



Radboud Universiteit

'Head, hand, and machine': The balance between tradition and innovation in craftsmanship

A qualitative study on how craftsmen in the furniture making industry balance tradition and innovation.

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Preface

Two years ago, I started with the pre-master Business Administration followed by the master Strategic Management which is now coming to an end. With this master thesis, I am not only concluding the master, but also valuable years as a student of Radboud University. A special moment in which I look back on a period in which I have developed both personally and professionally in meaningful ways that I had not expected before.

Writing this master thesis has contributed to my development in a special way, characterized by an eventful journey of mixed feelings and emotions, but in which I particularly enjoyed to get to know craftsmanship better. I believe that craftsmanship should be seen and valued more, and through this master thesis I want to contribute to this. The most special moment of this master thesis, therefore, was meeting the craftsmen who participated in this study. I am welcomed with open arms in the workplaces, personal stories are shared, and I am touched even more by the love and passion that the craftsmen have for their craft. This was meaningful for me and therefore I would like to first, thank the craftsmen for their willingness and openness to participate in my study.

Second, I would like to thank my supervisor Stephanie Koornneef for her guidance, support and structured feedback throughout this process. The words "It will all work out, one way or the other" have crossed my mind several times, and encouraged me to remain positive during the whole process. Third, I would like to thank my second examiner Mirjam Goudsmit for the effort to read and evaluate my master thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for the moments that they shared joy with me, encouraged me to go on, listened to me and gave advice, but especially for the space and freedom they have given me throughout my whole life to craft my own ways.

I hope you enjoy reading my master thesis!

Seline Sletterink

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1. Introduction

Craftsmanship is defined as "a humanist approach to work that prioritizes human engagement over machine control" (Kroezen et al., 2020, p. 503). Crafts are rooted in pre-industrialization and often associated with traditional practices – handcrafted methods and human labor (e.g. Adamson, 2007; Blundel & Smith, 2013; Dudley, 2014; Kroezen et al., 2020; McRobbie, 2016; Naudin & Patel, 2020; Ocejo, 2017; Sennet, 2009; Stinchfield et al., 2013) – but research has shown that craftsmanship goes through periods of change (Kroezen et al., 2020). This change is attributable to the increasing substitution of human labor by machinery and simultaneously the revaluation of human engagement in society (e.g. Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Kroezen et al., 2020; Ocejo, 2017; Raisch & Krakowski, 2020). Consequently, the boundaries between human labor and machinery are moving, forcing craftsmen and craftswomen – hereinafter referred to as craftsmen – to adapt to other ways of organizing (Kroezen et al., 2020). Hence, the moving boundaries of human labor and machinery force craftsmen to change.

Craftsmen are from origins focused on the preservation of traditional practices (e.g. Bell et al., 2021; Blundel & Smith, 2013; Kroezen et al., 2020; Stinchfield et al., 2013). Subsequently, adaptations to market demands have traditionally been suppressed in craft (Kieser, 1989). Yet, since industrialization craftsmen have been forced to work more efficient and consistent, due to increasing market demands such as competitive dynamics and profitability (Kroezen et al., 2020). As a result, change was allowed which enabled craftsmen to organize differently through implementations of innovations (e.g. Kieser, 1989; Kroezen et al., 2020). Innovation is defined by Baregheh et al. (2009) as "the multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, services or processes, in order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace" (p. 1334). Innovations can be created collectively or through individual processes (e.g. Das & Teng, 2000; Kim & Song, 2007; Kroezen et al., 2020) and affect the invention or improvement of products or processes (e.g. Damanpour & Gopalakrishnan, 2001; Kroezen et al., 2020; Tidd et al., 2005). However, craftsmanship is rooted in traditional practices and not often associated with innovation in the form of modern practices with machinery (Blundel & Smith, 2013). Hence, the question is how traditional and modern practices are divided within craftsmanship.

Inherent tensions exist between tradition – traditional practices including human labor and authenticity to preserve the craft identity (e.g. Bell et al., 2021; Kroezen et al., 2020; O'Neill et

al., 2014; Ocejo, 2017; Sennet, 2009; Zukin, 2008) and innovation – modern practices including mechanization and standardization to realize efficiency and consistency (e.g. Fox Miller, 2017; Kroezen et al., 2020). Yet, to preserve economic activity it is essential for craftsmen to innovate (e.g. Blundel & Smith, 2013; Carr & Gibson, 2016; Marques et al., 2019). Moreover, Cattani et al. (2017) stated that piano manufacturer Steinway & Sons preserved the traditional core and built a distinctive industry position, through innovations created by sharing ideas with stakeholders to develop the pianos. Another study of Marques et al. (2019) concluded that innovation is implemented by craftsmen in the handcrafted black pottery industry, through which the craftsmen preserved the culture and traditions of the region. Hence, these studies show that craftsmen can simultaneously maintain tradition and implement innovation.

The relationship between tradition and innovation is addressed in organizational research primarily from two perspectives. The first perspective highlights tradition as a constraint (Dacin et al., 2019) for innovation through protection of traditional practices (Bell et al., 2021) resulting in path dependency, inflexibility and conservatism (Leonard-Barton, 1992) that hinders change (Shoham, 2011). A second perspective is emerging in a growing number of studies that focus on tradition as a resource for innovation (e.g. Dacin et al., 2019; Erdogan et al., 2020; Kroezen et al., 2020; Shoham, 2011). These studies show that tradition is a resource with a adaptable nature (Shoham, 2011) that can be used as flexible input for blending with, or for augmenting innovations (e.g. Blundel & Smith, 2013; Kroezen et al., 2020) in which tradition is preserved (Dacin et al., 2019). Consequently, there is an ongoing academic debate on tradition as a constraint or a resource for innovation (Dacin et al., 2019).

Both of these perspectives in this ongoing academic debate highlight the interplay of two important phenomena in craftsmanship: stability – how craftsmen remain committed to traditional practices (e.g. Linnekin, 1983; Stinchfield et al., 2013) – and change – how craftsmen adapt and innovate with modern practices (e.g. De Massis et al., 2016; Erdogan et al., 2020; Feranita et al., 2017). This interplay is the core of family research that focused on organizations (e.g. Cattani et al., 2017; Cosentino et al., 2021; De Massis et al., 2016; Erdogan et al., 2020; Vrontis et al., 2016). Both family organizations and crafts have traditions that are strongly rooted in the past, attach great value to tradition, and transfer tradition from generation to generation (e.g. Bell et al., 2021; Dewey, 1916; Erdogan et al., 2020; Ranson, 1989). However, family organizations focus on maintaining unique legacies, which are difficult to transfer to, and replicate by outsiders of the organization (Erdogan et al., 2020). In contrast,

craftsmen strive for preserving the distinct identity through the transfer and copy of other craftsmen (e.g. Dudley, 2014; Kroezen et al., 2020; Stinchfield et al., 2013). Thus, it is assumed that craftsmen have other motivations that influence tradition and innovation than family organizations, making this an issue that needs to be examined.

In contrast to the family organizations level of previous research, this study focuses on how individual craftsmen deal with tradition and innovation at a detailed level. Noteworthy, research has tended to adopt a foremost assumption that craftsmen focus on preservation of tradition, with an underexposure of innovation (e.g. Adamson, 2007; Blundel & Smith, 2013; Kroezen et al., 2020; Shoham, 2011). Adherence to tradition alone would lead to a loss of competitiveness, and the exclusive pursuit of innovation would erode the distinctive identity (Erdogan et al., 2020) of craft, which calls for a balance. Yet, it remains unresolved how craftsmen create a balance, resulting in a gap that needs to be filled in order to preserve craftsmanship. Hence, it is worthwhile to develop understanding of how craftsmen balance tradition and innovation.

The gap is addressed by a qualitative study with an exploratory and abductive character that focuses on how craftsmen balance tradition and innovation in the furniture making industry (e.g. Edmondson & McManus, 2007; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Hennink et al., 2011; Locke et al., 2008; Yin, 2014). Therefore, the research question of this study is defined as:

"How do craftsmen balance tradition and innovation?"

To answer the research question, this study uses an institutional theory lens (e.g. Dacin et al., 2002; Dacin & Dacin, 2008; Scott, 2008). Based on this lens, there is examined how craftsmen simultaneously maintain stability with the traditional core – to remain legitimate and authentic – and implement change – to differentiate and sustain economic viability.

Thesis structure

The thesis is structured as follows. First, a brief explanation is given of the theories concerning craftsmanship, tradition, and innovation. Next, the relation between these concepts is described. Thereafter, the methodology is described and discussed, followed by the results of how craftsmen balance tradition and innovation. Finally, the interpretations, contributions, implications, and limitations are set out in the discussion, which ends with the conclusion.

2. Theoretical background

This chapter consists of the relevant literature, starting with an exposition of craftsmanship, which is followed by an explanation of tradition. Thereafter, innovation and the relationship between innovation and tradition are described, with specific references to the types of innovation that are the focus of this study. Finally, the application of the theoretical lens is clarified.

2.1 Craftsmanship

Craftsmanship refers to human involvement in making with human labor, which is the distinguishing factor of craft (Kroezen et al., 2020) that leads to a unique character (Dion & Arnould, 2011) and creates a particular niche in the industry (Marques et al., 2019). According to Kroezen et al. (2020), craftsmen possess distinctive attitudes which can be divided into dedication, exploration and communality. Dedication refers to the personal commitment of craftsmen to one's work (e.g. Kroezen et al., 2020; Ocejo, 2017). Furthermore, research on craftsmanship highlights that craftsmen are driven by intrinsic motivation (Sennet, 2009) – personal dedication – rather than extrinsic motivation – economic security and compensation (e.g. Kroezen et al., 2020; McRobbie, 2016; Wilensky, 1964). For example, Naudin and Patel (2020) studied the motivations behind the pursuit of craftsmanship and stated that extrinsic motivations "come secondary to the love of making and a passion for the craft artefact causing an uneasiness with notions of entrepreneurship and business acumen" (p. 2). Hence, craftsmen find intrinsic fulfilment more important than obtaining extrinsic rewards.

Furthermore, craftsmen are dedicated to improving craft knowledge and skills, which is indicated by Kroezen et al. (2020) as the explorative mindset. Sennet (2009) stated that craftsmen seek complexity and ambiguity to achieve experiential learning. To elaborate on this, Kroezen and Heugens (2019) concluded that the need to explore goes beyond the formal workplace and that craftsmen continue with experimenting in their private lives as well. Moreover, the authors argued that for a significant number of craftsmen, craft began as a hobby to pursue a creative expression, which subsequently evolved into their profession (Kroezen & Heugens, 2019). Thus, the explorative mindset characterizes the personality of craftsmen, which is both part of profession as well as private life and encourages craftsmen to start and maintain craft.

Noteworthy, craftsmanship creates a sense of commonality resulting in a shared identity between craftsmen that emerges in communities in which craftsmen are linked through apprenticeship and mutual cooperation (Kroezen et al., 2020). Communalities between craftsmen is studied by Ocejo (2010) in the craft of mixology, as well as by Croidieu and Kim (2018) among amateur radio makers and by Kroezen and Heugens (2019) in beer brewing. In summary, these studies concluded that craftsmen are not only focused on individual self-expression, but also on collective fulfillment with other craftsmen. Thus, craftsmanship gives an identity to individual craftsmen, but also to craftsmen as a group.

The distinctiveness of craft is also formed by specific skills of craftsmen, referred to by Kroezen et al. (2020) as all-roundedness, embodied expertise and mastery of techniques. Craftsmen have control to complete an entire work process (Kroezen et al., 2020) referred to as the series of actions from design to execution (Hodson, 2010). Furthermore, craftsmen are independent to individually make adjustments and changes in the craft process, which is referred to as all-roundness (Kroezen et al., 2020). Yet, craftsmen must first achieve a level of mastery that is reflected in a wide range of versatile techniques that are difficult to reproduce. The level of mastery has been highlighted in several studies, such as producing a mechanical watch (Raffaelli, 2018) and becoming a barber (Ocejo, 2017). Central in achieving a mastery level is the tacit knowledge that craftsmen need to use, which indicates an accumulated product of thinking and action (Toom, 2012) that is transferred in a collective process of action (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in a master-apprentice relationship (Dewey, 1916). To illustrate, the study of Slavich and Castellucci (2016) in haute cuisine concluded that craftsmen build on the masters' artistic style, but also add a signature style that differentiates craftsmen. Hence, craftsmen learn to craft in a similar way, but personalities and motivations make every craftsman unique.

Craftsmen not only apply manual skills, but also use practical and material knowledge, indicated as embodied expertise (Kroezen et al., 2020). In other words, working with hand as well as head is the focus in craft (Sennet, 2009). Bell and Vachhani (2020) concluded that craftsmen take physical working as a starting point, but combine this with knowing and feeling to link bodies, objects, places, culture and nature in craft practices. Consequently, also sensory engagements such as taste, smell, touch (Barley, 1996), and emotional sensations (Gibson, 2016) are part of craft. To conclude, craftsmen combine thinking, doing, and feeling in the exercise of craft.

2.2 Tradition

Craft distinguishes itself with skills and attitudes in which human engagement prevails (Kroezen et al., 2020) and this is originated in pre-industrialization. Consequently, craftsmanship is associated with tradition (Adamson, 2007). Tradition refers to aspects such as knowledge, competencies, materials, manufacturing processes, signs, values, and beliefs that are related to the past (e.g. De Massis et al., 2016; Holmquist et al., 2019; Petruzzelli & Albino, 2012). Specifically, O'Neill et al. (2014) stated that traditional practices in craft consist of handcrafted methods, naturalness, and concrete locations that emphasize personalization and connections to places, histories and believes (e.g. Lehman et al., 2019; Ocejó, 2017). Hence, tradition is rooted in the past, but still part of craftsmanship in the present.

Traditional practices are being preserved and revived by craftsmen and previous research indicates two main trends that reinforce this preservation and revival. One of the trends is an increased desire for authenticity in society (e.g. Beverland, 2005; O'Neill et al., 2014; Ocejó, 2017; Sennet, 2009). Dudley (2014) stated authenticity as transparency and visibility in how and by whom things are crafted, to which Bell et al. (2021) added accessibility. Bell et al. (2021) referred to craft breweries, where accessibility is realized, for instance, through bars that are set up in craft breweries, allowing customers to drink beer where it is made, meet the brewers and understand the brewing process. Furthermore, crafts are also being revived by contemporary craftsmen who look back into history and revalue old traditions (Holmquist et al., 2019). Consequently, traditional crafts that had largely disappeared from society, such as butchering (Ocejó, 2017), alcohol production (McKendrick & Hannan, 2014), and farming (Weber et al., 2008) are being revived. Hence, tradition from the past is being preserved and revived in the present in response to a desire for authenticity by society.

The other trend for the preservation of practices (Bell et al., 2021), is according to Stinchfield et al. (2013) inseparable from craftsmen themselves. Stinchfield et al. (2013) stated that craftsmen are driven by commitment to long-standing beliefs and practices, resulting in a sense of identity. Furthermore, Weber et al. (2008) concluded that this commitment and identity serves as an internal community for craftsman and external differentiation of craft compared to outsiders (p. 530). Therefore, craftsmen want to maintain traditional practices (Stinchfield et al., 2013). However, commitment to tradition also increases a reluctance among craftsmen to change and adapt to market developments (Stinchfield et al., 2013). To conclude, the desire of

craftsmen to preserve traditional practices can be seen as a resource – distinguishing craft – but can also limit craftsmen to change.

However, traditional practices are under pressure in craftsmanship, forcing craftsmen to change to organize in a more efficient and consistent way. Pressures are caused by an increased development of modern machinery, techniques and tools (e.g. Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Raisch & Krakowski, 2020), which are elements that belong to mechanical work (Kroezen et al., 2020). Mechanical work distinguishes itself from craft work with attitudes and skills reflected in elements as programming of activities, specialized roles and easy-to-obtain technical skills (Kroezen et al., 2020). Consequently, products can be produced faster, cheaper, and in larger quantities with modern techniques, in comparison to traditional practices (e.g. Bell et al., 2021; Blundel & Tregear, 2006; Kroezen et al., 2020). To illustrate, Blundel and Tregear (2006) studied how the work of cheesemakers changed from traditional farmers to industrial factories, as a result of increasing demand for dairy products, low prices and national distribution and concluded that market developments can force craftsmen to change, in order to remain economically viable (Piore & Sabel, 1984). Moreover, craftsmen are reinforced to change by the trend of continuous evolution of machines, in which machine automation, artificial intelligence, and robotization can increasingly acquire capacities that were once thought to be exclusively human (e.g. Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Raisch & Krakowski, 2020). Thus, the evolution of mechanical work and machines can create more pressure for craftsmen to work in an efficient way, which challenges the traditional practices and encourages craftsmen to change.

2.3 Tradition and innovation

The preservation of tradition is at the heart of craftsmanship, but change in the form of innovations is necessary to remain economically viable. Innovation is defined by Baumol (2002) as "the recognition of opportunities for profitable change and the pursuit of those opportunities all the way through to their adoption in practice" (p. 52). Profitability is described in this definition, which is chosen as a measurable outcome of innovation within this study. Another important outcome of innovation is novelty (O'Sullivan & Dooley, 2008), which seems contradicting with tradition where the focus is on familiarity that is related to the past (Petruzzelli & Albino, 2012). However, an emerging body of studies point out to tradition as not a constraint, but a resource for innovation (e.g. Cattani et al., 2017; Dacin et al., 2002; De Massis et al., 2016; Holmquist et al., 2019; Marques et al., 2019; Scares, 1997). To link this to

craftsmanship, Bell et al. (2021) stated that craftsmen have the capacity to transform traditional practices of the past, into sustainable forms of future-proof production. The authors explained this transformation as "innovative methods and techniques could be used to revisit and develop traditional, time-consuming manual practices and processes of making in ways which remain consistent with the craft imaginary" (Bell et al., 2021, p. 13). Thus, tradition shapes the craft imaginary and distinct identity of craftsmen, which can be preserved through the implementation of innovations.

Balancing tradition and innovation

How tradition can be preserved while innovating is further explored by De Massis et al. (2016) with studies in Italian family organizations. Tradition consists of past knowledge and the authors suggested that organizations should be able to search and source potentially useful past knowledge, which indicates interiorizing (De Massis et al., 2016). Furthermore, De Massis et al. (2016) stated that past knowledge can be combined and reinterpreted to produce new knowledge in the form of innovations. Hence, tradition consists of past knowledge that can be used to create innovations.

Although organizations can combine tradition to realize innovations, Erdogan et al. (2020) concluded that organizations can also combine tradition with innovation. Concretely, the study of Erdogan et al. (2020) – focused on Turkish family firms in the craft industry – concluded that tradition and innovation can be managed by reinterpreting traditional products or improving traditional production to suit to modern conditions, indicated as the integration strategy. Furthermore, the authors found that a segregation strategy is also possible, whereby a traditional product line and an innovative product line can be established and maintained separately (Erdogan et al., 2020). Hence, integration of tradition and innovation is not always needed, because segregation can also contribute to simultaneously maintaining tradition and realizing innovation.

However, research about tradition and innovation by, among others, Erdogan et al. (2020), focused on organizational level and family organizations, that encourages future research to examine how tradition and innovation is balanced on the individual level. One exception, is the study of Petruzzelli and Savino (2015) that examined the Italian Haute Cuisine on individual level, and found that the chefs combined traditional ingredients with novel ingredients originated from culturally distant gastronomies. Moreover, the authors found that the chefs

recombined traditional ingredients to non-traditional dishes in order to better facilitate the needs and wishes of customers (Petruzzielli & Savino, 2015). Consequently, this study suggested that individuals can create innovation through combined or recombinant processes. Another exception is the study of Holmquist et al. (2019) that focused on how individual craftsmen of furniture making in the Swedish Masonite industry combined non-traditional and traditional materials, forms and manufacturing techniques in non-traditional designs of products. Thus, these studies show that craftsmen can recombine traditions as well as combine tradition with novel components to create innovations. Both studies examined individuals (e.g. Holmquist et al., 2019; Petruzzielli & Savino, 2015) instead of organizations, and this study uses the same unit of analysis to explore how craftsmen balance tradition and innovation.

Balancing tradition with different types of innovation

Besides a focus on family and organizational level, research about tradition and innovation was mainly focused on product innovation (e.g. Holmquist et al., 2019; Petruzzielli & Savino, 2015) and process innovation (Cattani et al., 2017; Marques et al., 2019), thus this study refines these insights and extends this with more types of innovation. To start, craftsmen are autonomous to carry out an entire work process, which allows that changes can be implemented independently. Therefore, it was expected that craftsmen also create product innovations, similar to previous research (e.g. Holmquist et al., 2019; Petruzzielli & Savino, 2015). In line with this, this study examines how craftsmen innovate in products, indicated as improvements in products or creation of new products (Francis & Bessant, 2005) in order to satisfy customer demands (Utterback & Abernathy, 1975). Another examination is how craftsmen introduce new or improved elements in the craft process such as materials, tools, machinery and technologies, referred to as process innovations (Damanpour & Gopalakrishnan, 2001). Hence, through examining product and process innovation it is being observed how craftsmen innovate in the entire craft process, and how this is balanced with tradition.

Craftsmen are often part of a community in which transferring of knowledge between craftsmen to come to new ideas is central (Kroezen et al., 2020). Therefore, it was plausible that craftsmen create imitative innovations, defined by Moon and Acquaah (2022) as "the imitator does not simply copy the original innovator's product attributes or practices but creatively reconfigures or recombines them with its own distinctive characteristics" (p. 215). Likewise, collaborative innovation is being examined that takes a broader view than imitative innovations. Collaborative innovations are referred to as voluntary partnerships between organizations (Das

& Teng, 2000), characterized by temporary relationships (Kale & Singh, 2009) of jointly exchanging and sharing resources (Kim & Song, 2007) with the aim to boost innovation potential and realize a common innovation goal (e.g. Feranita et al., 2017; Hitt et al., 2000). Thus, as craftsmen rely heavily on their individual possession of knowledge and skills and create new ideas in a collective context, it is important to consider innovation broadly to determine where the balance with tradition is located.

Balancing tradition with different types of innovations from an institutional perspective

Interesting to apply in this study is an institutional theory lens. According to Scott (2008) institutional theory focusses on the resilient aspects of the social structure, that shape the behavior of organizations. The behavior of organizations is shaped by 'institutions', defined by Scott (2008) as "regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life" (p. 48). However, Dacin and Dacin (2008) indicate that institutional theory is powerful for the explanation of individual behavior and therefore appropriate for this study. Furthermore, the authors stated that tradition can be seen as an institutionalized practice, but that "adaptations and changes in institutionalized practices can result in either erosion or enhancement of tradition" (Dacin & Dacin, 2008, p. 331). Therefore, it is useful to apply institutional theory to advance understanding of which institutional influences explain the behavior of craftsmen, related to balancing tradition and innovation. Hence, through this lens, this study contributes on an individual level to the ongoing academic debate on tradition as a constraint or resource for innovation (Dacin et al., 2019).

3. Methodology

A qualitative study was conducted in the furniture making industry, that consisted of several research methods namely semi-structured interviews and participant observations. The underlying choices associated with the research strategy, design and methods are elaborated in this chapter.

3.1 Research strategy and design

The primary objective of this study was to explore how craftsmen balance tradition and innovation. A qualitative study was selected as research strategy to realize this objective, because this created the possibility to clarify and elaborate on personal beliefs, emotions, and thoughts (Hennink et al., 2011) of craftsmen. In addition, it allowed participants to speak in own terminology, rather than in terms and categories created by others (Yin, 2014). Moreover, this research strategy supported a proper interpretation of views and experiences of participants, that enabled to address the research question from the eyes (Hennink et al., 2011) of the craftsmen. This interpretation was necessary because each craftsmen has own beliefs and motivations for the execution of craft, which can result in differences between craftsmen (Kroezen et al., 2020), which can be better understood through qualitative research. Furthermore, based on these differences it was expected that craftsmen vary in how tradition and innovation is balanced and qualitative research made it possible to explore and clarify these variations in a more in-depth way.

Also, an interpretive paradigm is applied in this study that indicates the researcher's perspective on the world and this is commonly used in qualitative research with individuals as the unit of analysis (Hennink et al., 2011). Consequently, the role of the researcher was focused on active participation to get open interaction with craftsmen, in order to get an inside perspective (Hennink et al., 2011). As a result, the researcher thoroughly explored the mechanisms, motivations, actions and thoughts of craftsmen, related to balancing tradition and innovation. Moreover, this study has an explorative nature. As a result, a high degree of flexibility and independence to carry out the research, as well as to make adjustments in the research process was generated (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Additionally, an abductive research approach was applied, that allowed to iterate from the empirical evidence of this study to the theory – and vice versa – about how craftsmen balance tradition and innovation. As a result, new conceptual insights were gained and existing conceptual insights were refined (Locke et al., 2008).

Specifically, abduction made it possible to confirm expectations based on the theory, but also to observe new concepts from empirical phenomena (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Thus, an explorative qualitative strategy with an interpretive paradigm and abduction, allowed for deeper understanding of both theory and empirical phenomena related to how craftsmen balance tradition and innovation.

3.2 Research context

The furniture making industry was chosen as the research context, because this industry consists of an abundance of small and medium-sized businesses that emphasize traditional practices (Otero-Neira et al., 2009). Moreover, within the industry a division is visible between traditional practices – solid wood and a great variety of designs, shapes, and profiles of products with basic machines – and modern practices – panel materials, standardized production processes and similar products with automated machines (HOMAG, 2020). Therefore, it was interesting to examine the furniture making industry as it was expected that this division affects how craftsmen balance tradition and innovation. Consequently, a research sample of only the furniture making industry was drawn, to generate homogeneity. Homogeneity was generated by choosing participants with similar characteristics (Hennink et al., 2011), and with the use of sample criterion this has been maintained.

3.3 Research sample

This section consists of an explanation of the sampling criterion, the stages of sample selection and the final sample of the population.

Sample criterion

The research sample was drawn by following a purposeful sampling strategy with a focus on non-probability (Hennink et al., 2011). Consequently, different criteria have been maintained to select the research sample. First, craft furniture makers with a small business of one to two employees – hereinafter referred to as participant – are selected. Second, participants were selected that had control and responsibility over the entire craft process, to ensure that the business could be labelled as craft (Kroezen et al., 2020). As a result, participants with small a business were chosen, that could provide the most reliable and consistent information (Yin, 2014), about how tradition and innovation are balanced as the participants were the only ones responsible for it. Hence, based on this sample criteria participants with a small craft business in furniture making were selected for the sample.

Selection stages and research sample

The first selection stage consisted of the online search for participants with a small business in furniture making. Thereinafter, the most valid information from the participant and business was analyzed, in order to assess the participants' suitability for the study. In the second stage, the researcher contacted the participants through telephone and asked if the participant wanted to participate in the study. In the case of two employees, it was asked which employee was available for participation. Moreover, the researcher appealed to the voluntariness of the participants, as coercion should not be used to force participants to participate (Hennink et al., 2011). Consequently, the final research sample consisted of eleven participants. Noteworthy, permission to use names and relevant information of participants in this study was requested and all participants agreed. All of the relevant information is completed in table 1 below.

Table 1

Research sample

Nr.	Name firm	Existence	Location firm	# of empl.	Name participant	Date
1	Goed Houtwerk	8 years	Eindhoven	1	Maarten Dijksman	11-4-2022
2	Mehan van den Akker Maatinterieur	12 years	's-Hertogenbosch	1	Mehan van den Akker	11-4-2022
3	Dokx	6,5 years	's-Hertogenbosch	1	Maarten Kierkels	12-4-2022
4	Paul Meubelen	9 years	Nijmegen	1	Paul Balm	13-4-2022
5/6	Kloppenber Meubelen	32 years	Twello	2	Jeroen (son) and Ruud Kloppenberg (father)	19-4-2022
7	Deweever Interieurbouw	27 years	Deventer	1	Frank Dewever	19-4-2022
8	Thijs Scharenberg = meubelmaker	10 years	Velp (Gelderland)	1	Thijs Scharenberg	21-4-2022
9	Spant7	11 years	Deventer	2	Wilco van Duuren	21-4-2022
10	Meubelmakerij Kopshout	38 years	Nijmegen	2	Jelmer van der Sluis	26-4-2022
11	René Bruns Schrijnwerker	22 years	Laren (Gelderland)	1	René Bruns	28-4-2022

3.4 Research methods

Multiple research methods were combined within this qualitative study, namely semi-structured interviews and participant observations. Consequently, viewpoints were gathered from different angles of the participants (Hennink et al., 2011). Furthermore, triangulation was applied as it facilitated the research process of gaining an in-depth understanding of the empirical results (Cronin, 2014), which resulted in an improvement of interpretation of the results regarding how participants balance tradition and innovation.

Semi-structured interviews

One of the research methods were semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014) of which the interview protocol is attached in Appendix A. From the start to the end of April 2022, the researcher conducted a total of eleven interviews, lasting between 40 minutes and 1.5 hours. A total of eleven was chosen because, according to Guest et al. (2006) between seven and twelve is an adequate sample size to reach saturation. Noteworthy, the saturation level was further supplemented by the empirical results of the conducted participant observations.

The semi-structured interviews consisted of a combination of structured and unstructured interview styles that are conducted to collect feasible descriptions of the lifeworld (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014) of craftsmen. The structured part consisted of pre-determined questions which were equal for all participants. Furthermore, the questions were mainly open-ended, which made it possible to gather "direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge" (Labuschagne, 2003, p. 101). Consequently, participants had the opportunity to express personal reasoning and experiences. Moreover, there were also unstructured interview parts in the form of follow-up questions to clarify the reasoning of participants. As a result, the researcher was able to delve deeper into topics that were relevant for the particular participant (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Also, closed questions were asked in the interviews for confirmation and proper interpretation.

However, the order of pre-determined questions was adapted to the responses of the participant during the interview, for the maintenance of a good atmosphere and for prevention of repetition of questions. Regarding verbal communication, all interviews were conducted in Dutch, as this was the first language of the participants. Moreover, non-verbal communication was also monitored to better interpret answers and adapt verbal communication (Boeije, 2005).

Participant observations

Participant observations were also carried out in this qualitative study, because the interaction between human labor and mechanical work is highly visible within the furniture making industry. Therefore, participant observations were of added value to make direct connections between what was expressed in interviews and seen during participant observations, resulting in a comprehensive interpretation of information (Hennink et al., 2011). Furthermore, participant observations were carried out with all participants, in order to achieve a good understanding and better interpretation.

The participant observations consisted of a tour in the work place, led by the participant. During the tour the researcher listened to the participant's explanations, observed what could be seen, asked questions, and took photographs (Myers, 2020) of machinery, tools, materials, interior, exterior, products and parts of the production process. Furthermore, the researcher became not only part in sight, but also in smell and touch (Spradley, 1980) of the lifeworld of participants. Consequently, the researcher was able to go into more depth about what came up in the interview, and simultaneously about practices that were difficult to observe in the interviews (Myers, 2020).

Although the participant observations were conducted with all participants, the results of five participant observations are – in agreement with the participants – recorded in field reports. This choice was made because of the focus on the interviews, and the limited scope of the study. Moreover, the field reports were created on the same day of the participant observations, to avoid the loss of valuable experiences (Yin, 2014). The field reports are made of observations at: 1) Goed Houtwerk, 2) Dokx, 3) Kloppenberg Meubelen, 4) Meubelmakerij Kopshout and 5) René Bruns Schrijnwerker.

3.5 Data analysis

The data analysis started during the data collection phase. The audio recordings of the interviews were listened to carefully and simultaneously made into transcriptions – referred to as verbatim transcripts (Evers & de Boer, 2012) – that formed together with the field reports the foundation for the analyzing process. Furthermore, the analysis was carried out by applying the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2012). According to the authors, the Gioia methodology is supportive for comparing data with relevant literature as well as finding undiscovered insights,

which makes it a suitable methodology for the abductive approach of this study (Gioia et al., 2012).

The conducted analysis consisted of three phases (Gioia et al., 2012). The first phase started with the creation of first-order codes that were as close as possible to the participants' expressed terms. After this, similarities and differences between first-order codes were identified, after which the first-order codes were brought to a manageable and renamed number of categories. Within the second phase, the first-order codes were combined and renamed to understandable terms, and these terms were compared with the relevant literature, after which the first-order codes were grouped to more abstract second-order concepts. Subsequently, the second-order concepts were grouped to aggregate dimensions in the third phase. However, the whole analysis is more iterative than linear performed, with the result that the phases had to be revisited in order to arrive at an appropriate data structure. A model was created based on the data structure (Gioia et al., 2012), that shows how craftsman balance tradition and innovation. The data structure and the model are presented in the following chapter.

3.6 Quality

Within this study, validity and reliability were ensured in multiple ways. Reliability has been ensured through the establishment of the interview protocol (Hennink et al., 2011), which made structured part of the interview protocol identical for each interview, that allowed for comparison of the data. As a result, errors and biases were minimized (Yin, 2014), but also reproducibility was increased (Evers & de Boer, 2012). Furthermore, reliability was increased by the development of verbatim transcripts, which made it possible to literally check the process of data collection (Evers & de Boer, 2012). Validity was ensured through member checks (Hennink et al., 2011). The field reports as well as the verbatim transcripts have been shared with the sample participants and are adjusted where necessary, for correct interpretation (Creswell, 2014). In addition, the validity was ensured by using multiple sources of evidence, in which triangulation was applied (Yin, 2014).

3.7 Ethical requirements

To ensure that integrity was maintained within the study, a number of ethical considerations were determined. From the first contact with participants, the researcher ensured transparent communication about the whole process (Hennink et al., 2011). Moreover, the researcher planned an appointment with the participant based on availability, in order to not disturb or

limit the professional practice (Myers, 2020). In addition, the researcher emphasized the willingness and voluntariness of the participant to withdraw from the study at any time and without giving any reason (Bleijenbergh, 2015).

During the data collection, permission was asked to each participant to use names, relevant information, quotes said during the interview, and to record the interview. Also, permission was requested to take and use photographs to support the study. Furthermore, the researcher repeatedly pointed out to the voluntariness of the participant, in order to avoid the perception of coercion, insecurity and unsafety (Hennink et al., 2011). At the end of the interview, it was underlined by the researcher that the results were used for the study only, that member checking would be conducted (Creswell, 2014), and that the participant could contact the researcher at any time to add or change responses. Similar to the interviews, the participant observations were carried out, in which the researcher communicated in advance, when, how and with what expectations the observations were conducted (Hennink et al., 2011).

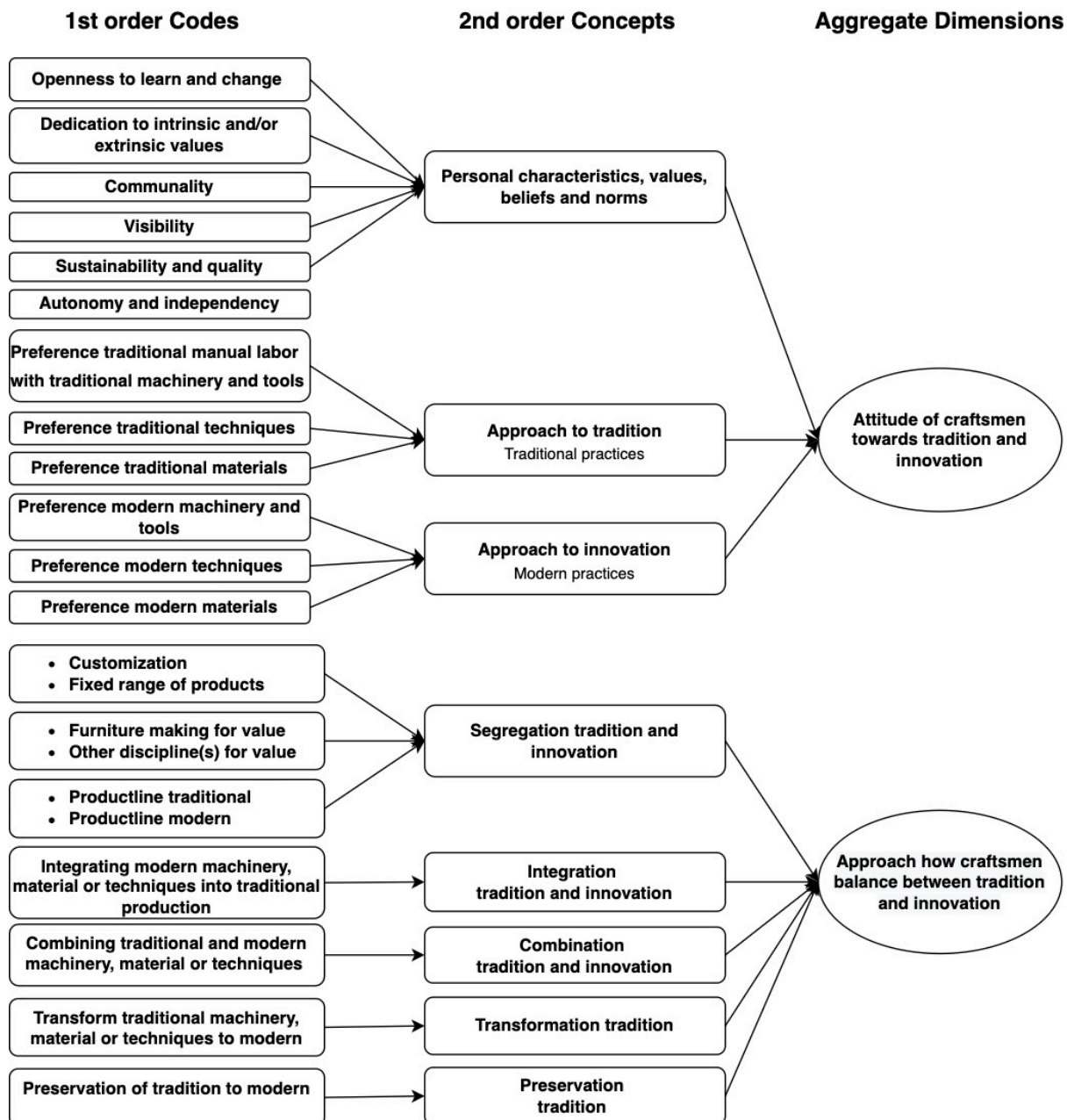
During the data analysis, all interviews and participant observations were carefully transcribed and processed. The transcripts, field reports and photographs were shared with the participants and the participant had the opportunity to edit, complete or delete data, for the purpose of proper interpretation (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, the researcher showed flexibility towards the participants in planning, rescheduling, and conducting of the interviews and observations.

4. Results

This chapter consists of the empirical results acquired in the semi-structured interviews and participant observations, that contribute to answering the research question of how craftsmen balance tradition and innovation. The empirical results are expanded with photographs for illustration, and translated quotes to include emotions, expressions and language of the participants for clarification. As a foundation for the results, Figure 1 presents the developed data structure (Gioia et al., 2012), which is also added in a larger format in Appendix A.

Figure 1

Data structure about how craftsmen balance tradition and innovation



4.1 Introduction

Based on the results it can be stated that each participant is strongly adhered to values, beliefs and norms, and has personal characteristics that influence the exercise of craft, which is further discussed in the forthcoming sections. Adherence to certain beliefs influences, for example, how craftsmen carry out the craft process, what kind of products and designs are created and what type of customers are served. In other words, each participant follows a path, that influences how traditional practices – tradition – and modern practices – innovation – are executed. However, all of the participants are driven by intrinsic and extrinsic values, but what is valued most differs from participant to participant. Choosing modern practices is mainly driven by the achievement of extrinsic values such as efficiency and profitability. In contrast, intrinsic values are related to the pursuit of passion, which is according to the participants mainly derived from traditional practices.

“You can never get rich from this, even if you make such expensive tables. You can only make a specific number of them, but I have completely adjusted my standards, my material standards, and I really like that.” (Interview 3, Dokx)

“I enjoy my work, I do it with a lot of love, I get a lot of energy out of it so that makes me happy (...) I have been to New Zealand but I do not have to go there again. And I do not need to go on a long trip and actually I do not need a Tesla.” (Interview 10, Meubelmakerij Kopshout)

“It does not matter if you earn a lot, so pleasure in your work is also a reward, you cannot buy bread from it, but it is a reward and a very important one so yes, that is how I have always seen it, that is how I have always lived so that suits me very well” (Interview 11, René Bruns Schrijnwerker)

Above quotes show that several participants are more dedicated to realizing intrinsic values than extrinsic values related to receiving a higher profit. Furthermore, the quotes reveal that participants have adapted their lifestyles to certain standards. Although a higher profit is not a goal, participants indicate that profitability is necessary to remain viable. In order to remain viable, it is observed that participants balance traditional practices and modern practices, but also unbalance with prioritizing either traditional practices or modern practices and this is elaborated in the forthcoming sections. The sections are divided to the previously described

types of innovations – process, product, collaboration, and imitation. Also, another unexpected type of innovation – business model – is described, followed by a conclusion that consists of a visual model of the results.

4.2 Process

The results of this section are divided into the use of techniques, materials, and distribution between human labor and machines of the process of craft.

Techniques

A common finding amongst the participants is how the craft process – receiving a request to delivering a product to the customer – proceeds. Furthermore, all participants divide the craft process into the design, production and the assembling of products. Specifically focused on production, a minority of the participants have been identified that prioritize traditional techniques in this process.

“The products we make, we always make furniture from solid wood so we do not work with plywood or glued plates (...) or any other kind of composite wood and that is actually, that is the first important differentiation of us.” (Interview 10, Meubelmakerij Kopshout)

The above quote shows that the participant prioritizes traditional techniques, creating a distinctive identity from other more modern craftsmen. Yet, several participants indicated that traditional techniques are more time-consuming than modern techniques (Figure 2 and 3). By using modern techniques, participants can work more efficient.

“Would you make that in a very traditional way, then people do not see what it should cost and besides that, people might want (...) a traditional-looking piece of furniture, but they do want soft drawers and soft-coated doors and things like that. And then a push-to-open system (...). Yes, they do want that, so it does not often go hand in hand with some craftsmanlike construction.” (Interview 9, Spant7)

The above quote shows that traditional techniques are difficult to apply in the production of modern designs and elements in products. In other words, products for customers that desire traditional designs are also made with traditional techniques.

Figure 2

A traditional technique by René Bruns Schrijnwerker



** A traditional technique of hammering a profile into wood, only possible by hand and still applied by René Bruns Schrijnwerker, which takes approximately three hours.*

Figure 3

A traditional technique by Meubelmakerij Kopshout



** A traditional technique of drying the wood takes a year for Meubelmakerij Kopshout, while with modern techniques it takes two weeks.*

“And most furniture makers do not saw their own trees, and do not dry their own trees and yes that is what I do and I use all connections, modern and old, the pinhole connection, the dovetail connection, but I also use dowels or lamellos.” (Interview 11, René Bruns Schrijnwerker)

“That also makes the profession a bit complex. you have to be able to do all those things. You cannot say I am only going to sell homes built in the 1930s, because then, only once a month do you have a job like that. You cannot eat from that, so you actually have to be able to do a lot and I think that is also a bit of a disadvantage.” (Interview 5, Kloppenberg Meubelen – Jeroen)

Above quotes show that the participants master both traditional and modern techniques. To elaborate, these participants segregate knowledge and skills for developing traditional and modern products, in order to respond to both demands of customers. However, the last quote also reveals that there are difficulties in maintaining both techniques, as this involves a wide range of knowledge and skills that need to be preserved.

“Look at a craft, you also think, at least I think, that you often use older techniques, but that is not always the case, I actually work very little with old techniques, old wood connections and things like that, I do not do that at all.” (Interview 9, Spant7)

Above quote shows that the participant associates craft with traditional techniques, but integrated modern techniques in the process. As a reason, these participant and other participants mentioned efficiency, limited visibility of the traditional techniques, and decreased customer demand for traditional designs. Thus, these results of techniques show that the prioritization of traditional techniques can differentiate participants, but is more time-consuming than modern techniques. Finally, both techniques allow participants to serve different types of customers, but challenge them to keep all their knowledge and skills up to date.

Materials

The choice of certain techniques also determines which materials can be used. All participants prioritize wood in the production process.

“And I love wood, it smells good, it is soft, it can be shaped into almost any shape, so yes, it does make me happy.” (Interview 1, Goed Houtwerk)

Above quote shows that wood is pleasant to work with, but also brings sensory involvement and enjoyment for the participant. Furthermore, a division is recognized between participants who prioritize traditional wooden materials and those who combine these with modern materials. To clarify, the differences between traditional and modern wooden materials are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Differences between traditional and modern wooden materials

Traditional wooden materials	Modern wooden materials
Traditional wooden materials – solid wood – are described by participants as unprocessed or recycled wood, that needs to be found and prepared before it can be used in the production process.	Modern wooden materials – panel/plate material, plywood, or glued plates like Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF) – are described by participants as processed and semi-finished wood, that can be used directly in the production process.

However, traditional wood is prioritized by the majority of the participants, which is based on certain norms and beliefs.

“And all from the region, also less environmentally damaging because of transportation and I work a lot with old wood. And that is wood that already has a whole life behind it, so that can be old floors of train wagons, I work with that. I am working on a table from old sleepers, all old oak.” (Interview 9, Spant7)

The above quote – also indicated by other participants – shows that sustainability of the materials is an important standard, reflected in the pursuit of the least possible pollution of the environment. Sustainability is also reflected in the possibility to recycle traditional materials (see also Figure 4). Due the use of traditional materials, the process is inefficient. Yet, adhering to sustainability is more important for most of the participants.

“Our furniture is more expensive, but hopefully it will last for generations, because someone just puts down more money and it is made together, so someone also has something that he can really use himself or his ideas in. That is when a piece of furniture is of such value, that someone does not just say goodbye to it.” (Interview 10, Meubelmakerij Kopshout)

The above quote shows that sustainability goes together with a higher price as well as more emotional value, which increases the chance that products last longer. In contrast, modern materials are seen as less sustainable due to limited recyclability, but more efficient. Nonetheless, a majority of the participants mentioned that a proportion of modern materials is becoming increasingly sustainable. Therefore, these participants combine traditional and modern materials with each other, indicating a balance.

“People who still really like the real solid wood, but yes you cannot sell that anymore because it's so expensive, then we make the inside of plate material, refinished, and nobody sees that. That is really just exactly the same, only the inside is different. And then the milling is solid though.” (Interview 5, Kloppenberg Meubelen – Jeroen)

As above quote shows, products can have a look and feel of traditional wood on the outside, but with less visible modern materials used for the inside, resulting in a reasonable price for customers. This demonstrates that participants combine traditional and modern materials to create a product of which Figure 5 is an example.

Figure 4

The showroom of Spant7



** In the showroom, potential customers are welcomed and the traditional materials obtained by Spant7 are displayed.*

Figure 5

A product made by Spant7



** A combination of traditional material, the table top, and modern non-wooden material, the steel base, made by Spant7.*

“We have an old profession, and we make traditional work, but where necessary with modern materials. So, the door (...), the frame and everything else is solid wood, but we are going to do the panel in this one from MDF, a dead material, so that it will always remain beautiful.” (Interview 11, René Bruns Schrijnwerker)

Above quote shows that as a result of the combination of traditional and modern materials, the efficiency increases, but also the sustainability and quality. To clarify, it was observed that René Bruns Schrijnwerker has more prioritization on traditional practices than on modern practices in his whole craft. However, even René Bruns Schrijnwerker appreciates a combination with modern materials. Furthermore, the rest of the combining participants indicate that the choice of certain modern materials to complement traditional ones is done consciously, without reducing the sustainability or quality. Thus, the prioritization of traditional, or the combination with modern materials, is driven by realizing efficiency and the beliefs, values and norms of participants such as sustainability and quality.

Human labor and machinery

In addition to the techniques and materials, a division can be recognized in the results between participants that prioritize human labor with traditional machines and tools, and participants that also complement this with the use of modern and automated machinery.

“I do not want the machine to take over everything from me, but basically here I still have to push the wood over the saw myself, and I still have to make those connections in it myself, so that will continue.” (Interview 8, Thijs Scharenberg = meubelmaker)

Above quote demonstrates – also indicated by other participants – that the participant values human labor and wants to preserve this in craftsmanship. Moreover, the participants that prioritize human labor, do recognize and appreciate traditional machines and tools for the execution of essential tasks in the design, production and assembling process.

“I also started with simpler stuff, but I have been at a level for quite a long time now that I actually think to myself, "Oh my God, I do not know what I need. Everything that is really, really necessary, I think I bought ten years ago.” (Interview 7, Dewever Interieurbouw)

The above quote shows that the participant has all the machinery to carry out associated tasks, and is satisfied with this collection. Furthermore, this reveals that the participant – also indicated by other participants – wants to maintain the traditional machinery till the end of the craft career. Consequently, these participants prioritize traditional machinery, thus creating an unbalance with more modern machinery.

“Furniture making and interior design is also just very versatile, you have a huge amount of equipment and hand tools that you work with. Each machine can also be used very creatively, which gives you new possibilities.” (Interview 4, Paul Meubelen)

Above quote reveals that it is possible to operate different equipment and tools in executing craft. Moreover, the participant indicates that each machine can be used for more purposes than it is intended for. Therefore, participants transform the ability of these traditional machines into a new and multifunctional purpose. As a result, the machine or tool suits more tasks of the process resulting in an increased effectiveness. Hence, although traditional machines are

prioritized, transformation of this traditional machines can realize innovations. Another example of transformation is observed during the participant observation in the workplace (Figure 6) of René Bruns Schrijnwerker. René Bruns Schrijnwerker showed a traditional machine from the metal industry that he had transformed into a new machine for the purpose of drilling wood (Figure 7).

Figure 6

The workplace of René Bruns Schrijnwerker



Figure 7

The drilling machine that René Bruns Schrijnwerker transformed



As René Bruns Schrijnwerker got to learn about the machine and became familiar with it, he developed new ideas for rebuilding, enabling him to work more effective and efficient. In other words, by transforming traditional machines the participants innovate, which indicates an unbalance. Other participants also prioritize human labor with traditional machines, but recognize benefits of integrating modern machinery in the traditional production process. Benefits mentioned by participants are more accuracy and consistency, in comparison with human labor. Consequently, several participants choose to integrate modern machinery into the traditional production process, indicating a balance.

“In my opinion, you are always still assembling it with your hands. Or customizing it. Or finishing it. So no, there will be steps that fall out. You will always need craftsmen to finally put it together or actually make it.” (Interview 1, Goed Houtwerk)

The above quote demonstrates, that the participant believes that modern machinery cannot substitute human labor completely. Furthermore, many participants expressed that the design and assembling of products, can only be performed by humans. Noteworthy, the use of modern

machinery is for most participants only possible by outsourcing to specialized partners, due to high investment costs of a modern machine. An exception is a participant who, unlike the others, owns a modern machine (Figure 8) besides traditional machines and tools.

“I think that otherwise you can no longer earn a living, I think it is a very large investment, but I think that every seven years you have to keep up with the new techniques. And a machine like that may cost a ton, the entry-level model costs a ton, but I think you have to keep up with new technology every seven years.” (Interview 5, Kloppenberg Meubelen – Jeroen)

The above quote shows that the participant believes that investing in a modern machine is necessary to create economic viability. Furthermore, the participant believes that the benefits of this modern machine are two-fold. On the one hand, production of the furniture can be executed more efficiently. On the other hand, other activities such as creating traditional designs and products, can be carried out while the modern machine is running. To elaborate, the participant indicates that traditional techniques (Figure 9), materials, machines are still needed in several products. Therefore, this participant maintains a traditional and modern product line, to meet the demand of both types of customers. In other words, a balance is observed since the participant segregates product lines.

Figure 8

The modern machine of Kloppenberg Meubelen



* The modern machine automatically carries out the production process based on a computer design, that results in separate product components that need to be assembled by the participant.

Figure 9

A handmade design by René Bruns Schrijnwerker



* In contrast to computer designs, René Bruns Schrijnwerker still makes all designs by hand in the traditional way.

Thus, the results of the process of craft show that beliefs, values and norms are divided between participants varying from participants that prioritize traditional machines and transform these, to participants that use traditional machines, and also integrate modern machines. Finally, all participants share the conviction that not all human input can be replaced by machines.

4.3 Product

A common value amongst participants is the association of craft with the ability to make everything.

“That you can make something out of nothing. That you always see possibilities, where other people say good enough, no, it can be even better, we will go a bit further.”
(Interview 4, Paul Meubelen)

The above quote reveals that the participant – also indicated by other participants – sees craft not only consistent with the ability to make everything, but also with the dedication to go beyond what is desired. All of the participants deploy this ability through customization, in which participants are responsible for converting a customer's idea into a tangible product. Consequently, each created product is different, and therefore also the techniques, materials, tools and machinery used. These differences require constant adapting of participants, in order to satisfy wishes and needs of customers.

“I think that is really cool. Because you broaden your own horizons in that way, and of course you always get a kick from trying something new and or you come across a problem that you think there are well-trodden paths to solving, but I do not think so myself, is there a better way?” (Interview 4, Paul Meubelen)

The above quote illustrates that customization appeals to the problem-solving capacity, but it also brings novelty with which participants are not yet familiar. Consequently, participants continuously improve and expand their knowledge and skills. Furthermore, customization challenges the participants to create alternative and non-obvious solutions.

“Some people have certain ideas that need to be customized somewhere, which is not for sale at the furniture boulevard and then they really have no choice, but to look for

someone who can make it. And then they come to me or one of my colleagues.”
(Interview 2, Mehan van den Akker Maatinterieur)

Above quote reveals that customers employ furniture makers for customization, when standard furniture does not meet the demand. Noteworthy, two divergent customization perspectives emerged, outlined in Table 3. The minority of participants argued that customization involves a one-way perspective that consists of the full realization of the wishes and needs of customers. In contrast, the majority of participants advocated a two-way perspective, in which the beliefs, norms and values of the participants are combined with the needs of the customer.

Table 3

Participants' perspectives on customization

One-way perspective	Two-way perspective
“Just make what the customer wants, think along. I also make things that I do not like at all. Yes, then I think. then there is this wardrobe and I think, nah, you do not want it in the house, then you put it there and then you think, yes, I can understand that they think it looks good here, but before that time you think: ‘where is this going, do we have to make this’. Yes, it is really how they want it, then that is how we do it.” (Interview 5, Kloppenberg Meubelen – Jeroen)	“I just want to work with, when I pour something in, a theme (...) milling out the head of William Alexander in a table and filling it with those pennies... And yes, he did not like that. And then we separated very nicely, I did not want to do what he wanted and he did not like what I did and that was fine. And then I prefer to do it that way, so I stick to that very strongly and that does not let me down, and then I prefer to have one occasion to sell no, but then I stick to my own core.” (Interview 3, Dokx)

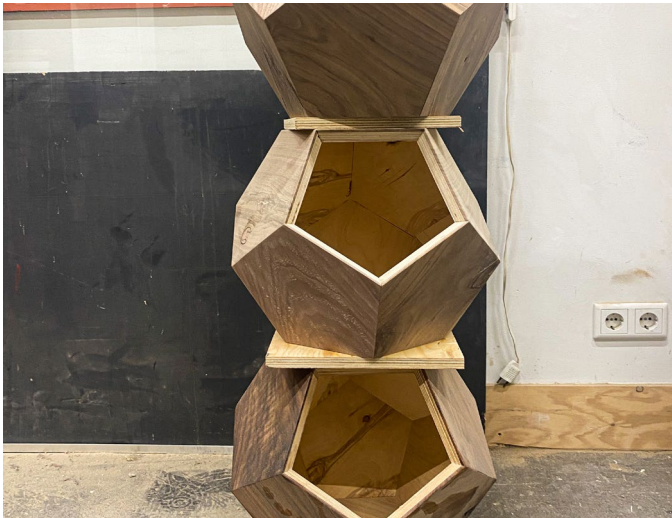
Above two-way perspective quote shows that the participant considers it important to express a personal style and design in products. Furthermore, a two-way perspective is based on an iconic style of participants that distinguish from other craftsmen. Accordingly, an iconic style attracts customers that prefer the same of products, which creates a distinctive portfolio.

“I have the webshop for the woodspeaker, cutting boards and the Cats Cradle. That actually runs all the time and projects next to it. I try to work project by project as much as possible.” (Interview 1, Goed Houtwerk)

Above quote shows, that the participant maintains a fixed range of products besides the offer of customization. In other words, this participant segregates traditional customization with a modern practice of creating iconic products (Figure 10), which another participant does with designs (Figure 11), resulting in a balance. Consequently, these participants differentiate themselves from other craftsmen, but can also standardize the process.

Figure 10

One of the iconic products of Goed Houtwerk



** This product is the Cats Cradle – a house for cats – which customers can order in the webshop of Goed Houtwerk.*

Figure 11

One of the iconic table designs of Dokx



** The location of Dokx is a workplace and showroom in one.*

The possibility of standardization became clearer during the participant observation at Goed Houtwerk (Field report 1), where three of the same products were ready for shipment to customers. Because these products can be made in advance, it is possible to respond better to production periods when the demand for customization is low. Above all, since the products are identical, the participant becomes faster and better in the process, which is less applicable to the process of customization. Finally, the results of the product of craft show that most participants prioritize customization and offer this in different ways, but there are also participants who balance customization with a fixed range of iconic products.

4.4 Collaboration

A recurring theme in the interviews was a need among participants to remain small as a business to ensure autonomy, enabling participants to carry out the production process independently. However, all participants recognize that a piece of furniture cannot be made completely

independently in all cases. Noteworthy, participants collaborate with craftsmen with different abilities, such as painting, upholstering, metal working, but also traders in wood or thrift stores.

“Really do that where your strength lies. And outsource the rest. Many of my partners or friends do not understand that and they say that this costs so much money and that costs a lot of money too, but this way I can do more of what I am good at and it will ultimately be more profitable. Everyone does what they like and what they are good at, then you achieve something very good together.” (Interview 3, Dokx)

Above quote reveals, that the participant considers it important to only use his personal strengths. This participant attaches great value to the abilities of others to compensate for personal weaknesses. Moreover, collaboration is for this participant and several other participants a means of achieving joint success, which cannot be achieved alone. In order to achieve this, participants consider it important to maintain long-term relationships with permanent partners.

“You just gather people around you with whom you can work pleasantly. Who are also reliable. Sometimes a new one joins in. That they do deliver quality, and that the install of things happens in the right way.” (Interview 8, Thijs Scharenberg = meubelmaker)

“I am very loyal to my partners because then you just, you also have a position with your partner when you put all the work there, otherwise you are just someone who comes every so often and then you just end up at the back of the line and if you just work together then your partner gives you more priority and also thinks along with you. And that is also built up over the years those partnerships, they are really built up to make beautiful things together.” (Interview 3, Dokx)

Above quotes show that participants invest in an established network, with partners who can work in a comfortable and reliable way. In other words, these participants prioritize tradition that is built through the preservation of long-standing relationships with partners, indicating an unbalance. Consequently, participants can easier implement innovations that create efficiency in the entire process. Noteworthy, several participants are located in a craft center in which they can interact with other craftsmen, which benefits the realization of collaboration.

“Sometimes things are really difficult, that I think poh.. I have never done this before, very nice to do, but never done before. So, then it is here internally to see who has the knowledge and expertise and then get them involved.” (Interview 1, Goed Houtwerk)

“And you pay that to the person who sprays and nine times out of ten he also gives a job back.” (Interview 1, Goed Houtwerk)

The above quotes show that the craft center where Goed Houtwerk is located (Figure 12), contributes to not only collaboration, but also to the preservation of craft through the transfer of knowledge and skills. Moreover, it increases profitability as the established craftsmen pass on orders to other craftsmen and share machines (Figure 13). Thus, the results of collaboration show that prioritizing of long-standing relationships with other craftsmen and related partners can improve efficiency, which is enhanced in a craft center.

Figure 12

The workplace of Goed Houtwerk in the craft center



* Craftsmen can rent a room within the craft center that they can use as a workplace.

Figure 13

The machine room within the craft center where Goed Houtwerk is located



* The machine room is shared with the other established craftsmen.

4.5 Imitation

A key component within craft is a master-apprentice learning relationship, characterized as a relationship in which the master teaches the apprentice to craft. Specifically, it can be seen as an imitation of the master's knowledge and skills by the apprentice.

“I had no education so to speak, I really learned and did it myself. I was able to take over a lot of knowledge and skills from this retired furniture maker and that really helped me a lot. And it is actually by doing that I have mastered this.” (Interview 1, Goed Houtwerk)

The above quote shows that the participant learned craft by observing and imitating from the master craftsmen, and by doing it himself, which is also shared by other participants. Moreover, the participants are eager to learn from craftsmen and are willing to pass on knowledge and expertise. However, participants hardly look to the practices and tools that unknown craftsmen are using, but do observe and contact known craftsmen.

“A friend of mine, (...) he makes a lot of decor pieces, a completely different profession, but I also see him and we exchange things like "I now have this product, hey this is cool or look at this I have seen in a movie, is that not cool for you" and then he says "I still have this and this is much easier, we have to do this like this or maybe you can also use this in your process, or I have this machine, or I have another sander, an edge sander, that works much better" and yes we exchange experiences with each other.” (Interview 3, Dokx)

The above quote reveals that with other craftsmen, problems are solved, experiences are exchanged, and ideas are shared with the goal of helping each other perform better, even if the profession is different. Furthermore, the participants consider it important that craft skills and knowledge are preserved.

“I do like it, and I also think it is important that it continues to exist or something like that, because the handy person is disappearing a bit because of all the things you can do with your computer. Yes, I think it is nice to pass it on to the new generation.” (Interview 8, Thijs Scharenberg = meubelmaker)

“I do have several people, furniture makers who have been with me "yes René how do you that actually, I would like to become a furniture maker, what do you have and how do you do that?", well fine come on, we will go into the workplace, we will look, what

are your ambitions, what would you like and then they will get to work and they will buy machines, more or less the same machines that I have and half a year later I am there in the workplace, yes wonderful!” (Interview 11, René Bruns Schrijnwerker)

As above quotes show, the participants not only want to preserve tradition, but also want to pass on their knowledge and skills to the future generation of craftsmen. Moreover, the most participants are actually passing on knowledge and skills to apprentices and this occurs in the workplaces – showed in Figure 14 and 15 – where all equipment is available.

Figure 14

The workplace of Meubelmakerij Kopshout



Figure 15

The workplace of Thijs Scharenberg = Meubelmaker



Thus, these results of imitation in craft show that beginning craftsmen receive knowledge and imitate skills from experienced craftsmen, and hereafter this is shared with other craftsmen.

4.6 Business model

Noteworthy, all participants indicated that human labor remains a traditional part of craftsmanship and that preservation for the present and the future is necessary, but notice that craft is threatened due to society trends. Participants indicate that craftsmen are scarce and young people are no longer likely to choose crafts and follow a craft education. Consequently, several participants searched for modern practices to create value with craft, with the goal of preserving craftsmanship. To illustrate, one of the participants – Dokx – creates value with a public workspace where crafts entrepreneurs can work with shared tools and machines and express ideas and knowledge. During the participant observation at Dokx (Field report 2) there

is observed that the public workspace consists of a workplace of the participant and two other workplaces.

“Right from the beginning, so there was a bicycle maker in there, that was a guy who did it from his shed. Then there was a double bass builder, he walked in here and he made electric double basses, he started in the general workshop with me and has now grown into his own space, so now he rents his own space and now (...) is in there and she restores old beverage trolleys and she also started from home and now she sells internationally all over the world.” (Interview 3, Dokx)

Above quote shows that Dokx wants to offer a springboard to beginning craftsmen to develop in craft, but also to grow their business. In addition to society trends, human labor in craft is also labeled by some participants as physically demanding that threatens the preservation of craftsmanship.

“I'm starting to notice that it's all getting a bit heavy. I'm already very long, I have back problems regularly, (...) so then we thought of what can we do to eventually stop this and still have an income, then we slowly start doing more home accessories, and sales through the website.” (Interview 9, Spant7)

“One day I am hired by a youth workplace, which is also here in Arnhem, and there are children from 8 to 32 years of age, and we make simple things with them, but in any case, we teach them tricks. That if they have ever been there, they don't need to call someone to hang a painting, because they can do that themselves.” (Interview 8, Thijs Scharenberg = meubelmaker)

“(...) the gentlemen always worked very hard, and the course was a reason they started to be a little less physically heavy and (...) the course was a good method for that, to still get an income, without doing heavy work. (...) we both have the idea that we would like to add some sort of social aspect to it, courses are of course a social event, eight people who love wood and are busy with it, but maybe also some walk-in of some sort of open workplace idea.” (Interview 10, Meubelmakerij Kopshout)

Above quotes show that participants – based on societal and physical considerations – have created other ways of value to preserve craft. Furthermore, these quotes reveal that participants segregate traditional furniture making and modern practices such as a public workspace, courses, webshop or supporting a youth workplace in the business model, indicating a balance. For example, Meubelmakerij Kopshout segregates furniture making and offering courses (Figure 16 and 17).

Figure 16

The course room of Meubelmakerij Kopshout

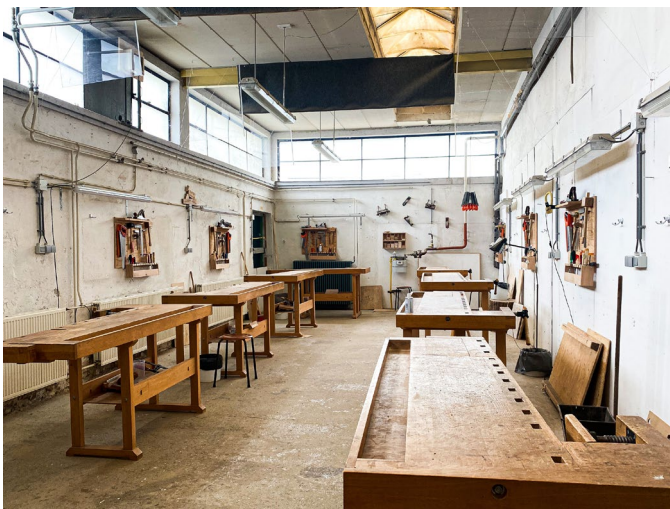


Figure 17

A quote on the wall in the course room of Meubelmakerij Kopshout



“Suppose there are ten people who make things, I also have to think ten times for them, how can you do that best and also design it ten times, so that is also a lot of moments in which I develop myself and stay busy, because every now and then there are also things of which I think God, I have never thought about how to get that done before, (...) that keeps you alive.” (Interview, 10 Meubelmakerij Kopshout)

The above quote shows that the participant not only benefits from the courses to preserve craft within society, but also for development of his own knowledge and skills. Thus, these results of the business model of craft show that the participants retain the traditional way of creating value, through other innovative forms of value creation to preserve tradition in the present and the future.

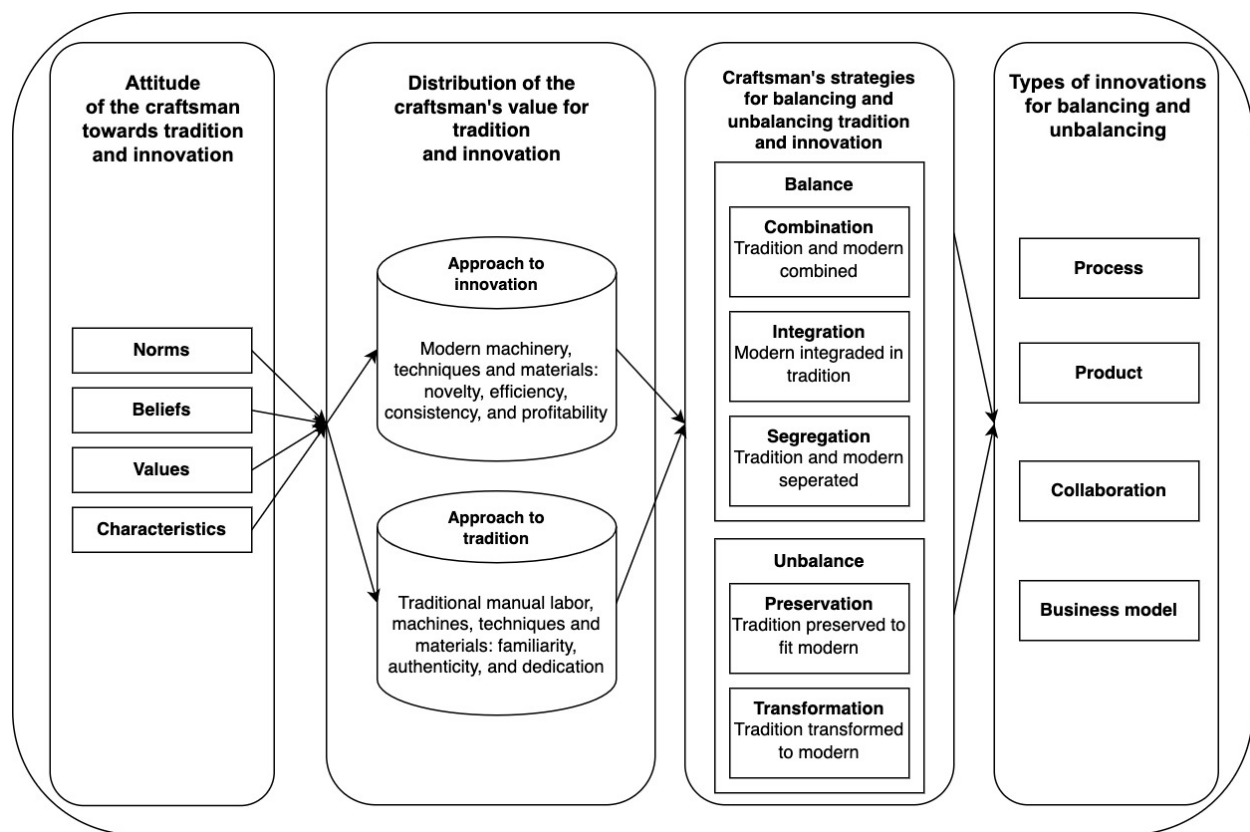
4.7 Conclusion

As described previously, each participant has own beliefs, norms, values, and personal characteristics that determine the path the participant follows. Moreover, this influences how

tradition – traditional practices – and innovation – modern practices – are balanced, and also unbalanced. Several participants also unbalance by giving priority to traditions that allow for innovations. Based on the empirical results of this study and outcomes of other studies (e.g. De Massis et al., 2016; Erdogan et al., 2020; Holmquist et al., 2019; Petruzzelli & Savino, 2015), a number of balance and unbalance strategies used by the participants were refined, and developed. These strategies and the related results are summarized in the visual model shown in Figure 18 below, as well as added in Appendix C.

Figure 18

Model about how craftsmen balance and unbalance tradition and innovation



Noteworthy, even the most traditional participant with an unbalance in the process, product, collaboration and imitation, has a certain focus on an innovative and modern way of working in the business model, indicating one balance strategy. Furthermore, it is observed that the participants apply multiple strategies to balance and unbalance tradition with several types of innovations. Overall, the results show that craftsmen are always looking for innovations in line with the path followed.

5. Discussion

This chapter starts with the interpretation of the results, after which the theoretical and practical implications are outlined. This is followed by the limitations. Finally, the critical reflection on the role of the researcher is described, after which the implications for future research are explained.

5.1 Interpretation of results

This study set out to answer the research question: ‘how do craftsmen balance tradition and innovation?’. The furniture making industry provided the ideal setting to test and refine a range of previously identified balance and unbalance strategies (e.g. De Massis et al., 2016; Erdogan et al., 2020; Holmquist et al., 2019; Petruzzelli & Savino, 2015) and built new insights in the field of craftsmanship. At first, this study found evidence to support that tradition as well as innovation are important components of craftsmanship. Each craftsman examined in this study values the preservation of traditional practices, but is also aware of the opportunities that modern practices offer to increase economic viability. This is consistent with the overall message of the emerging stream of tradition and innovation research, which emphasizes that tradition can be a resource for innovation (e.g. Cattani et al., 2017; Dacin et al., 2019). Furthermore, this study confirms that craftsman balance and unbalance between tradition and innovation, but contributes in a unique way to the scientific literature by dividing innovation into different types.

Similar to the studies by, among others, Petruzzelli and Savino (2015), this study suggest that craftsmen can balance and unbalance tradition with innovations in products, but extends this with process, collaboration (e.g. Damanpour & Gopalakrishnan, 2001; Das & Teng, 2000; Francis & Bessant, 2005; Utterback & Abernathy, 1975), and business model innovations. Furthermore, business model innovation unexpectedly turned out as important, as it was visible that craftsmen add value in other ways than solely through furniture making. Although imitation (Kim & Nelson, 2000) is confirmed as an important element in the preservation and transmission of craft, it proved less relevant in this study to determine how craftsmen balance this with tradition or not. Hence, this study suggests that craftsmen can balance and unbalance tradition with product, process, collaboration and business model innovation.

Several studies pointed out that tradition and innovation can be balanced through multiple strategies (e.g. Erdogan et al., 2020; Holmquist et al., 2019; Petruzzelli & Savino, 2015) and this study found evidence that craftsmen implement these as well. First, similar to the study of Erdogan et al. (2020), it is observed that craftsmen segregate traditional and modern product and process lines, indicated in this study as a clear break between the boundaries of tradition and innovation. Second, the results show that craftsmen combine traditional and modern materials and designs in processes to create products (e.g. Holmquist et al., 2019; Petruzzelli & Savino, 2015), recognized in this study as blurred boundaries between tradition and innovation. Third, craftsmen integrate modern machinery and techniques into traditional processes (Erdogan et al., 2020), indicated in this study as crossed boundaries of tradition and innovation. Hence, this study suggests that through balancing, craftsmen are able to both preserve tradition and realize innovations.

Although this study focused on how craftsmen balance between tradition and innovation, there is found that craftsmen also prioritize traditional over modern practices, referred to in this study as an unbalance. This is consistent with previous research that indicates that craftsmen are focused on the preservation of tradition (e.g. Adamson, 2007; Blundel & Smith, 2013; Stinchfield et al., 2013), what is consciously used as an unbalance strategy by craftsmen. To elaborate, craftsmen can reinforce the boundaries of tradition through preservation, resulting in the ability to work more innovatively. For example, craftsmen enter long-term relationships with partners, invest in fruitful collaborations, and are motivated to become familiar with the skills of their partners. By exploiting this relationships, new innovations in production processes and products can be applied more easily. However, it is observed that craftsmen also broaden the boundaries of tradition through the strategy of transforming. In other words, craftsmen transform the functionality of traditional machines and tools to suit new and more purposes. In summary, craftsmen can use tradition to realize innovations and this is consistent with several studies (Dacin et al., 2019; De Massis et al., 2016; Petruzzelli & Albino, 2012; Petruzzelli & Savino, 2015). Furthermore, this study found that through unbalance strategies craftsmen can realize similar outcomes as realized with the balancing strategies. Thus, this study suggests that with unbalance strategies, craftsmen can create innovations through the preservation of tradition.

Through balancing and unbalancing strategies craftsmen can embrace tensions caused by the moving boundaries between human – related to tradition and traditional practices – and

mechanization – related to innovation and modern practices – as pointed out by Kroezen et al. (2020). Although all of the strategies have different mechanisms, craftsmen can maintain traditional practices and the associated intrinsic values, such as familiarity, pursuing passion and authenticity. Simultaneously, craftsmen can achieve novelty, efficiency, consistency and greater profitability, which – according to the literature – seems contradictory with traditional practices, that are seen as more time-consuming (Bell et al., 2021). However, this study extends research with the suggestion that craftsmen can use balance and unbalance strategies to embrace these tensions, realizing the outcomes of both tradition and innovation.

Although this study does not directly address how certain beliefs, norms, values and personal characteristics shape behavior, the results suggest that they strongly influence how craftsmen balance and unbalance tradition and innovation. For example, one of the craftsmen applied an unbalance strategy within product, process, and collaboration with a high priority to maintenance and improvement of traditional practices, resulting in innovations. In contrast, this craftsman balanced traditional furniture making with a more modern practice, namely organizing courses for other craftsmen, in the business model. Moreover, this study indicates that craftsman can simultaneously balance and unbalance tradition and innovation with multiple strategies, which extends research that was more focused application of one strategy (Erdogan et al., 2020). However, it differs from craftsman to craftsman how balancing and unbalancing takes place, which is generally consistent with research, suggesting that each craftsman has an own personal style that distinguishes craftsmen in executing craft (e.g. Kroezen et al., 2020; Slavich & Castellucci, 2016). Thus, each craftsman examined in this study follows an own path that shapes how tradition and (which types of) innovation are balanced, and unbalanced.

Yet, the balance and unbalance strategies between tradition and the types of innovations should not be considered exhaustive by any means, given the limited number of observations from which these are derived. Rather, this study aims to characterize the empirical results merely as a starting point for future research to explore this further.

5.2 Theoretical implications

This study makes several theoretical implications. First, as described in the previous section, research about balancing in products (Petruzzelli & Savino, 2015) is extended with an unique contribution that craftsmen balance and unbalance between tradition and process, collaboration and business model innovation. Thus, this study extends theory about tradition and innovation

(e.g. De Massis et al., 2016; Erdogan et al., 2020; Holmquist et al., 2019; Petruzzelli & Savino, 2015), as well as innovation in general (e.g. Damanpour & Gopalakrishnan, 2001; Das & Teng, 2000; Francis & Bessant, 2005; Utterback & Abernathy, 1975), by relating it to craftsmanship.

Second, this study contributes to the academic debate of tradition as a constraint or resource for innovation (Dacin et al., 2019) and suggests that craftsmen use tradition as a resource. On the one hand, this study advanced understanding of the preservation of tradition through innovations, which is consistent with a number of studies (e.g. Cattani et al., 2017; Erdogan et al., 2020; Holmquist et al., 2019; Marques et al., 2019; Petruzzelli & Savino, 2015). On the other hand, there is observed that the preservation of traditions can realize innovations (De Massis et al., 2016; Erdogan et al., 2020). Thus, this study indicates that tradition can be a resource for innovation in several ways.

Third, this study contributes to institutional theory with an expanded understanding of how an institutionalized practice as tradition is enhanced and eroded (e.g. Dacin & Dacin, 2008; Scott, 2008), by society as well as craftsmen themselves. Within society there are deeply rooted institutions (Scott, 2008), and this is also observed in this study. For example, offering customization and master-apprentice learning of craft have traditionally been demanded by society. Consequently, society asks for stability of crafts, also encouraging craftsmen to be similar. However, this study showed that craft is changing through the implementation of innovations by craftsmen. Moreover, it is observed that craftsmen simultaneously can maintain similarity by enhancing tradition and realize differentiation of other craftsmen with changing and innovating. Thus, this study contributes to institutional theory (e.g. Dacin & Dacin; Scott, 2008) by providing insights into the mechanisms to enhance and erode tradition with changes, without losing legitimacy and stimulating differentiation. Finally, this study contributes at a more detailed level of how individual craftsmen balance tradition and innovation, which was overlooked by studies on the organizational level (e.g. Cattani et al., 2017; Erdogan et al., 2020).

5.3 Practical implications

This study has a number of interesting practical implications. Craftsmen may see traditional practices and modern practices as opposites rather than harmonizers. This study shows that both traditional and modern practices can complement each other in a positive way, and gives craftsmen various insights on how this is possible. Moreover, this study wants to encourage craftsmen to investigate what is most suitable for themselves, but also what enhances the

preservation of craft in general. An implication to realize this, is related to the upcoming crafts centers. Locating in a craft center offers advantages to craftsmen in order to achieve joint benefits, but still maintain the desired independence. Moreover, it facilitates knowledge transfer, investment in machinery, and collaborations, resulting in harmonization of traditional and modern practices. Another implication is that craftsmen can distinguish themselves more by making craft more visible. Craftsmen can realize this through, for example, offering unique products, locating workplaces more central for customers, (potential) craft students and other (starting) craftsmen, and investing in online presence with the result to develop and preserve craft. However, what is most important and also appeared in this study is that every craftsman has its own beliefs, norms, and values. This study encourages craftsmen to stay close to this identity. Nevertheless, this study demonstrates that innovations can also be realized by the preservation of tradition, which offers craftsmen sufficient opportunities to maintain and develop craft in the present and the future.

5.4 Limitations

Similar to all research, this study suffers from a number of limitations. First, the degree to which the findings of this study are generalizable across other craftsmen and type of crafts is constrained. This study was limited to eleven craftsmen, primary located in the West and East of the Netherlands. Although the craftsmen belong to the same industry and have a similar size, the craftsmen varied by date of founding, and educational and demographic backgrounds. Furthermore, the generalizability of these findings is limited by the choice of the industry. This industry was chosen, because of the expected visibility of the shifting boundaries between human labor and machines. Although this choice generated homogeneity, the results may be less applicable to crafts characterized by low-tech manufacturing.

Second, the study was limited due the broad meaning of innovation, including a wide range of different types of innovations which is interpreted differently by the examined craftsmen in this study. Moreover, innovation seems to happen more unconsciously than consciously for craftsmen, since the search for improvements and renewals is intertwined with the personal nature of most craftsmen. As a result, it was harder to obtain substantive results about the types of innovations that craftsmen perform. Third, a limitation related to the interpretive paradigm and subjectivity of this study is recognized. Due to the subjective nature of the research and the research done by one researcher, the chance of biases and heuristics with tunnel visions is increased (Creswell, 2014). Although triangulation is applied, the validity and accuracy of the

results can be affected by the subjective nature. Last, it became clear that a tour in the workplace of the craftsmen was more valuable for understanding craft, tradition, and innovation, than through observing craftsmen performing craft. Moreover, this facilitated the researcher to realize a perspective from the craftsman's eyes and to better interpret results. Thus, a limitation was prevented by framing the participant observations differently, which led to a more valuable collection of results.

5.5 Reflection on the role of the researcher

Since this study was done by one researcher, interim reflections were part of the research process. During the research preparation, the researcher tried to position the study in relation with the relevant literature. From start, the researcher experienced difficulties in creation of a clear conceptualization of both tradition and innovation, linked to craftsmanship. Furthermore, the researcher focused more on conforming to scientific standards, rather than combining this with her personal style and preferences of analyzing and writing. Therefore, during the collection of the empirical findings, several texts were revisited, rewritten and more specified according to the scientific standards and relevant literature, as well as the researchers' personal style. However, there are still areas for improvement to be more concise and to the point. Yet, the researcher has made sure to position the research scientifically and simultaneously remain close to herself.

The researcher has an enthusiastic, but self-aware character that mirrors herself to the person in front of her to create and preserve a pleasant atmosphere. On top of this, the researcher adopted a friendly, open and assertive attitude towards the research participants. Assertiveness was showed by a focus on asking questions relevant to answering the research question. However, it was a challenge in certain cases to ask relevant questions without steering participants towards an answer. Through interim reflections, the researcher quickly became aware of this challenge and tried to adjust her behavior. The personal interest in craftsmanship and enthusiasm of the researcher contributed to gaining depth during the data collection, but also resulted in complex thinking, and too extensive descriptions that needed to be adjusted. Furthermore, the researcher experienced difficulties with making choices, and this was mainly reinforced by the perfectionism of the researcher. Therefore, the researcher made a wide-ranging planning with sufficient time to accommodate overruns and adhered to it. Moreover, on certain occasions the researcher took a break from writing the study report, sought variety in writing and other tasks, and consulted regularly with other study-peers in order to get thoughts straight and interpret in

a proper way. Above all, the researcher gained more insight into personal strengths and areas for improvement, as well as accomplished professional development in academic research.

5.6 Implications for future research

While this study contributes in several ways, future research is needed for substantiation. First, it would be interesting to explore how personal beliefs, norms and values form the identity of craftsmen, as this seems the base on which tradition rests and innovation constitutes. Moreover, future research can focus on whether craftsmen also transfer beliefs, norms and values to other craftsmen in the master-apprentice relationship, similar to what is done with knowledge and skills. For this to be done, researchers could use an identity theory lens with a focus on imprinting to observe how the identity of craftsmen is formed and transferred. Second, longitudinal research in the form of ethnographic research can support a deeper exploration of tradition and innovation in craftsmanship. Ethnographic research may be appropriate, since innovation seems to be part of the personality of craftsmen, and therefore not easily recognizable or explainable. Consequently, the researcher can become more part (Myers, 2020) of the lifeworld of craftsmen, through interactions with craftsmen themselves. Furthermore, insights that are more difficult to gain through one-off interviews and observations can be better discovered and explored with ethnographic research. Yet, this study suggests that craftsmen balance and unbalance tradition with multiple types of innovation and further validation is required. Above all, this study raises important questions about which other types of innovations craftsmen use, and future research can explore this.

Third, it is recommended that future research focuses on the relative impact of business growth on tradition and innovation in craftsmanship, because the results of this study are based on craftsmen who want to keep the business small. Therefore, it is interesting to study craftsmen who aspire to grow the business and how this effects tradition and innovation, but craftsmanship as well, and how this differs with craftsmen that want to keep the business small. Finally, this study focused on one type of craft namely furniture making in the Netherlands. Future research on this industry with sample criterion – different countries, date of founding and educational background – could be useful to not only to avoid research biases, but also to determine the consistency of the observed patterns. Moreover, this study was only able to investigate craftsmen and therefore encourages future research to include craftswomen to observe similarities and differences.

6. Conclusion

This study focused on the research question of how craftsmen balance between tradition and innovation. This has been carried out by applying a qualitative research strategy with semi-structured interviews and participant observations that were conducted in the craft furniture making industry. All of the empirical evidence and relevant theory were integrated through an abductive analysis, which resulted in new conceptual insights and refinement of existing ones. Based on the relevant results, this study concludes that both tradition and innovation are important elements of craftsmanship. Craftsmen want to preserve tradition, but implementing innovation is also observed as part of the craftsman's identity. In line with this, this study specifies that craftsmen realize product, process, collaboration, and business model innovations. Moreover, this study concludes that craftsmen simultaneously can preserve tradition and implement innovations by balancing as well as unbalancing strategies. On the one hand, craftsmen can balance through strategies as segregation, integration and combination of tradition and innovation. On the other hand, a balance is not always necessary, as craftsman can also unbalance with preservation and transformation of tradition to achieve innovation. Finally, this study concludes that every craftsman can choose one or more strategies of balancing and unbalancing tradition with one or more types of innovations, encouraging craftsmen to explore and craft their own paths. Nevertheless, in order to create a better understanding and foundation of the results, more research needs to be performed on this topic.

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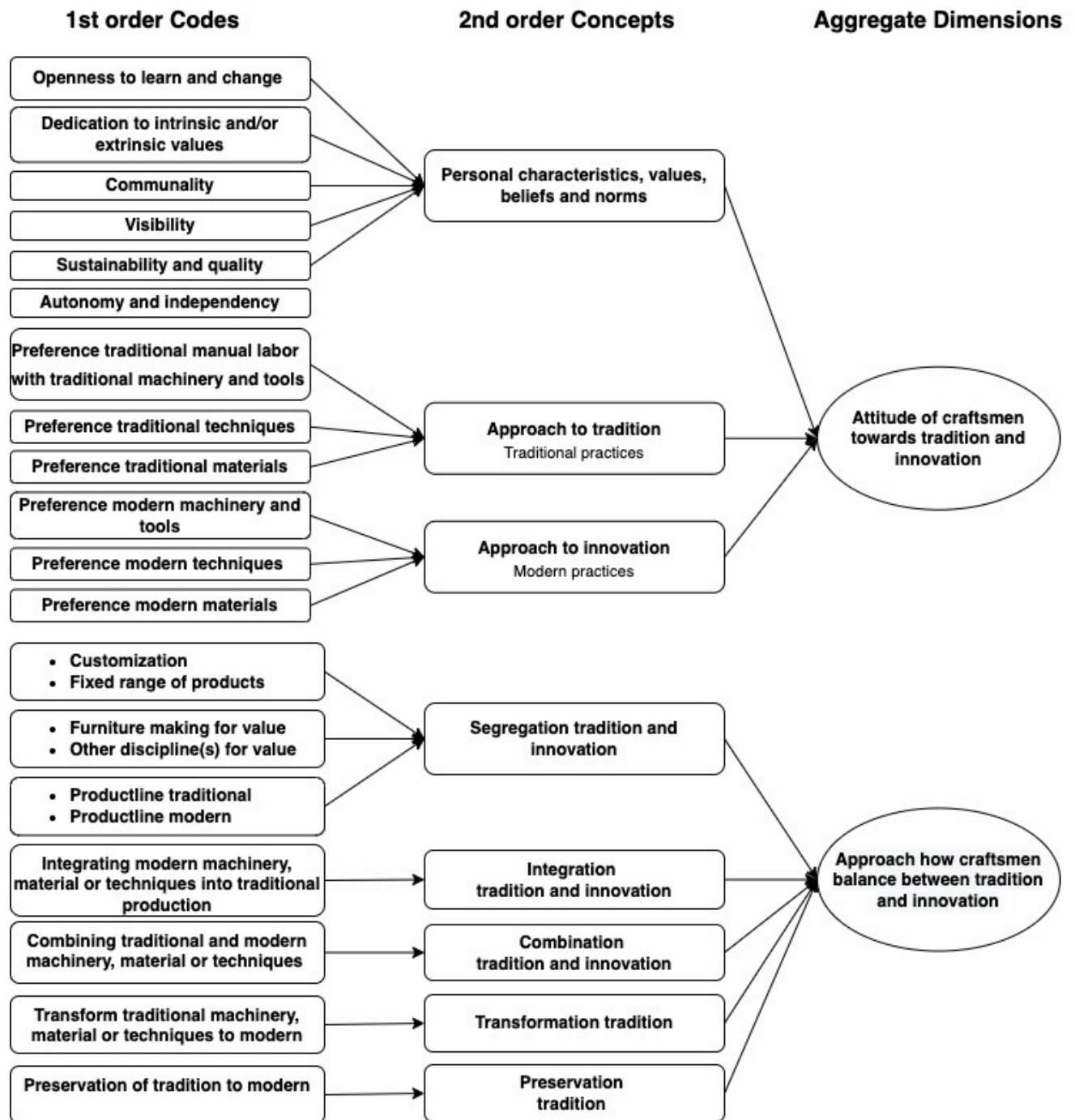
Appendices

Appendix A – Interview protocol

Inleiding interview
Hallo, mijn naam is Seline Sletterink en ik volg de master Strategisch Management aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. Ter afronding van deze opleiding ben ik momenteel mijn afstudeeronderzoek aan het uitvoeren en vakmanschap staat hierin centraal. Binnen het afstudeeronderzoek houd ik met meerdere meubelmakers interviews, die in het teken staan van hoe vakmanschap en traditie behouden blijft, maar tegelijkertijd ook over hoe vakmanschap verandert en innoveert. Daarvoor heb ik een aantal open vragen voorbereid, waarover we binnen dit interview in gesprek gaan. Op basis van deze vragen verwacht ik dat het interview ongeveer een uur gaat duren. Alles wat u zegt, wordt tijdens dit interview en gedurende het verwerken vertrouwelijk behandeld. Uw antwoorden op de vragen worden ga ik na het interview uitwerken en verwacht ik binnen twee tot drie weken afgerond te hebben. Na afronding zal ik de uitwerking via mail met u delen en indien u dit wenst, kunt u dan de resultaten controleren en waar nodig aanpassingen doorgeven, waarna ik dit zal verwerken. Om uw antwoorden op de vragen van dit interview beter te kunnen werken, wil ik graag een audio-opname maken. Bent u ermee akkoord dat ik een audio-opname maak? Om binnen mijn onderzoeksrapport meer beeld en uitleg te geven bij de door mij meegenomen meubelmakerijen, wil ik graag de bedrijfsnaam en beschrijving van uw meubelmakerij gebruiken en dit verwerken in de resultaten van de interview en de observatie. Dit is geen vereiste en u kan ook kiezen om anoniem te blijven, wat betekent dat ik uw naam, bedrijfsnaam en andere verwijfbare informatie ga anonimiseren in de uitwerking van de resultaten. Waar gaat uw voorkeur naar uit? Mocht u een vraag gedurende het interview niet begrijpen, even moeten nadenken of de vraag niet willen beantwoorden, dan is dat geen enkel probleem. Geef het dan vooral aan en dan geef ik meer toelichting en tijd, of sla ik de vraag over. Heeft u op voorhand vragen?

Kern interview	
Algemene vragen	1. Kunt u zichzelf voorstellen? 2. Hoe zou u een werkdag omschrijven? 3. Hoe lang bent u al meubelmaker? 4. Hoe vindt u het om meubelmaker te zijn?
Werkcontext	5. Hoe lang bestaat uw bedrijf al? 6. Waarom bent u een eigen bedrijf gestart? 7. Hoe vindt u het om een eigen bedrijf te hebben? 8. Hoe zou u de sector omschrijven waarin u opereert? 9. Hoe kijkt u tegen grotere meubelmakers aan?
Vakmanschap	10. Hoe zou u vakmanschap omschrijven? 11. Vindt u het belangrijk dat vakmanschap behouden blijft binnen uw bedrijf en de sector? 12. Welke veranderingen heeft u doorgevoerd binnen uw bedrijf sinds de start? 13. Hoe denkt u dat de sector veranderd is over tien jaar?
Afsluiting interview	
We zijn aan het eind gekomen van het interview. Zoals ik al heb vermeld, deel ik de resultaten binnen twee tot drie weken met u, waarna u wijzigingen of aanpassingen kan doorvoeren. Binnen het onderzoeksrapport wil ik graag foto's toevoegen van de werkplaatsen. Bent u ermee akkoord dat ik een aantal foto's binnen uw werkplaats maak en deze verwerk in mijn onderzoeksrapport? De gemaakte foto's zal ik tevens sturen met de resultaten van het interview voor een check. Heeft u op dit moment nog vragen of opmerkingen? Indien later u nog vragen te binnen schieten, mail of bel mij dan gerust. Voor nu, hartelijk dank voor uw tijd en medewerking!	

Appendix B – Data structure



Appendix C – Model

