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Abstract

Purpose - Artist residencies comprise a unique accommodation type and a form of cultural entrepreneurship which remains overlooked from a hospitality perspective. This exploratory study examines the phenomenon of artist residencies as specialist accommodation, as well as their operators' motives as cultural entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Creation theory is used to explore how artist residency operators create entrepreneurial opportunities.

Design/methodology/approach - Asynchronous email interviews were conducted with 20 artist residency operators from 18 countries. Purposive sampling was used to select interviewees and thematic analysis to analyze the primary data.

Findings - The results showed that with few exceptions, artist residencies address all criteria of specialist accommodation, and that social interactions among artists and operators are fundamental in running an artist residency. From a cultural entrepreneurship perspective, most of the operators declared that their priorities were to promote artistic creativity and cultural knowledge exchange, confirming the main elements of creation theory.

Practical implications - Managerial implications are discussed to enhance artist residency resilience and strengthen their financial viability, as well as to support them to overcome the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Originality/value - This study extends the hospitality literature by adding the artist residencies to the existing types of specialist accommodation. It also examines creation theory and concludes that artistic creativity and cultural networks are prominent in artist residency entrepreneurial activities.

Keywords Artist residencies, Specialist accommodation, Cultural entrepreneurship, Creation theory, Asynchronous email interview, COVID-19

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Early research on the accommodation sector (for instance, Arbel and Pizam 1977; Shelburne, 1970, etc.) focused on mainstream accommodation establishments, primarily large scale hotels and resorts. The last two decades several scholars (for instance, Jones *et al.*, 2013; McIntosh and Siggs, 2005; Radder and Wang, 2006) turned their research interest to non-traditional forms of hospitality, such as bed & breakfast, guest houses, boutique hotels etc. These forms of hospitality provide personalized and specialized services to travellers and guests, besides the provision of food, beverage and accommodation. As a consequence, the term specialist accommodation emerged as “a generic, non-elitist, and integrating expression” encompassing a set of unique styles and types of accommodation (Morrison *et al.*, 1996, p. 19). Similarly to several types of specialist accommodation, artist residencies offer artists space to experiment and create away from their usual work environment by enhancing their creativity and offering opportunities for research and personal development (Badham *et al.*, 2017).

While the subject of entrepreneurship has been studied from a multitude of disciplinary perspectives (see for example Ahmad, 2015; Rivetti and Migliaccio, 2015; Swedberg, 2006; Yodchai *et al.*, 2022), research on artist residencies has been overlooked from the aspect of hospitality. Instead, most research on artist residencies is based on organization theory and management studies, and as a consequence there is only passing mention of the subject in the hospitality literature. According to Rivetti and Migliaccio (2015) the lack of research on entrepreneurship in the performing arts is due to the dependence of most relevant businesses and organizations on public funding. However, before the COVID-19 pandemic the cultural and creative industries were considered as growth drivers of development, increasing therefore the need for research on the topic (Liang and Wang, 2020).

The first aim of this study is to identify whether artist residencies comprise a form of contemporary specialist accommodation by testing the four criteria identified by Pearce and Moscardo (1992, cited in Morrison *et al.*, 1996) and Morrison *et al.* (1996, p. 24): a) the provision of guest interaction with host personnel, b) some special opportunity or advantage to guests through location and several other features of the establishment (e.g. a historic building), or activities offered to guests (e.g. art courses), c) accommodation that is owner-operated and not part of any chain or consortium and d) “small guest accommodation capacity (generally less than 25 rooms)”. The second aim of the study is to situate the phenomenon of artist residencies through the lens of creation theory by focusing on the operators’ motives and entrepreneurial activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed several challenges that artist residencies need to overcome regarding their business model change and the necessity to adapt to the digital economy (OECD, 2020). In doing so, this study provides insights into an overlooked, but with great potential for development, accommodation sector that aims to deliver not only short-term paid lodging, but also to facilitate artists’ ability to move across the world and develop their career (Lehman, 2017).

Moreover, this study seeks to understand the theoretical framework of cultural entrepreneurship which may defy financial performance and business expansion in artist residency management goals (European Commission, 2016). Creation theory is considered appropriate in this study because it highlights the role of creativity and supports that opportunities are created by entrepreneurs and do not exist independent of them (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; 2010; Alvarez *et al.*, 2013; Ferreira *et al.*, 2019). This theory also suggests that profit maximization is not among the main goals of entrepreneurs (Alvarez and Barney, 2007), something that characterizes artist residency operators who mainly focus on artistic

achievements and cultural knowledge sharing. Prior research has explored the theoretical and conceptual aspects of creation theory and therefore there is a gap in the literature regarding its applied research. According to Alvarez *et al.* (2013), creation theory is rooted in social constructionism and Campbell's (1974) evolutionary epistemology. Alvarez *et al.* (2013, p. 307) support that creation theory recognizes that entrepreneurs "socially construct their own reality but that the veracity of those social constructions are tested either against objective reality or against the collective social constructions of others." Based on the fact that little explanation is offered by Alvarez *et al.* (2013) on how the entrepreneurs' social constructions are tested against objective reality, creation theory seems to be basically rooted in social constructionism, because testing the individual social constructions against the collective ones, does not negate the fact that both individual and collective social constructions are subjective in nature. This is also supported by an earlier study conducted by Alvarez and Barney (2010, p. 565) on the epistemological roots of creation theory, who explained that: "this "objective" reality may be nothing more than the aggregation of other individuals' socially constructed realities."

While several motives are important to become a cultural entrepreneur (Jones *et al.*, 2013), there remains a dearth of empirical research on artist residencies and the motives of their owners/operators. However, a closer examination of artist residencies through the spectrum of hospitality can be useful, since creativity has become increasingly important for entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry (Breier *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, the fact that artist residencies and their operators are poorly researched designates the need for further academic research on the topic (Lehman, 2017).

In this regard, this study examines the phenomenon of artist residencies as specialist accommodation, as well as their operators' motives as cultural entrepreneurs. Additionally, to provide a more insightful understanding of the current trends in artist residencies, the phenomenon is explored during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study enhances the realization of the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as artist residencies are primarily based on cultural knowledge sharing and social interactions, which nowadays are minimized and controlled due to the restrictive safety measures, especially during the winter season.

2. Literature review

2.1. Specialist accommodation and artist residencies

Artist residencies emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century in Europe when artists were withdrawn temporarily in the countryside during the summer to create their own utopias (European Commission, 2016; Pinto *et al.*, 2020). Accordingly, Lehman (2017, p. 10) refers to "an artist colony called the Corporation of Yaddo [that] was founded in 1900 in the state of New York" something that reveals that the phenomenon of artist residencies was not restricted to Europe. During the 60's, modern artist-initiated residencies were established, and in the late 80's and early 90's, artist residences were widely accepted throughout the world as alternative, locally-based learning centres for artists (European Commission, 2016; Pinto *et al.*, 2020). Since then stays in artist residencies have increased (European Commission, 2016). The emergence of artist residencies is embedded in two interlinked tendencies. First, from the supply side the rise of the so-called entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative industries has been an effective way to focus on art and culture by combining a more productive art workplace with short-term residency (Andriotis, 2021; 2022). At the same time, residencies hosting artists from different cultural backgrounds can offer host entrepreneurs several opportunities to gather experience and develop networks and long-

lasting relationships (European Commission, 2016). Second, the global growth of the artist-in-residence phenomenon has been enabled by a) the ability of artists to travel cheaply and faster, b) the proliferation of faster and more cost-effectively ways of communication through the use of internet and the social media and c) artists' interest in learning outside formal educational institutions (Andriotis, 2021; European Commission, 2016).

Following the obvious benefits accrued to artist residencies there is a large number of artists who stay there at various stages of their career, either as a first step to become an artist after graduating from college or higher education, or to use a residency as a mid-career break (Andriotis, 2021; Pinto *et al.*, 2020). For instance, in-depth interviews conducted with 20 artists by the Arts Council of England found that half of them had undertaken a residency at some point in their careers and most considered their stay as an important mean of support (Honey *et al.*, 1997, p. 51). In addition, the artists considered some positive features of residencies, such as the production of artworks in a different working environment, the exploration of new areas of work, as well as the increase of accessibility to a wider audience (Honey *et al.*, 1997).

In practice, artist residencies provide a different accommodation type compared to traditional hospitality enterprises. An artist residency may not only function as specialist accommodation, but also as an art learning centre where knowledge can be shared among the artists, the operator and the host community (Lee *et al.*, 2018). Artist residencies are aimed to host artists of all kinds (poets, composers, dancers, painters, photographers, sculptors etc.), who need to break isolation and work outside their normal working circumstances (Pinto *et al.*, 2020; Stephens, 2001). Some artist residencies provide other services as well, such as art therapy, which includes individual and group therapy through art making (Allen, 1992). Moreover, in the current era artist residencies have been included in regeneration programs of degraded urban settings in North America and Europe (Pinto *et al.*, 2020).

Nevertheless, one challenge to the systematic examination of artist residencies as a form of specialist accommodation is the lack of an insightful understanding of the subject. In fact, artist residencies “take a number of forms ranging from short-term self-funded individual studio residencies with no requirement for public outcomes, to participation in collective artist retreats, micro-residencies in a person’s home, to multi-partner international institutional programs that employ teams of artists for extended periods” (Badham *et al.*, 2017, p. 1). This study focuses on private rather than on artist residencies which are parts of universities or other institutions, due to the fact that the understanding of the influencing factors of independent artist-run entrepreneurs to create, develop and manage their business, can be instrumental in affecting the dynamics of investment in artist residencies. This in turn reinforces cultural change through arts and creates an environment where creativity matches hospitality.

2.2. Artist residency operators as cultural entrepreneurs: A creation theory approach

The concept of entrepreneurship is fundamental in Schumpeter’s (1983) theory of economic development, as entrepreneurs are the ones who drive the economy forward through innovation. According to Shane and Venkataraman (2000), entrepreneurship is linked to the discovery and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities by individuals or firms who introduce new and profitable products and services to the market. Therefore, in the context of this study cultural entrepreneurship refers to formal (e.g. governance structures) and informal social actors (e.g. amateur musicians and actors) who focus on making culture (Gehman and Soublière, 2017).

Cultural entrepreneurs are individuals or a network of persons who interact with each other and focus on novel creative and artistic achievements. Obviously, cultural entrepreneurs

seek to establish financially viable businesses and organizations, but it is assumed that their main motive is to contribute to the sphere of culture, as many of them are artists themselves (Pinto *et al.*, 2020). Certainly, there are cultural entrepreneurs whose primary goal is to maximize their financial gains, as entrepreneurship entails business risk and uncertainty about the outcome of such an undertaking, but the hierarchy of motivation depends on their personality traits (Swedberg, 2006). Cultural entrepreneurship is not only driven by financial viability but also by intangible goals, such as artistic recognition (Betzler and Camina, 2020; Swedberg, 2006; Werthes *et al.*, 2018). Other intangible goals pertain to social connectedness of artists who work together on projects through national or international networks (Betzler and Camina, 2020). Artists' networks are surrounded by other actors, such as auctioneers, gallerists and collectors who might participate in cultural entrepreneurship projects. In this regard, social interactions between artists and other cultural actors are helpful for their professional and personal development.

Eventually cultural entrepreneurship from a creation theory perspective, underlines the fact that individuals' personality traits create entrepreneurial opportunities. In practice, cultural entrepreneurs differ from those investing in other industries because they are particularly concerned with creating and exploiting cultural or creative capital. Their motivations are similar to lifestyle-oriented entrepreneurs, who focus on their personal development and quality of life, and at the same time try to create social networks in contrast to growth-oriented entrepreneurs, who primarily focus on financial performance (Andringa *et al.*, 2016; Fernandes and Ferreira, 2022; Fu *et al.*, 2019; Kallmuenzer *et al.*, 2019).

According to creation theory, entrepreneurial opportunities do not exist in the market independent of entrepreneurs' actions, but these opportunities are an outcome of entrepreneurs' personality traits, prior beliefs, perceptions and abilities to produce innovative products and services (Alvarez and Barney, 2010). Entrepreneurial opportunities are endogenously created by entrepreneurs as they implement their ideas and observe the responses of the market. Additionally, profit maximization is not among the main initial goals of entrepreneurs as the potential gains "do not play a major role in deciding whether or not to engage in entrepreneurial actions" (Alvarez and Barney, 2007, p. 19).

Creation theory suggests that entrepreneurs' efforts to create opportunities are based on the logic of acceptable losses, which refer to the personal and financial costs entrepreneurs are willing to pay. However, "when losses incurred are greater than what is deemed "acceptable", even tenacious entrepreneurs may cease attempting to create an opportunity" (Alvarez *et al.*, 2013, p. 310). This might be explained by the fact that creation theory suggests that entrepreneurs' activities are usually financed by their own economic resources and/or by the wealth of their family or friends. Accordingly, the role of entrepreneurs' social networks is significant as they usually recruit human resources from their social networks to create and exploit the entrepreneurial opportunities (Alvarez and Barney, 2007). Based on the aforementioned review, it is evident that the major elements of creation theory are the following: a) Personality traits, such as creativity, charisma, and the ability to observe the market and create entrepreneurial opportunities, b) profit maximization is not among the main initial goals but the logic of acceptable losses characterizes entrepreneurs' actions, and c) entrepreneurs' social networks to implement entrepreneurial strategy.

Artist residencies comprise an overlooked aspect of cultural entrepreneurship, from the viewpoint of creation theory. The nexus between cultural entrepreneurship and the hospitality industry should not be confused with hotels offering art-oriented services to their customers (Cheng *et al.*, 2016). However, artist residency owners/operators as cultural entrepreneurs provide highly differentiated (personalized and unique) accommodation services to guests, in contrast to classic hotel services which are usually impersonal (Jones *et al.*, 2013).

2.3. Artist residencies during the COVID-19 pandemic

Since the beginning of March 2020 when the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 as a pandemic (Liu *et al.*, 2020), accommodation providers all over the world experienced an unexpected shock that marked the COVID-19 era followed by several restrictive measures (Clark *et al.*, 2020; Dar and Kashyap, 2022; Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021; Meyer *et al.*, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic had several negative impacts on the global hospitality and tourism industry, since borders, ports and airports closed and people were not allowed to travel overseas during lockdowns (Leta and Chan, 2021). While several governments, industries and service providers, implemented smart work (from home or reduced working hours) to adapt to new circumstances, some firms and organizations could not follow the changes, such as those dealing with tourism and hospitality (Kraus *et al.*, 2020). In particular, hotels and artist residencies share the common feature of providing services to guests. Since visitors and tourists were not allowed to travel during the lockdowns, accommodation providers were forced to shut down.

Accordingly, artist residencies were negatively affected as 54% of planned residencies had been cancelled, postponed or short cut according to a survey conducted during the May of 2020 by Res Artis and the University College London (UCL) (2020). In addition, 9% of artist residency operators were forced to close indefinitely, and only 17% were able to access emergency funding support (Res Artis and UCL, 2020). A more recent study by Res Artis and the UCL (2021) found that 6% of residency operators had been forced to close, while 42% of the artists under study declared that they did not plan to visit any artist residency in 2021 due to the fear of contagion. Additionally, the same study revealed that 61% of residency operators could not get any kind of emergency funding support, and 37% reported that they recently re-opened after the lockdown in the winter of 2020-2021. Similarly to hotels which were obliged to comply with government regulations regarding hygiene and safety measures during the reopening periods (Kenny and Dutt, 2022), artist residencies had to adopt identical strategies to provide guests a safe environment. Thus, social distancing, hygiene protocols, as well as safety and hygiene training of the staff were required to safely operate during the COVID-19 era (Kenny and Dutt, 2022).

In this regard, several entrepreneurship scholars propose that hospitality firms are in great need to modify their existing business models by implementing business model innovation (Breier *et al.*, 2021; Harms *et al.*, 2021). Access to financial resources, flexibility (continuously adapt business strategies) and digitalization are considered to be among the necessary management initiatives, which need to adapt to new circumstances in the COVID-19 era (Breier *et al.*, 2021; Emami *et al.*, 2021; Kraus *et al.*, 2020; Mimaki *et al.*, 2022). In a similar vein, the recent study of Res Artis and UCL (2021) suggests that artist residencies are in great need of reconsidering their crisis management initiatives to get access to funding, provide and promote a safe environment to potential guests, and perhaps to modify their marketing strategy by focusing on vaccinated guests and/or domestic artists. Additionally, the OECD (2020) places emphasis on the creation of digital infrastructure and online platforms to promote digital artworks to a broader audience. Certainly, coaching, mentoring and artist collaboration require face-to-face interactions, but digital artworks and visual art projects might be a provisional solution during lockdowns.

Nevertheless, artist residencies face several barriers in implementing business model innovation (Khanin *et al.*, 2022). The fact that most artist residency owners and operators are artists themselves reveals a lack of appropriate management education and training. The lack of managerial skills and related education has been confirmed as well by other studies on entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism (Madanaguli *et al.*, 2021; Yodchai *et al.*, 2022).

In contrast to growth-oriented businesses, which focus on financial performance, business expansion, new product development etc. (European Commission, 2016), most artist residencies are small-sized enterprises and/or non-profit organizations having different goals, such as cultural development, artistic creativity etc. (Pinto *et al.*, 2020). Despite their differences, business entrepreneurs as well as cultural entrepreneurs are operating in a turbulent environment where crisis management and business model innovation have become essential for their survival. Therefore, crisis management training of artist residency operators and employees is considered to be essential as suggested by hospitality scholars (Giousmpasoglou *et al.*, 2021). In this regard, creation theory could be used in the current environment of uncertainty to create new entrepreneurial opportunities, as it suggests that entrepreneurs form opportunities with little or no information when they initially engage in entrepreneurial activities (Alvarez and Barney, 2020).

3. Methodology

Given the minor empirical research on artist residencies, in the context of cultural entrepreneurship, this exploratory study was conducted with the aim to examine artist residencies as specialist accommodation, as well as their operators' entrepreneurial activities during the COVID-19 pandemic from a creation theory perspective. To meet the aim of this study, relevant databases (Google Scholar, Scopus) were searched for the occurrence of the keywords: "arts entrepreneurship," "cultural entrepreneurship," "artist residencies" and "specialist accommodation" in order to find academic journal articles across a wide range of literature. Accordingly, to filter the search results the selection criterion concerned the use of the aforementioned keywords within the title, abstract and/or keywords.

This article examines creation theory, which is rooted in social constructionism, and suggests that entrepreneurs are creating entrepreneurial opportunities based on their subjective perceptions of social reality (Alvarez and Barney, 2010). Thus, interviews are essential in this study in order to identify the operators' subjective beliefs, attitudes and personality traits. Additionally, the limitations of face-to-face data collection methods due to COVID-19 restrictions, the difficulty to access geographically dispersed respondents, as well as the call of Blackburn and Kovalainen (2009) for more critical and qualitative research approaches to entrepreneurship, resulted in the selection of the asynchronous email interview method (Andriotis, 2021; Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021; Ratislavová and Ratislav, 2014; Schiek and Ullrich, 2017). This method was also chosen because it allows further exchange of written information between the interviewees and the researchers.

Artist residencies were selected from a list provided by the Worldwide Network of Arts Residencies (Res Artis). The Res Artis is an international not-for-profit organization that has a membership of more than 550 artist residencies located in over 75 countries (Res Artis, 2022). Certainly, there are globally many artist residencies which are not enlisted in the Res Artis network, as the last requires a membership fee. There are also other organizations, such as the DutchCulture/TransArtists (2022), which provides a database of over 1500 residency programmes all over the world, and Artist Communities Alliance (2022) which has a membership of more than 400 organizations and individuals. However, Res Artis database was selected because it comprises the most important professional body of artist residencies as 85% of artists who seek for residency offerings visit the Res Artis website (Res Artis and UCL, 2020), and because many artist residencies are displayed in both Res Artis and DutchCulture/TransArtists websites.

Artist residencies which were parts of governmental institutions and universities were not selected because the aim of this study was the examination of the views of private cultural

entrepreneurs/owners. Based on the fact that the list contained repetitive entries and inactive websites, of which some closed due to the COVID-19 restrictive measures, a total of 207 artist residencies were finally selected. Purposive sampling was used to select interviewees who are owners or operators of artist residencies and therefore have a deep knowledge of the phenomenon under study. This sampling method was meaningful because there is a limited number of entrepreneurs (worldwide) who run such residencies and are able to provide primary data.

The potential interviewees were initially informed via a motivation email about the study aims and objectives and were asked to participate in the survey. Two reminder emails were sent after six and twelve weeks respectively in order to achieve a satisfactory sample size. In total, 20 artist residency operators replied within a six-month period which lasted from November 2020 to April 2021. The response rate was 9.66%, which according to Kallmuenzer *et al.* (2019), is in the same range of similar studies in entrepreneurship research. A confidential, anonymous, self-administered interview was employed for this study, consisting of five sections. The first section focused on the characteristics of each artist residency (number of rooms, location and type of services provided). The second section concerned the operators' socio-demographic characteristics (education, gender and age). Socio-demographic data of the respondents were examined at the initial stage of the data analysis. However, they were not used as explanatory variables because their analysis did not reveal any important impact on artist residency activities and management as well as on their operators' motives.

The third section included questions that explored the four criteria of specialist accommodation: a) whether host (personnel)-guest interactions are provided, b) what kind of activities and experiences are offered to guests, c) accommodation type provided to guests, and d) accommodation capacity. The fourth section pertained to the operators' perceptions on cultural entrepreneurship and their main motives for operating an artist residency (cultural, financial and/or social). Finally, the last section referred to the COVID-19 era which negatively affected artist residencies followed by several restrictive measures regarding loss of income during lockdowns and hygiene conditions in reopening periods.

Regarding ethical issues, confidentiality was ensured to the interviewees by hiding their names or other identifiable information when presenting the results of the study (Creswell, 2014). With the exception of descriptive questions, all interview questions were self-explanatory and open-ended to allow interviewees to freely express their opinions. After receiving the responses, some emails were sent to some interviewees to clarify certain points of their responses which needed further explanations. Since all responses and further clarifications had been received in email texts, the authors started to transcribe them in word sheets by creating a file for every interviewee.

To provide a rich description of the data and to offer meaningful interpretations of the phenomenon under study thematic analysis was employed, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). They also support that thematic analysis is compatible with social constructionism and therefore appropriate for the understanding of cultural entrepreneurs' experiences. At the first stage the interviewees' responses were read several times by both researchers in order to familiarize themselves with the primary data as well as to identify interesting points and ideas (Creswell, 2014). To facilitate a more comprehensive and deeper analysis of the data provided by the transcripts, manual coding was preferred over qualitative data analysis software, which heavily rely on keywords and therefore allow a narrower range of codes (Kozinets, 2015; Paraskevaidis and Weidenfeld, 2019).

A combination of deductive and inductive coding was used to ensure that the data would be classified according to existing theoretical elements drawn from the literature review (deductive coding), as well as to discover interesting new ideas and patterns directly

from the data (inductive coding) (Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019). The deductive coding process started with codes, which were drawn from the literature review, such as artist residencies, artist residency operators/owners, mentorship and coaching, artistic creativity, accommodation, social interactions, entrepreneurship, creation theory, motivation/personality traits, business model innovation, cultural development, cultural networks, COVID-19, lockdown, hygiene and safety measures, digitalization, and crisis management. Then, codes were collated to themes that emerged from the literature review, namely: a) artist residencies/specialist accommodation, b) cultural entrepreneurship/creation theory, and c) artist residencies/COVID-19 pandemic. The next step concerned the inductive coding process by focusing on patterns that differed from the codes developed during the deductive coding process. Both researchers agreed on these codes and collated the data to them. In addition, they compared their interpretations of the primary data and besides some very minor differences they agreed on the above mentioned themes of the results.

The latter concerns investigator triangulation, which enhances the trustworthiness of the study, because different researchers analyze the same body of data and conclude similar results (Decrop, 1999). Moreover, member checking is considered to be a complementary technique to investigator triangulation (Decrop, 1999). Member checking was employed by sending via email a report of the findings to two interviewees as proposed by Creswell (2014). The two interviewees were asked to comment on the findings regarding the accuracy of the provided data and they replied by verifying the results of the study. Meaning saturation was reached, as the last two interviews did not add any further dimensions or insights on the primary data (Hennink *et al.*, 2017), and therefore the sample size of 20 asynchronous email interviews was considered to be sufficient.

4. Findings

The sample consisted of 20 artist residencies located in 18 different countries (15 in Europe, one in Asia, two in North America and the remaining two in South America). Twelve interviewees were females and eight males and their age ranged between 25 and 70 years old, with the majority aged 50 years and older (Table 1). Fifteen interviewees defined themselves as artists and 14 quoted that they studied arts, while 12 out of them studied arts and were active artists. Eighteen artist residencies offered up to nine rooms and the other two 16 and 46 respectively. Seventeen out of the 20 artist residencies had up to five employees and the remaining three up to 48, something that according to the staff headcount criterion of the small- and medium-sized enterprises definition of the European Commission (2020) classifies the first group to the micro enterprises and the second to the small ones. Fourteen artist residencies charged a residency fee and were asking their guests to pay all their travel costs and food needs, as well as any other kind of supplies required. The majority of the artist residencies offered the following art subjects: visual art, sculpture, dance, theatre, performing arts, textile art, music, literature, animations, film-making, photography and ceramics. The deductive coding process resulted in the aforementioned codes which were explained in the previous section. Additionally, the inductive coding process featured interesting findings regarding local cultural development, social change, virtual residencies, and the lack of crisis management training. Codes found during the deductive and the inductive coding process, were collated to the three themes which are analyzed below and depicted in Figure 1.

[Insert Table 1]

4.1. Artist residencies as specialist accommodation

The first prerequisite of specialist accommodation is the provision of personal services and social interactions between guests and the host personnel (Pearce and Moscardo, 1992). While Pearce and Moscardo (1992) refer to typical interactions, such as greetings, communication and the provision of some information, the results of this study revealed that the majority of the respondents referred to closer relationships. In more detail, six respondents referred to typical relationships with guests, while 14 out of 20 explained that close relationships with artists are fundamental in their philosophy of running the artist residency. This confirms Werthes *et al.* (2018) who state that social interactions are meaningful for cultural and creative entrepreneurs as they help them to shape their entrepreneurial identity. Six out of the 14 said that they often had lunch and dinner with their guests and five referred to visits to the city and the surrounding landscape. As Respondent 6 explained: “We tend to create a friendly and comfortable environment for the guests and we usually communicate closely prior to their arrival. We ourselves live there with them during their residency and host parties, have barbeques, organize walks around the city and more. We often eat together and hang out.” The above quote reveals that strong social interactions and ties between operators and guests are not pursued for typical reasons, but comprise an important element of cultural entrepreneurs’ lifestyle orientation.

Warm and welcoming attitude of hotels’ staff is considered to be a crucial and meaningful factor in offering memorable hotel experiences to guests (Sthapit, 2019). However, strong social interactions between residency operators and guests go a step further, as they sometimes form long lasting relationships. As Respondent 18 stated: “Some artists stay in long time connection with us through emails, so we are following them to see how they get along after the residency. Long-time friendship starts sometimes after this.” Thus, cultural networks continue and expand long after artists return to their hometowns. Close relationships with guests are typical in specialist accommodation according to McIntosh and Siggs (2005), who explained that interactions vary depending on the guests’ needs. This was verified by two respondents, with Respondent 17 quoting: “It depends on the artist. Some like to interact with others, but there are artists, particularly writers, that prefer solitude.” While closer relationships and stronger social interactions between the operators (and/or the host personnel) and the guests are evident in other types of specialist accommodation, such as boutique hotels (McIntosh and Siggs, 2005), in artist residencies this phenomenon empowers artists’ creativity through mentorship and coaching.

The second criterion of specialist accommodation refers to special activities and/or opportunities offered to guests through the location and/or some remarkable features of the residency, such as a historical or heritage building. The provision of special activities concerns a major feature of artist residencies as they primarily offer coaching, mentorship, art courses and workshops. This was mentioned by the majority of the respondents and eleven of them referred to artists’ exhibitions which are usually organized at the end of artists’ stay: “At the close of the residency, we encourage the artists to share their work in an exhibition” (Respondent 12). Another interesting activity provided by some artist residencies concerns meetings and collaborations of guests with local artists, something that offers them the chance to get in touch with the local culture and art. Besides the activities at the artist residencies, 11 respondents quoted that the location of their residency comprised a special attribute, with six out of them referring to the rich cultural heritage of their city. For instance, Respondent 5 noticed that her artist residency is located in the historic centre of a city in Italy, which is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. She also referred to the cultural significance of the local carnival which could provide inspiration to artists. Therefore, artist

residencies serve as spaces that combine their offering artistic services with the local cultural tradition.

Additionally, seven respondents mentioned that the building that houses their residency has a historical value. In particular, Respondent 18 quoted: “We kept the atmosphere and different things in the house (children school, built in 1936) and even the blackboard is still on the wall. The location is ideal for artists, an isolated community on a small island.” Similarly, Respondent 20 mentioned that her artist residency: “Is a historical log home on original site built in 1839.” Another respondent referred to the historical significance of the surrounding farm of her residency: “Our farm is 350 years old and our forest we planted ourselves is 20 years old and offers amazing opportunities for walking, filming and photography” (Respondent 3). Thus, artist residencies which are housed in historical buildings promote historic preservation something that has been noted by relevant studies as well (see for example, Morrison *et al.*, 1996; Moscardo *et al.*, 1996). Consequently, the majority of the respondents are aware of the special features of their residencies and understand that the location and/or the building offer an inspiring environment to artists.

The third criterion of specialist accommodation refers to owner-operated accommodation which is not a part of any consortium or chain. Eighteen out of 20 respondents declared that they operated their residencies themselves, but two mentioned that their residencies were funded by other organizations. The first case was funded by the municipal council of a city in Norway, while the other by the Arts Council of Ireland. These two cases do not address the third prerequisite of specialist accommodation, as they are managed and funded by different stakeholders. The fact that the vast majority of the entrepreneurs are running their enterprises and organizations based on their own resources reveals that artist residencies are mainly an outcome of the entrepreneurs’ personal interest in arts.

Finally, the fourth criterion concerns artist residency accommodation capacity. In particular, the residencies offered rooms ranged from one to 16 (with the exception of only one who had 46 available rooms) having therefore a small accommodation capacity (less than 25), which is typical in specialist accommodation (Morrison *et al.*, 1996). This finding is assisted by the fact that the sample of this study consisted of artist residencies from 18 different countries, and therefore this might be a general tendency. In comparison to hotels’ accommodation capacity, Ahmad (2015) classifies as small-sized hotels those having up to 50 rooms, while Andriotis (2002) those with 40 rooms or less. This might indicate that in contrast to the hotel industry that places emphasis on profit maximization and business growth, artist residencies as specialist accommodation focus on artistic creativity and inspiration, personal cultural development of owners/operators and artists, as well as on cultural knowledge sharing, and therefore smaller accommodations are preferred.

4.2. Creation theory: Cultural entrepreneurship and operators’ motivation

The element of creation theory, as generated in the literature, refers to the entrepreneurs’ personality traits as a main motive to engage in entrepreneurial activities. The fact that the majority of the interviewees are artists themselves and/or studied arts reveals that their engagement with artist residencies is based on prior cultural interest and artistic creativity. All respondents referred to cultural development motivation and seven out of them clarified that personal development through interactions with other artists was among their main motives for running an artist residency. For instance, Respondent 5 admitted that her motivations included: “financial and personal cultural development as well as exchange and sharing of my knowledge.” Another seven informants clarified that their residencies are places where ideas and cultural experiences are exchanged between the operators and foreign

and local artists. As stated by Respondent 18: “The main goal is to provide an opportunity for international exchange, where professional artists are given the opportunity to meet, exchange ideas and possibly cooperate in a peaceful environment.”

Four other entrepreneurs revealed that their motivation was based on the promotion of social change, as stated by Respondent 6: “We are motivated to inspire social change and running artist residencies to support artists to be more socially engaged in their communities. By acquiring new skills, building a wider network, explore new ideas, artists are motivated to become more proactive.” For instance, Richards (2020) refers to several rural and urban cultural regeneration programs, which improved locals’ quality of life through community engagement. Although cultural networks focus on cultural development, there is potential for the expansion of the established networks by including local stakeholders something that could promote local and regional economic development as well (Ferreira *et al.*, 2019). This confirms creation theory by highlighting the prominent role of networks in artist residencies as a form of cultural entrepreneurship.

Besides cultural development motivation, five out of the 20 respondents mentioned financial reasons for operating their residency. However, none of them quoted that profit maximization was among their main goals; instead they supported that financial gains were essential to cover their operating costs. Most of them declared that their priority was to promote artistic creativity and cultural knowledge exchange. This can be realized in the words of Respondent 17 who quoted that: “I see the destructive force of Airbnb (in my city [in France] there are over 1,000 rentals!), and in order to resist going down that path I see my artist residency as a more poetic way to keep my building inhabited, even if the financial rewards are considerably less.” Likewise, Respondent 20 stated that “no money is made here.” To sum up, the motivations of the respondents under study are similar to lifestyle entrepreneurs, who place emphasis on quality of life and personal creativity. In this regard, hobbies, personal values and knowledge sharing were among respondents’ main priorities in running their artist residencies, instead of focusing on profit maximization and business growth. These findings confirm another element of creation theory, which refers to the fact that profit maximization does not comprise a priority for residency operators.

4.3. Artist residencies during the COVID-19 pandemic

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts on the artist residencies under study, as 15 of 20 shut down and postponed their programs during the winter of 2020-2021, something that confirms past research findings (Res Artis and UCL, 2021). It also confirms that the vast majority of accommodation providers could not implement work from home as an alternative and innovative strategy (Kraus *et al.*, 2020).

The remaining five artist residencies operated only for domestic artists as international ones were forbidden to travel due to the COVID-19 restrictions. In this respect, Respondent 3, quoted: “No overseas guests this year. Domestic guests have to fill out a Covid form three days before arrival. We don’t police it, but in the forms and communication prior we make it all very clear.” Obviously the lockdown measures had negative effects on the residency earnings and therefore some changed their strategy by renting the rooms to domestic students, as Respondent 1 admitted: “We rented the apartments and studios out to make money. That money was spent on doing some much needed work in the apartments, such as new kitchens, paintings, and new furniture.” Despite the fact that this respondent changed the use of her artist residency by altering its business model, this was only a temporary adaptation to the lockdown without any intentions to implement long-term innovative changes. None of the respondents under study mentioned any kind of received emergency funding, despite the fact that their artist residencies comprise micro- and small-

sized enterprises, which usually have limited financial resources available (Breier *et al.*, 2021). This finding differs from the finding of Res Artis and the UCL (2021) where less than 40% of the sample had access to emergency funding support, and this might be because, when the study was conducted many of the artist residencies that received emergency funding were closed, and therefore they could not respond to the email interview request. Also, it probably reveals the lack of appropriate crisis management training of the respondents under study and highlights the fact that access to financial resources comprises an important element of business model innovation.

The ongoing pandemic and the lockdowns motivated two respondents to plan and execute some online programs and virtual projects in order to stay in touch with guests and to enhance their cultural networks: “In response to the pandemic we launched a virtual residency program that has been successfully functioning and expanding during the last year” (Respondent 10). Likewise, Respondent 13 stated: “It meant that we were required to stop our members meeting. On the positive side, we started a series of online meetings, which negated our geographic isolation. It kept us in touch with people far away as well as nearby.” The fact that only two out of the 20 respondents implemented novel and innovative changes to their business model, by exploiting digital opportunities, reveals a low adaptation to the circumstances of the COVID-19 era. This finding is confirmed by the survey of Res Artis and UCL (2021, p. 12) which revealed that only 23% of participating artist residencies planned to operate as a virtual residency in the near future, “with only 7% actively offering virtual residency opportunities currently.”

While the internet offers some promising options for online networking (Prommer *et al.*, 2020) and virtual residency programs, artist residencies are primarily based on face-to-face interactions, which are negatively affected by the COVID-19 restrictions (Res Artis and UCL, 2021). For instance, Respondent 16 explained how the COVID-19 measures affected his interactions with domestic artists: “As much discussion with walks as time and artist interest permits, limited now by Covid to walking at a safe distance and supporting technical and other requirements as they arise.” This reveals that social distancing and the adoption of safety measures by artist residencies have become a new normality in host-guest interactions.

Moreover, the potential of virtual cultural events might be used as a marketing tool and a platform to display artworks and foster collaboration with artists. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic several challenges emerged for accommodation providers, which required a reorientation of crisis management initiatives and the adoption of hygiene and safety measures (Giousmpasoglou *et al.*, 2021, Leta and Chan, 2021). In this regard, Respondent 16 has already complied with such measures: “Our accommodation does provide independent self-contained quarantine appropriate and has allowed artists from abroad to quarantine and work when travel permitted.” Nevertheless, artist residency crisis management reorientation does not only concern the adoption of COVID-19 protective measures. This could be promoted on their websites to convince potential future guests, even though none of the respondents under study referred to any such initiative. Eventually the artist residencies under study did not get any funding during the lockdowns, something that led to poor financial performance, which is critical for their survival. Moreover, they did not cooperate with any local stakeholders to receive financial support and the vast majority (except two respondents) did not express any interest to alter any dimensions of their business model.

[INSERT Figure 1]

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1. Conclusions

To overcome past research negligence on cultural entrepreneurship of artist residencies, this exploratory study used asynchronous email interviews to examine the operating activities of 20 artist residencies from four different continents. This methodological approach, which has been rarely adopted in hospitality studies (Andriotis, 2021; Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021), was used as a safe mode of interviewing in the current era of the COVID-19 pandemic, to allow researchers to reach remote interviewees as well as to examine social phenomena which occur in geographically dispersed locations. Additionally, the researcher could send several follow-up emails to the interviewees to clarify ambiguous parts of their written responses.

5.1.1. Artist residencies as specialist accommodation

In addition, this study extended the hospitality literature by adding the artist residencies to the existing types of specialist accommodation, such as lifestyle and boutique hotels (Morrison *et al.*, 1996). It revealed that the vast majority of the artist residencies under study address the four criteria of specialist accommodation. In particular, the first criterion concerns social interactions between the artists and the owners/operators and/or their staff. Artist residencies primarily operate as learning and educational centres and therefore many artists reside there to gain artistic knowledge and experience (European Commission, 2016). Artistic coaching and mentoring were evident as well and this might lead to long lasting mentor-student relationships. The second criterion refers to special opportunity for guests through the location of artist residencies or other features, such as residencies placed in historical or heritage buildings. Artist residencies usually offer a calmness environment which stimulates creativity and inspiration to guests, and this might be the reason that many of them are located in rural settings or in historical/heritage buildings. The third criterion concerns accommodation that is owner-operated and not part of a chain or consortium. Finally, the fourth criterion refers to the small accommodation capacity. Artist residencies primarily operate as accommodation settings with up to 25 rooms and as a consequence with a small number of guests.

5.2. Theoretical implications

Creation theory was confirmed in this study because first, artist residency owners/operators were mainly motivated by personal values and interest in the arts to create entrepreneurial opportunities; second, none of the residency operators mentioned profit maximization among the main reasons to run their artist residency, and third, networks created and maintained by the operators were mentioned as important elements of their arts-oriented entrepreneurial activities. The latter mainly considers cultural networks of local and international artists, gallerists, collectors, museum directors and curators etc. rather than networks of various stakeholders (host community, regional and local government authorities, businessmen etc.). In this regard, the applied research of creation theory in this study goes beyond the previous theoretical and conceptual studies on entrepreneurship (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; 2010; Alvarez *et al.*, 2013) by examining how artist residency operators create entrepreneurial opportunities.

Adopting creation theory in different contexts of the real economy might reveal distinctive features of entrepreneurship, such as the prominent role of cultural networks and

social interactions in artist residencies. Additional theoretical implications of this study concern the fact that cultural entrepreneurship in the context of artist residencies differs from usual entrepreneurial behaviour that focuses on market opportunities and financial performance. While the primary goal of cultural entrepreneurship is making culture (Gehman and Soublière, 2017) financial viability and business model innovation still comprise important factors of successful entrepreneurship, something that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the fore. Therefore, cultural entrepreneurs need to maintain a balance between the cultural and financial dimensions of their entrepreneurial activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts on the creative and cultural industries in general, and on artist residencies in particular. As stated in the literature (for instance Res Artis and UCL, 2021), most residencies were forced to shut down during the lockdowns and their reopening was followed by a restrictive framework of legal obligations regarding safety and hygiene measures, which reduced social interactions. During lockdowns few artist residencies have maintained their cultural networks through the internet, but face-to-face interactions still comprise an essential factor in running artist residencies, as the findings of the Res Artis and UCL (2021) study reveal.

5.3. Practical implications

The managerial implications of this study mainly concern the ability of artist residencies to implement business model innovation in the current era of the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety and hygiene measures, which artist residencies are obliged to follow, require a reorientation of their crisis management strategy. Guests should be ensured that artist residencies follow all necessary measures in their attempt to provide a safe environment through social distancing and the adoption of hygiene protocols. However, such adjustment policies need to be promoted through their websites as well as on social media sites. Another alternative strategy seems to be their reorientation to virtual residencies. Although this strategy minimizes host-guest interactions, which are essential for artist residencies, it offers the chance to promote digital artworks and virtual cultural events creating therefore entrepreneurial opportunities to reach a wider audience (OECD, 2020). Despite the fact that the respondents under study did not receive any funding, public aid is required to provide emergency funding opportunities to artist residencies, something that could enhance their resilience and strengthen their financial viability during and after the COVID-19 era. In particular, these funds might be used for the development of online platforms, the digitalization of artworks and the parallel development of a virtual residency. The latter may allow artist residencies to develop new projects while maintaining their cultural networks. In case the COVID-19 pandemic continues to require restrictive measures in the future, online networks could act as a means to maintain existing relationships between artists and the residency operators. Additionally, the current pandemic and the corresponding need to adopt crisis management obviously reveal the necessity of required education and training programs to overcome any difficult situation.

5.4. Limitations and future research

One of the limitations of this exploratory study concerns the fact that it was based on a purposive sample, which is a non-probability sample, and therefore the study findings have limited generalization. In general, qualitative research results are limited to the studied sample (Becker, 2017) and in particular, while some dimensions of artist residencies may be common (e.g. cultural development goals, accommodation that provides appropriate conditions for artistic creativity etc.), the results of this study cannot be generalized to other

artist residencies as they might have distinctive features. Another limitation concerns the research method used in this study, namely the asynchronous email interview, which refers to written interviews with strangers and therefore the researcher could not see the interviewees' facial expressions and gestures as happens with face-to-face interviews. Additionally, many artist residencies shut down during the COVID-19 era and did not respond to survey requests; therefore the motivations of operators who had closed their residencies remain unexplored. Future research needs to address such cases as well as to explore if those artist residencies reopened or permanently closed. Finally, future studies need to identify differences between artist residencies and other types of specialist accommodation as realized by their customers and operators.

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Table

No	Age	Gender	Location/Country	Rooms	Staff
1.	51	Female	Norway	2	1
2.	55	Female	India	3	4
3.	67	Female	Italy	9	2
4.	69	Male	Spain	1	2
5.	51	Female	Italy	2	0
6.	25	Female	Serbia	4	5
7.	59	Male	USA	2	2
8.	63	Female	Germany	2	2
9.	30	Female	Belgium	46	48
10.	29	Female	Russia	5	3
11.	41	Female	Italy	3	11
12.	59	Male	Colombia	6	3
13.	49	Female	Ireland	1	1
14.	56	Male	Netherlands	16	16
15.	50	Male	Bulgaria	5	2
16.	70	Male	UK	3	2
17.	64	Female	France	3	2
18.	56	Male	Iceland	4	0
19.	48	Male	Argentina	4	5
20.	66	Female	Canada	3	1

Table 1: Profile of artist residencies and operators

Figure

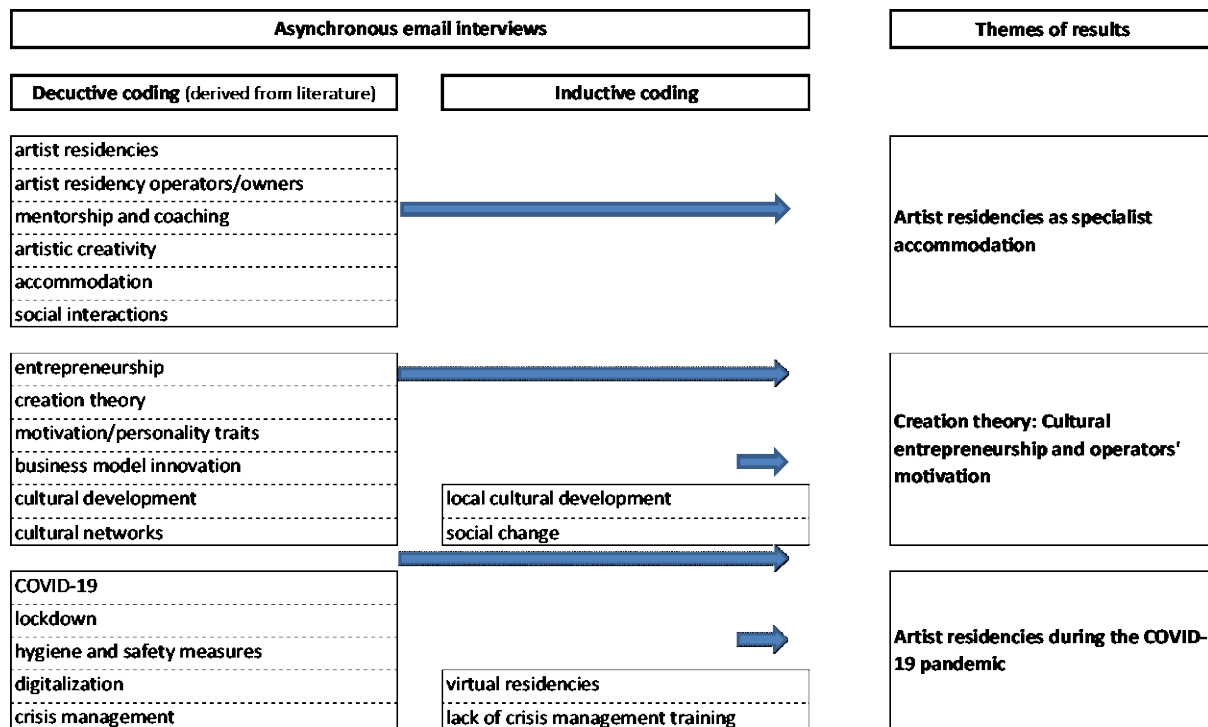


Figure 1: Coding and results