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Creative Tourism Destination Competitiveness: An Integrative Model and Agenda for Future Research

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Abstract

Creative tourism has been approached from several points of view: products and processes, enabling elements, marketing, sustainability, etc. However, to our best knowledge, there is no integrative model that brings together all its dimensions and enables the 'birds' eye' perspective of the creative destination competitiveness. As such, this article aims to present a model of competitiveness of a creative tourism destination. The model presents four essential dimensions: core elements (products and processes, travelers and entrepreneurs), enablers (community engagement and stakeholders competences), creative atmosphere as the binding element, and developers (marketing and communication). Avenues for future research are presented based on the identification of areas to expand existing knowledge on creative tourism research, mainly by proposing measurement instruments which may contribute to operationalize the proposed model.

Creative tourism; Destination Competitiveness; Creative Entrepreneur; Creative Atmosphere; Destination Management

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Keywords

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1. INTRODUCTION

This research has as its central theme the competitiveness of a creative tourist destination. The theme of creative tourism has been the subject of intense research over the past two decades (e.g. Bruin and Jelinc, 2016; Richards and Wilson, 2006). The discussion involves various topics such as creative tourists (Ali, Ryu, and Hussain, 2016; Tan, Kung, and Luh, 2012; Tan, Tan, and Luh, 2015), the atmosphere (Maitland, 2010; Santagata and Bertacchini, 2011), creative entrepreneurs (Komppula, 2014; Mottiar, 2007; Richards, 2011), destination marketing (Dias-sardinha, Ross, and Gomes, 2018), the role of public entities (Clare, 2012) or the creative product itself (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009; Drake, 2003).

We argue that all these factors are essential for a given place to become a creative tourism destination. In this vein, consolidating each factor is essential to strengthen the competitiveness of the creative tourist destination. It's a snowball effect where better (not necessarily more)

creative tourists will attract more creative entrepreneurs and vice versa. Furthermore, the inherent encounters add experiential value for tourists and increase the creation of knowledge about users (Sørensen and Jensen, 2015). At the same time, given the specificity of tourists and entrepreneurs, the destination must be properly promoted and developed around a vibrant atmosphere.

The subject of tourism destination competitiveness has been widely discussed at the academic (Abreu-novais, Ruhanen, and Arcodia, 2016; Haugland, 2011; Hong, 2016) and practitioner levels (e.g. World Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index). However, in the research on creative tourism destinations, the concept of competitiveness is scarcely included in either the titles or keywords of articles. Simultaneously, research on creative tourism is fragmented lacking the interconnection between the different perspectives. As such, the study of the competitiveness of a creative tourist destination requires an approach with an integrative model. Creative tourists are attracted to certain destinations because there are experiences in which they can participate and co-create, within an atmosphere that enhances a production-led cultural context (Richards and Wilson, 2007).

The existence of creative tourists makes the destination also attractive for entrepreneurs. It is a virtuous cycle. However, in the context of creative tourism, the continued growth of this cycle is not necessarily a positive thing. Destination and creative entrepreneurs are not suited to receive masses of tourists, who would cause a loss of competitive differentiation and would dilute the very concept of lifestyle entrepreneurship (Marchant and Mottiar, 2011; Mottiar, 2007) in something unnatural and less experiential.

This means that DMO must take into consideration specific strategies for the promotion of a creative destination, seeking to achieve a balance between the number of tourists who allow, on the one hand, the sustainability of creative businesses and entrepreneurs, many of them integrated in small businesses or even working on their own (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2000). On the other hand, the marketing activities must take into consideration the sensitivity to avoid the massification of the destination (Maitland, 2010). Eventually DMO must combine their strategies with self-marketing made by lifestyle entrepreneurs (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2006).

The negative effect of excess tourism is also a very sensitive issue for the communities in which creative tourist destinations operate. The role of the community is essential, and the existence of consensus in the community regarding the projects for the creation or development of creative tourism is essential for its success (Dias-sardinha et al., 2018; Dias et al., 2018).

Within this framework, the proposal of an integrative model of creative tourism requires the articulation of several actors, specifically: the tourists, the entrepreneurs, the atmosphere, the DMO and the community. As such, the main objectives for this article are: (i) to identify the Comentado [WU1]: Do you mean overtourism?

competitiveness factors of a creative tourism destination; (ii) to establish an integrative model for the competitiveness of a creative tourism destination. This article expands existing knowledge about creative tourism by integrating into a single model the diverse dimensions contributing to a more attractive and sustainable creative destination. It also introduces the topic of destination competitiveness in the context of creative tourism, establishing a framework for future research in this field, and supporting decision-making in destination management and policy making.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Creative tourism has been developing rapidly since the 2000s. It reflects the growing desire of tourists to enhance their own creative potential but also the need for entrepreneurs, cities and creative regions to profile themselves in an increasingly competitive global market (Richards and Wilson, 2007). Furthermore, creative tourism has become a source of differentiation as cultural heritage was transformed into commoditized experience modules (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009). Culture turned into a mass consumption phenomenon in many destinations, and creativity occupied a central role in the transformation of traditional cultural tourism into creative tourism (P. Remoaldo and Cadima-Ribeiro, 2019), specially by creating new tourism products that enhance the destination experience (Ross, Saxena, Correia, and Deutz, 2017b). Furthermore, the idealization of the product also changed. The modification implied an shift from discrete products with clearly marked boundaries to more diffused ones (Lampel and Germain, 2016) enhancing the role of the tourist co-creation (Sørensen and Jensen, 2015).

However, destinations must address several challenges, by trying to embrace creative tourism as a strategy to overcome the congestion and trivialization of tourism experiences brought by cultural tourism massification model (Paula Remoaldo, 2019), in a context where space is a cultural production-led (Richards and Wilson, 2006).

The first challenge is attracting creative entrepreneurs or developers. Culture has become an important form to promote the destination uniqueness (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009). Creative tourism is related to a shared learning-by-doing experience embracing a range of experiential learning activities (De Bruin and Jelincic, 2016). Furthermore, this interactive engagement creative tourism (Dias-sardinha et al., 2018) involves the promotion of local culture and authentic experiences (P. Remoaldo and Cadima-Ribeiro, 2019) "only attainable if the 'lecturers' in charge of conducting the creative activities are local people and are able to perform creative activities imbedded in the local/regional culture and heritage" (p. 87). The authenticity of the experiences is associated in the literature with daily life (Maitland, 2010) blurring the boundaries between producers and consumers (Lampel and Germain, 2016). In summary the

Comentado [WU2]: You need a discussion of competitiveness frameworks as asll

inherent challenge is how to promote equilibrium between the attraction factors of creative entrepreneurs or developers to a specific place (e.g. way of life, money, local development) and the offering of experiences with the before-mentioned characteristics. On this context, the first research question results as follows: what are the creative developers' attraction factors to a specific location?

The second challenge is related to a binding factor: the creative atmosphere. Creative entrepreneurs contribute to a creative, vibrant atmosphere (Richards and Wilson, 2006) a core argument in the appeal of a specific location life (Maitland, 2010) to attract more mainstream tourists (Richards, 2011). Furthermore, creative atmosphere represents the network structure of local systems of cultural production (Maitland, 2010), a key ingredient for tourism destination competitiveness. However, defining the creative atmosphere of a place may be difficult and not be very helpful in attracting visitors and entrepreneurs to the location (Richards, 2011).

Marketing a creative destination is the third challenge. Despite the recognition of the importance of creative tourism, several territories fail to position themselves in the industry (P. Remoaldo and Cadima-Ribeiro, 2019). Developing place marketing strategies based on themes and narratives (Richards and Wilson, 2006) where tourists and entrepreneurs participate in cocreating the tourism experience (Dias-sardinha et al., 2018) is a difficult task. From the moment areas are advertised as undiscovered they are likely to attract many visitors and loose much of their interest for certain visitors (Maitland, 2010). Furthermore, creative entrepreneurs, deeply involved with what they do that blurs the boundary between work and leisure (Richards and Wilson, 2006), are generally not interested in masses of tourists. This also poses a challenge for tourism marketers and destination marketing office (DMO) who must find new and subtler ways to attract potential visitors attention of these places (Maitland, 2010).

The fourth challenge is the acceptance of creative tourism projects and initiatives by the community and other stakeholders. In many cases, the development of creative project is dependent of the involvement of other entities, usually external to the community (government, banks, ONG's) (Dias, Patuleia, and Dutschke, 2018).

2.1. The Core Components

Figure 1 presents the actors designated as core components. These various dimensions are developed in the following sections. Within the presented growing development of creative tourism, the theme has been the subject of extensive academic research, with the concept now being more blurred (Ross et al., 2017b). On this vein, creative tourism is recognized not as a coherent 'niche', but instead a series of creative practices linking production, consumption and place (De Bruin and Jelincic, 2016; Stamboulis and Skayannis, 2003). Creativity in the context

of creative tourism embeds the relationship with the cultural and human elements of a particular place (Richards and Wilson, 2007).

2.1.1. The link to place

The link to a place plays an important role on entrepreneurial performance (Hallak, Brown, and Lindsay, 2012). Tourism experiences consist on a combination of the local natural or cultural heritage, narratives and stories and the tourist's active participation or co-creation, all associated with the place as a distinctive factor (Anderson, 2012). Creative entrepreneurs benefit from being embedded locally (Bredvold & Skålén, 2016), facilitating the access to local culture by merely living and spending time locally (Valtonen, 2009). The link to place also foster the community involvement (Sofield, Guia, and Specht, 2017), allowing the access to endogenous knowledge (Richards, 2011), which is tacit and difficult to imitate (Hoarau, 2014), thus a source of competitiveness (Bosworth and Farrell, 2011). As such, according to this approach, creative tourism destination competitiveness is based on differentiated experiences supported by the cultural environment of a specific place (Tan et al., 2015). Meaningful places has a high potential for person attachment (Lewicka, 2011), where "creative workers subjective, personal or emotional response to place will affect how they may use the attributes of that place for aesthetic inspiration, and that response will be molded by individual identities, perceptions and beliefs" (Drake, 2003, p. 512). The cultural characteristics of the destination represent the basis for destinations to develop their creative tourism activities (Tan et al., 2015). Moreover, the place identity was found to have positive implications in entrepreneurs' self-efficacy and on community support (Hallak et al., 2012). On this context, the place appears to be the basis for the development of both product and providers, as well a tourist attraction factor.

2.1.2. The creative tourism product and processes

Besides place, creativity is also linked to persons, processes and products (Kahl, Hermes da Fonseca, and Witte, 2009). By emphasizing the importance of the experience, the concept of the product has also changed, as the idea of a product with clearly defined boundaries has become blurred in the context of creative experiences (Lampel and Germain, 2016). On the other hand, the traditional dimensions of destination competitiveness are part of the model where dimensions people friendliness or local hospitality facilities are important for tourists (Zhang and Xie, 2018). Together with things, artifacts, and physical conditions they propitiate a close relationship with individuals in the creativity process and creative experience (Tanggaard, 2012). Vargo and Lusch (2008) referred to these tangible resources as *operand*. Since factors like vernacular heritage, service quality, and participatory experience are important components of creative tourism experiences (Zhang and Xie, 2018), tourist satisfaction of tourism destination benefit when intangible tourism resources become tangible (Park, Choi, and Lee, 2019).

Creative tourism also benefit from *operant* resources (Vargo and Lusch, 2008) which can be skills, expectations, creative potential and prior knowledge either brought to co-created experiences by tourists and entrepreneurs or providers (Ross, Saxena, Correia, and Deutz, 2017a). Furthermore, by adopting a constructivist approach that emphasizes the tourist participatory process, tourists' and providers' experience can transform operand or tangible assets on operant resources (Ross et al., 2017a). The distinction between content and context is one of strategic importance. As stated by Stamboulis and Skayannis (2003) "(e)xperience has always existed in destinations. It was considered however as context rather than content. It was taken for granted - a by-product - rather than innovated (created and developed)" (p. 39).

According to the context exposed in this section, creative tourism product is deeply related to the tourist's learning experience (De Bruin and Jelincic, 2016), implying that there is no separation between tourist and host, tourism spaces and other spaces (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009). The combination of operand and operant factors facilitates the development of more genuine and differentiated experiences associated to the place (Richards, 2011), allowing entrepreneurs aligning their offering to a growing tourist segment searching for place-related experiences (Arias & Cruz, 2018). By incorporating local features, the experiences are unique and constitute the basis of competitiveness of small-scale businesses when compared to large companies' solutions (Mottiar, 2007). As such, knowledge associated to the place and tourism resources constitute a basis of global competitiveness (Guercini & Ceccarelli, 2020).

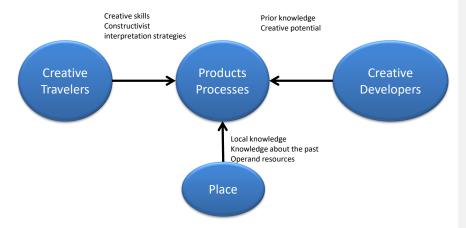


Figure 1. The core components

2.1.3. The creative travelers

Within the creative tourism field, the research referring to tourists is one of the most representatives, covering several issues. Among the several topics studied some authors proposed a taxonomy of creative tourist (Tan, Luh, and Kung, 2014). Other analyzed the several dimensions contributing to the creative experience such as the active tourist participation (De Bruin and Jelincic, 2016), the interactions with the local context (Tan et al., 2015), or more integrative model of the experiences (Tan et al., 2012).

The motivations, intentions and other cognitive processes were also examined. Specifically topics covered the motivations and perceptions of authenticity (Park et al., 2019; Zhang and Xie, 2018), preferences (Ting and Lin, 2015), memories, satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Ali et al., 2016).

The creative tourist pertain to a specific niche, characterized by selecting their agenda, their capacity for engagement and interaction with destinations, skilled consumption and search for a narrative (Richards and Wilson, 2006). Tourists became aware that creativity could be used as a way of self-expression (P. Remoaldo and Cadima-Ribeiro, 2019). Furthermore the relationship they develop suggests new patterns of consumption (Lampel and Germain, 2016), where tourists play a central role in the experience networks (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009). As a result the tourist's learning experience becomes a central characteristic of creative tourist (De Bruin and Jelincic, 2016).

With these participatory activities, the term co-creation is inextricably linked to experiences of creative tourism (Ross et al., 2017b). Co-creation exists when firms or providers work in close cooperation with experienced consumers and their intellectual capital (Romero and Molina, 2011). The co-creation concept gained momentum as a result of the service-dominant logic in other research fields (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). In the tourism field the co-creation results from participative experiences allowing the tourist to develop their creative potential by contacting local people (Richards, 2011). The experience co-creation is the key in distinguishing creative tourism from mass cultural tourism (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009). Moreover, co-creation permits the tourist to experience a locals' lifestyle in a specific creative atmosphere (Richards and Marques, 2012) and act as a marker of authenticity (Maitland, 2010).

The impact on destination competitiveness of co-creation activities is determinant. First, because all the players acquire valuable knowledge about the tourist perspective (Sørensen and Jensen, 2015). Second, it allows a spiral of value creation (Lampel and Germain, 2016) increasing innovation and customer satisfaction (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004).

2.1.4. The creative entrepreneur

From the supply side, creative tourism entrepreneurs "are mostly operated by creative people, such as artists and lifestyle entrepreneurs and, therefore, the concepts and the development of creative tourism are always seen from the supply-led perspective" (Tan et al., 2015, p. 982). As such, the provider becomes a facilitator empowering the tourist self-development by allowing a more participative experience (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009; Ross et al., 2017a).

Like tourists, creative entrepreneurs are also a specific kind of professionals that enjoy being creative and making a living from their hobby, for whom tourism is understood as a source of income (Richards and Wilson, 2006). They are also named lifestyle entrepreneurs (Marchant and Mottiar, 2011), not necessarily acting for money (Komppula, 2004) being 'economically precarious but emotionally autonomous' (Lampel and Germain, 2016). As such, for them the most important motives were the interesting and challenging character of the industry, independence and freedom of entrepreneur and coming across a good opportunity (Komppula, 2014). Furthermore, they are recognized by the contribution to the destination sustainability (Shrivastava and Kennelly, 2013).

This kind of entrepreneurs are essential to a creative destination development, acting as triggers of change, encouraging the participation of other actors (Koh and Hatten, 2002; Ryan, Mottiar, and Quinn, 2012). Therefore, creative tourism can be understood as a form of networked tourism, dependent on the value creation relationships between providers and consumers (Richards and Marques, 2012). Entrepreneurs, firms and tourists participate in co-creating the tourism experience (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009). Moreover, the degree of cooperation with other firms and the entrepreneur networks in which they participate represent an important source of competitive advantage for small firms (Mottiar, 2007). On the cooperation field, previous research included third parties importance on the development of creative tourism projects (Dias et al., 2018).

The link to place is an important issue to explore to understand the competitiveness of a creative tourism destination. Creative tourism providers are expected not only to guide tourists, but also participate in crafting imaginative travel experiences (Ross et al., 2017b). Since entrepreneur performance was found to be linked to the place identity of tourism entrepreneur (Hallak et al., 2012), it is important to study the factors contributing to attract homegrown or adopted innovators which contribute to a place creative and vibrant atmosphere (Richards and Wilson, 2006). Specially because lifestyle entrepreneurs are considered to be scarce resources income (Lampel and Germain, 2016; Richards and Wilson, 2006).

In summary, this sections alerts to the importance of studying the entrepreneurs' attraction and retention factors of a given place. Koh and Hatten (2002) suggested two strategies to increase the levels of local tourism entrepreneurship: (i) increase the number of tourism entrepreneurs and (ii) create a conducive tourism investment environment.

2.2. The Enablers

In addition to the core factors, the literature suggests the existence of other factors that strengthen its effect on competitiveness. Figure 2 shows these three factors: community support, atmosphere and competences development. They are detailed in the following sections.

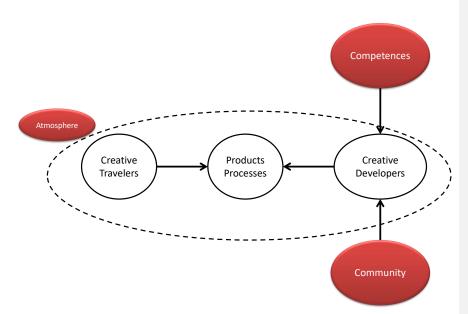


Figure 2. The enablers

2.2.1. The community

Creative tourism is linked to the place and the community (Hallak et al., 2012; Sofield et al., 2017). It benefit from the local community lifestyles, sensibilities and thematic associations (Drake, 2003).

But creative tourism destinations were also found to be developing instruments in the context of rural communities with few resources and without a clear view of the path to follow to generate profit from creativity associated with local resources and practices (Dias et al., 2018). For this reason, it is defended the importance of the participation of host community in tourism development projects planning, which should include the sharing of benefits, the type and scale of tourism development in their localities, is at the core of participatory tourism (De Bruin and Jelincic, 2016). The community support is found to be linked to place identity (Hallak et al., 2012).

From a different perspective, the places become a result of a co-creation process, acquiring new and differentiated meanings, both for service providers, local communities and visitors (Richards and Marques, 2012). The community feeds creative tourism products with imaginations and emotions by integrating different groups or subcultures within the local population (Drake, 2003). As such, the community can enhance the product (or a service), including product design, marketing communication and creating the overall brand experience (Romero and Molina, 2011).

According to this context, the local community can act as an activator of creativity and innovation, increasing the propensity of people to invest in their cognitive skills and knowledge (Santagata and Bertacchini, 2011). Moreover, the effect is expected to be both sided, since creative processes promoted the articulation of place attachment and memory making among both visitors and residents (Duxbury, Silva, and Vinagre de Castro, 2018).

In summary, the community seems to play an important role in the development of the core elements of the proposed model. The cooperation with tourists and other stakeholders are key issues in place-making in context of local communities (Dias et al., 2018; Sofield et al., 2017).

2.2.2. The atmosphere

The place need life, needs an atmosphere that binds the place, the tourists and the entrepreneurs in an attractive environment. The atmosphere and sense of place represents attraction factors for creative travelers (Maitland, 2010; Richards, 2011)

As referred by Richards and Marques (2012) "the main drivers of creative tourism development therefore currently seem to be the cultural creatives in search of like-minded souls and economic support for their lifestyles, and tourists seeking creative entry points into local communities" (p. 9).

From the marketing literature, atmosphere concerns to the "conscious design of space to create certain effects on buyers" (Kotler, 1973, p. 50). As referred by Heide and Grønhaug (2006) the "atmosphere as created by the interaction between individuals and their environment" (p. 273).

Despite of the creative 'atmosphere' of a place being very difficult to define (Richards, 2011), several characteristics emerge. It is understood as a cultural production-led space where the atmosphere results from local innovators (Richards and Wilson, 2007). This implies that the term atmosphere includes some elements of the environment going beyond the individual (Heide and Grønhaug, 2006). Furthermore, the atmosphere is associated with functioning whole incorporating the traditional landscape and folk performances (Park et al., 2019). It is also the result of the quality of relationships, ideas, and organizational structures (Santagata and Bertacchini, 2011) of a specific place.

The link to place is another important characteristic, especially when the context permits an authentic engagement in the real cultural life of the place (P. Remoaldo and Cadima-Ribeiro, 2019).

More transcendental dimensions can be considered, since consumer experiences seems to be directly affected by sensory and emotional stimuli from the retail environment (Biehl-missal and Saren, 2012).

The co-creative context can include intangible and symbolic aspects, and situates itself in the sphere of the emotional and spiritual, where the individual looks actively ways to follow a certain lifestyle in a specific creative atmosphere.(Richards and Marques, 2012). The scale used by measures physical atmosphere incorporating the following aspects: quiet/noisy; innocent/sinful; sleepy/arousing; overcrowded/sparse (Hosany, Ekinci, and Uysal, 2006)

As a summary, the creative atmosphere is the result of an intense flow of ideas and information within a community (Santagata and Bertacchini, 2011), which plays an important role on creative destination competitiveness, contributing to attract tourists, entrepreneurs and other actors and establishing a link to the place.

2.2.3. The competences

The fostering of competitiveness is closely related to the endowment of the competences of the various actors. The resource based view support that sustained competitive advantage derives from the resources and capabilities a firm controls that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and not substitutable (Barney, Wright, and Ketchen, 2001; Wernerfelt, 1995). Creative lifestyle entrepreneurs tend to follow market opportunities originated by low entry barriers instead of more rational business decisions (Hjalager, Kwiatkowski and Larsen, 2018). Furthermore, those opportunities are less demanding in capital and skills (Ioannides and Petersen, 2003) which raises concerns of competitiveness due to the lack experience and resources (Marchant and Mottiar, 2011).

In spite of being a field clearly insufficiently addressed within creative tourism research, some clues can be identified in the literature. For example, Dias et al. (2018) found that the

provision of technical, managerial and market orientation knowledge had strong implications for creative tourism in less developed communities by promoting local entrepreneurship, attracting new talent and developing residents' skills.

In the rural context, Komppula (2014) identified several important factors affecting entrepreneurs success such as the quality of the product, the capabilities of the entrepreneur or the access to capital.

The relational capital (Duxbury et al., 2018; Lampel and Germain, 2016) and knowledge transfer (Duxbury et al., 2018; Richards, 2011) were other competences that should be part of the entrepreneurs characteristics, which still depend on their intuition or on copying best practices to design or develop new creative products (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009).

The lack of production oriented creativity or creative abilities of the experience creator are weaknesses pointed to creative entrepreneurs (Richards and Wilson, 2006).

At another level, recent research suggested that new technological skills are increasingly needed to create experience-centric networks based on highly interactive and collaborative experience environments (Romero and Molina, 2011).

Besides the relational, technological and human capital, the development of destination competitiveness is also related to the existence of institutional capital (Santagata and Bertacchini, 2011), meaning that other actors (than tourists and entrepreneurs) should also detain more advanced competences (e.g. DMO, educational system, financial institutions) as suggested by Dias et al. (2018).

2.3. The Developers

A third level in the model are the developers. They represent the institutions managing and promoting the creative tourism destination in a sustainable manner. Figure 3 shows how they interact with the other elements of the model.

2.3.1. The destination marketing

Marketing and communicating a creative tourism destination requires a subtle approach (Maitland, 2010). It involves targeting specific groups both from the demand and supply side. Marketing massively creative tourism has dangerous implications on the authenticity of contents (Zhang and Xie, 2018). The simple fact of promoting an unknown place can has as consequence likely loosing much of the appeal for many visitors (Maitland, 2010).

The fragile context of creative destinations should balance the lifestyle entrepreneurs want to preserve their way of life (Richards, 2011) and the sustainability of their business, i.e. to earn sufficient money from tourists or other sources to maintain their way of life (Komppula, 2004).

On the demand side, the promotion of creative tourism by offering hands-on practice and involvement, requires that the DMO should be able to identify and communicate to creative tourists which are experienced and actively pursuit unique learning and participative experiences (Zhang and Xie, 2018). The first step is to know and understand their cultural backgrounds and travelling motivation (P. Remoaldo and Cadima-Ribeiro, 2019).

The DMO also have other issues, indirectly linked to tourists and entrepreneurs. They should assure that other factors contributes to the competitiveness, such as, support and participation of the local government, tourism development funding, strategic planning (Komppula, 2014), consensus and cooperation between the several actors (third parties, financing institutions, other businesses and institutions) (Dias et al., 2018) and assure the community support for tourism.

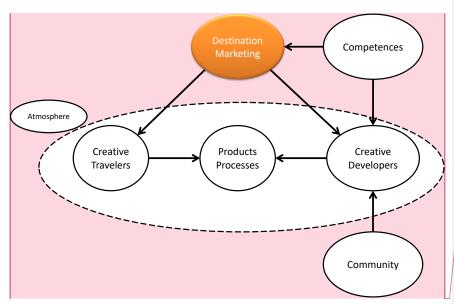


Figure 3. The developers

3. AN AGENDA FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The model presented sought to bring together a wide range of research conducted in an integrative model. The empirical testing of its various dimensions will definitely contribute to its consolidation and validation. The following sections discuss the current state of research in this field and propose some investigation paths.

3.1. Entrepreneurs

Comentado [WU3]: The model is on competitiveness, but where are the prices? Or the competitors? Or the borader external environment?

Comentado [WU4]: Best to have one comprehensive conceptual framework than 3. First you need to provide a brief overview of the framework and then delve deeper into it.

Comentado [WU5]: You can formulate specific research questions that need to be answered by future studies?

The research focused on lifestyle entrepreneurs need a lot more attention (Sun & Xu, 2019; Thomas et al., 2011). Their businesses are run using lifestyle objectives as such, traditional business models cannot be applied (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011; Carlsen, Morrison, & Weber, 2008). Furthermore, they operate in constantly changing environment (García-Rosell, Haanpää and Janhunen, 2019) and they lack the skills and resources to become more competitive (Ioannides and Petersen, 2003). Accordingly, further research on creative destination competitiveness should bring more insights about these entrepreneurs: to learn, in more depth, the profile and competences of the creative entrepreneur and understand the factors promoting the attraction or retention of entrepreneurs in relation to a creative destination.

tourism research has made few contributions regarding the way TLEs manage knowledge (Hoarau, 2014).

The research on creative entrepreneurs has been predominantly qualitative (e.g. Eikhof and Haunschild, 2006; Komppula, 2004, 2014; Marchant and Mottiar, 2011; Mottiar, 2007). Research addresses several topics such as common characteristics (Marcketti, Niehm, and Fuloria, 2006; Mottiar, 2007), relationship between entrepreneur's life quality and enterprise growth (Peters, Frehse, and Buhalis, 2009), motivations (Marchant and Mottiar, 2011) or entrepreneurial identity (Bredvold and Skålén, 2016). On this vein, quantitative studies based on surveys can complement these studies. The complementarity benefits from establishing a link to the creative destination competitiveness, by exploring the role of variables like the link to place, networks and community participation, link to the community, capacities and local knowledge absorptive capabilities, as well the way they correlate with entrepreneurs willingness to stay and deviation factors. One difficulty is to obtain a significant sample of these entrepreneurs, because, due to the strong work-lifestyle link, their willingness to respond will be limited.

3.2. Atmosphere

Creative entrepreneurs and tourists value the place quality of life as a primary factor in determining the business location (Sun & Xu, 2019). As such, the location decision is based on several criteria not necessarily rational (Arias & Cruz, 2018; Morrison, 2006). Studies focusing on the attraction and retention factors of entrepreneurs and creative tourists do not allow a comprehensive model to be established. Some authors analysed some topics independently. For example, Richards (2011) reports the importance of a 'stimulating atmosphere', Hoarau (2014) indicates that a culture of entrepreneurship is important to attract both entrepreneurs and tourists, and Sun and Hu (2019) defend that is necessary a sustainable market supporting creative

Comentado [WU6]: ???

businesses. As identified, the atmosphere is the binding element of a creative destination. However, it is difficult to define a creative atmosphere (Richards, 2011). As such, this poses a challenge for further research: to identify the characteristics of a vibrant atmosphere, a core feature of creative destinations (Richards and Wilson, 2007). Tourism literature specifically addressing a place vibrant atmosphere is scarce. Furthermore, although we are experiencing an increasing academic attention on the subject of entrepreneurship in tourism, the role of the link to the place is still underexplored in the TLE context (Kibler, Fink, Lang, & Muñoz, 2015). The key issue is that there are no definitions of a creative atmosphere and no measures to assess the degree of 'attractiveness'. Thus, an important avenue for research is to propose a measure to evaluate a vibrant atmosphere. Similar research followed an exploratory approach based on scale development (Bassi, 2011; Chen and Raab, 2017; Thomas, Quintal, and Phau, 2018; Tsaur, Yen, and Teng, 2018; Wang, Hsieh, Chou, and Lin, 2007) in order to gain "some insights into tourist's thoughts and experiences" (Tan et al., 2012, p. 160). In this vein, it is suggested scale development to measuring 'creative vibrant atmosphere'.

3.3. DMO

Previous research suggests that besides participating in creative experiences, tourists also play a key role on destination marketing activities (P. Remoaldo and Cadima-Ribeiro, 2019; Richards, 2011). This sort of co-marketing activities needs further development in order to understand the complexity of developing the image and identity of a destination (Dias-sardinha et al., 2018). Several actors contribute to this complexity. The tourists generates a growing range of tourist created content (de Souza, Mendes-Filho and Buhalis, 2019; Richards, 2011; Romero and Molina, 2011) which is not controlled by the DMO. Entrepreneurs and creative businesses promotes their activities independently (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2006). The DMO is part of this puzzle. By promoting the destination itself as a key activity but also by conciliating the other actors entrepreneurship (Marchant and Mottiar, 2011; Mottiar, 2007).

For the DMO, acting in this context requires specific capabilities and marketing activities which should include new and subtler ways of making potential visitors aware (Maitland, 2010). In this vein, further research could to investigate configurations of DMO marketing capabilities and marketing activities that lead to high performance. To do so, the studies should envisage a qualitative and quantitative approach. It is acknowledged the difficulty of conducting quantitative organizational research, specifically obtaining a reasonable sample. For this reason the use of *Fuzzy Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis* (FsQCA) approach is adequate for small samples. Another advantage of using FsQCA is that "contrary to traditional techniques that treat causal conditions as in-dependent variables, fsQCA offers a logical representation and analysis of causal

conditions and exhibits configurations of conditions" (Kallmuenzer, Kraus, Peters, Steiner, and Cheng, 2019, p. 323).

Comentado [WU7]: What is the relevance of this method here?

The results of this method can be combined with a qualitative approach configured, for example, through focus group sessions with DMO managers. This mixed-method study strategy permits to avoid inconsistent conclusions caused by just focusing on quantitative or qualitative, as recommended by Creswell and Clark (2017).

3.4. Creative Tourists

Research related to creative tourists is the most extended and profound among the other destination actors. Several topics have been object of empirical research, such as, the involvement of active tourist participation (De Bruin and Jelincic, 2016), motivations for participating in creative activities and perceptions of authenticity (Zhang and Xie, 2018), model of tourists' creative experience (Tan et al., 2012), taxonomy of creative tourist (Tan et al., 2014), the interactions of tourists with their surrounding socio-material factors (Tan et al., 2015), cognition and preferences (Ting and Lin, 2015) or the influence of experiences on memories, satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Ali et al., 2016). This list is not exhaustive.

Considering to this extended research, at this point, the development of further empirical studies is likely to make a modest contribution to the literature. However, it is noticed that the existing research is dispersed through many topics. It would be helpful for future research in creative destination competitiveness to have an integrative approach allowing understanding the creative tourist behavior and motivations. As such, it is suggested a literature review targeted at pinpointing the factors that attract and retain creative tourists.

3.5. Community

The community plays an important role in the context of creative tourism, being not only a source of inspiration for new experiences and to acquire local knowledge (Hoarau, 2014), but also a fertile ground to identify new entrepreneurial opportunities (Yachin, 2019). Furthermore, collaborative activities within the community provide an interesting space to engage local stakeholders (Yachin, 2019), build trust (Czernek, 2014), and add value to creative tourist experiences (Dimmock, et al., 2014; García-Rosell, et al., 2019).

This provides an interesting field to explore, especially to expand existing knowledge about the antecedents of cooperation around creative experiences. It will be interesting to understand to what extent stakeholders can be regularly involved in the activities offered to tourists.

Another field to explore is sustainability in the context of creative tourism. The sustainability of a tourism destination is more related with small-scale tourism and with lifestyle entrepreneurs than big corporations (Shrivastava and Kennelly, 2013). The former are more concerned to buy local, to hire local people and with the preservation of the local culture, natural environment and traditions (Burnett and Danson, 2004; Jack and Anderson, 2002; Morrison, 2002). Furthermore, developing tourism within a community also contributes to increase visitors awareness and knowledge about the community way of life, contributing to value their local traditions (Giampiccoli and Mtapuri, 2017), which is an important dimension of creative tourism. As such, further research should aim to evaluate the contribution of the local community and other stakeholders on the development of the competitiveness of creative tourism destinations.

Given the complexity of studying this area due to the existence of multiple actors, a qualitative approach is suggested, such as in-depth interviews, focus group and comparative or longitudinal case studies

4. CONCLUSION

This article aims to present an integrative model of creative tourism destination competitiveness. This is a theme that has been earning attention from academics and has been the subject of analysis in its various dimensions. Researchers have explored aspects such as the motivations or characteristics of creative tourists, entrepreneurs, the concept of creativity, the importance of the place, among other topics.

However, the competitiveness of the tourist destination, which basically includes all these aspects, has not been explored. Thus, this article presents a first approximation to an integrating model resulting from an analysis of the existing literature. This model is intended to be a basis for empirical studies that can study the interrelation between the various dimensions presented and add their critical perspectives.

A second objective of this article was the presentation of guidelines for future research, so that each of its dimensions can be explored in greater depth and, in the future, to develop models for evaluation and measurement of creative tourism destination competitiveness, similarly to the competitiveness models of tourist destinations (c.f. Hanafiah, Hemdi and Ahmad, 2016). These existing models do not reflect the essence of creative tourism. As such, no attempt was made to adapt existing models, but rather to create a new model.

Conflict of Interest statement

Nothing to declare

Financial Disclosure statement

Nothing to declare

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Comentado [WU8]: Update with sources from the last 2-3 years.

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