

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE FIELD OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the current state of cultural institutions and educational programs within the creative and cultural sector (CCS) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It utilizes data from the Statistical Agency of BiH and presents the results of the DIGITCRESHE project, in which Banja Luka College High School participated. The paper identifies essential challenges, such as the lack of modern educational curricula, insufficient digitalization of cultural resources, and limited opportunities for professional networking and practical education. Recommendations include sector improvement through digital transformation, enhanced cooperation between educational institutions and industry, and the development of cultural infrastructure.

KEY WORDS: *creative industry, education, networking, culture*

POBOLJŠANJE KVALITETE VISOKOG OBRAZOVANJA U PODRUČJU KREATIVNIH INDUSTRIJA

SAŽETAK

Ovaj rad bavi se trenutnim stanjem kulturnih institucija i obrazovnih programa unutar kreativnog i kulturnog sektora (KKS) u Bosni i Hercegovini. Korišteni su podaci Agencije za statistiku BiH i prikazani su rezultati projekta DIGITCRESHE u kojem učestvuje Visoka škola „Banja Luka College“. U radu se identifikuju ključni izazovi, kao što su nedostatak savremenih obrazovnih programa, nedovoljna digitalizacija kulturnih izvora i ograničene mogućnosti za profesionalno umrežavanje i praktično obrazovanje. Preporuke uključuju poboljšanje sektora digitalnom transformacijom, pojačanu saradnju između obrazovnih institucija i industrije te razvoj kulturne infrastrukture.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: *kreativna industrija, obrazovanje, umrežavanje, kultura*

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INTRODUCTION

The creative and cultural sector (CCS) in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a vital part of the socio-economic structure, encompassing a wide range of activities including art, design, museums, galleries, music production, literature, film, and other cultural domains. This sector plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage, shaping identity, and promoting innovation. Although it has significant potential for development and economic contribution, CCS faces numerous challenges that hinder its full realization.

One of the major problems faced by CCS in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the lack of institutional support. There is insufficient coordination between different levels of government and a lack of strategy for the development and promotion of cultural and creative industries. Additionally, the infrastructure supporting this sector is often inadequate, with outdated or underdeveloped spaces for artistic activities, galleries, and music studios.

Furthermore, educational programs in the fields of art and culture are not always aligned with the current needs and trends in the creative industries, resulting in a disconnect between education and the actual demands of the market. This makes it more difficult for young creatives to successfully enter the professional world and contribute to the development of the sector.

This paper provides a detailed analysis of the current state of CCS in Bosnia and Herzegovina, using data from the Agency for Statistics of BiH and research conducted as part of the DIGITCRESHE project. The aim is to identify key challenges and develop recommendations to help improve and grow the sector, maximizing its potential and contribution to society and the economy.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In analyzing the creative and cultural sector (CCS) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the methodological framework plays a key role in shaping the understanding of the sector's current state, identifying challenges, and formulating recommendations for improvement. This framework encompasses approaches and techniques used for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data from two main sources: the BiH Statistical Agency⁴ and the DIGITCRESHE project⁵.

To cover a broad spectrum of information about CCS, data was collected from official sources and research studies. Quantitative data from the BiH Agency for Statistics provides insights into various aspects of the sector, such as the number and type of cultural organizations and individuals, financial indicators, employment, and other relevant metrics. These data form the basis for understanding the economic and demographic characteristics of CCS.

On the other hand, the DIGITCRESHE project offers deeper insight into challenges and opportunities within the sector through qualitative data. This research includes surveys, interviews, and focus groups with key stakeholders such as artists, cultural institution managers, and educators. These data help to capture subjective attitudes, experiences, and perceptions that are not covered by quantitative analyses.

4 <https://bhas.gov.ba/Calendar/Category/36>, Accessed 10. 07. 2024.

5 <https://digitcreshe.eu/>

The analysis combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive picture of CCS. Quantitative analysis uses statistical methods to examine patterns and trends in data from the BiH Statistical Agency. This analysis allows for the identification of key indicators, such as the growth of cultural organizations, changes in financing and employment, and other metrics important to the sector.

Qualitative analysis focuses on interpreting data from the DIGITCRESHE project. Through analysis of interview transcripts and survey responses, thematic areas such as challenges in infrastructure, education, and institutional support were identified. Qualitative analysis provides insight into the underlying causes of problems and offers a deeper understanding of the specific needs and desires of sector stakeholders.

To ensure the accuracy and validity of the results, several key aspects were carefully considered. Combining data from official sources and research studies provides a broader perspective and helps reduce bias. The validity of the analysis was further enhanced through consultations with experts in culture and the arts, ensuring that interpretations align with the sector's realities.

It is important to note that limitations were recognized and considered during the analysis. For example, official statistics may be incomplete or outdated, while the subjectivity of qualitative data can influence the interpretation of findings. These limitations were accounted for in formulating conclusions and recommendations, ensuring that the results are as precise and useful as possible.

Some limitations that may affect the analysis include restricted access to data due to a lack of updated information or limited availability of detailed statistical data. While qualitative data provides a deep understanding of issues, it can be subjective and may not always be representative of the broader sector. Additionally, generalizing the results may be challenging due to variations across different areas and segments of CCS.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review for analyzing the state of the creative and cultural sector (CCS) in Bosnia and Herzegovina covers key sources dealing with the issues of museums, libraries, galleries, orchestras, and educational programs. The literature relies on theoretical frameworks, case studies, policy analyses, and studies that offer insights into the current challenges and opportunities for improving the CCS.

The Council of Europe's documents on culture emphasize the need for a broad definition of culture, encompassing various human activities and creativity such as music, dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, painting, sculpture, photography, graphic arts, industrial design, costume and fashion design, film, television, radio, sound recording, and artistic activities related to presentations, performances, exhibitions, art education, cultural heritage, and modern forms of expression (Jagić & Vučetić, 2013).

Definitions of culture vary, depending on whether the focus is on the subjective dimension of culture (values, behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs) or on the objective aspect, which cultural forms assume in terms of collective memory and codified traditions (Crespi, 2006). Culture is a universal human phenomenon, an anthropological reality, and a fundamental characteristic of humans as both social and individual beings. Thus, no society

in history exists without a certain level of culture in its broadest sense, nor any individual who has not internalized the basic cultural patterns of their society.

One interpretation of art offered by sociology focuses on the general categories of social action theory and its relationship with society's symbolic dimension. Sociologists note that the processes of artistic creation are always influenced by complex economic and social conditions, as well as by the collaboration of various actors with institutions such as art academies, schools, and galleries. The sociological perspective is seen as the best approach to analyzing art because it simultaneously considers the influence of social conditions on artistic expression and art's relative autonomy, with its capacity to anticipate and revolutionize established cultural forms (Crespi, 2006).

Plato was one of the first to emphasize the importance of beauty and aesthetics in education, arguing that aesthetic sensitivity influences ethical aspects of personality, promoting goodness and helping to achieve inner harmony (Mendeš, Hicela, & Pivac, 2012). This concept is significant for both societal development and the individual.

The concept of the creative economy continues to evolve, based on the interaction between human creativity, ideas, intellectual property, knowledge, and technology. In other words, the creative economy is an economic ecosystem of profit and nonprofit creative industries, artists, educators, entrepreneurs, suppliers, policymakers, and financiers, who produce and distribute goods and services based on creativity and art (American for the Arts, 2022).

Creative industry refers to copyright-protected production, encompassing projects that create both tangible and intangible products and services intended for market exchange (Horvat et al., 2018). It involves independent sectors focused on producing intellectual products and cultural values based on human creativity. Creative industries are centered on producing intellectual results, products, or services perceived by consumers as entirely new (Wong & Chau, 2020).

According to Goldstein (2016), creativity drives innovation and is the primary force behind the development of social, professional, personal, and entrepreneurial skills. Creativity, rather than culture, is now seen as the key reflection of human potential.

UNESCO (2021) notes that the creative economy is one of the fastest-growing sectors globally, generating nearly 30 million jobs, particularly for young people aged 15 to 29 (Newbigin, 2021). The creative economy arises from the use of generic information and communication technologies, involving the production, distribution, and consumption of intangible creative, cultural, and symbolic goods, including ideas, experiences, perceptions, images, software, media content, design, information, and services (Primorac, 2021).

It is important to note that the creative economy is a broader concept than the creative industry, as it also includes the exchange of cultural and creative products. These exchanges are vital for all members of society, particularly the creative workforce. Creative activities play a crucial role in the creative economy, visibly impacting GDP, employment rates, city branding, and investments in creative cities, as well as the external trade environment (Jobst, 2020).

RESEARCH RESULTS

In this review, we have analyzed the current situation in all areas of culture and art, which are also the domain of the creative industry. As mentioned earlier, we used data from the BiH Agency for Statistics and research during the DIGITCRESHE project.

Through the analysis, we have seen that museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina are facing challenges such as the reduction of the number of collections and objects, which indicates problems with preservation, digitization and availability of museum resources. The lack of professional staff and limited funding further complicate the work of these institutions.

Year	Number of Museums	Number of Collections	Number of Items	Natural Science Collections	Ethnological Collections
2015	25	223	1,860,834	22	33
2017	20	225	1,878,318	15	21
2019	22	269	3,581,073	33	28
2021	20	185	3,101,137	31	32
2022	18	187	2,603,720	27	39

Table 1: Number of museums, collections, and items over the years, along with changes in the number of natural science and ethnological collections (2014-2022), Source: BiH Statistics Agency

The data shows a decline in the number of museum objects and collections, which may be the result of a lack of resources for preservation, digitization and promotion. The introduction of modern technologies, such as virtual reality and digitization, can significantly improve the accessibility of museum collections and increase public interest.

The data clearly show us that it is necessary to increase investment in this cultural sector, especially an increase in investments in museums and digitalization, through an increase in the budget for the maintenance of collections and the development of digital resources.

In addition, staff training and infrastructure modernization are very important. Education of museum staff on the use of new technologies for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage would raise the level of interest in culture.

Libraries play a key role in preserving cultural heritage and promoting reading, but they are facing a reduction in the number of employees and processed materials. Also, as a recommendation for this segment of culture, we can mention the digitization of the book collection, which is becoming necessary to preserve the relevance of libraries.

Year	Number of Libraries	Books & Brochures	Newspapers	Old & Rare Books
2014	1,060	5,715,106	12,291,579	20,271
2015	1,126	5,212,043	13,589,261	20,539
2016	1,153	4,755,732	13,362,894	39,432
2019	1,035	4,817,753	12,567,512	48,577
2022	1,011	4,658,498	8,243,747	51,861

Table 2: Number of Libraries and Processed Materials (2014-2022), Source: BiH Statistics Agency

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, we see a decrease in the number of libraries and materials. This phenomenon indicates the need for modernization and digitization of content in order to maintain relevance in modern society. Digital libraries and e-books can significantly contribute to the preservation and availability of knowledge and more comprehensive education.

As a recommendation for this segment of culture, the authors recommend the development of digital libraries, the introduction of e-resources and the digitization of old books in order to make them available to the general public. Through the DIGITCRESHE project, it was observed that bringing together the book collection in digital form plays a significant role in the education of young people. Also, the improvement of services and modernization means the use of new technologies for library management and interactive support for users.

Data from the BiH Statistics Agency show that galleries in Bosnia and Herzegovina play an important role in presenting contemporary art, but face a number of challenges, including low attendance and lack of financial support.

Year	Total Exhibitions	Own Exhibitions	Guest Exhibitions
2015	191	114	77
2017	413	259	154
2019	187	121	66
2021	112	75	37
2022	181	102	79

Table 3: Number of Exhibitions in Galleries (2015-2022), Source: BiH Statistics Agency

It is evident that 2017 was a very prosperous year in terms of exhibitions, while the following years show a significant decline. The decrease in the number of exhibitions over the years highlights the need for innovation and greater audience engagement. Organizing digital exhibitions and improving promotional strategies can help attract more visitors. Through the DIGITCRESHE project, it has been observed that today's generations are more receptive to art when promoted through digital media, but it is also necessary to develop online galleries and promote them via social networks. Additionally, as a recommendation for improving this sector, educational programs and workshops, especially those for children and young people, are important to increase interest in art.

Apart from the mentioned areas of culture, musical ensembles and choirs are facing challenges in maintaining their activities, including a reduction in the number of concerts and audiences. Therefore, it is necessary to modernize and improve this form of art through a digital approach and connect it with educational institutions. Digital transformation can enable live streaming of concerts and attract a younger audience. Through the DIGITCRESHE project, we have realized that connecting with music schools can secure new talents and expand the repertoire.

The DIGITCRESHE project analyzed the state of the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS) in the Western Balkans and certain EU countries, but in this paper, we will focus only on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through the analysis conducted in the project, we have noticed that the current educational programs in the CCS sector are not sufficiently aligned with market needs. Our analysis revealed that cultural workers emphasize the need for cur-

riculum modernization and greater connection with the industry. We have realized that educational programs do not keep pace with the rapid changes in the labor market and do not sufficiently utilize new technologies. There is a need for the integration of digital tools and skills relevant to the modern business environment.

DISCUSSION

In this discussion, we will focus on analyzing the research results on the state of the creative and cultural sector (CCS) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a particular emphasis on comparing statistical data and responses from the DIGITCRESHE project respondents. The aim is to clarify key challenges and opportunities in different segments of CCS and identify areas requiring immediate attention and reform.

The statistical data on museums and museum collections (Table 1) indicate a decrease in the number of museum items and collections in recent years. The number of museums dropped from 25 in 2015 to 18 in 2022, while the number of items fluctuated, showing a significant drop from over 1.8 million in 2015 to just over 2.6 million in 2022. This illustrates noticeable oscillations and a decline in both the quality and scope of collections.

Survey responses from the DIGITCRESHE project highlight similar challenges: a lack of institutional support and resources for preservation and digitalization. Respondents agreed that increasing investment in digitalization and staff training would be key to improving the state of museums. Both the data and responses point to the need for urgent modernization of museum infrastructure and improved access to digital technologies to ensure the long-term sustainability and visibility of cultural heritage.

The data on libraries (Table 2) show a decline in the number of libraries and the volume of processed materials in recent years. The number of books and brochures decreased from over 5.7 million in 2014 to around 4.7 million in 2022, while the number of old and rare books significantly increased. This could suggest reduced availability of contemporary resources and a need for greater investment in digitalization.

According to the DIGITCRESHE project respondents, libraries face challenges in modernization and digitalization. A significant portion of respondents believes that developing digital libraries and improving services is essential. These responses align with statistical data, which show a decrease in processed materials and the number of libraries, further emphasizing the need to redirect resources towards digitalization and modernization.

Data on galleries and exhibitions (Table 3) show variations in the number of exhibitions over the years, with a sharp increase in 2017 followed by a decline in subsequent years. These fluctuations may be related to financial challenges and low visitor numbers.

DIGITCRESHE project respondents indicated that galleries face challenges in promoting art and engaging audiences. Recommendations for promoting art through digital media and organizing educational programs underscore the need for innovation in audience engagement and the use of modern technologies. This aligns with the decline in exhibition numbers and the need for greater public involvement and innovation.

The data on orchestras, ensembles, and choirs reveal a decrease in the number of concerts and activities. These statistics reflect the challenges of maintaining activities and engaging audiences.

Respondents emphasized the need for digitalizing performances and connecting with music schools as key measures for improving the situation in this segment. Digital transformation and enhanced collaboration with educational institutions were recognized as significant for attracting younger audiences and securing new talent, which is consistent with the statistics showing a reduction in activities and concerts.

Results from the DIGITCRESHE project point to significant discrepancies between educational programs and labor market needs. Respondents highlighted the lack of opportunities for internships and the insufficient application of new technologies in education. Survey data show that only a small percentage of respondents believe that current educational programs are adequately preparing students for the global market.

Recommendations for updating curricula and increasing collaboration with industry are crucial for adapting educational programs to contemporary needs. This aligns with survey results showing the need to integrate digital tools and skills relevant to the labor market.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the CCS in Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with comparisons of statistical data and the results from the DIGITCRESHE project, highlights key challenges and opportunities shaping the sector. The findings offer several insights that can serve as the basis for recommendations and strategies to improve the CCS.

The decrease in collections and items within museums points to serious problems in cultural heritage preservation. The lack of resources for digitalization and staff training exacerbates the issue. To enhance the accessibility and preservation of museum heritage, increased investment in museums, the development of digital resources, infrastructure modernization, and staff training is recommended.

The decline in the number of libraries and processed materials emphasizes the need for modernization and digitalization of library collections. Respondents confirmed the need for developing digital libraries and improving services. New technologies in library management and interactive user support can significantly improve the relevance and accessibility of libraries.

Data on galleries show fluctuations in the number of exhibitions, which may be due to financial challenges and low visitor numbers. Promoting art through digital media and organizing educational programs is recommended to boost public interest. These efforts will help galleries attract more visitors and improve their performance.

The reduction in concerts and activities highlights the need for improved approaches and collaboration with educational institutions. Digitalized performances and closer cooperation with music schools can help attract new talent and expand repertoires, increasing audience engagement while preserving musical heritage.

The research indicates that current educational programs in the CCS sector are not fully aligned with labor market needs. Updating curricula and increasing collaboration with industry are essential for aligning educational programs with modern demands and technologies.

In conclusion, the cultural and artistic sectors in Bosnia and Herzegovina face significant challenges that require urgent and coordinated efforts for improvement. Implement-

ing the recommendations from this research can greatly enhance the state of museums, libraries, galleries, and music, as well as education within the CCS sector. These measures will contribute to preserving cultural heritage, improving accessibility and audience engagement, and adapting educational programs to the needs of the contemporary market.

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