

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES VALUATION USING A TOPSIS – BASED DECISION SUPPORT ALGORITHM

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Abstract. *The main goal of the paper is the creative activities valuation using a TOPSIS based decision support algorithm. As defined by Cutler & Carmichael (2010) tourist experience remains in memory, preceded by motivations and expectations and result in satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The creative tourism is not well developed in the Slovak Republic yet, and there is no theoretical evidence what kind of creative tourism activities the tourists are most interested in. As the results show, tourists very strongly prefer creative tourism activities connected to education. The results also show that tourists do not connect creative activities with tourist destinations, which should result in a more involved supply side in the future, with the support of the local economy and sustainability, including the crafts, art and local culture.*

Key words: *creative tourism, tourism, tourism development, competitiveness TOPSIS*

JEL Classification: L83, Z32, Z19

1. INTRODUCTION

Products and services are no longer enough to generate economic prosperity. Therefore, “organizations use the experience as a management tool for differentiation” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Experiences are “subjective, highly personal and intangible phenomena” (Billing & O'Dell, 2010), hence, difficult to define and to grasp their essence. The tourist

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experience “remains in the memory, preceded by motivations and expectations, and results in satisfaction or dissatisfaction” (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010).

The research of Coelho et al. (2018) shows, that “the experiences seem to arouse a set of emotions and not just an isolated one. Furthermore, memorable experiences have resulted primarily in positive emotions, to the inward (reward, freedom) or outward (joy, happiness, enthusiasm, liveliness)”. Figure 1 illustrates the kind of emotions arising from memorable tourism experiences.

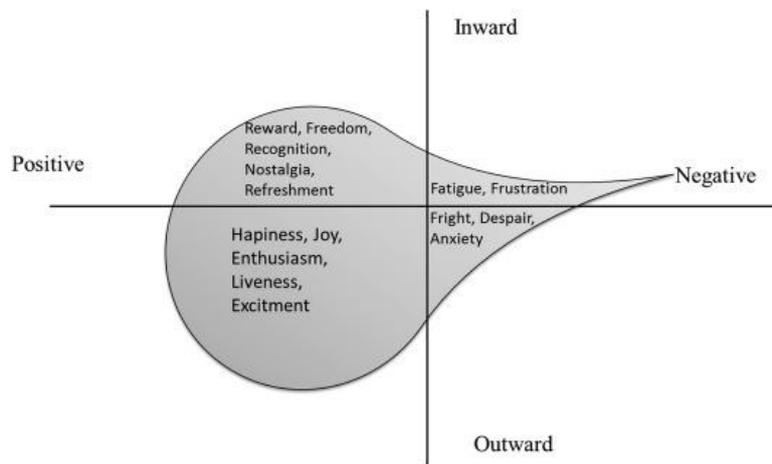


Fig. 1 Representation of the types of emotions of Memorable Travel Experiences

Source: Coelho et al. 2018

Tan et al (2013) consider experience as “a process that tourists need to go through to achieve creativity”. They integrate six categories of experiences into four themes: ‘consciousness/awareness’, ‘creativity’, ‘needs’, and ‘learning and interacting’, as shown in Figure 2. “The first three are named ‘inner reflection’s as the reflexive process happens to the inner-self; and the final theme is named ‘outer interactions, because tourists are interacting with outside factors, such as the environment, people, and product/service/experience. In addition, ‘consciousness/awareness’ is a prerequisite of creative experience, and the tourists must have a sense of this (whether individual, social, cultural or environmental)” in order to have a creative experience, as this differentiates these from other experiences. The findings show that ‘outer interactions’ and ‘inner reflections’ together construct the model of ‘creative experience’.

This is consistent with the view that ‘self-actualization, learning, creativity, and needs operate in a synergistic cycle’ (Burlinson, 2005), as well as Hanifl’s idea that people are creating, designing, selecting and reflecting upon their creative experiences (2015).

In order to understand the origins of creative tourism, one needs “first to look at the rise of culture as a form of tourism consumption” (Richards, 2013; Carvalho et al., 2019; Csapó 2012). The characteristics of tourism’s current consumption demonstrate that it has increasingly acquired a diverse, multidimensional and (micro) segmented character,

corresponding to broader use of culture (Jelincic, 2009). “Understanding the role of creativity in the tourism industry, and how it contributes to creative experiences, is both challenging and complex. Creativity can be seen in multiple dimensions: everyday creativity, artistic creativity, and intellectual creativity” (Ivcevic & Mayer, 2009).

Tourists stand to benefit from stretching their capabilities and learning new skills, possibilities which work pressures in the home environment often leave little time for. People increasingly feel a need to distinguish themselves in a homogenized world and are becoming more curious about the relative process (Richards & Raymond 2000).

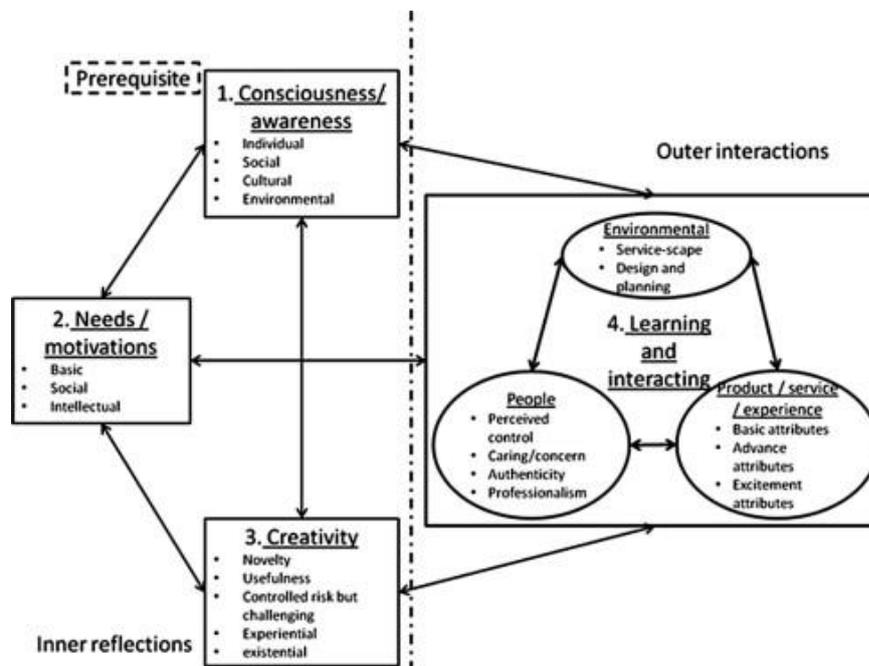


Fig. 2 A model of creative experience

Source: Tan et al. 2013

Creative tourism stands for the acquisition of certain skills during holidays, which becomes a part of the culture and community of a target country. UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network (2006) understands “creative tourism as travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place” in connection with residents. “Tourists develop their creative potential and become closer to the local community through informal participation in interactive seminars and acquisition of experience” (Raymond, 2007). “Creative tourism is a trip directly oriented towards participation and acquisition of authentic experience, gaining certain knowledge in the field of arts, heritage and particular kind of locations where immediate communication with the local community is possible, which would allow creating a ‘live’ culture” (Maisel, 2009).

“Creative tourism can be seen in numerous situations where visitors, service providers, and the local community exchange ideas and skills and influence each other in a synergetic way. In this sense, creative tourism can be (Richards & Marques 2012):

- a means of involving tourists in the creative life of the destination,
- a creative means of using existing resources,
- a means of strengthening identity and distinctiveness,
- a form of self-expression/discovery,
- a form of edutainment –self-realization and education,
- a source of „atmosphere” for places,
- a source of recreating and reviving places.”

Even though creativity is seen as the base of creative tourism, the creative factors of creative tourism systems remain unexplored. Furthermore, the current definitions of creative tourism are all supply-led, such as by tourism boards, service providers, and various industry practitioners, without considering the tourists’ viewpoint although tourists are seen as co-creators of the experiences.

As Kaufman & Baer (2012) ask, who decides what is creative? However, according to Tan et al. (2013) all creativity assessments are “expert-based, and may not be applicable for ordinary people, especially the research studies often examine artistic creative dimensions that are unreachable by lay people, such as tourists, who just want to enjoy something that is original or authentic in common life settings and related interactions.”

Nature of creative supply is synergetic and it lies in the offer of creative activities by “locals” (service providers, creative communities) through which visitors can develop their creative potential and locals can improve their position on the market place (Hrubalova & Palencikova, 2017).

“Although tourists are playing active roles in co-creating their experiences while on vacation, industry practitioners still take the lead when it comes to designing and providing such activities” (Raymond, 2007), with few studies considering what tourists actually want in this context. For example, Maitland (2008) studies the roles of tourists and residents in creative cities, while Maisel (2009) acknowledges that many tourists desire experiences that are small, intimate and on a human scale.

The original concept of Richards & Raymonds creative tourism (2000) with an emphasis on creative learning through attending courses and workshops while on holiday has shifted to the current concept of co-creation as co-makers between the visitors and the locals, to “living like local” experience integrating all aspects of tourist consumption at creative places/destinations (Palencikova, 2018).

There is a need for more analysis of creative tourism in the Slovak Republic, which draws on the tourists perspective, especially with regard to what kind of activities do tourists prefer and consequently, which of the activities will they go for. The paper also explores the assumption of Maisel (2009) that creative activity should be directly oriented towards authentic experience, knowledge connected with the location/region and the local community.

2. METHODOLOGY

The scope of the research was to evaluate the interest of Slovak tourists for creative tourism activities, to identify their selection criteria, using a TOPSIS based algorithm. A

questionnaire has been applied as the data collection instrument. Data from respondents were collected during the spring season 2019 (from January to May) in various tourist regions in Slovakia. The direct inquiry was carried out on a sample of 315 respondents from all the regions of the Slovak Republic, aged 15-75. The respondents were to mark the category (specification) connected with creative tourism activity related to importance. (Table 3).

TOPSIS is a bipolar comparison of each alternative under consideration with both the positive ideal (PIS) and the negative ideal (NIS) solutions. The distances to these two solutions are calculated for each alternative and then the aggregated criterion is built that combines these two factors and describes the quality of each alternative, assuming that the chosen alternative should have the shortest distance to the ideal solution and the farthest distance to the negative ideal one (Wachowicz, 2011).

In order to calculate the weights for the different criteria, the AHP (Analytic Hierarchy Process), introduced by Thomas Saaty (1996) has been applied. In this AHP, the pairwise comparison matrix A is built. The matrix A is an $m \times m$ real matrix, where m is the number of evaluation criteria considered. Relative importance between two criteria are measured according to a numerical scale from 1 to 9. (Table 1)

The pairwise comparison was evaluated according to our survey (inquiry) results. The direct inquiry was carried out on a sample of 315 respondents from the Slovak Republic, aged 15-75 from all the regions of the Slovak Republic. The respondents were to mark the category (specification) connected with creative tourism activity related to importance. (Table 3).

Table 1 AHP criteria evaluation

Value S_{ij}	Interpretation
1	i and j are equally important
3	i is slightly more important than j
5	i is more important than j
7	i is strongly more important than j
9	i is absolutely more important than j

Source: Authors

Each entry S_{ij} of the matrix A represents the importance of the i -th criterion relative to the j -th criterion. If $S_{ij} > 1$, then the i -th criterion is more important than the j -th, where $S_{ii} = 1$, $i = 1, 2, 3 \dots, k$ and $S_{ji} = 1/S_{ij}$.

Finally, the criteria weight vector v_i (that is an m -dimensional column vector) is built in three partial steps. (1) – (3),

$$S_i = \prod_{j=1}^k S_{ij} \quad (1)$$

where k in number of criteria, S_{ij} – is criteria,

$$R_i = (S_i)^{1/k} \quad (2)$$

$$v_i = \frac{R_i}{\sum_{i=1}^k R_i} \quad (3)$$

where, $j = 1, 2, \dots, k$.

The TOPSIS algorithm consists of six subsequent steps:

1. Building the normalized decision matrix $R=(r_{ij})$,

$$r_{i,j} = \frac{y_{ij}}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^k y_{ij}^2}} \quad (4)$$

where $i = 1,2,3\dots k, j = 1,2,3\dots k$.

2. Computing the weighted normalized decision matrix. Each j -th column of R matrix multiply by v_j weight and calculate weighted normalized decision matrix W .
3. Determining the positive ideal H_j and negative ideal D_j solutions, where $H_j = \max w_{ij}$, $j = 1,2,3\dots, k$ and $D_j = \min w_{ij}, j = 1,2,3\dots, k$.
4. Calculating the separation measures (distance) for each alternative i and the best condition d_i^+ and distance from the target alternative i to the worst condition. d_i^- , the Euclidean distance is used:

$$d_i^+ = \sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^k |w_{ij} - H_j|^2}, \text{ for } i = 1, 2, \dots, k \quad (5)$$

$$d_i^- = \sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^k |w_{ij} - D_j|^2}, \text{ for } i = 1, 2, \dots, k \quad (6)$$

5. Determining the relative closeness of each alternative to the ideal solution:

$$c_i = \frac{d_i^-}{d_i^+ - d_i^-}, \text{ for } i = 1, 2, \dots, k \quad (7)$$

6. Ranking the alternatives in descending order using c_i .

3. RESULTS

This section presents a numerical case study of creative tourism activities classification in the Slovak Republic to demonstrate the proposed creative activity selection algorithm.

Activities related to creative tourism in the Slovak Republic were divided into several categories. The main categories are events, courses, and workshops. The more detailed specification of activities is described in Table 2.

Table 2 Creative tourism activities

Category	Activity
Events with the theme of traditional crafts and folk art	a ₁
Courses of traditional crafts and folk art	a ₂
Gastronomic events with the theme of cooking local dishes and meals	a ₃
Cooking courses of cooking local dishes and meals	a ₄
Events associated with demonstrations of authentic folklore	a ₅
Scenic Art Courses	a ₆
Visual Art Courses	a ₇
Workshops designed for children	a ₈
Courses of recycling and production of organic products (Eco-friendly products)	a ₉

Source: Authors

In order to compare selected activities, it is necessary to identify the criteria (Table 3), most characterizing the creative tourism activities. As described in the methodology, in contemplation of calculating the weights for the different criteria, the analytic hierarchy process with pairwise comparison was applied. In criteria evaluating, the results of the survey (more described in the methodology) were taken into account. Conforming to research (inquiry) results, respondents strongly favored creative tourism activity connected to education. Based on the results, the creative tourism activity should be funny and relaxing, authentic, unique and challenging. Destination, respectively linking to a particular location is not a key factor in the choice of creative tourism activity for respondents.

Table 3 Creative tourism activity selection criteria

Criterion description	Criterion name	Category	Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate, ▪ learn to unfold skills and techniques, ▪ acquire or develop new skills. 	EDUCATION	K ₁	Very strongly preferred
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be funny 	FUN AND RELAXATION	K ₂	Strongly preferred
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Referring to the location, ▪ a better understanding of the local culture, ▪ become closer to the local community. 	LINKED TO DESTINATION	K ₃	Weakly preferred
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be unique and extraordinary, ▪ enable to get an authentic experience. 	AUTHENTIC AND UNIQUE	K ₄	Strongly preferred
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Challenging and unusual. 	CHALLENGE	K ₅	Strongly preferred

Source: Authors

In the next step, the pairwise comparison matrix was built (Table 4). Relative importance between two criteria was measured according to a numerical scale from 1 to 9 and according to survey results. Each criterion was evaluated according to survey results (methodology).

Table 4 Pairwise comparison of creative tourism activities

Criterion	K ₁	K ₂	K ₃	K ₄	K ₅	S _i	R _i	v _i
K ₁	1	9	9	9	9	6.561	5.78	0.60
K ₂	0.111	1	3	5	3	4.995	1.38	0.15
K ₃	0.111	1	1	7	1	0.777	0.95	0.10
K ₄	0.111	1	1	1	3	0.333	0.80	0.08
K ₅	0.111	1	1	1	1	0.111	0.64	0.07
Σ							9.55	1

Source: Authors

Results of a pairwise comparison evaluated according to survey results present value v_i in a column of Table 4. Conforming to (Table 3) and the v_i weights, the greatest weight is the education creative tourism activity, resp. creative tourism activity is linked with education (in survey very strongly preferred as well), subsequently the funny and relaxation activities, authentic and unique activities and challenging activities (in survey results strongly preferred). These activities are approximately of the same weight v_i (Table 4).

Weighted normalized decision matrix W is presented in Table 5. Table 5 presents the ideal H_j solutions, which present the highest values of each criterion and D_j solutions, which present the lowest values of each criterion. The resulting values c_i are shown in Table 6.

Table 5 Weighted normalized decision matrix W

Activity	K_1	K_2	K_3	K_4	K_5
a_1	0	0.061	0	0.046	0
a_2	0.245	0.061	0.05	0	0.029
a_3	0	0	0	0.046	0
a_4	0.245	0.061	0	0	0.029
a_5	0	0.061	0.05	0.046	0
a_6	0.245	0	0	0	0.029
a_7	0.245	0.061	0.05	0	0.029
a_8	0.245	0.061	0	0	0.029
a_9	0.245	0	0.05	0	0.029
v_i	0.60	0.15	0.10	0.08	0.07
H_j	0.245	0.061	0.05	0.08	0.029
D_j	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Authors

Table 6 Relative closeness of each alternative to the ideal solution

Activity	d_{i+}	d_{i-}	c_i
a_1	0.795	0.077	0.088
a_2	0.077	0.259	0.771
a_3	0.797	0.045	0.053
a_4	0.089	0.257	0.743
a_5	0.793	0.089	0.101
a_6	0.114	0.247	0.684
a_7	0.077	0.259	0.771
a_8	0.095	0.253	0.727
a_9	0.100	0.251	0.715

Source: Authors

Multi-criterion analysis using the TOPSIS method, evaluate five criteria. These criteria were ranked according to the TOPSIS method (Table 7). The best ranked creative tourism activities are courses, then events and least attractive events.

Table 7 Tourism creative activities results

Ranking	Activity	Activity description	c_i
1.	a_2, a_7	Courses of traditional crafts and folk art Visual Art Courses	0.771
2.	a_4	Cooking courses of cooking local dishes and meals	0.743
3.	a_8	Workshops designed for children	0.727
4.	a_9	Courses of recycling and production of organic products (Eco-friendly products)	0.715
5.	a_6	Scenic Art Courses	0.684
6.	a_5	Events associated with demonstrations of authentic folklore	0.101
7.	a_1	Events with the theme of traditional crafts and folk art	0.088
8.	a_3	Gastronomic events with the theme of cooking local dishes and meals	0.053

Source: Authors

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The paper evaluates selected creative tourism activities in the Slovak Republic using TOPSIS methodology considering evaluation criteria. These creative tourism activities were evaluated according to the realized survey, where respondents figured out the most important criteria, which met the requirement of creative tourism activity.

The research results show that creative tourism activities should be primarily educational. Strongly important for respondents are activities that are funny, relaxing, authentic and unique and challenging. Respondents did not confirm the need to link creative tourism activities to a destination.

These results confirm the importance of support to creative tourism activities that are linked to education, for example courses of traditional crafts and folk art, unconventional cooking courses, scenic art courses and visual art courses (Table 7) in the Slovak Republic. To the contrary, creative tourism activities should “allow tourists to learn more about the local skills, expertise, traditions and unique qualities of the places they visit” (Richards & Wilson, 2006), so it is a challenge for the supply side (in Slovak destinations) to provide courses connected with local culture, heritage and local people and improve local development through creative tourism’s development opportunities.

Table 8 evaluates the creative tourism activities in relation to the theoretical background more described in the introduction. Activities targeting different kinds of courses also meet the conditions (Tan et al. 2013) of creative experiences as consciousness, motivation, creativity, and learning.

Table 8 Creative tourism activities evaluation in relation to the theory

Activity	Tourism Experience	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooking courses of cooking local dishes and meals ▪ Workshops designed for children ▪ Courses of recycling and production of organic products (Eco-friendly products) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reward ▪ Refreshment ▪ Happiness ▪ Liveness ▪ Enthusiasm ▪ Liveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involving tourists in the creative life ▪ Means of strengthening identity and distinctiveness ▪ Form of edutainment ▪ Source of recreating and reviving the domestic culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scenic Art Courses ▪ Visual Art Courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Freedom ▪ Nostalgia ▪ Enthusiasm ▪ Excitement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involving tourists in the creative life ▪ Form of self-expression/discovery ▪ Form of edutainment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Events associated with demonstrations of authentic folklore (folk art) ▪ Gastronomic events with the theme of cooking local dishes and meals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognition ▪ Refreshment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creative means of using existing resources ▪ Means of strengthening identity and distinctiveness ▪ A source of „atmosphere for the place“ ▪ Source of recreating and reviving the domestic culture

Source: Authors

The global tourism market has been experiencing immense changes in the last decade, mainly due to the globalization and technological advances both in terms of demand and supply. Changes are creating a lot of new opportunities as well as challenges for all tourism stakeholders (Palencikova, 2018).

By knowing which activities attract tourists the most, tourists can maximize their creative experience by searching for what they want from the range of creative tourism experiences on offer. The paper also describes the key elements that can increase the level of creativity in the creative experience process, and the most important criteria for the demand side that creative activities should fulfill. Since there are relatively few studies examining these issues in the Slovak Republic, the current research aims to address these gaps in the current literature.

In order to understand the origins of creative tourism demand, in the Slovak Republic we looked at the tourism consumption. Creative tourism is not largely expanded in the Slovak Republic. There is a good tourism development in the Slovak Republic, but edification, resp. propagation of creative tourism must be improved; both in terms of demand (information dissemination) and supply (information dissemination, activities that attract tourists) as well. As research shows, to ensure the competitiveness of the Slovak Republic in the creative tourism market on the supply side, the Slovak creative tourism industry needs to focus mainly on courses and workshops (courses of traditional crafts and folk art, visual art courses, cooking courses of cooking local dishes and meals) and not focus only on events. Tourists tend to benefit from learning new skills; the activities of the creative tourism should be directly oriented towards authentic experience, knowledge dissemination, connected with the local community, but not necessarily connected with location or destination.

In the future research, authors will focus on concrete courses, workshops, and activities that attract and interest tourists in concrete tourist regions. Future research on creative tourism development should also involve opinions of destination management organizations, that represent the "orgware" of creative tourism supply and in-depth interviews with their managers. Furthermore, understanding the preferences of creative tourists and specifics of creative supply in various tourist regions within Slovakia may serve to achieve greater acceptance of creative tourism as a new form of tourism development in Slovakia and include creative tourism in tourism development strategies in the near future.

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EVALUACIJA KREATIVNIH AKTIVNOSTI NA OSNOVU TOPSIS- ZASNOVANOG ALGORITMA ZA PODRŠKU ODLUKAMA

Glavni cilj ovog rada je evaluacija kreativnih aktivnosti uz pomoć algoritma za podršku odlukama zasnovanom na TOPIS metodi. Kao što su Cutler & Carmichael (2010) definisali, turistička iskustva ostaju u sećanjima, prethode im motivacija i očekivanja a rezultiraju u zadovoljstvu ili nezadovoljstvu. Kreativni turizam još uvek nije dovoljno razvijen u Republici Slovačkoj, i nema teoretskih dokaza za vrstu aktivnosti u kreativnom turizmu za koje bi turisti bili najzainteresovaniji. Kako rezultati pokazuju, turisti preferiraju one aktivnosti kreativnog turizma koje su povezane sa obrazovanjem. Rezultati takođe pokazuju da turisti ne povezuju kreativne aktivnosti sa turističkim destinacijama, što bi trebalo da rezultira u boljoj ponudi u budućnosti, uz podršku lokalne ekomonije i održivosti, uključujući zanatstvo, umetnost i lokalnu kulturu.

Ključne reči: kreativni turizam, turistički razvoj, konkurentnost, TOPSIS