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ВЛИЯНИЕ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ КРЕАТИВНЫХ КЛАСТЕРОВ НА РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЕ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ

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Аннотация. Формирование креативных кластеров и их влияние на региональное экономическое развитие рассматриваются с экономической точки зрения. Анализируется роль креативных кластеров в эффективном использовании местных ресурсов, создании новых рабочих мест, повышении предпринимательской активности, расширении производства инновационных товаров и услуг, а также повышении инвестиционной привлекательности регионов. Особое внимание уделяется экономическим эффектам, возникающим в результате интеграции таких направлений, как дизайн, ремесленничество, информационные технологии, медиа, туризм, мода, искусство и другие виды креативной деятельности, в региональную экономику. Исследуются возможности креативных кластеров в поддержке малого бизнеса и частного предпринимательства, развитии местных брендов, создании добавленной стоимости и сокращении межрегиональных экономических различий. Результаты исследования показывают, что развитие креативных кластеров способствует усилению экономической специализации регионов, более эффективному использованию человеческого капитала и созданию дополнительных условий для устойчивого экономического роста.

Ключевые слова: креативный кластер, региональная экономика, креативные индустрии, экономическое развитие, инновации, предпринимательство, человеческий капитал, инвестиционная привлекательность, региональная конкурентоспособность, добавленная стоимость.

Abstract. The formation of creative clusters and their impact on regional economic development are analyzed from an economic perspective. The role of creative clusters in the efficient use of local resources, creation of new jobs, promotion of entrepreneurial activity, expansion of innovative goods and services, and enhancement of regional investment attractiveness is examined. Particular attention is paid to the economic effects arising from the integration of design, handicrafts, information technology, media, tourism, fashion, arts, and other forms of creative activity into regional economies. The potential of creative clusters to support small businesses and private entrepreneurship, strengthen local brands, generate value added, and reduce interregional economic disparities is also examined. The findings indicate that the development of creative clusters contributes to strengthening regional economic specialization, promoting more efficient utilization of human capital, and creating additional conditions for sustainable economic growth.

Keywords: creative cluster, regional economy, creative industries, economic development, innovation, entrepreneurship, human capital, investment attractiveness, regional competitiveness, value added.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global economy, creative industries are increasingly recognized as an important source of innovation, employment, entrepreneurship, and regional competitiveness. Unlike traditional industries that primarily depend on natural resources, physical capital, and large-scale production facilities, creative industries are largely based on human capital, knowledge, talent, cultural resources, intellectual property, and technological capabilities. This distinctive feature makes them particularly significant for regions seeking new sources of economic growth, especially under conditions of structural transformation, digitalization, and increasing competition for investment and skilled labor.

One of the most important organizational forms supporting the development of creative industries is the creative cluster. A creative cluster can be understood as a spatial concentration of interconnected enterprises, entrepreneurs, cultural institutions, educational organizations, technology providers, investors, and other actors engaged in the production and commercialization of creative goods and services. The geographical proximity

of these participants facilitates knowledge exchange, professional cooperation, innovation, the joint use of infrastructure, access to markets, and the emergence of new entrepreneurial initiatives. As a result, creative clusters can generate economic effects that extend beyond individual firms and influence the development of the wider regional economy.

The importance of creative clusters for regional development is associated with their ability to mobilize local economic and cultural resources. Each region possesses a specific combination of historical heritage, traditions, skills, educational potential, business experience, tourism resources, and human capital. When these resources are integrated into economically viable creative activities, they can form the basis for new products, services, brands, and market niches. For example, traditional handicrafts can be combined with contemporary design and digital marketing, while cultural heritage can be linked with tourism, media, gastronomy, fashion, and event industries. Such interactions increase the commercial value of local resources and contribute to the diversification of regional economic activity.

Creative clusters also have considerable potential to influence employment. Their development creates demand for a wide range of occupations, including designers, architects, programmers, artists, craftspeople, marketers, media specialists, photographers, producers, tourism professionals, and other creative workers. At the same time, cluster development can generate indirect employment in trade, logistics, catering, accommodation, transport, education, consulting, and business services. Therefore, the economic contribution of a creative cluster should not be limited to the number of firms operating directly within the creative sector; its broader effects on related industries and local labor markets should also be considered.

Another important aspect is the role of creative clusters in supporting small and medium-sized enterprises. Creative industries are often characterized by a relatively high share of microenterprises, self-employed professionals, start-ups, and project-based businesses. Their concentration within a common territorial environment can facilitate business interactions, improve access to information and professional networks, and create additional opportunities for cooperation. Shared infrastructure, exhibition spaces, co-working areas, digital platforms, educational services, and promotional activities can strengthen the market position of small creative businesses and increase their ability to commercialize innovative ideas.

The formation of creative clusters can also improve the investment attractiveness and image of regions. A vibrant creative environment enhances the visibility of a territory, contributes to the formation of a recognizable regional brand, and can attract tourists, investors, skilled professionals, and young entrepreneurs. In this context, creative clusters perform not only a production function but also a broader territorial development function. They may contribute to the revitalization of underused urban spaces, stimulate business activity in specific districts, and increase demand for local services. Consequently, their impact can be observed in both economic indicators and changes in the spatial organization of regional development.

At the same time, the effective establishment and development of a creative cluster require the creation of appropriate economic and institutional conditions. Its effectiveness depends on the quality of human capital, entrepreneurial culture, infrastructure, access to finance, market demand, institutional support, intellectual property protection, cooperation among participants, and the capacity of local businesses to commercialize creative products. Effective interaction among education, business, culture, and public institutions can enhance the economic benefits of geographical concentration. Therefore, the regional effects of creative clusters should be assessed not only through their existence as territorial formations but also through the actual economic activity and interactions taking place within them.

For regions of developing economies, the issue is particularly relevant because creative industries can provide opportunities for economic diversification while offering flexible approaches to the use of financial, human, and technological resources compared with many traditional industrial sectors. The use of local cultural resources, digital technologies, entrepreneurship, and professional skills can create new sources of value added and income. In addition, the growth of creative activities may contribute to the diversification of the sectoral structure of regional economies and expand opportunities for young people and small businesses to participate in regional economic processes.

In Uzbekistan, the development of creative industries may become an important component of regional economic diversification. The country's regions possess significant potential in handicrafts, cultural heritage, tourism, design, information technology, media, architecture, fashion, performing arts, and other creative activities. The effective concentration and economic integration of these activities can contribute to the formation of competitive local products and services, stronger territorial brands, increased entrepreneurial activity, and the creation of new employment opportunities.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of creative cluster formation on regional economic development and to identify the main economic effects associated with their operation. Particular

attention is paid to their influence on entrepreneurship, employment, innovation, investment attractiveness, value creation, and regional competitiveness. The study also considers the conditions under which creative clusters can make a sustainable contribution to regional economic growth and the more efficient use of local human and cultural resources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between industrial clustering, creativity, and regional economic development has received considerable attention in regional economics, economic geography, and innovation studies. The theoretical foundation of cluster-based regional development is closely associated with Michael E. Porter. In his study *Clusters and the New Economics of Competition*, Porter defines clusters as geographically concentrated groups of interconnected firms and institutions operating within related fields. He argues that geographical concentration can strengthen productivity and innovation by facilitating access to specialized suppliers, skilled labor, information, and supporting institutions. From the perspective of regional development, Porter's approach is important because it shifts attention from the performance of individual firms toward the economic advantages generated by territorial concentration and interaction among businesses and institutions.

The application of cluster theory to cultural and creative activities has expanded substantially since the early 2000s. Philip Cooke and Luciana Lazzeretti contributed to this discussion by examining creative cities, cultural clusters, and local economic development. Their edited volume, *Creative Cities, Cultural Clusters and Local Economic Development*, brings together studies focusing on the relationship between culture, creativity, knowledge networks, and localized economic development. The literature represented in this volume emphasizes that cultural resources can function as economic assets when they interact with entrepreneurship, knowledge exchange, innovation systems, and local institutional conditions. Furthermore, the studies demonstrate that the economic potential of cultural concentration can be enhanced through high-quality networks and the capacity to transform cultural assets into economically viable activities.

A particularly significant empirical contribution was made by Luciana Lazzeretti, Rafael Boix, and Francesco Capone in their study *Do Creative Industries Cluster? Mapping Creative Local Production Systems in Italy and Spain*. The authors examined the geographical concentration of creative industries in Italy and Spain and identified creative local production systems using local labor markets as territorial units. Their analysis included both traditional cultural activities, such as publishing, music, architecture, and performing arts, and technology-oriented creative activities, including ICT, research and development, and advertising. The study demonstrated that creative industries show clear tendencies toward spatial concentration and that the configuration of such concentrations differs across territories. This finding is particularly relevant to regional economics because it suggests that the economic contribution of creative industries depends not only on sectoral growth but also on their territorial distribution.

Lazzeretti, Capone, and Boix subsequently extended this research by investigating the factors underlying the clustering of creative industries in Italy and Spain. Their 2012 study shows that creative employment tends to concentrate around medium-sized and large cities, although the determinants and patterns of concentration differ between countries. The authors combine perspectives from cultural economics, evolutionary economic geography, and urban economics to explain creative clustering. Their findings indicate that historical and cultural endowments, urbanization, human capital, and the broader socioeconomic characteristics of territories can influence the geographical concentration of creative activities. Consequently, regional strategies aimed at developing creative clusters should take into account existing territorial specialization and the specific characteristics of creative industries across different regions.

The importance of human capital in creative regional development has also been investigated by Richard Florida, Charlotta Mellander, and Kevin Stolarick. In *Inside the Black Box of Regional Development—Human Capital, the Creative Class and Tolerance*, the authors examine how human capital and creative occupations are associated with regional income and wages. Their empirical analysis shows that human capital and the creative class influence regional development through different channels. The creative-class measure performs strongly in explaining regional labor productivity, as reflected in wages, whereas conventional educational measures of human capital perform better in explaining regional income. The authors also identify relationships between cultural economy variables and regional development outcomes. This research suggests that the economic effectiveness of creative clustering is closely associated with the availability and concentration of skilled and creative workers.

Related empirical evidence is provided by Ron Boschma and Michael Fritsch, who studied the distribution and economic effects of the creative class across more than 500 regions in seven European countries. Their

research indicates that creative workers are distributed unevenly across European regions and that regional employment opportunities and an open social environment are associated with their geographical concentration. The study also examines the relationship between the presence of creative workers and regional growth. These findings support the view that creative clusters are closely connected with regional labor-market conditions and a territory's capacity to attract and retain human capital.

At a more detailed spatial scale, Rafael Boix and co-authors investigated the micro-geography of creative industry clusters in Europe. Their research, published in *Papers in Regional Science*, analyzes the spatial location and co-location patterns of creative industries and shows that creative activities form identifiable geographical "hot spots" and interconnected spatial concentrations. The authors' use of detailed firm-level geographical information demonstrates the importance of examining creative clusters not only through broad regional or administrative boundaries but also at more localized spatial levels. This is an important methodological observation for regional economic research because the economic effects of creative concentration may be highly localized within particular cities, districts, or neighboring territories.

The potential contribution of creative clustering is not limited to major metropolitan areas. Research on non-metropolitan municipalities in Spain identified hundreds of locations with the potential to host creative clusters. The study found that municipalities associated with creative clusters displayed more favorable indicators in areas such as economic activity, human capital, demographic dynamics, and employment compared with otherwise comparable non-metropolitan locations. These findings broaden the discussion of creative clusters by demonstrating that their relevance to regional development extends beyond global cities and large metropolitan centers. Creative specialization based on local cultural resources, crafts, design, tourism-related activities, and other place-specific assets can also have significant economic value in smaller territories.

Chapain and Sagot-Duvaurox provide a broader assessment of this field in their systematic literature review of cultural and creative clusters. They note that cultural and creative quarters, districts, and clusters have become widely discussed as instruments of local development, urban regeneration, and economic development. Their analysis also demonstrates the importance of clearly distinguishing between the concepts of a "creative cluster," "cultural cluster," "creative district," and "creative quarter." Their assessment highlights the value of evaluating creative clusters through measurable economic outcomes alongside an examination of the physical concentration of cultural organizations and creative businesses.

Recent evidence also confirms that the spatial concentration of creative industries varies within national economies. Sekeroglu and Celik's study of Türkiye develops a regional agglomeration index for creative industries at the NUTS-2 regional level. Their results identify Istanbul as the strongest creative-industry concentration, followed by Ankara and Izmir, while also demonstrating notable differences in the territorial distribution of creative entrepreneurship. This evidence is particularly relevant to economies characterized by regional disparities because it demonstrates the importance of considering regional differences in entrepreneurship, human capital, infrastructure, and market access when developing creative industries.

The OECD's *The Culture Fix: Creative People, Places and Industries* places these academic findings within a broader regional-development context. The report emphasizes that cultural and creative sectors directly contribute to wealth creation, employment, entrepreneurship, and innovation, while also affecting other sectors through supply chains, creative occupations, knowledge spillovers, and place attractiveness. OECD evidence further shows that cultural and creative activities tend to concentrate spatially and increasingly form part of regional smart-specialization and local-development strategies. Thus, the economic importance of creative clusters extends beyond the direct output of creative enterprises and may influence the wider regional business environment.

Taken together, the reviewed literature confirms that the territorial concentration of creative industries can be associated with stronger knowledge exchange, specialized labor markets, entrepreneurship, innovation, business formation, and more intensive use of local cultural and human resources. The literature also emphasizes that the economic contribution of geographical concentrations of creative activity is shaped by specific regional, institutional, and socioeconomic conditions. Chapain and Sagot-Duvaurox's systematic review highlights the conceptual and methodological diversity of the field, while comparative studies by Lazzeretti, Boix, Capone, Boschma, Fritsch, and other scholars reveal substantial differences among regions.

The studies reviewed above have primarily examined European and North American regional settings, with more recent research beginning to address other national contexts, such as Türkiye. This creates a strong rationale for context-specific research into how creative clustering affects regional economies with different institutional, demographic, cultural, and structural characteristics. For the present study, particular

attention is therefore given to the extent to which creative clusters may influence regional entrepreneurship, employment, value creation, innovation activity, investment attractiveness, and territorial competitiveness. Such an approach makes it possible to assess creative clusters not simply as concentrations of creative organizations but as an economic phenomenon whose regional effects can be evaluated through observable development outcomes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs the **comparative analysis method** to assess the impact of creative cluster formation on regional economic development. The method is used to compare regions with different levels of creative-industry concentration in terms of key economic indicators, including employment, entrepreneurial activity, value added, investment attractiveness, innovation activity, and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Statistical and analytical data from official reports, international organizations, and previous empirical studies are examined to identify differences and common trends across regions. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between the territorial concentration of creative businesses and changes in regional economic performance. The comparative approach makes it possible to determine whether regions with stronger creative-industry agglomeration demonstrate more favorable economic outcomes than regions with lower concentrations of creative activities. The results obtained through this method provide an empirical basis for evaluating the economic significance of creative clusters in regional development.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The comparative analysis shows that creative clusters can exert a significant influence on regional economic development, although the scale and direction of this influence depend on the economic structure, level of urbanization, availability of skilled labor, entrepreneurial activity, and institutional conditions of each territory. The reviewed evidence indicates that regions with a relatively high concentration of creative industries tend to demonstrate stronger interaction between firms, greater labor specialization, more intensive knowledge exchange, and broader opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, creative clustering tends to be more frequently observed in territories where cultural resources, human capital, market demand, and business infrastructure are relatively well developed.

One of the principal results concerns the concentration of creative activity in economically dynamic urban territories. OECD data show that cultural and creative employment accounts for between **1.4% and 5.7% of total employment** in OECD and EU countries for which comparable data are available. Moreover, in almost 90% of countries with regional data, capital regions have the highest share of cultural and creative employment. In some cities and regions, creative and cultural occupations account for as much as one in ten jobs. This confirms that geographical concentration is an important characteristic of the creative economy and suggests that creative clusters can become meaningful components of regional labor markets.

The results also indicate that creative industries may contribute to employment growth at a faster pace than the economy as a whole. According to OECD estimates, cultural and creative employment increased by **13.4% between 2011–2019**, compared with an average increase of **9.1% in overall employment** across OECD and EU countries. Although these figures reflect the broader dynamics of creative activities rather than the effects of clustering alone, they demonstrate the growing economic importance of activities associated with creativity, culture, design, media, and specialized professional services. In regions where such activities become geographically concentrated, the employment effect may be reinforced by the emergence of specialized suppliers, supporting services, educational institutions, and related businesses.

A second important finding is that the regional impact of creative clusters extends beyond employment within formally defined creative industries. Approximately **40% of cultural and creative employment is located outside cultural and creative sectors**, including designers, programmers, architects, and other creative professionals working in manufacturing, professional services, public institutions, and other parts of the economy. This finding is economically significant because it demonstrates that creative capabilities can also contribute to the competitiveness of traditional industries. Consequently, the regional value of a creative cluster should be measured not only by the number of cultural organizations or creative enterprises located within a particular district but also by its wider contribution, including the diffusion of creative skills into other sectors.

The comparative evidence can be summarized as follows (Table 1):

Table 1
Economic Impact of Creative Clusters on Regional Development¹

Area of impact	Observed result of creative concentration	Regional economic significance
Employment	Higher concentration of creative occupations in major urban and capital regions	Expansion and diversification of regional employment
Entrepreneurship	Concentration of small firms, freelancers, and specialized creative businesses	Increased business activity and opportunities for self-employment
Innovation	Creative professionals operate both within and outside creative sectors	Knowledge and creative skills spread into traditional industries
Human capital	Creative industries tend to concentrate where skilled labor is available	Greater demand for qualified and specialized workers
Local specialization	Different territories develop different creative specializations	Stronger territorial differentiation and potential regional branding
Business linkages	Creative firms interact with suppliers and service providers	Additional indirect economic activity outside the cluster
Territorial attractiveness	Creative activities contribute to the attractiveness of cities and regions	Greater potential to attract talent, visitors, and investment

The relationship between creative clustering and innovation is particularly important. OECD evidence emphasizes that creative professionals contribute to innovation throughout the wider economy, not only within cultural and creative industries. Research on creative service industries also identifies links between their presence and regional productivity, indicating that knowledge-intensive creative services can support economic performance through specialized expertise and cross-sectoral interaction. Thus, a region containing a strong concentration of design, digital media, architecture, software, advertising, and related creative activities may benefit from improved product differentiation, marketing capacity, digital transformation, and the introduction of new business practices.

Territorial specialization represents another important result. The comparative studies of Italy and Spain by Lazzeretti, Boix, and Capone show that creative industries form identifiable local production systems and are particularly concentrated around medium-sized and large cities. However, the structure of these concentrations differs substantially from one territory to another. This means that a successful regional creative economy does not necessarily require all types of creative industries to be represented equally. A territory may develop stronger specialization in crafts, design, audiovisual production, architecture, software, fashion, cultural tourism, or other activities, depending on its existing resources and competencies.

The spatial analysis conducted by Boix and co-authors provides further support for this result by showing that creative-industry concentration often takes the form of relatively localized “hot spots” rather than a uniform distribution across large administrative territories. From an economic perspective, this suggests that regional-level indicators may sometimes conceal highly concentrated local areas where actual interaction among firms, creative professionals, institutions, and consumers takes place. Therefore, evaluating creative clustering requires attention not only to regional averages but also to the internal spatial distribution of creative businesses.

The comparative analysis further demonstrates that creative clusters are not exclusively a metropolitan phenomenon. Research examining non-metropolitan Spanish municipalities identified creative concentrations outside major cities and found that such locations could be associated with favorable conditions related to economic activity, human capital, demographic characteristics, and labor-market performance. This is especially relevant for regional development because it suggests that creative specialization can potentially support smaller cities and peripheral territories when it is based on distinctive local resources and viable market opportunities.

Another result concerns business formation and self-employment. Creative industries are characterized by a relatively high proportion of small firms, freelancers, and independent professionals. Across OECD countries with available data, approximately 29% of cultural and creative workers are self-employed, which is slightly more than twice the average rate for the total workforce. This characteristic creates favorable conditions for entrepreneurship and small-scale market entry while also highlighting the importance of ensuring stable income opportunities, sustainable contractual arrangements, and appropriate social protection. Therefore, the regional economic success of a creative cluster should be evaluated not only through growth in the number of individual entrepreneurs but also through the stability, productivity, and income-generating capacity of these activities.

¹ Source: Developed by the author.

The findings reveal that the benefits of creative clustering are closely associated with the presence of appropriate territorial conditions. Evidence from Italy and Spain indicates that creative concentration is influenced by several territorial factors, including urbanization, cultural resources, human capital, and broader socioeconomic conditions. Consequently, the productive potential of creative enterprises located within the same physical area can be strengthened through effective interaction and cooperation. Economic benefits become more pronounced when firms have access to skilled labor, customers, professional networks, digital infrastructure, specialized services, and opportunities for cooperation.

The analysis also highlights the importance of balanced regional development. Since creative industries are frequently concentrated in capital cities and economically developed urban centers, encouraging the broader territorial distribution of creative activities can help create additional development opportunities for different regions. OECD evidence showing that capital regions generally contain the highest shares of creative employment illustrates the spatial concentration of these activities. At the same time, evidence from non-metropolitan creative clusters demonstrates that smaller territories also possess opportunities for creative development. Their potential depends strongly on identifying distinctive local competencies and connecting them with viable markets.

For Uzbekistan, these comparative findings suggest that the economic potential of creative clustering should be considered in relation to the specific specialization of individual regions rather than through a uniform approach. Regions with established traditions in handicrafts, cultural heritage, and tourism may possess different competitive advantages from territories with stronger IT, media, design, or educational capacities. This represents an inference drawn from international comparative evidence rather than a result derived from a separate Uzbek regional dataset.

Overall, the results indicate that creative clusters can contribute to regional economic development through higher employment concentration, entrepreneurship, specialization, innovation, and wider intersectoral effects. Their greatest economic value lies not simply in concentrating creative enterprises geographically but in creating conditions in which creative knowledge and professional skills become commercially productive and interact with the wider regional economy. Furthermore, differences between metropolitan and non-metropolitan territories, varying access to human capital and infrastructure, and diverse forms of employment highlight the importance of assessing the economic outcomes of creative clustering in terms of both economic growth and the overall quality of regional development.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study confirms that the formation of creative clusters can make a meaningful contribution to regional economic development by strengthening employment, entrepreneurship, innovation, territorial specialization, and the commercial use of local cultural and human resources. Creative clusters create favorable conditions for the geographical concentration of firms, professionals, institutions, and supporting services, which can improve knowledge exchange, business interaction, and access to specialized labor.

The analysis shows that the economic effects of creative clustering are not limited to the creative industries themselves. Creative occupations and competencies are also utilized in manufacturing, tourism, trade, professional services, information technologies, and other sectors. As a result, the development of creative clusters can generate broader regional effects through the diffusion of design, digital skills, marketing capacity, innovation, and new forms of entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the results indicate that the positive impact of creative clusters largely depends on regional conditions. Human capital, infrastructure, market accessibility, entrepreneurial activity, institutional support, digital connectivity, and the availability of local cultural and economic resources significantly influence their effectiveness. Therefore, the geographical concentration of creative enterprises can generate greater economic benefits when supported by favorable institutional, infrastructural, and market conditions.

The findings also demonstrate that creative clustering is characterized by varying levels of spatial concentration. Creative industries are often concentrated in capital cities and economically developed urban areas, while peripheral regions possess additional opportunities to strengthen their access to skilled labor, investment, and markets. Evidence from non-metropolitan territories suggests that smaller regions can also benefit from creative specialization when it is based on distinctive local advantages, such as handicrafts, cultural heritage, tourism, design, or other place-specific competencies.

For Uzbekistan, the development of creative clusters can be particularly relevant for increasing the economic use of regional cultural heritage, traditional crafts, tourism resources, digital competencies, and entrepreneurial potential. Different regions may develop different forms of creative specialization depending on their existing resources and competitive advantages. Such specialization may contribute to the creation

of new employment opportunities, the growth of small businesses, the development of local brands, and the generation of additional value added.

Overall, creative clusters should be considered one of the promising directions for regional economic diversification. Their contribution to sustainable regional development becomes more significant when creative activity is economically productive, commercially viable, and integrated with the wider regional economy. Therefore, assessing creative clusters through measurable indicators of employment, entrepreneurship, innovation, value creation, and territorial competitiveness is essential for determining their actual economic significance.

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