

# Musicians, as an Important Building Block of Mediterranean Rural Tourism

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This paper looks into the significant role of musicians in improving rural tourism offerings. Rural tourism is one of the main pillars of economic development and cultural preservation as it is a tool that provides jobs, improves the local quality of life, and supports the renovation of historic sites. Through their creativity, musicians safeguard and spread intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional music and dance, which positively influences the financial performance of rural tourism entrepreneurs. Music festivals and events in the countryside are also a great source of rural tourism. They bring in substantial revenue and help form a favorable image of the destination. Events in less-favored areas have attracted visitors by diversifying tourism offerings and encouraging regional development. Despite this, their success is contingent upon good planning and proper organisation. This study investigates the influences of factors such as state support, proactivity, job satisfaction, luck, and personality traits on the success and development of musicians in Mediterranean countries, specifically in Slovenia and Montenegro. It has been revealed that including cultural resources into tourism strategies makes rural areas more attractive and competitive. Empirical studies on rural tourism indi-

cate that musicians contribute significantly to cultural tourism by attracting visitors, preserving local heritage, and stimulating economic growth, thereby supporting the sustainable development of rural areas.

[10]

*Key Words:* musicians, rural tourism, Mediterranean region, state support, self-confidence

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to determine the importance of the musician's role in building the offer in a rural tourism destination. Rural tourism has become essential for economic growth and cultural preservation in many areas. It generates employment, improves the quality of life for local population and fosters the restoration and surveillance of historic places. Among the various factors that make rural places attractive, musicians and folk music deserve a unique position. They play a critical role in defining the identity of rural areas, which become more appealing to tourists in search of authentic and immersive experiences.

Musicians, in fact, by their art and performances, contribute to both preserving and propagating intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional music or dance. This cultural diversity can dramatically impact the financial performance of rural tourism entrepreneurs by attracting a broader variety of tourists. Traditional music is an important start in rural tourism development, as it provides creative and engaging services that fundamentally improve the competitive advantage of rural areas.

This is why music festivals and events play a significant role in rural tourism. Not only do they comprise a large portion of revenue through tourists spending on accommodation, food, and transportation, but they also help to create a good image of the destination. They are also effective instruments for regional development, attracting tourists to otherwise less popular regions and adding to tourism product variety. However, the outcome of such events depends on musician's readiness to cooperate and their level of proactivity.

Therefore, musicians are one of the essential backbones of rural tourism offerings. They provide a rich cultural experience that makes a



difference in providing tourism products and, therefore, helps the sustainable development of rural areas. Their contribution to rural tourism draws attention to the need to embed cultural assets into tourism plans to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of rural destinations.

[11]

#### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Tourism has emerged as one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors globally, contributing significantly to international trade and employment (Croce 2018; Lew 2011; Agbola et al. 2020). Despite its economic importance, tourism faces challenges related to sustainability, inclusivity, and climate change (Croce 2018; Moreno de la Santa 2020; Scott et al. 2012). The industry's growth has led to increased recognition of its potential to foster economic development and alleviate poverty, particularly in developing countries (Saarinen et al. 2011). However, tourism's vulnerability to external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights the need to understand demand drivers and practical strategies better (Agbola et al. 2020). As the sector continues to expand, there is a growing emphasis on mitigating negative impacts and promoting sustainable practices (Croce 2018; Willson 2015). Researchers caution against overgeneralising tourism's benefits and impacts, emphasizing the need for more nuanced approaches to address its complex challenges (Sharpley 2012).

Rural tourism offers significant economic development and cultural preservation opportunities in rural areas. It can create jobs, improve the local quality of life, and support the restoration of historic sites (Corina 2018). Musicians and traditional music play a crucial role in rural tourism offerings, contributing to the distinctiveness of destinations (Rudan and Stipanović 2021). Intangible cultural heritage, including music and dance, can positively influence the financial results for rural tourism entrepreneurs (Starčević et al. 2022). Tradition, encompassing music, dance, and local cuisine, is a key initiator of rural tourism development (Antic et al. 2015). Rural tourism can strengthen the competitive position of destinations through creative offerings and private-sector involvement (Gannon 1994). It has the potential to build economic independence for rural communities, as evidenced by the success of tourist villages in other regions (Maret et al. 2018; Triyanto et al. 2018). The inclusion of music industry offerings can be leveraged to design cultural experiences for demanding tourists (Vaz et al. 2017).

[12] In both developed and developing countries, tourism is frequently supposed to be a viable means of raising the economic activity of regions. Additionally, developing a tourism industry has been noted to promote the destination's image, enabling the region to achieve other objectives, such as business recruitment and retention.

Music festivals and events significantly impact tourism, particularly in rural and lesser-known destinations. This is especially typical for regions with a rich cultural tradition, which certainly includes Mediterranean countries. Music events can boost local economies by generating revenue through tourist expenditure on accommodation, food, and transportation (Baldi et al. 2022; Čekrljija and Milić 2024). They also contribute to destination image formation and place-making (Duarte et al. 2018). Music tourism can lead to cultural changes, affecting local musicians and traditions (Basu and Imara 2014; Stipanović et al. 2023). Festivals serve as key tools for regional development, attracting visitors to less-favoured areas and diversifying tourism offerings (Ribeiro et al. 2006). These events not only have economic impacts, but also bring social, cultural, and political implications for host communities (Dujmović and Vitasović 2012). However, the success of music events in promoting tourism depends on strategic planning, organization and the willingness of musicians to contribute (Čekrljija and Milić 2024).

Based on the introduction provided, the following research question could be formulated: How do factors such as state support, job satisfaction, luck, and personality traits (self-confidence, subjective norms, internal locus of control) influence the proactivity of musicians and, consequently, their readiness to be involved in the growth of rural music tourism in Mediterranean countries like Slovenia and Montenegro?

#### HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Rural tourism has become an increasingly important regional development and re-imaging strategy in Mediterranean countries, particularly as they face global rural restructuring challenges (Hall and Mitchell 2000). Previous research has mentioned music as one of the traditional elements that can attract tourists to rural areas, alongside dance, clothing, and culinary specialties (Antic et al. 2015). Integrating cultural resources, including traditional music, into rural tourism offerings can enhance the appeal of destinations and contribute to rural revitalization (Wang 2023). However, rural tourism development still involves a complex interplay of various factors, including natural beauty, lo-



cal traditions, and government policies (Antic et al. 2015; Wang 2023).

It's important to recognize that while rural tourism can provide opportunities for economic development and job creation in rural areas, also it also presents challenges and potential adverse impacts (Boz et al. 2018; Saarinen 2007). Sustainable rural tourism development requires careful planning and consideration of economic, social, and environmental factors (Boz et al. 2018; Fun et al. 2014). [13]

The interplay between state support, proactivity, luck, and work satisfaction creates a complex environment for Mediterranean musicians. While state support provides opportunities and resources, individual proactivity remains crucial for career advancement. The cultural understanding of luck and fortune adds another layer to this dynamic, potentially influencing how musicians perceive and pursue opportunities. Job satisfaction, especially when combined with a supportive work-family culture, can help sustain proactive behaviors and commitment to one's musical career despite challenges and uncertainties.

State support for the music industry varies across Mediterranean countries, with some nations recognizing its potential as both cultural and economic asset. A recent study in Kosovo found that the art and music sector has shown considerable growth potential, contributing to the country's cultural and economic environment by providing employment opportunities (Breznica et al. 2024). The Kosovan music scene encompasses various genres, from traditional folk music to modern styles, catering to both local and global preferences. Slovenia and Montenegro share a recent past with Kosovo, so we derived hypotheses H1 and H2 based on these findings.

H1 The level of perceived state support differs between the observed regions

H1a A higher level of perceived state support leads to a higher level of proactivity

Proactivity plays a significant role in the success of musicians in Mediterranean countries. Research by Smale et al. (2019) has shown that proactive career behaviours, such as self-promotion, networking, and continuous skill development, positively correlate with musicians' subjective financial success, as measured by income stability, career satisfaction, and professional opportunities (Smale et al. 2019). Proactivity emerges as a crucial trait for musicians and entrepreneurs in Mediterranean countries, particularly during economic crises, as it

[14] enables adaptability, opportunity recognition, and financial resilience (Toubes et al. 2019). However, the relationship between proactivity and work-life balance is more complex. Interestingly, the benefits of career proactivity may vary across cultures, with factors such as in-group collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance influencing the outcomes (Smale et al. 2019). The concept of luck and fortune also plays a role in the social imagination of Mediterranean musicians. Anthropological studies have highlighted how idioms of luck and fortune can connect humans, potentially influencing the perceived success of musicians (da Col 2012). This understanding of luck may interact with proactive behaviours, shaping how musicians approach their careers and interpret their successes or failures. On this basis, we set our hypotheses H2, H3 and H4.

H2 The percentage of income from the music industry differs between the observed regions

H2a A higher percentage of income from the music industry leads to a higher level of proactivity

H3 The level of perceived luck differs across the observed regions

H3a A higher level of perceived luck is associated with a higher level of proactivity

Work satisfaction is another crucial factor that influences musicians. Research has shown that job satisfaction can be a motivational resource for maintaining high levels of proactivity over time (Strauss et al. 2015). Additionally, a supportive work-family culture has been associated with less work-family conflict, greater job satisfaction, and greater affective commitment (de Janasz et al. 2013). Balancing their artistic pursuits with family responsibilities may be particularly important for musicians in the Mediterranean region, given the cultural emphasis on family in many of these countries. On this basis, we set our hypothesis H5.

H4 The level of work satisfaction differs between the observed regions

H4a A higher level of work satisfaction leads to a higher level of proactivity

Research on musicians' personalities and cognitive profiles has revealed interesting differences both among various groups of musicians and between musicians and non-musicians. These differences extend



factors such as subjective norms, self-confidence, and locus of control, which can vary based on factors such as musical training, instrument type, and cultural background. Subjective norms among musicians are also influenced by the type of musical training they receive. For instance, Rose et al. (2018) suggest that formal music learning is associated with higher levels of conscientiousness, while musicians, in general, tend to have higher levels of openness to experience compared to population norms. Research also indicates that the close environment may shape musicians' perceptions of what is expected or valued within their musical community (Rose et al. 2019). [15]

Self-confidence among musicians seems to be closely tied to their performance abilities and their perception of control over their skills. Hanton and Connaughton (2002) highlight that perceived control is a crucial moderating factor in how musicians interpret anxiety symptoms and their impact on performance. When musicians feel in control of their symptoms, they tend to interpret them as facilitative for performance, leading to increased self-confidence. Conversely, a lack of perceived control can result in debilitating effects on performance and lower self-confidence (Hanton and Connaughton 2002). The locus of control among musicians may differ based on their musical background, expertise and cultural environment. Agres et al. (2022) suggest that musicians are more sensitive to the dynamic and schematic properties of musical stimuli than non-musicians. This heightened sensitivity could indicate a more internal locus of control, as musicians may feel more capable of understanding and manipulating musical elements (Agres et al. 2022). Additionally, Porflitt and Rosas (2020) reveal that different types of musicians (rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic) exhibit varying cognitive performances, which could influence their perception of control over their musical abilities (Porflitt and Rosas 2020). While the available research does not explicitly address regional differences in these aspects, it is reasonable to assume that cultural factors and local environment may contribute to variations in subjective norms, self-confidence, and locus of control among musicians in different regions.

On this basis, we believe it makes sense to include personality factors into our research model and to explore these potential regional differences and their implications.

- H5 The level of perceived self-confidence differs between the observed regions

- [16]
- H5a A higher level of perceived self-confidence leads to a higher level of proactivity
  - H6 The level of perceived subjective norms differs between the observed regions
  - H6a A higher level of perceived subjective norms leads to a higher level of proactivity
  - H7 The level of internal locus of control differs between the observed regions
  - H7a A higher-level internal locus of control is associated with a higher level of proactivity

#### METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

To test the hypotheses, we collected data in Slovenia and Montenegro in 2023. In both cases, the population consists of musicians in the observed region, which was in 2023. The data were collected using an online survey questionnaire and with the help of regional musicians' associations.

The values of the variables were compared using the *t*-test between independent samples. To test the assumed dependence relations, we set up a linear regression model for each region separately to test the hypotheses in each region. In this way, we also enabled the comparison of regression coefficients between the observed regions.

The gender composition of the sample is comparable in both regions. In both cases, the sample is approximately two-thirds male and 1/3 female. Table 1 also shows the regional composition of the sample, namely by age, years of activity in the music industry and the percentage of personal revenue that comes from the music industry. The sample size is appropriate if we note that the Montenegro sample is small but still sufficient to meet the minimum requirements for carrying out the planned analyses (Louangrath 2017).

The dependent variable in our linear regression model is the individual's proactivity level. We collected data using a 10-item Likert scale, which has been used and validated in previous research. Items are captured on 7-step scale (Bateman and Crant 1993).

For all independent variables, we also used previously used and validated scales. To measure the perceived level of state support, a 5-point six-item scale was used. The scale originates from the research on the perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al. 2001). Self-





TABLE 1 Sample Frequencies

Country	Male		Female		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Slovenia	116	64.4	64	35.6	180	100.0
Montenegro	30	66.7	15	33.3	45	100.0
Total	146	64.9	79	35.1	225	100.0

Country	Item	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD
Slovenia	Age	181	43.44	12.37
	Years in music	179	20.35	15.45
	Percent of income	176	56.89	38.07
Montenegro	Age	45	36.84	9.94
	Years in music	43	12.98	10.66
	Percent of income	42	48.36	40.08

[17]

TABLE 2 *t*-Test Results

Item	<i>t</i>	Sig.	Mean*
Percent of income from music	1.291	0.198	8.52900
State support	3.608	0.000	3.17828
Self confidence	-2.562	0.012	-1.24785
Proactivity	-0.840	0.402	-1.17469
Subjective norms	1.407	0.161	0.84003
Luck	-2.070	0.040	-2.64935
Internal locus of control	0.425	0.671	0.54170
Work satisfaction	3.206	0.003	2.39261

NOTES \* Slovenia-Montenegro.

confidence was measured with nine items on 5-point Likert scale previously used in a study of private and public self-consciousness (Vleeming and Engelse 1981). Subjective norms were captured with three items on 7-point scale based on a previous study of entrepreneurial programs in relation to students entrepreneurial intention after graduation (Levenson 1973; Souitaris et al. 2007).

From the same study, we also used 4 items for measuring the internal locus of control level which we supplemented with four additional items used in the research of multidimensional locus of control (Levenson 1973). Work satisfaction was captured with 5 item scale (Oyler 2007).

To compare the two observed regions by individual variables, we

TABLE 3 Country-Level Variable Comparison: Hypotheses Confirmation

H	Observed variable	Confirmed
H1	The level of perceived state support	Yes
H2	The percentage of income from the music industry	No
H3	The level of perceived luck	Yes
H4	The level of work satisfaction	Yes
H5	The level of perceived self-confidence	Yes
H6	The level of perceived subjective norms	No
H7	The level of internal locus of control	No

[18]

used the *t*-test of means of independent samples to test the hypotheses. The results of the *t*-test are summarized in table 2. We detected a statistically significant difference between the two groups in perceived state support. In this case, we detected a very high significance level ( $p = 0.000$ ). Slovenian musicians perceive a higher level of state support compared to their colleagues from Montenegro. Interestingly, in the case of self-confidence, we detected an equally high statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.012$ ), but in favour of Montenegrin musicians. Montenegrin musicians also attach greater importance to the lucky circumstances necessary for successful operation in the music industry ( $p = 0.040$ ).

Regarding job satisfaction, the detected statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.003$ ) showed higher satisfaction among Slovenian musicians. We did not detect statistically significant differences between the two groups for the other observed factors. An overview of the confirmed hypotheses is given in table 3.

We used a regression model to test the causal relationships between the independent variables presented in the introduction of this paragraph and musicians' proactivity, which is the model's dependent variable. We developed a regression model for each region separately to compare the two regions. The regression coefficients are given in table 4.

The results of the models show that only a few of the factors included affect the proactivity of music industry stakeholders. This is especially true for Montenegro, where we detected a statistically significant causal relationship only in the case of self-assessed level of self-confidence ( $p = 0.043$ ). All other factors do not have a statistically significant effect on the proactivity of Montenegrin musicians. The model



TABLE 4 Regression Models Coefficients

Country	Item	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Slovenia	(Constant)	12.720		2.128	0.035
	Percent of incom from music	-0.026	-0.127	-1.762	0.081
	State	-0.217	-0.140	-1.988	0.049
	Self_confidence	0.979	0.467	6.472	0.000
	Subj_norms	-0.072	-0.030	-0.388	0.698
	Luck	0.078	0.069	0.976	0.331
	Locus	0.252	0.234	2.980	0.004
	Work_satisf	0.294	0.120	1.546	0.125
	Gend_F	4.043	0.250	3.557	0.001
Montenegro	(Constant)	10.230		0.704	0.489
	Percent of incom from music	-0.006	-0.035	-0.217	0.830
	State	-0.456	-0.315	-1.652	0.113
	Self_confidence	0.929	0.386	2.150	0.043
	Subj_norms	0.584	0.319	1.318	0.201
	Luck	-0.221	-0.212	-1.257	0.222
	Locus	0.340	0.314	1.395	0.177
	Work_satisf	0.304	0.186	0.886	0.385
	Gend_F	-0.226	-0.014	-0.087	0.931

NOTES Dependent variable: proactivity.

is quite good at the sample level, explaining 45.9% of the variance in proactivity in Slovenia and 53.5% in Montenegro. In Slovenia, proactivity is statistically significantly affected by perceived state support ( $p = 0.049$ ), level of self-confidence ( $p = 0.000$ ) and the level of internal locus of control of behaviour ( $p = 0.004$ ).

It is worth mentioning that a higher level of perceived state support leads to a lower level of individual proactivity. We believe such a result would require an in-depth analysis to explain the reasons. In any case, the result represents a good motive for future research. In both observed countries, self-confidence stands out as the most potent factor (SLO  $\beta = 0.467$  and MNE  $\beta = 0.386$ ).

In addition to the independent variables, we included the respondent's gender in the model as a control variable. The analysis showed that in Slovenia, female musicians are statistically significantly more proactive than their male counterparts ( $p = 0.001$ ). However, in Montenegro, we did not detect statistically significant differences between the genders. Table 5 gives an overview of the tested hypotheses.

TABLE 5 Country-Level Hypotheses Confirmation

H	Independent variable	Slovenia	Montenegro
H 1 a	The level of perceived state support	Yes	No
H 2 a	The percentage of income from the music industry	No	No
H 3 a	The level of perceived luck	No	No
H 4 a	The level of work satisfaction	No	No
H 5 a	The level of perceived self-confidence	Yes	Yes
H 6 a	The level of perceived subjective norms	No	No
H 7 a	The level of internal locus of control	Yes	No

NOTES Dependent variable: proactivity.

### DISCUSSION

The research results show a strong connection with general theoretical positions, which can be summarized through a few facts. As a globally growing economic sector, rural tourism can strongly contribute to economic development and the preservation of cultural heritage in rural areas. Within these frameworks, the basis is formed by activities such as traditional music, dance, clothing, and culinary specialities (Guo et al. 2023). These activities significantly contribute to the attractiveness of destinations and the revitalization of rural areas.

Rural tourism also plays a key role in preserving cultural heritage, promoting sustainable development, and increasing economic opportunities in rural areas. In this context, musicians represent an essential factor in developing tourism in rural areas. Mediterranean countries can undoubtedly use their rich cultural heritage to develop tourism in rural regions. Of course, the willingness of music industry stakeholders to participate in this project is of key importance for successfully implementing this idea. Musicians are an essential part of the rural tourism offer, attracting visitors with their artistry and Mediterranean authenticity, and creating unique experiences. Branding that connects rural tourism and musical tradition strengthens the recognition of regions and builds an emotional bond with visitors, encouraging tourism's long-term development (Damnjanovic et al. 2009).

To ensure readiness for cooperation, state support is needed. In this context, we found that Slovenian musicians recognize state support for their activity as an essential factor that encourages a higher level of proactivity. On the other hand, their Montenegrin colleagues on the other side of the Mediterranean do not perceive state support as an important factor. The perceived difference is worth in-depth consider-



ation and analysis to uncover the underlying causes. The reason may lie in the possibly too low level of support for the music industry from the state so far. From this perspective, it would be beneficial for state bodies responsible for developing rural tourism to place greater emphasis on supporting the music industry and its participants. In doing so, it is necessary to focus on the visibility of this support, as the musicians themselves must positively recognise it. Only in this case can we rightly expect a greater willingness for active cooperation among musicians. This conclusion is in line with the existing theory, as sustainable rural development can be achieved mainly through the integration of tourism and local cultural practices (Coroş et al. 2021; Kim and Jamal 2015). In addition to the above, previous studies emphasise the importance of better governance for more successful tourism development in rural regions (Lane and Kastenholz 2015). [21]

Of course, we should not overlook the critical fact that the research found a negative correlation between the level of proactivity and perceived state support. This means that higher perceived support can also lead to lower stakeholder proactivity. From this perspective, we also believe that further research is needed to identify the reasons for such results. This is consistent with the theoretical argument that proactivity is essential for achieving success, even though there is limited support. This result is consistent with research indicating that state support can provide resources and opportunities, but individual proactivity remains key to career advancement (Hall and Mitchell 2000; Wang 2023).

The observation that proactivity was better predicted by self-confidence in both countries provides theoretical support to the assumption that self-confidence is a crucial determinant of proactive behaviour. Several studies report that self-confidence is related to perceptions of control over ability and performance, which, in turn, should facilitate proactiveness (Hanton and Connaughton 2002; Agres et al. 2022), and thus confirms the specificity of this within this body of research. When comparing the two observed Mediterranean regions, we detected a higher level of self-confidence among Montenegrin musicians, which may also be a consequence of the previous finding that they receive less support from the state and are thus more dependent on their abilities.

The research results show that musicians in Montenegro attach greater importance to luck, which can shape their approach to their careers and proactivity. This is an interesting finding related to theoretical

[22] claims about the role of luck in the social imagination of musicians. Da Col, in his study, discovered that the cultural perception of the notion of luck is a potential explanatory factor in success and proactivity perception (da Col 2012). In light of this finding, it is worth mentioning the possibility that musicians in Montenegro attach greater significance to luck than their Slovenian counterparts, possibly due to the lower level of state support for their activity.

The research additionally found that musicians in Slovenia are more satisfied with their jobs, which can contribute to their proactivity. However, this factor was significant only in Slovenia when tested with a regression model. Owing to the results of the studies, many authors have formulated in their research the conclusion that job satisfaction can be a motivational resource to sustain high levels of proactivity (Strauss et al. 2015; de Janasz et al. 2013), which emphasizes the significance of the results obtained, since it is in agreement with the previously established relationship between job satisfaction and high levels of proactivity in the music industry.

Music plays a crucial role in enhancing rural tourism offerings, particularly through the valorisation of traditional and local music heritage (Rudan and Stipanović 2021; Krajnović and Gortan-Carlin 2007). However, challenges arise from the commercialization of rural spaces and the potential loss of authentic cultural experiences (Wu 2017). Additional challenges lie in fully exploiting rural tourism potential, including the need to build trust, rebuild social capital, and integrate local communities into development processes (Demonja 2014; Quaranta et al. 2016a). Accordingly, educating the younger generation can undoubtedly contribute to the further development of rural music tourism in Slovenia and Montenegro, as it reflects the specific interest of the inhabitants in musical education in these regions. The Mediterranean cultural environment in Slovenia encourages students to join numerous musical groups of various genres during and after their studies (Plevnik et al. 2021), enhancing the local music scene and its appeal to visitors. This creates a unique synergy between musical tradition and tourism, supporting the sustainable development of rural areas.

## CONCLUSION

Rural tourism has emerged as an important driving factor in economic growth and cultural protection across the globe. Musicians, using their artistry and performing activities, contribute to rural regions' distinc-



tive cultural identity, which in turn makes regions more attractive to tourists seeking genuine and immersive experiences. This is especially important for regions with a rich cultural tradition, which certainly includes Mediterranean countries.

Rural tourism is a key driver of economic development, contributing to income diversification, job creation, and cultural preservation. Studies indicate that it enhances local economies by promoting small businesses, reducing urban migration, and fostering sustainable resource management (Dimitrijević et al. 2022; Livandovschi 2022; Sert 2024). Rural tourism supports environmental conservation through ecotourism initiatives and incentivizes the protection of cultural heritage. It contributes to preserving cultural heritage, natural resources, and traditional crafts (Sert 2024; Tola et al. 2024). Community involvement is crucial for successful rural tourism development, as it fosters a deeper understanding of local challenges and promotes innovative solutions (Kuqi et al. 2019). Rural tourism benefits both tourists and host communities, improving infrastructure and quality. However, inadequate infrastructure, seasonal demand fluctuations, and environmental degradation require strategic policy interventions (Slusariuc 2018; Tola et al. 2024).

Our analysis shows that several determinants, such as state assistance, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and cultural variations, shape musicians' proactivity. Although state funding is critical, it should be structured to encourage musicians' autonomy and creativity without fostering excessive dependence on subsidies. Self-confidence among musicians was identified as one of the main determinants of proactivity in both observed regions.

The study also highlights the need to support an understanding of cultural nuances. Rural tourism has become a cornerstone of economic growth and cultural heritage in many Mediterranean areas. Musicians are, moreover, critical actors in the construction of the distinctive cultural identity of rural Mediterranean communities via their performance/artistic practices. Hence, rural communities have become increasingly desirable tourist destinations that display authenticity and immersive experiences. This study emphasises the role of managing critical motivational factors, with the goal of raising the musician's proactivity levels.

The research shows that some background variables affecting musicians' proactivity are state support, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and

[24] cultural variability. State aid is, of course, crucial, but it should be designed to encourage engagement with the arts by musicians in a way that does lead to excessive dependence on such support. Notably, self-confidence emerged as the most decisive factor influencing proactivity among musicians, underscoring the need for self-confidence training and professional development workshops.

In general, the paper contributes to the sustainable regional development of Mediterranean rural areas by providing insights into some of the variables driving musicians' initiative and music tourism development. The findings can be applied to enhance the music industry and rural tourism offerings in Slovenia, Montenegro, and other Mediterranean regions. This would ultimately improve the appeal of rural destinations while promoting economic development, cultural preservation, and the development of proactive skills in musicians through education. In addition, it draws attention to the importance of more sophisticated support structures for musicians and more robust approaches for creating rural music tourism.

The study's limitations include the small sample size in Montenegro, which may affect the general validity of the findings, and the geographical limitation to only two Mediterranean countries, which makes it difficult to generalize to wider regions. Self-reporting scales may introduce bias, while the time frame, which is limited to 2023, does not allow for insight into long-term trends. In addition, the study does not include a wider range of factors, such as cultural differences or financial barriers, limiting the results' comprehensiveness.

For further research, we suggest including a wider geographical area and additional factors such as cultural differences, financial barriers and the impact of digitalization, which would allow for a more comprehensive analysis. Additionally, long-term studies and the use of qualitative methods would contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamic factors that influence musicians' proactivity and the development of music tourism.

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