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# INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON FINANCIAL RESULTS IN RURAL TOURISM

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## ARTICLE INFO

Original Article

Received: 05 April 2022

Accepted: 03 June 2022

doi:10.5937/ekoPolj2202483S

UDC 39:338.48-44

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### **Keywords:**

*cultural heritage, rural tourism, financial results*

**JEL:** P34, Q14, R51

## ABSTRACT

Many scientists and native stakeholders are increasingly pointing to the importance of connection between cultural heritage and tourism, and influence of that connection on the financial results of entrepreneurs in rural tourism. Therefore, the importance of cultural heritage and especially intangible cultural heritage is being discussed. In the continuation, the status of connection between intangible cultural heritage and rural tourism is analyzed. The paper further points to the need for planned and organized, stronger content linking of rural tourism and intangible cultural heritage, that should influence financial results of the entrepreneurs in rural tourism. An example from the Croatia is given which is using intangible cultural heritage (traditional music and dance) in (rural) tourism offering. The link between this connection and financial results of the company is analyzed. The conclusion provides recommendations for better connection of the intangible cultural heritage and the rural tourism, ensuring the better financial results.

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## Introduction

At the beginning of the paper, the concepts of (intangible) cultural heritage and its status in the Republic of Croatia are being discussed. The paper later describes the degree of protection that Croatian intangible cultural heritage enjoys in the Republic of Croatia, and in particular the status of protection that Croatian intangible cultural heritage enjoys

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at UNESCO<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, a brief overview is given of the importance of the tourism sector for the Croatian economy, and especially cultural tourism and rural tourism. The connection between cultural tourism and rural tourism is analyzed, along with the analysis of the business potential of Croatian intangible cultural heritage in rural tourism. Besides that, the influence of inclusion of the intangible cultural heritage in rural tourism on the financial results of the entrepreneurs is being described. The analysis of the business potential of intangible cultural heritage (especially traditional music and dance) in the rural tourism sector uses a concrete example of organized and institutional interpretation of intangible cultural heritage, which confirms there is a close link between intangible cultural heritage (especially traditional music and dance) and rural tourism, i.e. that the inclusion of traditional music and dance in the offer of rural tourism increases its quality and visibility, and thus financial results of it. After that, the methodology used and the hypothesis set up are briefly described, and the research results are commented on. Ultimately, conclusions are reached that confirm the hypothesis, i.e. confirm the role and great importance of intangible cultural heritage (especially traditional music and dance) in the overall result of the entrepreneurs in rural tourism.

### **Cultural heritage**

According to Anić (1998), heritage represents all of the preserved and cherished cultural goods inherited from the past, which preserves and nurtures culture, tradition and native wisdom. Tomašević and Horvat (2012:122) point out that cultural heritage is one of the capitals that is inherited and whose possession implies living in a certain area. Heritage in the broadest sense of the word is a common resource and represents a kind of common good sensitive to overexploitation and insufficient funding. Pacelli and Sica (2020:6) state that: “cultural heritage is a dynamic and ever-expanding set of goods characterized by strong and expressive aesthetics. Cultural heritage expresses the unique values of the society from which it originates, and therefore cultural heritage has an important economic value that, in addition to historical, artistic and cultural value, allows it to be an important source of local and national income.” Although there are various approaches in defining traditional culture and heritage, this paper relies on its definition as “works of its artists, architects, composers, writers, and philosophers, works of unknown authors who have become an integral part of national wealth and the totality of values that give life thought. These are works of tangible and intangible origin that express the creativity of a particular people, such as language, music, customs, beliefs, places and historical monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries” (Gredičak, 2009:198). According to Hafstein (2013), UNESCO (as the United Nations organization “in charge of culture”) has adopted and implemented several conventions over time to prevent the deterioration of cultural heritage in order to prevent and preserve, among others, such physical sites. Among numerous conventions, however, the convention governing intangible heritage stands out because it represents a revolutionary step towards recognizing the intangible (spiritual, intangible) economic resource.

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4 UNESCO is a specialized agency of United Nations in charge of intellectual and ethical issues in the field of education, science and culture. It was established in 1945

## Intangible cultural heritage

The Heritage Strategy (Ministry of Culture, 2019) accepts the division of cultural heritage into tangible (movable and immovable) and intangible heritage. According to the expression of this strategy, intangible forms of cultural heritage are phenomena of man's spiritual creativity in the past. A similar division of cultural goods into tangible (immovable and movable) and intangible is also found in Articles 7, 8 and 9 of the Act on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage (O.G. 69/1999). The Heritage Strategy notes that intangible heritage is endangered and could potentially disappear. This is influenced by demographic changes and declining population in certain areas. In addition to positive connotations, there are "negative connotations that come with the development of tourism and economic and technological progress that bring changes in lifestyle and production and could lead to disappearance or commercialization of some knowledge, skills and customs" (Ministry of Culture, 2011:29). The division of cultural heritage into tangible and intangible is also explained by Šošić (2014) who suggests that the concept of cultural heritage not only encompasses tangible forms of cultural heritage but also includes intangible achievements of human culture. Pacelli and Sica (2020:5) point out the distinction between tangible and intangible heritage whereby they describe tangible heritage as having a defined and stable form (includes paintings, statues, architecture, and archaeological artifacts), and intangible as existing only in moments when they take place and includes festivals, popular performances, processions, religious ceremonies, sporting events and competitions. Carek (2004) explains that intangible heritage by a definition usually includes various beliefs, living customs, accumulated knowledge, different skills, and phenomena of spiritual creation, that has been transmitted by tradition. Important is that societies, groups or individuals recognize all of these as their heritage (language, dialects, speech, oral literature, traditional crafts) and arts, folklore, music, dance, tradition, games, rituals, customs, etc.). As a result of efforts to equalize the status of intangible and tangible cultural heritage, UNESCO in 2003 adopted the Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter: "the Convention").

### Protection of the intangible cultural heritage

Since 1999, based on the Law on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage, intangible cultural goods have enjoyed special protection as goods of interest to the Republic of Croatia. Since that year, 195<sup>5</sup> goods have been entered on the List of Protected Cultural Property of the Republic of Croatia, and 10<sup>6</sup> goods have been entered on the List of Preventively Protected Intangible Goods of the Republic of Croatia. The

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5 Status on February 24, 2022

6 Status on February 24, 2022

database on the Register of Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Croatia<sup>7</sup> serves as basic source of data describing all intangible assets enjoying the legal protection. Concern for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage is the primary task of the holder of intangible heritage as well as the local community in whose area various projects and activities are implemented. With the entry into force of the Convention, UNESCO has established three new lists (UNESCO, 2003):

1. Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
2. List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Protection
3. Register of Good Practices for the Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Republic of Croatia has inscribed intangible cultural assets on all three UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists.<sup>8</sup> As many as 16 assets are inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In 2010, one cultural asset was entered in the second List, i.e. *Ojkanje* as a musical expression, while in the third register, the *Batana Ecomuseum* was inscribed in 2016.

### **Economic importance of the tourism industry**

According to European Union statistics, the Republic of Croatia is, despite the undisputed growth from year to year, only the eighth most popular European tourist destination. In front of it are Spain, Italy, France, the United Kingdom, Austria, Greece and Germany. Revenue from tourism in the GDP of Croatia in 2019 was a high 19.5%, suggesting that Croatia is dependent on tourism. Petračić (2018) points out that this speaks to the dependence of the entire economy on the service industry. The service industry cannot be the basis for the development of the national economy, but it can certainly be one of the complementary activities that will improve its prosperity. The Republic of Croatia is already recognized as a destination for the sun and the sea, and it is increasingly being promoted as a “green” country. Petračić (2018) notes that the national strategic document for the development of tourism in the Republic of Croatia until 2020 (adopted by the Croatian Parliament) clearly shows that the dominant tourist product is the “sun and the sea” with a physical volume of about 85%. Unfortunately, specific forms of tourism, and thus cultural tourism and rural tourism, are less developed. Rural tourism, including mountain areas, is estimated to account for only 3% of international travel, with an annual growth rate of 6%. Croatia’s offer of rural tourism is developing relatively slowly and with special emphasis on the continental area. For future generations to be able to engage in tourism, it is necessary

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7 List of all protected intangible cultural heritage goods, inscribed in List of Protected Cultural Property of the Republic of Croatia is available at: <https://min-kulture.gov.hr/izdvojeno/kulturna-bastina/registar-kulturnih-dobara-16371/16371>; (February 24, 2022.)

8 Full list and description of intangible cultural heritage goods, inscribed in all three UNESCO lists of intangible cultural heritage is available at: <https://min-kulture.gov.hr/izdvojeno/kulturna-bastina/kulturna-bastina-na-unesco-ovim-popisima/17251> (February 24, 2022.)

to develop it on a year-round level and within the entire area as well as according to the concept of sustainable development. Tourism, as an integral part of the country's economy, has various effects that can have a positive or negative impact on the well-being of the entire country, as it includes public, private and non-profit sectors, as well as the population. Through its effects, tourism as an economic branch influences the achievement of economic balance in the country. "The essence of tourism development is based on the fact that tourism develops primarily because of its economic benefits that to a greater or lesser extent contribute to the development of national, regional and especially local economy" (Čavlek, et al. 2011:253; Cipek & Ljutić, 2021; Cvjetković et al., 2021; Kalaba & Pantović, 2020).

### **Cultural tourism**

Due to the importance of cultural heritage in the economic life of the Republic of Croatia, especially tourism, it is important to enlighten all stakeholders in culture and heritage about the proper identification of cultural heritage in its area, as well as providing funds for care and heritage economic resource. Namely, as cultural heritage is one of the key resources in the tourism sector (compared to other economic sectors, tourism is able to repeatedly use cultural heritage), it is important to know which elements of the offer affect the choice of destination. Robinson and Smith (2006) say that cultural heritage is the foundation of tourism and emphasize the great impact of cultural heritage on the growth and development of tourism, as well as the involvement of various social groups in the necessary development processes in tourism. Richards (1996) points out that heritage through tourism can be a driver of the local and national economy by increasing economic activity, number of employees and income. McKercher and Du Cros (2002) also hold that cultural heritage is a tourist attractive, and thus economically usable form of culture of a society or area. Goodwin (2002) points out that the existence of diversity, both cultural and natural heritage, creates many economic opportunities for the local community, which allows the formation of a specific tourism product. Richards (2000) comments that cultural heritage is a vital resource for the growth and development of the tourism sector, while on the other hand tourism contributes to cultural development. McCain and Ray (2003) point out that the continuous growth of visits by tourists related to culture and heritage has stimulated research that analyzes the topic of heritage and tourism, which has led to new definitions of heritage tourism or tourism of heritage as "tourism related to what we have inherited" (McCain and Ray, 2003:714). Southall and Robinson (2011:176-188) state that "heritage tourism can include visits to (authentic) places of special historical importance and experiences that are experienced in the same places in a targeted, frequent and organized way".

### **Rural tourism**

In scientific discussions and practice, the terms "rural tourism" and "agritourism" are often confused or equated. In recent times, there is a trend to replace the term agritourism - in the strategic notion of development - with the broader term "rural tourism", of which

it is an integral part. Even though there are some disagreements in the definition of rural tourism, it can be concluded that: “rural tourism includes all tourism services/activities/types of tourism that occur within rural areas, whereby rural areas are areas dominated by natural environment, rural environment, small settlements, isolated agricultural holdings, while agriculture and forestry are the main economic activities” (Ivandić, Kunst, 2015). Petračić (2018) notes that rural tourism is related to the heritage, identity and tradition of a particular area because its main role is to preserve it in a way that introduces visitors to the way of life in a particular environment and rural customs. Rural tourism is a common name for all special forms of tourism in rural areas: tourism on farms, hunting, fishing, ecotourism, health, sports and recreation, residential (holiday homes), adventure, camping tourism, nautical tourism, gastronomic, wine, cultural tourism, religious tourism and other special forms. According to Krajnović, Čičin-Šain and Predovan (2011), rural tourism in the world is growing, both due to increased demand in the tourism market and due to public support for its development. It is especially important to note that rural areas are particularly sensitive areas for the preservation of natural resources and cultural and historical heritage. “Tourist nomads of today” are looking for new places and ways where and how to spend their vacation or short vacations, often driven by the desire to get to know the domicile (receptive) environments they travel to, as well as the search for indigenous and authentic values and forgotten ways of life. An adequate response to this market challenge is (also) rural tourism. Therefore, each country that aims to increase its competitiveness should necessarily consider its own potential for the development of this form of tourism and find ways to valorize them. Namely, according to Petračić (2018), cultural tourism in rural areas is tourism of special interests that can be defined as a form of tourism in which the visitor goes to a tourist destination to visit the material and cultural-historical heritage of a region or participate in activities within the intangible heritage. Namely, the rural area offers a number of benefits, attractions and sights that would meet the cultural needs of tourists. Also, a rural area can be a destination for tourists primarily because of a cultural site or other tangible and intangible property. Hitrec (1995) notes that it is common for the term cultural tourism to mean only monumental heritage, i.e. museum exhibitions, concerts and festivals. However, the notion of cultural tourism is broader in scope. It also includes the spiritual dimension of culture and the presentation of cultural tourism. The complex product of cultural tourism must contain both material and intangible side of the product, which means that it should include participation in traditional customs of the receptive locality and environment, tasting local gastronomic offer, living in traditional architecture, and especially listening to and experiencing traditional music from local (rural) area. As one of the emerging forms of rural tourism is cultural tourism in rural areas, the next chapter analyzes the business potential of traditional music as cultural (intangible) heritage in rural tourism.

### **Business potential of intangible cultural heritage in rural tourism industry**

According to Rudan&Stipanović (2021), in typical rural destinations, one can design, develop and implement, various sorts, types and forms of tourism. This chapter focuses

on one particular form, namely cultural tourism in rural tourism, based on traditional music and dances, being the part of the rich intangible heritage that could be found and offered in the rural destination. Regarding the cultural tourism, it has been proven that visit to cultural attractions (e.g. history, art, heritage...) and ability for tourist to meet their cultural needs and interests, has become the most important motivation for tourist to travel to a certain destination. It has become obvious that the most valuable tourism resource of a rural destination is and will be the cultural heritage. Most of the tourists would like to learn about tangible and intangible forms of culture existing in certain rural destination. Rudan&Stipanović (2021) further explain that integrated tourist-destination product should include music as an essential component thereof. When offered through the integrated tourist product, music always provides an added value to every offering in a destination, especially in rural destination. In order to better promote offering in any rural tourist destination, many tourist destinations use various forms and types of music and sound experience aimed to creation of a unique and specific experience in certain destination, regardless the initial tourists' motivation for visiting that particular destination. Music in general, and specifically traditional music and dances of a certain region or locality, represent a distinctive feature between rural areas competing at the tourist market, developing their own various forms of rural tourism. According to Kušen (2002), music from the certain region, shows to be one of the most important elements of that region's identity. Some tourist (rural) destinations have managed to develop diversity in tourist offering based on the music form the region, which is including traditional music and dances. Such diversity is remarkably improving the content quality of particular tourism offering in the destination. Where tourist offers are enriched with the elements of traditional music and dances, it can create unforgettable memories for the visitors that would for sure remind them of their stay in such a destination. Traditional music of a tourist destination should be considered as the totality of all its forms (music, dances, signing, costumes, etc...) and should be focused on various performing arts offering traditional music and dances from rural region. This has become a key success formula to satisfy ever growing demands and expectations of visitors. Local residents being proud of their heritage (traditional music, dances etc...), which helps these goods to gradually become a crucial element of the integrated tourist offer in rural destination. Such integrated offering is very often presented at gastronomic events, cultural events, festivals and similar events. Traditional offering, presenting interaction of music, folklore, customs and traditional lifestyle in rural regions, should become a key focus of the rural tourism entrepreneurs. One could conclude that in Croatia, traditional music should evolve into the crucial part of the integrated tourism product offering, especially in the rural tourist destinations. The importance of music resources from rural destinations grows, resulting in growing appeal of the rural regions as such. It is obvious that music from rural region "consumed" in rural destination, evokes emotions and memories related to a visit to a rural tourist destination.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for all stakeholders involved in designing a tourism offering, to act in synergy when designing the sustainable and well-conceived tourism offering in rural destinations that would include music in general and traditional music (as intangible heritage) in the tourism offering. Finally, management of the cultural and creative tourism offering should integrate traditional music with all other forms of the offering, such as the food&wine, festivals, gastronomic events, etc...

### **Inclusion of intangible cultural heritage in rural tourism and its influence on the financial results**

As it has been described in the previous paragraph, a well thought out integration of music, particularly traditional music (intangible heritage) in the offer of tourist (rural) destinations, is increasing the variety and quality of the (rural) tourism in general. Since such offering should be integrated with all other types of the offers (traditional food, domestic wines, various festivals and other events), it is more than obvious that such “new” cultural and creative offering in rural tourism should have an impact on the financial results of the entrepreneurs in rural tourism industry. On the one hand, the expansion of offering within the (rural) tourism activities, directly increases the development of the tourism industry, increasing the occupancy rate and, consequently, sales revenue. On the other hand, the development of (rural) tourism can significantly improve the business environment, which has an indirect effect on the business performance of companies in the tourism industry. The study developed by Chen (2007) showed that the growth of tourism improves economic conditions which, consequently, increases the performance of companies. Any tourism company that succeeds to include intangible cultural heritage in its tourism products or services, and later sell it at the market (domestic or foreign) with a satisfactory profit rate, observing the presence of other providers, achieves a certain competitive advantage. Creating and maintaining a competitive advantage by defining a new and different tourism product (based on the inclusion of intangible cultural heritage) might become the essence of any competitive strategy in the modern tourism industry. Namely, this special competence and competitiveness that enables superiority compared to other tourism companies in the business area, is a key preoccupation of all competitive oriented companies and important for achieving the better financial results of entrepreneurs in tourism.

#### **Example from Croatia - Etnoland Dalmati, Pakovo selo**

The Interpretation Center of Traditional Culture and Heritage - Etnoland Dalmati, from Pakovo Selo near Drniš (Croatia), offers visitors an authentic experience of an old Dalmatian village. Within the village, tourists are able to see the reconstructed stone houses and dry-stone walls. Apart from the architecture and old construction, the offer for visitors includes gastronomic experiences, traditional music and dance experiences (Figure 2). Apart from the material cultural attractions, in Etnoland tourists can learn about a destination’s intangible culture as well. Together with the local food and

domestic wine, Etnoland offers various interaction with traditional music and sounds that create a specific experience of the specific locality (ojkalice, nijemo kolo, diple...). Such an offer helps to strengthen the position and recognition of that particular rural destination. If arranged upfront, tourists could experience performance of the local folkdance groups (Figure 1), but also hear other amateur and professional performers of traditional music and dances from other parts of Croatia.

**Figure 1.** Folkdance group after performance of “nijemo kolo” in Etnoland



Source: <https://etnoland.com/>; (25.02.2022.)

Tourists in Etnoland could also learn how to dance “nijemo kolo” or even how to play “diple” (Figure 3).

**Figure 2.** Tourists learn to dance “nijemo kolo” in Etnoland



Source: <https://etnoland.com/>; (25.02.2022.)

**Figure 3.** Authentic music instrument from the region – *diple*

Source: <https://www.gajde.com/instrumenti/dalmatinski-mih/> (26.02.2022.)

Based on the comprehensive and structured offer – consisting of typical tourist products well-known in rural tourist areas, and modern products based on the cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), i.e. cultural products that include traditional music and dance performances – Etnoland Dalmati has been recording continuous increase of income and profit (Table 1).<sup>9</sup>

**Table 1.** Shortened P&L account of the company Dalmati d.o.o.

Business year	Total income (HRK)	Income from subsidies (HRK)	Total income w/o subsidies (HRK)	Total cost (HRK)	Profit before tax (HRK)	Profit before tax – w/o subsidies (HRK)
2017.	2.795.254	476.263	2.318.991	2.348.356	446.898	(29.365)
2018.	2.881.437	171.029	2.710.408	2.487.574	393.863	222.834
2019.	2.899.854	118.395	2.781.459	2.505.941	393.913	275.518

Source: <https://etnoland.com/>; (25 February 2022)

This serves as evidence that traditional music and dance, if included in the offer of tourism sites and entrepreneurs, and when properly combined with all other offers (events, festivals, food&wine etc.) represent integrated tourist-destination product that increases the quality of the service and improve the financial results of the entrepreneurs, as well as enhances development of rural tourism in Croatia.

9 Results for the Y2020 and Y2021 have been heavily damaged by COVID, and are therefore hereby excluded

## Results and discussions

This paper covered theoretical considerations and a shortened form of secondary research, i.e. used the data from an analysis carried out within the relevant legal framework and literature in the field of cultural (intangible) heritage and rural tourism in the Republic of Croatia as well as the information gathered from the example case analyzed. Therefore, the scientific methods that are being used when drafting this paper, have been determined by the elements of all the parts of the research. In the preparation of the paper, the following scientific methods have been used: description method, classification method, methods of analysis and synthesis, and the compilation method. The compilation model was used carefully, with the truthful quoting and citing of the sources. The problems elaborated within this paper, have resulted in setting up the main research question as well as the hypothesis. The main research question was trying to reveal whether there was a connection between the intangible cultural heritage (traditional music) and rural tourism in general and in particular in Croatia. After the main research question, the following hypothesis, tested by the short research and analysis, has been set up in this paper. Hypothesis (H): *Inclusion of traditional music and dance, as intangible cultural heritage, in the offer of rural tourism destinations increases the quality of the offer; improve the financial results of entrepreneurs in tourism and contributes to the development of rural tourism in the Republic of Croatia.* Having in mind the great importance and internationally recognized value of Croatian intangible heritage (UNESCO), it is crucial to understand that such value should be more extensively utilized in a process of defining and developing the rural tourism of Croatia. Therefore, the issue of this paper is very actual and should be further in focus of decision makers and policy makers who have a chance to influence the future development and shape of the Croatian rural tourism. Given the fact that regulation in the field of intangible cultural heritage is underdeveloped and the fact that legal framework for rural tourism is still in development (the new Tourism Strategy is still being drafted), there is a permanent need for further monitoring of the relevant regulation in both fields, intangible cultural heritage and rural tourism. As a result of short analyses and research performed within this paper, it is obvious that cultural (intangible) heritage is attracting more attention considering development of cultural and rural tourism in Croatia. Cited literature shows that awareness of all stakeholders involved in rural tourism has arisen, and new trends are going in a direction of wider inclusion of cultural heritage in the offering of rural tourism in Croatia. The results of a shortened form of secondary research, based on the information gathered from the example case analyzed, are clearly pointing out that careful and expert inclusion of intangible cultural heritage in a tourist offer of Etnoland as a place with professional, organized and institutional interpretation of intangible cultural heritage, contributes to the financial results of the company but also the quality of rural tourism offering and recognition in Croatia.

## Conclusions

The more we recognize a great value of cultural (intangible) heritage as an economic resource (especially in tourism industry), the more we could contribute further to the development of tourism industry, especially cultural and rural tourism industry in Croatia. There is an obvious need for further development of legal framework for business activities in the field of cultural heritage, but also in the field of rural tourism. Experiences from other European countries confirm that rural tourism is becoming more and more attractive for tourists. If typical offering in the rural tourism industry is enriched by great, but unutilized, values of cultural (intangible) heritage, tourism industry could record even better financial results than in the past. Therefore, recommendation for further research should instruct scientists and practitioners to investigate even deeper the possibilities of inclusion of even more intangible cultural heritage goods into the offering of rural tourism in Croatia. It is to be hoped that policymakers and decision makers will recognize the importance of inclusion of cultural (intangible) heritage in the offering of tourism (rural) industry and, within their scope of responsibilities, enable the entrepreneurs to record better financial results and therefore influence the future development and shape of the Croatian rural tourism.

## Acknowledgements

The authors would hereby like to thank to Lokas family from Etnoland Dalmati, for their provided help, information and support during the research.

## Conflict of interests

The authors hereby declare there are no conflict of interest.

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