

## THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN TOURIST DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – This study aims to analyse the current state of traditional music valorisation and to put forward concrete suggestions for enhancing the valorisation of traditional music to innovate the tourism offerings and promotion of Istria and the Kvarner region. The study analyses the role of traditional music and the role of Cultural-Artistic Societies (CASs), as major promoters of traditional music, in the destinations' tourism development.

**Methodology** – Theoretical research focuses on analysing the contents of secondary sources pertaining to the role of traditional music in tourism development. Primary research is based on a qualitative approach. The interview method and semi-structured questionnaires were used on a sample of CASs in Istria and the Kvarner region. The results of the research are complemented with the authors' opinions to provide answers to the posed research questions.

**Findings** – The theoretical and empirical results of the paper provide a new approach to the role of traditional music in tourism destination development (on the example of Istria and the Kvarner region). Traditional music is insufficiently valorised in innovating the tourism offering and promotion and no synergy has been created between traditional music and tourism. Although CASs are major promoters of traditional music, scant entrepreneurial initiatives and the lack of a management model for music development at the destination level are limitations to enabling the greater valorisation of traditional music. The study puts forward and makes a case for concrete proposals for improvement in the future and develops a management model.

**Contribution** – The contribution of the paper is twofold. It puts forward and makes an argument for proposals to enhance the valorisation of traditional music in the tourism offerings and promotion of Istria and the Kvarner region. It presents an audio management model that encompasses the valorisation of traditional music in tourism development.

**Keywords** traditional music, tourism, audio management, development, Istria and Kvarner region

### **INTRODUCTION**

Tradition, local culture, the value system and indigenous elements are growing into one of the key motivations and attractions driving modern tourism. The valorisation of traditional music in terms of culture is emerging as a sustainable alternative to a globalised market, which is able to generate competitive advantages based on innovation and represents a model for local development within a turbulent global setting. The key challenge is how to valorise traditional music and other traditional assets to create a unique experience and distinctive brand in the increasingly competitive and dynamic tourism market. The formulation of a tourism policy based on the creation of an authentic experience provided by traditional music will establish new value systems through the cohesion of all elements of a tourism product, representing a challenge in creating a new type of tourism after the coronavirus epidemic.

To appreciate the issues involved in valorising traditional music in the tourism development of destinations (Istria and the Kvarner region) and to understand the attitudes of stakeholders (Cultural-Artistic Societies – CASs) engaged in presenting traditional values, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: What is the role of traditional music in the destinations' tourism industry?

RQ2: What is the current level of traditional music valorisation in the tourism offering and tourism promotion of Istria and the Kvarner region?

RQ3: What are the attitudes of traditional music providers (CASs) towards involvement in the creation of an integrated tourism product of a destination?

RQ4: What are the objectives of enhancing the valorisation of traditional music in tourism in Istria and the Kvarner region and what concrete proposals are there for achieving these objectives?

RQ5: What can be done to improve the management of traditional music valorisation in tourism development in Istria and the Kvarner region?

The paper explores two of the most developed tourist destinations in Croatia – Istria and the Kvarner region – that have incorporated different forms and types of music into all parts of their tourism offerings. No other studies were found that deal with the integration of traditional music into the tourism offerings of these two destinations. This fact provided additional incentive to investigate, from both a theoretical and application perspective, the extent to which traditional music is present in the modern tourism offering and the extent to which it could contribute to tourism development in the destination.

## **1. TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN TOURISM – LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the tourism development of a place, all elements pertaining to place identity, including traditional music, are important. In general, music makes an important and emotional contribution to tourists, as an expression of culture, a form of cultural heritage, by connecting them to a given locality and by providing a tourism experience through memorable moments (Kaul, 2014). Sharp was among the first (after Šulentić-Begić and Begić, 2017) to define traditional music as the product of a race that expresses the feelings and preferences of a community and that is constantly being built upon, while existing in a number of forms. Traditional music began to gain importance internationally with the founding of the International Council for Traditional Music in 1947. In the organisation's origins are found the factors that define traditional music as a continuous bond between the past and the present, as a driver of the creative instinct of individuals or groups and communities that determines a type and form of lasting music. Various authors define traditional music as the art of typically small groups of people connected by similar musical interests in which communication is based on oral musical creativity without any intermediaries (Vaz, Dinis nad Silva, 2017; Vitez and Muraj, 2001). According to Krajnović and Gortan-Carlin (2007), the music tradition is one of the most significant intangible properties of the universal heritage of humanity. Gibson and Homan (2004) explored music valorisation and the effect of music on revitalising localities as guidelines to tourism development in a destination. Their study concluded that music is an important factor of tourist destination revitalisation. Examples of the

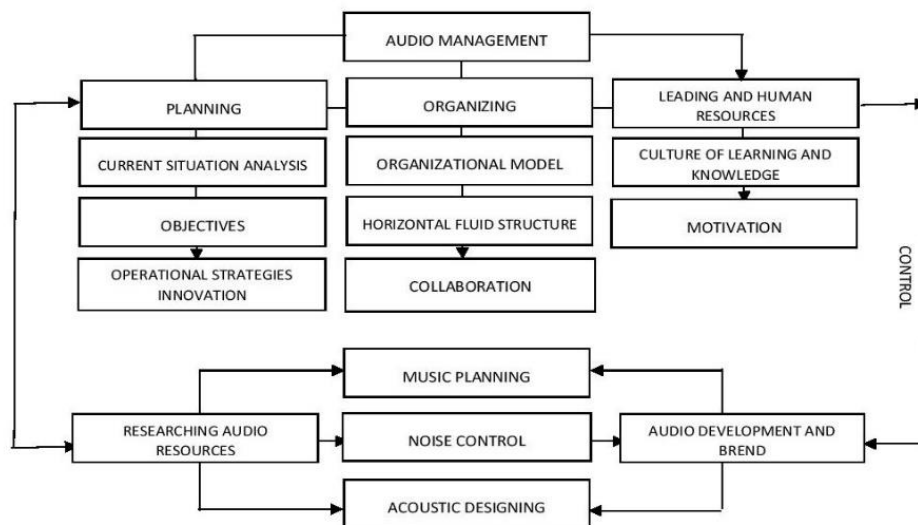
effects of traditional music on destination development in repositioning the destination, expanding its offerings, etc. can be found in destinations whose strengths are based on sustainability, special-interest tourism, specific experiences and the creation of comparative advantages (Duarte, Folgado-Fernández and Hernández-Mogollón, 2018; Karayilan and Cetin, 2016; Pawaskar and Goel, 2014). In tourism, traditional music is increasingly presented through tradition-based events (Song and Yuan, 2020; Kinnunen, Luonila and Honkanen, 2019; Lopez and Leenders, 2019; Stokes 1999). Some of the most notable examples of the use of traditional music in tourism can be found in Ireland, which has built a strong tourism brand based on traditional Irish music (Kaul, 2009; O'Shea, 2006; Fleming, 2004), in Austria with its Alpine traditional music (Šulentić-Begić and Begić, 2017) and in Canada with Celtic traditional music on Cape Breton Island (Brown, 2009). Traditional music is part of the identity of local residents but to tourists it represents new experiences and the opportunity to learn about the traditional values of the destination they are visiting.

Rural places are most often individually defined by their specific traditional music. In terms of tourism, traditional music is frequently used in marketing rural areas and typically refers to music performed on acoustic instruments such as guitars, accordions, fiddles, bodhrans and concertinas, and to engaging with folk idioms (Everett, 2016). Vaz, Dinis and Silva (2017, 31) underline the need to embed a (new) concept of rurality in a metamorphosis process which involves new actors, activities and the (re-)construction of rural identities. This is followed by the introduction of cultural tourism as a mediator in the (re-)creation of cultural identities or, to be more exact, the introduction of music as the central element in the identity-building process. In the overall offering, traditional music, as an element of spatial diversity with a specific offering, can be incorporated into an integrated tourism product and facilitates the image-building and promotion of a destination (Chen et al. 2019). Gortan-Carlin and Orlić (2014, 122, 125) argue that traditional music, a potential segment of the cultural tourism offering, becomes appealing when it is characteristic of the place or region which a tourist is visiting or when music becomes the exclusivity of a specific region. Traditional music helps to create and spread a destination's image, thus concurrently encouraging travel and facilitating the familiarisation of tourists with a destination (Long, 2014). Stipanović, Rudan and Zubović (2019) point out that the communication of traditional music in current forms such as contemporary manners of presentation, digital processes, etc. opens up a number of opportunities for valorising the traditional music in a given place in the creation of a tourism identity. In addition to the visual experience, the tourist experience is increasingly being based on experiences using sensory factors (visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory and tactile; e.g., smell of the food) and affective factors (feelings, emotions; e.g., feeling welcome) (Barnes et al. 2014). This destination experience is the multidimensional takeaway impression or outcome formed by different elements and it is a very difficult task to determine which are the key components (Karayilan et al. 2016). While cultural policies with such an outlook are gaining in importance, Mišković (2013) cautions that cultural policies should include not only activities aimed at cultural heritage preservation (including the preservation of traditional music) but also activities in adopting measures relating to education and economic and tourism development. The cultural policy guides tourism development initiatives (Jing, 2017). The effect of tourism on traditional music can, however, be both positive and negative, and the role of music has become diversified in different tourism contexts (Song and Yuan, 2020).

Defining a management model is a precondition to valorising traditional music. Audio management and, in turn, the incorporation of traditional music into the tourism offering must be based on the triple bottom line concept, referring to the three pillars of sustainable and responsible development: sustainability, social responsibility and profit (Mihalič, 2016; Dwyer, 2015).

The strategic thinking of traditional music valorisation should focus on defining the future of overall tourism to achieve a destination's vision and it must be adjusted not only to the desired target segment but to residents as well. Without the active inclusion of traditional-music valorisation in innovating the development concept across all levels, there can be no systematic implementation of music nor can there be any significant, qualitative advancements (Hjalager, 2015). Authors Stipanović, Grgurić and Jurina (2019) defines that audio management should be built on a culture of knowledge and learning (knowledge generation and transfer) and on the systematic and continuous involvement and integration of stakeholders (Figure 1). It provides opportunities for connecting with other forms of the offering and collaboration of tourist destination leaders with experts in the field of music combining the implementation of all management functions.

Figure 1: **Audio management model**



Source: Adapted from “Stipanović, C., Grgurić, D., Jurina, N. (2019), “Audio Management in the Development and Branding of Krk Island”, *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 335”.

A development concept that confirms the inclusion of traditional music in a destination's offering and promotion must be the result of consensus among all stakeholders across all levels (Malek and Costa, 2015; Fyall et al. 2012) based on arguments and priorities. The essence of integration lies in the fact that by accomplishing common goals stakeholders will be able to accomplish their individual objectives in the continuous innovation of a

tourism product based on music as a component (Gebert-Peterson, Mattsson and Öberg, 2014).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

To determine the role of music (traditional music, in particular) in a destination's tourism development, research was conducted in the destinations of Istria and the Kvarner region in Croatia. Cultural-Artistic Societies (CASs) were selected as this study's target segment because of their importance in the presentation, preservation and transmission of their own traditional music, customs and dances and because they are carriers of identity. Through integrated action, CASs collaborate with tourist boards, educational institutions, SMEs and large hotel corporations, but they do not have an offering for the tourism market nor do they directly or independently engage in creating one. A study of CAS heads or representatives was conducted from April 2019 to January 2020 using the in-depth interview and survey method on a convenience sample. The research technique was a semi-structured questionnaire comprising 11 closed and 8 open-ended questions. In the research technique preparation phase, pre-formulated questions in the form of discussion topics were developed that would allow respondents to express their opinions regarding their role and the role of traditional music in the destinations' tourism development and regarding the specific features of their activities within the destinations of Istria and the Kvarner region.

The questions focused on situational analysis and scenarios for enhancing the use of traditional music in the destinations' offerings and promotion. The questionnaires were distributed to 24 CASs in Istria and 32 CASs in the Kvarner region (the total number of CASs with available contact information) and were returned by the heads or representatives of 12 CASs in Istria and 15 CASs in the Kvarner region. The sample included the part of the CAS population engaged exclusively in traditional music but did not include the CASs of national minorities. The response rate was 48%. Three of the returned questionnaires were not included in the analysis because they were incomplete.

## **3. FINDINGS**

Istria and the Kvarner region are among the most developed Croatian destinations, with a tourism product that has in recent years been transforming from mass tourism based on natural preconditions (sea, sun and sand) into a unique and distinctive experience that is based on all the five senses.

The results of secondary research on the importance of sound (as a broader concept) and music in Croatian tourism were the starting point for primary research. Secondary research was conducted in April 2019 (Stipanović and Grgurić, 2019) and involved 195 heads (representatives) of tourist boards at the national level, 24 at the Kvarner region level and 23 at the Istria County level. A 5-point Likert rating scale was used. The results indicate that awareness of the importance of sound and music has a higher score than the inclusion of sound and music in the tourism offering and promotion. The quality of the overall offering and promotion also has a higher score than the inclusion of sound and

music in the tourism offering and promotion. The level of inclusion of a destination's own traditional music is higher than the level of inclusion of traditional music in general. All indicators received higher scores in the Kvarner region than in Istria County. The inclusion of traditional music in destination promotion has the lowest average score.

Considering the relatively low scores in the previous study, this paper explores the attitudes of the representatives or heads of CASs to assess the valorisation of music and sound in the offering and promotion and to establish guidelines for improvement.

The CAS heads (representatives) gave the highest score to the importance of traditional music in the offering, confirming that traditional music (as well as music in general) is insufficiently used in the tourism offering and promotion across all levels of tourism in Istria and the Kvarner region. According to the opinions of CAS members, residents of the Kvarner region are more interested in traditional music than are tourists to that destination, indicating that local people wish to preserve their identity and the values they possess. The situation differs in Istria, where the score respondents gave to the interest of tourists in traditional music is higher than the score they gave to the interest of locals in traditional music. In both destinations, respondents gave very low scores to the interests of young people in joining CASs.

**Table 1: Scores given by CASs to the valorisation of traditional music in tourism**

	Kvarner region		Istria region	
	Average	Std.dev.	Average	Std.dev.
Importance of traditional music in the overall tourism offering	4.10	0.78	4.40	0.81
Overall tourism offering of the destination	3.00	0.93	2.70	0.95
Inclusion of traditional music in the overall offering	3.10	0.99	2.60	1.17
Inclusion of traditional music in overall promotion	2.90	1.35	2.50	1.07
Level of preference of tourists for traditional music	3.00	0.71	4.10	0.90
Level of preference of residents for traditional music	3.60	0.73	3.30	0.82
Level of preference of young people for traditional music	2.80	0.67	2.60	1.01

Source: The authors

The respondents confirmed that CASs are not sufficiently involved in the creation of destination offerings (only 44% of surveyed CASs in the Kvarner region and 48% in Istria are involved in creating the destination's offering). They consider that traditional music is seen and presented as a supplementary offering and only in individual cases can it be identified as a primary travel motivation to the destination. Their responses confirm that the most common forms of inclusion of traditional music in the offering are folklore festivals (63% of responses in the Kvarner region and 58% in Istria), cultural-artistic events (24% in the Kvarner region, 26% in Istria) and traditional music concerts (14%

in the Kvarner region, 16% in Istria). Good examples of the inclusion of traditional music in the destinations' offerings are events such as the Krk Island Folklore Festival, *Rapska Fjera* (medieval festival held on Rab Island), TradInEtno (a festival of traditional and ethnic music held in Pazin), the Traditional Istrian Music and Dancing Festival and *Zakantajmo istrijske kante* (Let's Sing Istrian Songs). The synergy of traditional music, costumes and dances is ranked first in the appeal of traditional music as a tourism product. Of the surveyed CASs, 45% in the Kvarner region and 33% in Istria are focused exclusively on the traditional music of their own regions (Kvarner and Istria), while the traditional music of other regions in Croatia is performed by 55% and 67% of CASs in the Kvarner region and Istria, respectively. Fully 55% of Kvarner respondents and 33% of Istrian respondents reported including elements of contemporary music into their programmes to make traditional music more popular with the general public.

The respondents confirmed that CASs are insufficiently involved in destination promotion (56% and 50% of CASs surveyed in the Kvarner region and Istria respectively are involved in promotion). Involvement in destination promotion mostly consists of performances by CASs at tourism trade fairs and destination presentations. Traditional music is not incorporated into the audio branding of destinations nor are opportunities provided by traditional music digitalisation exploited in destination promotion.

The surveyed CAS representatives gave similar opinions in answer to the open-ended questions. These similarities can be interpreted through the following common assumptions. That CASs participate in creating an integrated product through cooperation with, and the involvement of, the CASs of other municipalities and towns is evident in the following response:

“We try to accept as many invitations as we can to perform in events and we try to include CASs from neighbouring municipalities, with which we collaborate, share enthusiasm and exchange information about performances and additional sources of funding.” – the Kvarner destination.

CASs see themselves as carriers and stewards of traditional values. Regarding ways of enhancing their activities in the tourism offering and in tourism promotion, they expressed the following opinions:

“At the cultural level, in the form of presenting the CAS as a carrier of traditional heritage mostly by using our audio and video material.” – the Istria destination,

“Indigenous music is included through folk costumes, dances, movement, the spoken word and various types of designed structures.” – the Kvarner destination,

“By joining the tourist offer, we generate additional financial resources, which enables us to run our activities.” - Istria destination,

Furthermore, respondents in the Istria and Kvarner destinations identified the following key issues in valorising traditional music: a lack of understanding among stakeholders, a lack of experts in the field of traditional music valorisation, a lack of funding for CAS activities, and inadequate inclusion of music valorisation in the strategic thinking of destination development. Necessary changes reinforce the examiner's contention:

"There is an insufficient engagement of our greater involvement in tourism offer providers and there are no join activities."- the Kvarner destination,  
"We feel that traditional music is not sufficiently included in the tourist offer, we could present it more." - the Istria destination.

The CAS representatives consider that traditional music should hold a more important position and become a priority in the process of destination offering and promotion innovation, which entails considerably greater investments and funding. They put forward suggestions that involve more effectively including traditional music in tradition-based events, organising traditional music festivals and linking traditional music with native foods and wines. They suggest that the offering could be further enriched with folk costume shows, dancing schools for tourists, and museums, and by organising cultural exhibitions of traditional music. Future guidelines for CASs should help them go beyond the limited, local presentation of their programmes, to take part in the joint programmes of larger events. CASs encounter difficulties in financing the marketing of the offering and promotion and are largely dependent on support from tourist boards and the local government and self-government, mostly due to the lack of funding (CASs depend on membership fees, donations and funding from municipal and town budgets).

The respondents confirmed that a model for managing music in tourism is not in place in their destinations and that synergy between stakeholders is weak. More than 80% of respondents expressed a negative attitude towards key stakeholders in charge of devising tourism policies (tourist board managers, stakeholders in the local government and self-government, etc.), in particular with regard to the insufficient involvement of traditional music in the destinations' offerings. Compared with respondents in the Kvarner region, respondents in Istria gave a higher score to the effectiveness of tourist boards in promoting traditional music. The considerable discrepancy is the result of programme internationalisation, better stakeholder networking, clustering, branding and greater financial support. The respondents' opinions underline the need to create a management system and to strategically plan development as a precondition to enhancing music valorisation in tourism in their destinations.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

A review of previously published papers by various authors, together with research results, confirms the important role of traditional music in tourist destination development (RQ1). An analysis of the current state of managing the implementation of traditional music in the tourism offering indicates that the market of the audio offering (supply and demand) is under-researched as are opportunities for developing the use of music in the offering and promotion (the activities of competitors, the perceptions of tourists). There is no situational analysis that could serve as a starting point for setting objectives, making concrete proposals for the valorisation of music in the tourism offering and in tourism promotion, or proposing improvements to development management. Music is not managed and the valorisation of music, in particular traditional music, depends on individual initiatives to accomplish the various



programmes and projects of tourism offering providers. Formal education for stakeholders in traditional music valorisation is also lacking.

Respondents in the Kvarner region gave higher scores to the current state of traditional music valorisation in the tourism offering and promotion than did their counterparts in Istria. The range of scores given to the inclusion of traditional music in the offering and promotion (2.5 – 3.1) is similar to the range of scores given to the overall tourism offering (2.7 – 3.0). The range of scores given to the inclusion of traditional music in the offering (2.6 – 3.1) is slightly higher the range of scores for the inclusion of traditional music in promotion (2.5 – 2.9). The average score, together with the other responses, indicates that traditional music as a resource has not been valorised to the fullest extent possible; traditional music is mostly presented in folklore festivals and cultural and traditional-base events (offering) and tourist destination presentations (promotion). The study shows that synergy has not been created between music and tourism; traditional music is seen a supplementary element of the offering and has been underutilised as a resource in audio branding the destinations. Modern music adjusted to global consumers has taken the lead, without regard to the criteria of cultural value and excellence, while traditional music is inadequately interpreted in creating new value in tourism (RQ2).

CASs, as major promoters of cultural heritage, play a more important role in the preservation and presentation of cultural heritage and traditional music than they do in implementing traditional music in tourism to achieve financial sustainability and profitability. Because CASs do not have the financial and organisational means nor the creativity needed to effectively valorise traditional music in the destination's offering and promotion, they depend on the organisational initiatives of tourist boards and individual stakeholders (RQ3).

The most important and challenging elements of the study refer to research questions RQ4 and RQ5 that seek concrete suggestions to improving and managing the valorisation of traditional music in the tourism industry of Istria and the Kvarner region. The results of the study indicate that while CAS representatives are insufficiently involved in promoting traditional music in the development of the destination in the future, they consider that a greater presence of traditional music in the tourism offering and tourism promotion could result from integrated action. Based on the results of this study, it is suggested to: ensure the more-effective valorisation of traditional music in all events and the organisation of traditional music festivals, establish interactive interpretation centres of traditional music and instruments, include traditional music in a variety of other programme solutions (fishermen's festivals, food and wine events, traditional boat regattas, storytelling), provide education and interpretation of traditional music for tourists, organise creative workshops based on the traditional music of the Kvarner region and Istria, include traditional music in promotional materials (the websites of tourist boards, etc.), and enhance the distinctiveness of traditional music as a tourism product through networking and participation in festivals and other events. In valorising traditional music, a distinction should be made between the preservation of traditional archaic music and the modernisation of traditional music to make it more appealing to younger populations (RQ4).

The only way to enhance the valorisation of traditional music in the destinations' offerings and promotion is to improve development management. The valorisation of traditional music needs to be enhanced through visionary entrepreneurial initiatives as well as through the creation of audio management models based on synergy and integration (RQ5). Preconditions to integrating traditional music more fully into the tourism offering include educating residents and managers (in particular, through educational programmes); raising the awareness of destination managers about opportunities to valorise traditional music; and actively involving all supply providers, associations, music institutions, event organisers, residents as promoters of local and indigenous culture and music and as SME generators, local government and self-government, and tourist boards as well as tourists, as co-creators in developing the music offering. In synergistic action with CASs, music institutions and specialised event organisers, tourist boards must become the key actors in managing, coordinating and leading traditional music in the tourism offering.

Collaboration between DMOs and tourism businesses is essential (e.g., infrastructure, investments, promotion) and linked in creating positive experiences for visitors (Karayilan and Cetin, 2016). The audio management model (Figure 1) is a precondition to the successful valorisation of traditional music in the destinations' offerings and promotion. The model is based on the integration of destination management functions and the active planning of traditional music valorisation in the future. It needs to become an integral part of the management of a destination to ensure the destination's vision and fundamental goals can be achieved and to underscore the special traits of tradition as an inexhaustible cultural resource and its valorisation as a lasting and unique market asset. In managing traditional music valorisation, it is necessary to define music selection criteria and identify the ways in which traditional music is to be incorporated into an integrated destination product. In designing a music offering and promotion, in particular with regard to traditional music, it is essential to set up an education system and use the services of consultants and advisers. The expert assessment of the quality of programmes and performances is vital to ensure a professional effect and more-intense artistic impression. Evaluation, monitoring and control should become a feedback loop in the process of the continuous planning of and improvements to the music offering and promotion to achieve excellence.

## **CONCLUSION**

Traditional music is an endless source that can be tapped to develop event and experience tourism and, in particular, heritage tourism. Previous theoretical research and analyses of concrete practical examples of traditional music valorisation in destination development confirm the potential of traditional music in the tourism industry and underline the need of implementing a music management model. Communicating traditional music through a variety of forms available today, such as an innovative music offering, contemporary modes of presentation and digital processes, opens up numerous opportunities to valorise the traditional music of a given locality in building a tourism identity. Istria and the Kvarner region are distinguished by their rich traditional music and culture. The attitudes of CAS representatives confirm that the level of awareness of opportunities to valorise traditional music is much higher than the level of the actual

implementation of music in the offering and promotion. Traditional music is seen as a supplementary element of the offering, featured in various folklore festivals and events focused on a narrow target segment and on residents. Although CASs are willing to take an active part in improving the current state, concrete initiatives that should be launched by destination managements are missing.

Istria and the Kvarner region could develop into distinctive music destinations by actively incorporating traditional music into their tourism offerings and promotion to highlight their specific and unique features and by valorising traditional assets to address the challenges of modernisation and digitalisation. The elements for developing traditional music as an integrated tourism product are based on the authenticity of a given locality, focused on special-interest tourism and the more effective use of traditional music in destination branding. The key to development is the continuous improvement of the development management model based on synergy among all supply providers, residents and tourists in generating new value.

The study's limitations are the lack of previous research (concerning the relationship of traditional music and tourism), the relatively small sample of respondents and the subjectivity of the respondents' attitudes. Future research could involve other stakeholders, tourists, destination managers and residents in fostering the synergistic inclusion of traditional music in tourism development in a destination.

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