

Original Research Article

# Identification and Analysis of Design Indicators for Recreational and Accommodation Spaces in the Creative Tourism Model (Case Study: Sanandaj City)

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**Abstract** | With the expansion of the tourism industry, competition to attract tourists and utilize the effects of this industry in various dimensions has significantly increased. Accommodation and recreational spaces, as the primary infrastructure for hosting tourists, lack an appropriate model in the design and operational processes in many regions. Creative tourism is one of the lesser-known strategies in this field that can enhance the sustainability of tourism models. This study aims to identify the indicators and components of creative tourism that influence the design and operation of accommodation and recreational centers. In response to this issue and with the goal of increasing the efficiency of accommodation spaces, this research seeks to propose an optimal model of creative tourism in accommodation and recreational spaces in the city of Sanandaj. In order to collect data, initially, within the framework of a systematic review, six dimensions and 22 key indicators were identified based on data obtained by searching for keywords related to creative tourism in reputable national and international scientific databases. To analyze the impact and correlation of the dimensions, multiple linear regression analysis was employed. Additionally, the research indicators were evaluated using a one-sample t-test, confirming the significance of the indicators and dimensions. Finally, using the Friedman test, the prioritization of the development of dimensions and indicators in the creative tourism model was examined from the perspective of experts and the local community. The research findings indicated that an appropriate model for creative tourism in accommodation and recreational spaces requires special attention to all six dimensions and the 22 identified indicators, particularly the environmental and creativity-related indicators. This research showed designing spaces based on the creative tourism model, as proposed in this study and according to the identified priorities, can serve as a practical framework to optimize the structure of accommodation and recreational spaces, leading to greater alignment between these spaces and user needs.

**Keywords** | Creative City, Creative Tourism, Space Design, Sanandaj City.

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**Introduction** Today, due to its size and dynamism, the tourism industry is considered one of the key activities in the global economy. This industry is also regarded as a catalyst for regional development, as it has a high potential for creating employment and developing new infrastructures (The World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021). To develop the tourism sector in a sustainable yet competitive manner, tourist destinations must enhance their current positions (Lozano-Oyola et al., 2019, 8). Destinations seek new characteristics and faster ways to differentiate themselves in the global tourism economy, often turning to creative industries to achieve this goal (Turok, 2009, 13-30).

The increasing competition in tourism has led to a greater focus on concepts such as creative tourism and cultural tourism. This model not only provides meaningful experiences for tourists but also contributes to the sustainable cultural and economic development of various regions. It creates new opportunities for designing accommodation and recreational spaces tailored to the creative characteristics of each location (Tourism, 2014). The concept of creative tourism emphasizes gaining authentic and creative experiences at tourist destinations, relying on active interaction between residents, tourists, and the destination itself. For instance, "authentic experiences," "developing creative potential," "active participation," and "skill development" are some key features of creative tourism (Dias et al., 2023, 50).

Creative tourism spaces can generate high added value through unique design, integration of local cultural elements, and utilization of creative industries (Marques & Richards, 2014). Architecture and creative events are now among the most important cultural catalysts, used to reshape urban identity, enhance vibrancy, and attract creative individuals and tourists (Della Lucia & Trunfio, 2018, 35-44).

While extensive research has been conducted on creative tourism, studies on the specific experiences and activities of creative tourism in different locations remain limited (Wang et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2019). Iran, as a country dependent on the oil economy, has not performed well in tourism development\_ both in well-endowed and underprivileged areas (Soleimani et al., 2023, 122-139). In this regard, Kurdistan Province and the city of Sanandaj, despite possessing rich national and international resources in history, culture, rituals, nature, and tourism economy, hold a negligible share of Iran's tourism cycle (Ardalan et al., 2022).

Given the above, proper planning in creative tourism, which serves as a rapid and effective driver for tourism growth, is an urgent necessity in Kurdistan and Sanandaj\_ regions with significant tourism potential. Providing practical recommendations to enhance the impact and profitability of tourism in these areas is of great importance.

Since creative tourism has the potential to become a fast and beneficial catalyst for tourism development in Sanandaj and Kurdistan Province, the main goal of this research is to identify, assess the significance of, and prioritize key dimensions and indicators that influence the design of recreational accommodation spaces within the creative tourism model in Sanandaj.

This study seeks to answer the following questions: What are the key indicators and components in designing recreational and accommodation spaces within the creative tourism model?

What are the development priorities of the dimensions and indicators for designing recreational accommodation spaces within the creative tourism model from the perspectives of experts and the local community in Sanandaj?

## Literature Review

A review of research conducted in the field of creative tourism indicates that the relationship between creative tourism and tourist destinations has received little attention from researchers. In recent decades, creative tourism has emerged as a new branch of tourism that significantly impacts underdeveloped tourist locations. Booyens & Rogerson (2018) examined the effects of creative tourism, identifying them as including the reconstruction of environmental and historical structures, supporting the local food industry, developing sites of historical, cultural, natural, architectural, and artistic significance, increasing the use of local productions, engaging residents, and attracting experts. They emphasize that by focusing on participatory creative experiences, creative spaces, and creative cultural events, innovation in this field can be achieved.

Duxbury et al. (2020) also explored the relationship between place and tourist within the creative tourism model. They identified four key elements in this model: site and materials, activities, storytelling, and social interactions. Integrating these elements into a creative tourism experience encourages visitors to participate in innovative ways and creates memorable experiences for them.

Rabazauskaitė (2015) argues that the creative tourism model, by stimulating active participation and defining the tourist's role as an active participant in processes, can contribute to further revitalization of spaces and enhance a sense of place attachment. Cheng & Chen (2023, 47) define the creation of creative space as the core value of creative tourism and identify five influential factors: innovative space, joyful space, artistic space, pleasurable space, and distinctive space. These factors positively impact the tourist's feelings both before and during their trip. Li & Kovacs (2022, 41) highlight eight creative resources, including architecture, handicrafts and folk art, design, film, food, literature, media arts, and music. They argue that identifying the strengths and weaknesses of these resources can lead to a more suitable model for creative tourism development. Richards (2021b, 36-48) presents the principles of creative placemaking, highlighting three key factors that stimulate tourism: resources, meaning, and creative elements. These principles reveal the differences between destinations rich in creativity and those suffering from a lack of creativity, such as small towns and villages. Singsomboon (2014) introduces creative tourism as an experience-based interaction between tourists and locals, involving participatory learning in the arts, heritage, or unique characteristics of a location. He asserts that the success and sustainability of creative tourism depend on factors such as a strong social base, appropriate natural resources, a sufficient cultural base, local community participation, and innovative and creative activities. Research in Iran has also explored this field. Bastenegar & Ghamari (2021, 279-295) highlight the lack of research on new paradigms of creative tourism and creative cities. They introduce Sanandaj, which has recently joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, as a city with potential in this domain. Additionally, Ardalan et al. (2022, 35-52) present a creative tourism model based on a culture-oriented regeneration approach in Sanandaj, which enhances place and space quality and fosters a cultural and creative identity. Taghvaei et al. (2022, 108) emphasize the need for planning and revising tourism spaces, advocating for the creation of tourism destinations and spaces utilizing successful creative tourism models and ideas. Considering previous research on creative tourism and tourist destinations, this study examines the dimensions and key factors influencing the design of recreational accommodation spaces based on the creative tourism model.

## Theoretical Framework

### • Creative city

The concept of the creative city was initially introduced and discussed by Florida and Landry. (Brzozowska, 2016, 3-14). A city achieves this status when it simultaneously possesses high levels of talent, tolerance, and technology (Florida et al., 2012). Other indicators have also been proposed by researchers and experts in this field, encompassing the social, cultural, and economic conditions of society (Heidaripour et al., 2018, 23-39). Landry (2006, 15-23) identifies several key indicators for a creative city, including the general and political framework, diversity, vibrancy, enthusiasm, and expressiveness, inclusivity, resilience, and accessibility, entrepreneurship, exploration, and innovation, strategic management, agility, and vision-building, talent and learning outlook, communication, connections, and networking, placemaking and urban design, livability and well-being, and craftsmanship and impact. A creative city is a city strong in cultural and intercultural learning. The creative city theory seeks to define qualities that enhance the mental image of a city for both its residents and tourists, making it more attractive and memorable (Shamsi et al., 2018, 425-441).

### • Creative tourism

Creative tourism is based on experiential activities and deep interaction with the lifestyle of the destination community. In this regard, the definition of "intangible heritage" includes: oral traditions, performing arts, rituals and events, knowledge and experiences related to nature, the universe, and traditional crafts (UNESCO, 2006, 25-27). Creative tourism, as a new paradigm in tourism, consists of two closely related concepts but in a more comprehensive and modern form, enabling interaction. Creative tourists engage in creative activities when visiting a destination (Ferreira & Sousa, 2019, 567).

Tourism and creative industries have increasingly become a key factor in urban development strategies. In fact, destinations that integrate creativity into their tourism strategies enhance their competitiveness (Adamo et al., 2019, 302).

Creative tourism is considered the third generation of tourism, moving beyond traditional sightseeing and cultural tourism to emphasize active experiential engagement and deep interaction with the local community. In other words, creative tourism is a participatory visit in which all five senses of the tourist are involved in creating a unique experience (Bastenegar & Hassani, 2019, 43-67).

According to its advocates, creative tourism addresses the needs of tourists dissatisfied with the passive consumption of experiences associated with traditional cultural tourism (Richards, 2021a, 1-13). Creative tourism can play a fundamental role in the growth and development of any city. The presence of cultural and economic infrastructure, creative leadership, and engagement of innovative individuals are among the key prerequisites for promoting sustainable urban tourism (Panahi & Dadash Pourmoghadam, 2019, 87-96).

UNESCO’s creative cities strategy aims to transform cultural tourism by gradually integrating it into new dimensions of culture, extending beyond tangible attractions (Du Cros & McKercher, 2020).

**• Creative placemaking in tourism**

Cities, as the biggest competitors in the tourism industry, are constantly presenting programs, strategies, and creative attractions for tourists. These initiatives not only boost tourism but also contribute to the cultural growth, economic development, and social progress of these destinations (Yozcu & İçöz, 2010).

In a study conducted by Tan et al. (2013), the findings indicated that resources, meanings, and creativity shape the creative tourism experience model (Fig. 1). Resources and meanings refer to the interaction of tourists with three factors: The environment, People, Product/Service/Experience.

Creativity itself does not have a fixed definition, but in the contemporary economy, it is evident in experiences such as music tourism, culinary tourism, design and architecture tourism, and film tourism. In these cases, tourists use global reference frameworks to consume local creativity (Long & Morpeth, 2016). The principles of design based on creative tourism experiences utilize experience-based design, allowing local communities to expand their tourism offerings. This approach outlines a model of experience design based on content development, conceptualization, and enrichment (Richards et al., 2019).

**• Components of creative placemaking in tourism destinations**

Tourism destination planning and marketing are essentially placemaking activities designed to shape the image and perception of a place. Most destinations consist of a combination of local and global elements. These elements range from tangible aspects (urban design foundations) to intangible ones (people and perceptions) (Lew, 2019, 142-160).

Cultural and natural resources are essential for the growth of the tourism industry. Historical and ancient

sites also form an integral part of tourist attractions. In this regard, the architectural values of a city are tangible assets, whereas cultural and natural values are intangible assets that shape tourists’ perceptions of a place. Placemaking supports the concept of creating spaces that enhance the sense of place and improve the relationship between users and the environment (Rahman et al., 2018).

The tourism potential of an area can include sustainable tourism, rural tourism, recreational tourism, cultural heritage tourism, and culinary tourism (Doganer & Dupont, 2015, 1-19). Sustainable tourism development occurs when it aligns with the economy, society, and environment of a region (Soleimani & Momeni, 2022, 225-236). In Table 1, the extracted components have been translated into architecturally relevant dimensions, and corresponding indicators have been identified for each dimension. The conceptual model of the study is illustrated in Fig. 2, depicting the relationship between dimensions, indicators, and creative tourism.

**Research Method**

This research is applied-developmental in terms of its objective and descriptive-analytical in terms of its nature and method. The analytical data collection was conducted using an exploratory approach through library and field studies, while the descriptive part was survey-based. The questions were formulated based on the dimensions and indicators defined in Table 2, using a five-point Likert scale. To determine the sample size, Cochran’s formula was applied with a confidence level of 0.96 and an error margin of 0.5. Two groups were identified for the survey: the local community and experts. Based on the results of

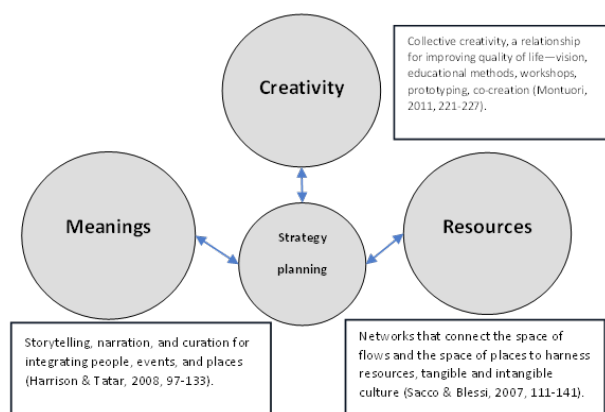


Fig. 1. Elements of the conceptual model of placemaking. Source: Authors.

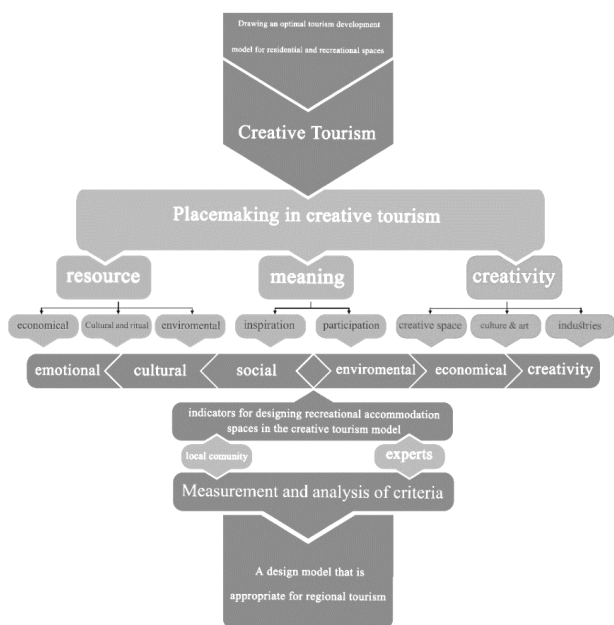


Fig. 2. Conceptual model of the research. Source: Authors.

years old. Among the respondents, 20% held a PhD, 55% had a Master’s degree, and 25% had a Bachelor’s degree in Architecture.

It is worth mentioning that in the questionnaire, a question regarding the importance of creative tourism was presented using a five-point Likert scale. At the beginning of the questionnaire, a comprehensive explanation of creative tourism was provided. The results in Table 3 show that experts have a more positive perspective on the importance of creative tourism compared to the local community. In both groups, the local community and experts, there was generally no opposition to the significance of creative tourism.

Considering that the present study aims to achieve alignment and assess the significance of dimensions and indicators influencing the development of creative tourism, separate statements related to the main components of creative tourism in Sanandaj were designed for each questionnaire (local community and experts) while maintaining a unified objective.

**• Analysis of correlation and impact of extracted dimensions on the concept of creative tourism**

To determine the impact of dimensions on the concept of creative tourism, regression analysis was used. In regression analysis, the variation in the dependent variable (importance of creative tourism) is measured in relation to changes in the independent variables (main dimensions). One of the key assumptions in regression analysis is the independence of errors

Cochran’s formula, 40 questionnaires were assigned to experts, and 384 questionnaires were allocated to the local community of Sanandaj, considering the city’s population. A simple random sampling method was used for questionnaire distribution. In the initial phase, expert opinions were sought to evaluate the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, and subsequently, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was applied to measure its reliability. The Cronbach’s alpha value was 0.84 for the local community questionnaire and 0.81 for the experts questionnaire, both indicating acceptable reliability. For data analysis and result extraction, SPSS Statistics 26 software was used. Since the questionnaire distribution coincided with the summer season, and due to hot weather conditions, both in-person and online methods were employed to reach the required sample size for the local community. To analyze the impact of dimensions and their correlation with the concept of creative tourism, a multiple linear regression test was conducted. Additionally, to assess the significance of creative tourism indicators separately among both target groups, experts, and the local community in Sanandaj, a one-sample t-test was performed. Finally, Friedman’s test was used to prioritize the dimensions and indicators in the development of the creative tourism model, comparing the viewpoints of experts and the local community. Since the research focused specifically on architectural aspects, closed-ended questions were used.

**Discussion**

In this study, to identify the most important indicators influencing the development of creative tourism in Sanandaj, first, the six main dimensions of creative tourism were extracted: social, economic, emotional, environmental, cultural, and creative. Subsequently, 22 key indicators derived from these dimensions were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale, and the necessary data were collected. In the field studies, a total of 40 questionnaires were distributed among experts, and 384 questionnaires were distributed among the local community. The gender distribution among respondents in the local community questionnaire was 63% male and 37% female, and in terms of marital status, 59% were single and 41% were married. The expert questionnaire was distributed among architecture professors and professional architects. In terms of age distribution, 20% of respondents were over 55 years old, 25% were between 41 and 55 years old, 35% were between 25 and 40 years old, and 20% were between 18 and 25

Table 1. Main components and subcomponents of creative tourism. Source: Authors.

Component	Dimesion	Effective indicators in design
Meanings	(Social)	Interaction, participation, and socialization
		Participation and agency of people in planning, implementation, and utilization of projects
		Utilizing the social characteristics of the local population
	(Emotional)	Inspiration, creating a sense of connection setting the scene
		Designing with an approach that connects with people and integrates with local life
		Mixing different Indigenous land uses within the complex
Resources	(Environmental)	The environment
		Using local materials
		Applying climate-responsive architecture
	(Economical)	Economy
		Utilizing the area's topographical capacities
		Leveraging geographical commercial talents
Creativity	(Cultural)	Culture and tradition, religion
		Traditional handicrafts
		Weekly and local markets
	(Creativity)	Creative space
		Emphasizing local customs and traditions
		Innovation in creating new spaces and incorporating global experiences
Creative industries	(Creativity)	Creative culture and art
		Utilizing cultural and artistic capacities to create new experiences
		Employing modern handicrafts and novel culinary practices

Table 2. Age distribution of the questionnaire respondents. Source: Authors.

Survey respondents	Age distribution				Distribution by education				Total
	18 to 25 years	25 to 40 years	41 to 55 years	55 years and above	Diploma	Bachelor	Master	Ph.D	
Local community	35.93	32.81	21.35	9.89	45.04	35.41	17.96	1.59	384
Experts	20	35	25	20	-	25	55	20	40

Table 3. Importance of creative tourism from the perspective of target groups. Source: Authors.

Questions	Local community	Experts
Creative tourism is very important.	41%	77%
Creative tourism is of little importance.	40%	17%
Creative tourism is ineffective.	13%	6%
Creative tourism is a bit of a no-brainer.	4%	0
Creative tourism is very unimportant.	2%	0

(the difference between actual values and those predicted by the regression equation). If errors are correlated with each other and the assumption of error independence is rejected, regression analysis cannot be used.

To examine this, the Durbin-Watson (DW) test was applied. The Durbin-Watson statistic is a test for detecting autocorrelation in the residuals of a statistical model or regression analysis. The DW statistic always falls between 0 and 4. A value of 2 indicates that no autocorrelation is detected in the sample. Values between 0 and less than 2 suggest positive autocorrelation, while values between 2 and 4 indicate negative autocorrelation. A general rule of thumb is that DW test values in the range of 1.5 to 2.5 are considered relatively normal (Tables 4 & 5).

It should be noted that to enhance the accuracy of the results, responses from both the expert group and tourists were combined in the test. The results of the

test are presented in Table 6. To examine the absence of multicollinearity among the independent variables (the six dimensions of creative tourism), the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) index was used. If VIF values are less than 5, the assumption of no multicollinearity among independent variables holds. As observed in Table 5, these two indices meet the specified conditions and are in an optimal state; therefore, the assumption of multiple regression is also valid.

According to the results, the significance level of all dimensions in the regression model is meaningful, and they exhibit correlation. The correlation between the environmental, emotional, cultural, social, economic, and creativity dimensions with the importance of creative tourism was found to be 0.495, 0.487, 0.467, 0.463, and 0.357, respectively. Examining the test results indicates that there is a strong relationship between the creative tourism dimensions identified in this study and the local

Table 4. Results from the Durbin-Watson test. Source: Authors.

Coefficients					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std error of the estimate	Durbin-watson
1	0.714	0.509	0.503	0.378	2.284

Table 5. ANOVA Regression (Linear regression through the origin, dependent variable: The importance of creative tourism). Source: Authors.

ANOVA						
Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	58.294	6	9.716	67.782	0.000
	Residual	56.188	392	0.143		
	Total	114.482	398			

Table 6. Calculated coefficients (Linear regression through the origin, Dependent Variable: Creative tourism). Source: Authors.

Coefficients <sup>a,b</sup>								
Dimension	Non-standard coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Standard deviation	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
Social	0.121	0.037	0.139	3.248	0.000	0.467	0.162	0.115
Emotional	0.179	0.036	0.207	4.973	0.000	0.495	0.244	0.176
Environmental	0.165	0.037	0.190	4.398	0.000	0.495	0.217	0.156
Economical	0.134	0.031	0.178	4.324	0.000	0.463	0.213	0.153
Cultural	0.137	0.036	0.162	3.789	0.000	0.487	0.188	0.134
Creativity	0.188	0.028	0.242	6.681	0.000	0.357	0.320	0.234

community’s perception of the importance of creative tourism (R=0.71). The six factors collectively predict 71% of the variance change in creative tourism.

Based on the Beta values, all dimensions have a significant positive relationship with creative tourism. To measure and evaluate the extracted indicators from the six dimensions of creative tourism, a one-sample t-test was used to determine the significance of these indicators in creative tourism for both the local community and experts. Given that this questionnaire had a positive orientation and utilized a five-point Likert scale, the midpoint was set at 3. The greater the mean exceeds this midpoint, the more significant the indicator is for the target group. Additionally, in the one-sample t-test, if the significance level (Sig)

is less than 0.05, it indicates that the sample mean can be generalized to the entire target population. Table 7 presents the t-values, the difference from the midpoint, and the overall mean of each indicator.

According to the findings in Table 7, the results of the one-sample t-test indicate that the mean of each indicator within the six dimensions of creative tourism, for both experts and the local community, is higher than the theoretical average (3). Given the positive mean difference for each indicator, it can be concluded that the defined components in this study are significant for creative tourism. Based on the extracted results from the questionnaire, all indicators have a Sig value of less than 0.05, meaning they show a statistically significant difference from

Table 7. Results of the t-test. Source: Authors.

Dimension	INDEX	Ranking based on expert opinion		Ranking based on local community opinion	
Social	Participation and agency of people in planning, implementation, and utilization of projects	11.35	3	11.38	3
	Utilizing the social characteristics of the local population	11.40	2	11.59	2
	Designing with an approach that connects with people and integrates with local life	14.20	1	11.26	4
Emotional	Mixing different indigenous land uses within the complex	11.27	4	11.78	1
	Leveraging the historical background of the region	10.23	4	11.15	4
	Using narratives and paradigms to create a sense of place	14.44	1	11.28	3
	Utilizing past and ongoing regional events	11.38	2	11.65	2
	Incorporating local symbols to enhance the sense of place	10.89	3	12.69	1
Environmental	Making use of the region’s natural environment and climate	14.74	1	13.78	1
	Using local materials	11.67	3	11.93	3
	Applying climate-responsive architecture	11.40	4	9.84	4
	Utilizing the area’s topographical capacities	12.56	2	12.84	2
Economical	Leveraging geographical commercial talents	12.06	1	11.91	1
	Traditional handicrafts	10.65	2	11.50	2
	Weekly and local markets	9.60	3	10.60	3
Cultural	Emphasizing local customs and traditions	8.61	4	9.82	4
	Regional music	11.57	1	11.39	2
	Area-specific events and festivals	9.69	3	11.89	1
Creativity	Showcasing local clothing and dance for added cultural value	10.37	2	10.54	3
	Innovation in creating new spaces and incorporating global experiences	11.04	3	10.94	3
	Utilizing cultural and artistic capacities to create new experiences	12.57	1	12.08	1
	Employing modern handicrafts and novel culinary practices	11.60	2	11.91	2

the average level. The findings, presented through the one-sample t-test, reveal that the calculated mean is positively above the average threshold.

• **Prioritization of identified factors in the creative tourism development model for Sanandaj**

The development and realization of objectives in creative tourism require a comprehensive understanding of the needs of both users and stakeholders. By identifying the dimensions and indicators related to this field and evaluating their importance and impact, it becomes possible to strategically plan and implement them to facilitate the development of creative tourism in recreational accommodation spaces.

In this study, after extracting the dimensions and indicators, the alignment and relevance of the selected indicators with the creative tourism model were examined based on the responses from both the local community and experts. Subsequently, using the Friedman ranking test, the prioritization of dimensions and indicators was determined. It should be noted that all dimensions and indicators have a favorable mean value above the midpoint, indicating that the test results highlight which dimensions require more attention in the development and design of recreational accommodation spaces based on creative tourism.

The Friedman ranking test is a non-parametric test that assesses whether there is a significant difference between three or more related groups. To apply this test, the Chi-square statistic ( $\chi^2$ ), degrees of freedom (df), and statistical significance (Asymp. Sig) were calculated. Since the statistical significance value for both questionnaires is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the importance of the questionnaire items, meaning that from the respondents' perspective, these items do not hold equal value or importance.

The median values of the indicators for both groups are presented in Table 8, followed by their ranking based on the Friedman test results.

Based on these results, the environmental dimension has the highest average value. Experts, as the group with the greatest ability to create changes in the spatial layout of recreational accommodation spaces, have considered this dimension as the most important priority. The local community has also emphasized the same environmental dimension as their priority. The findings of this section align with the research of Kastenholtz et al. (2018), which showed that the role of nature receives the most attention in rural tourism and increases place attachment. According to

previous studies, while the environmental and natural potentials of Kurdistan province and Sanandaj have been highly significant over the years, they have been neglected (Pouya et al., 2019), and the high priority of this dimension from the perspective of the target communities can be attributed to this matter. In the environmental dimension, both groups ranked the utilization of nature and the local climate as the highest indicator.

The social dimension, from the experts' viewpoint, had the highest average value after the environmental dimension, while the local community's average values for the social dimension were lower than those of the experts. The results indicate that experts have considered the development of participation and the connection between people and users as more necessary, as Della Lucia & Trunfio (2018) demonstrated that development models like the concept of the creative city should be based on a high level of local participation (from the social dimension indicators) to be effective. Therefore, the development of meanings to engage a broad range of stakeholders, including tourists and locals, is very important. Regarding tourism development, stakeholders also include tourists who can contribute knowledge and skills, and it is essential to involve a wide range of actors in the place-making process, ideally with dynamics from both bottom-up and top-down approaches. Community participation in activating local assets that directly benefit locals is important, while a more strategic view is also needed to ensure the cohesion of creative programs and avoid the risk of serial reproduction, which can help improve the quality of life in the places they visit if used effectively (Richards & Duif, 2018, 269). In the social dimension, for experts, the indicator of communication and connection with people and the local way of life had the highest rank, while for the local community, the indicator of mixing native land uses ranked the highest.

Based on the results, both groups selected creativity as their third priority in terms of average value, which highlights the importance of introducing new concepts in tourism and place-making based on the creative tourism model. In this context, research by Richards (Richards, 2021b, 36-48) also emphasized the growing importance of creativity as a development strategy and recently as a foundation for place-making. The rise of creative city development has encouraged more regions to develop creative tourism strategies, although, as some commentators have pointed out, there is less understanding of

Table 8. Friedman test of components. Source: Authors.

Dimension	INDEX	Experts			Local community		
		T	Difference with average	Average	T	Difference with average	Average
Social	Participation and agency of people in planning, implementation, and utilization of projects	9.85	1.14	4.14	15.70	0.88	3.89
	Utilizing the social characteristics of the local population	7.76	1.07	4.07	17.19	0.95	3.95
	Designing with an approach that connects with people and integrates with local life	12.55	1.42	4.43	12.98	0.71	3.72
	Mixing different indigenous land uses within the complex	5.12	0.90	3.90	16.58	0.93	3.93
Emotional	Leveraging the historical background of the region	5.36	0.88	3.88	15.39	0.84	3.84
	Using narratives and paradigms to create a sense of place	12.92	1.47	4.48	14.95	0.86	3.86
	Utilizing past and ongoing regional events	5.99	1.00	4.00	17.60	0.95	3.96
	Incorporating local symbols to enhance the sense of place	7.33	1.00	4.00	21.24	1.10	4.11
Environmental	Making use of the region's natural environment and climate	20.33	1.57	3.88	23.51	1.25	4.25
	Using local materials	5.95	1.02	4.48	17.74	0.96	3.97
	Applying climate-responsive architecture	6.88	1.04	4.00	12.88	0.67	3.68
	Utilizing the area's topographical capacities	7.87	1.16	4.00	20.01	1.09	4.09
Economical	Leveraging geographical commercial talents	7.15	0.81	4/10	17.21	0.96	4.97
	Traditional handicrafts	7.22	1.07	3.95	16.16	0.90	3.91
	Weekly and local markets	4.83	0.73	3.74	13.32	0.75	3.76
	Emphasizing local customs and traditions	5.10	0.66	3.67	13.57	0.67	3.68
Cultural	Regional music	5.20	0.92	3.93	16.29	0.89	3.90
	Area-specific events and festivals	5.72	0.81	3.81	16.90	0.94	3.95
	Showcasing local clothing and dance for added cultural value	4.96	0.33	3.79	14.42	0.77	3.77
Creativity	Innovation in creating new spaces and incorporating global experiences	7.33	1.00	4.00	14.65	0.82	3.83
	Utilizing cultural and artistic capacities to create new experiences	10.15	1.23	4.24	18.02	0.98	3.99
	Employing modern handicrafts and novel culinary practices	6.63	1.02	4.02	15.94	0.94	3.94

how creative tourism works (Gato et al., 2022, 40). Analyzing cases that operate at different scales shows that such developments are highly context-dependent, with significant differences in the design and implementation of programs based on place scale, connectivity, and the underlying assets. In the creativity dimension, both groups ranked the utilization of cultural and artistic capacities as the highest indicator. The emotional dimension, which includes meanings in culture, history, and society in the form of creating

a sense of place, had a higher average value for the local community than for the experts. The reason for this discrepancy and the greater attention of the local community in terms of average value can be attributed to the insufficient clarification of emotional patterns in place design and the uniformity of spatial design. As Seamon & Sowers (2008, 51) point out, places are “important centers of our immediate experiences of the world.” This definition focuses on the experiences of destinations. Places are full of meanings, and people may form emotional and psychological bonds

with these environments through tourism. The importance of place identity, which is what makes a place distinct from others, can also stem from the emotional dimension (Hammit et al., 2009, 57-72). Place identity may be based on emotional bonds from the experience of a place or on more abstract and symbolic meanings (shared with the cultural dimension) (Williams et al., 1992, 29-46). In the emotional dimension, the indicator of using narratives and paradigms ranked higher for the experts, while for the local community, the indicator of using native symbols to create a sense of place had the highest rank.

In this research, the economic dimension was rated as having the lowest average value for both groups. This may be due to more experience in economic tourism and the greater volume of tourism activities in the economic sector, which has always attracted more attention from both the public and private sectors due to its higher appeal. The economic dimension is an important factor in attracting tourists, as tourist presence in destinations boosts the local economy, and this dimension also influences the community and culture (Scerri et al., 2019, 695). Although the economic dimension has a lower average value than other dimensions in this study, its importance in the design of recreational accommodation spaces within the creative tourism model presented in this research is still rated highly, given that its average value is above the mid-point. Tourists tend to prefer experiences that are closer to local life and not artificial in economic tourism, meaning that tourists are welcomed as citizens rather than guests (Jafari-Salehi et al., 2012, 63-85), a practice not often seen in conventional tourism structures. In the economic dimension, the indicator of utilizing geographic commercial talents ranked highest for both the experts and the local community.

The cultural dimension in this research, with indicators such as utilizing rituals and traditions, attire, music, and festivals in place-making, was questioned. Cultural factors act as facilitators in the development of tourism, affecting the cultural sustainability of a community on one hand (Taghvaei et al., 2022, 93-113) and serving as a critical infrastructure in the development of the creative tourism model on the other hand. This dimension had lower average values for both groups compared to other dimensions. Government activities and investments in utilizing the tourism potential of culture in recent years and the reduction of weaknesses in tourism destinations in utilizing these

potentials (MosaKazemi et al., 2019, 281-306) may be the source of this issue. In the cultural dimension, the music indicator ranked highest for experts, and the events and festivals indicator ranked highest for the local community.

Based on the analyses derived from the responses of the local community and experts, it can be inferred that the city of Sanandaj has deep and appropriate connections with each of the indicators in the extracted model of the research, and this framework, if the correct creative tourism model is applied, can lead to more effective growth in this field and related tourism sectors. The results of this section are presented in the form of a dynamic and interactive cycle model, showing the relationship between the creative tourism model and the extracted dimensions and indicators, as shown in Fig. 3.

### Conclusion

The main goal of this research is to achieve an optimal design model for recreational accommodation spaces within the creative tourism model. Creative tourism, as a new form of tourism, can become a driving force for underdeveloped regions in advancing the tourism industry. The use of an appropriate model tailored to each region will lead to the success and development of related projects, while any non-principled activities could negatively impact the structure of tourism



Fig. 3. Dynamic cycle model of designing recreational accommodation spaces in the creative tourism model. Source: Authors.

and the economy in these areas. In this research, the research team addressed the design criteria for recreational accommodation spaces in the creative tourism model within the framework of relevant dimensions and indicators to arrive at a suitable and comprehensive tourism space design model.

For the development and advancement of the tourism industry, the design of tourism spaces can serve as a new engine, further boosting tourism. Therefore, the importance of using correct indicators in designing recreational and accommodation centers should be given more attention and become a model for creating new attractions. The identified factors and clusters of creative tourism, as well as the findings from various studies, have been incorporated into this research.

The results of this research were first presented by outlining the previous indicators studied by other researchers and summarizing them into six effective dimensions in creative tourism (social, emotional, environmental, economic, cultural, and creativity). The results indicate a positive correlation between these factors and the importance of creative tourism. The results of the t-test show that all the average values of the explained indicators in this study are above the theoretical mean, indicating a positive attitude of the community toward creative tourism. The regression and Pearson correlation tests show that the highest correlation exists between the environmental, emotional, cultural, social, economic, and creativity dimensions and the importance of creative tourism.

The analysis of the six main indicators of the research reveals a strong relationship between these structures and the importance of creative tourism. Based on the results, all six dimensions and 22 extracted indicators have sufficient importance in this creative tourism model. When examining the dimensions and indicators, the environmental dimension, according to both the local community and specialists, holds the highest priority for attention and development within the creative tourism model in the studied area. The creativity and emotional dimensions are also important in this model. Based on the findings, the mentioned dimensions and indicators align with the region's potential context, and stakeholders can utilize scientific and practical methods, leveraging existing resources, to facilitate tourism growth in the region based on this creative tourism model.

### Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding this research.

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