

The Use of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Creating Cultural Creative Touristic Destinations

Field of Study : Anthropology, Arts and Culture, Economics, Sociology

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KEYWORDS

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH); creative tourism; creative cultural touristic destination; cultural capitalization; co-creation in tourism.

ABSTRACT

Historically, tourism sector was based mainly on various tangible assets. In the recent years, the tangible elements of tourism are more and more combined with experiences, as elements of the touristic demand; as a consequence, tourists became part of the co-creation process in the touristic experience – “the creative turn of tourism”.

Cultural tourism made not exception from this trend; moreover, the new paradigm of “cultural tourism” seems to become the result of a synergy between cultural heritage and the specific experience of the tourist. Therefore, developing cultural creative touristic destinations needs a multidimensional and integrated approach and, finally, a comprehensive strategy of the policy-makers.

The Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) represents a very generous source of creativity; therefore, it could become a defining element of differentiation, a tool used by the authorities as economic and social driver for the local development, and, also, an important provider of innovation, growth and a job generator.

Despite the fact that some attempts of culture-related indicators tried to assess and to harmonize culture’s contribution at national and international level, there is a lack of information about the possible contribution of ICH at the creative cultural tourism in terms of innovation, competitiveness or sustainability.

The present research proposal focuses on the contribution that ICH might have in the process of co-creation specific to creative tourism, as well as on developing new tools to monitor and to assess the contribution of ICH in the touristic destination’s development.

Research aims and methodology

The aim of this research proposal is to examine the way that Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) can be used for developing creative cultural touristic destinations with a focus on the development of creative activities and on the tourists involvement in the product creation (co-creation). To achieve the research aim, the following objectives are proposed:

- Assuring a theoretical framework regarding the main concepts related to the research theme;
- Analyzing specific situations and aspects about ICH and its role in tourism in some particular cases;
- Analyzing the institutional support for creative industries;
- Analyzing the stage of development for creative and cultural tourism;
- Identifying possible variables to be used for an empirical measurement method for assessing the ICH contribution to the touristic development;
- Providing a system of composite indicators for assessing the role of ICH for the touristic destination and for the way that it could be used in the co-creation of the cultural touristic destinations.

To achieve the research aim and objectives, the following research design is proposed:

1. In depth literature review considering ICH, creative tourism, cultural sustainability, cultural capitalization, culture-related indicators, concepts related to experiential marketing, etc – with the purpose of creating a theoretical frame regarding the cultural tourism, the role of experience in tourism, the culture-related indicators and the role of ICH in developing creative tourist destinations.

2. Secondary data research - a succession of case studies, content analysis and secondary data analysis – with the purpose of indentifying the actual state of the creative tourism, with a focus on the specific elements of ICH and, at the same time, with a focus on the experentials elements that contribute to the development of creative tourism.

3. Primary data research:

- a qualitative research – with the purpose of identifying the main variables that might be used to assess the role of ICH in developing cultural creative touristic destinations from the involved parts (policy makers, local authorities representatives, representatives of tourism accomodation and tourism associations, experts in tourism, etc)
- a quantitative research – with the purpose of measuring the impact of ICH in developing cultural creative touristic destinations.

Relevance and added-value of the proposed research in relation to the current state of knowledge

The relevance of the research proposal is given by the following:

1. **theoretical relevance** – as it assess the current state of knowledge regarding a series of new concepts - creative industries, cultural touristic destination, cultural capitalization, co-creation - and, in addition, as it integrates them in a new paradigm, with the purpose of creating a very specific theoretical framework related to creative cultural tourism;
2. **theoretically-applicative relevance** – since it analyzes the way that the considered concepts are already found and applied in practice in certain tourist destinations and the evaluation of the way in these aspects contributes to increasing the competitiveness of the tourist destination, with a special focus on the role of ICH and on the co-creation process;
3. **practical relevance** – it will provide a series of conclusions, as results of two planned research, as it follows:



- expected outcomes of the qualitative research – identifying the role of ICH in creating creative cultural touristic destinations; identifying the specific elements of co-creation in creative tourism, as parts of designing the touristic products; providing insights of ICH-related tourism development (product, prices, placement, promotion, people, conservation, etc)
- expected outcomes of the quantitative research – measuring the degree that ICH contributes to creative cultural tourism development; assessing the role of tourists in co-creation and experience; measuring the effect of using intangible heritage elements contribution in tourism, etc.

The main added-value will be assured by proposing a scientific deliverable which consists in providing a system of activities and descriptors which will lead to the construction of an indicator with the help of which ICH's contribution to the development of cultural tourism can be evaluated.

Through the research conclusions and the proposed scientific deliverable this proposal can contribute to the enhancement and dissemination of cultural heritage, as stakeholders from tourism and, also, policy-makers and local/regional authorities will be able to use the outcomes and the deliverables as tools for improving the cultural touristic destination development.

Interdisciplinary nature of the research together with the alignment with the CHORAL programme and complementarity expertise of the teams

The proposed plan will have an interdisciplinary character, since it approaches the issue of the development of creative cultural tourism not only from the perspective of specific elements of tourism (the economy of the tourist destination, the tourist product, the distribution and promotion of the tourist product), but, also, from the perspective of cultural anthropology (analyses on local culture, archaeology, folklore, oral traditions, ethnography, linguistics, etc.), sociology (communities and related issues, etc.) and arts.

Output plan including publication and dissemination activities

The research plan considers all the elements needed for achieving the proposed aim and objectives. In this sense, the following outputs are taken into consideration:

1. scientific reports – according to an individual research plan, the PhD student will have to elaborate 3 scientific reports:
 - a. an overview on the ICH and its role in the development of touristic destinations (Scientific report 1)
 - b. a conceptual approach on the new trends in cultural tourism (Scientific report 2)
 - c. an analysis regarding the international experiences of using intangible heritage in creative industries (Scientific report 3)
2. qualitative research report – including the aim, the objectives, methodology, data collection, data analysis, results and discussions, and the research conclusions
3. quantitative research report – including the aim, the objectives, methodology, data collection, data analysis, results and discussions, and the research conclusions
4. scientific deliverable – providing a system of activities and descriptors that might be used in assessing the use of ICH in creating cultural creative touristic destinations
5. PhD thesis – including all the mentioned aspects and the original contribution

During the PhD school, the PhD student will publish – individually and as a member of research teams - a series of articles in indexed journals (data bases indexed journals and Clarivate journals) and, also, he/she will attend international conferences, in order to assure the dissemination of results and activities.



Estimated schedule

The proposed plan offers the possibility to achieve all the scientific research goals, by following the next steps:

Output	Target value	Due date
Scientific report 1	1	June 2026
Scientific report 2	1	October 2026
Scientific report 3	1	December 2026
Qualitative research report	1	April 2027
Quantitative research report	1	July 2027
Scientific deliverable	1	December 2027
PhD thesis	1	July 2028
Articles published in data base indexed journal	3	June 2026, December 2026, June 2027
Articles published in Clarivate journals	2	December 2028, June 2029
Participation to international conferences	5	June 2027, June 2028, June 2029