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THE CONTRIBUTION OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES INTO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF UKRAINE

The relevance of the study is determined by the growing role of creative industries in generating employment, entrepreneurial activity, exports, and forms of value creation, as well as by the lack of an approach to assessing their contribution to Ukraine's economic development. The study is based on the hypothesis that this contribution is multidimensional and cannot be objectively measured using a single indicator. To test the hypothesis, a system of economic, entrepreneurial, labour, export, innovation and digital, and regional indicators was developed. The composite assessment included comparable statistical series for 2020–2024, normalised using the min–max method and combined into sub-indices of entrepreneurial activity, economic contribution, labour contribution, and export capacity. The results revealed unstable and structurally heterogeneous dynamics of the sector. The highest value of the composite index was recorded in 2021 (0.879); it declined to 0.423 in 2023 and increased to 0.688 in 2024. It was established that the substantial entrepreneurial presence of creative industries does not ensure a proportional economic return: in 2024, the sector

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ВНЕСОК КРЕАТИВНИХ ІНДУСТРІЙ В ЕКОНОМІЧНИЙ РОЗВИТОК УКРАЇНИ

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростанням ролі креативних індустрій у формуванні зайнятості, підприємницької активності, експорту та форм створення вартості, а також відсутністю підходу до оцінювання їх внеску в економічний розвиток України. В основу дослідження покладено гіпотезу, що такий внесок має багатовимірний характер і не може бути об'єктивно визначений за одним показником. Для її перевірки сформовано систему економічних, підприємницьких, трудових, експортних, інноваційно-цифрових та регіональних показників. До інтегрального оцінювання включено зіставні статистичні ряди за 2020–2024 рр., нормовані методом мінімум-максимум і об'єднані у часткові індекси підприємницької активності, економічного внеску, трудового внеску та експортної спроможності. Результати засвідчили нестабільну й структурно неоднорідну динаміку сектору. Найвище значення інтегрального індексу отримано у 2021 р. (0.879), у 2023 р. він знизився до 0.423, у 2024 р. зріс до 0.688. Встановлено, що підприємницька присутність не забезпечує пропорційної економічної віддачі: у 2024 р. на сектор припадало 14.72%



accounted for 14.72% of active business entities but only 1.79% of total sales. Structural polarisation within the sector and the dominance of IT, information services, advertising, and communications were identified. The research hypothesis was confirmed. The proposed approach makes it possible to assess both the overall dynamics and the internal structure of the contribution of creative industries and may be used to monitor the effectiveness of national and regional policies supporting the sector.

Keywords: creative industries, economic development, economic contribution assessment, composite index, structural analysis.

діючих суб'єктів господарювання, але лише 1.79% загального обсягу реалізації. Виявлено структурну поляризацію сектору та домінування IT, інформаційних послуг, реклами і комунікацій. Наукову гіпотезу підтверджено. Запропонований підхід дає змогу оцінювати загальну динаміку і внутрішню структуру внеску креативних індустрій та може використовуватися для моніторингу результативності державної і регіональної політики підтримки сектору.

Ключові слова: креативні індустрії, економічний розвиток, оцінювання економічного внеску, інтегральний індекс, структурний аналіз.

JEL Classification: C43, L26, O10, Z10.

Introduction

Creative industries are playing an increasingly important role in the modern economy by transforming knowledge, creative abilities, digital technologies, and intellectual property into economic outcomes. According to United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD), global exports of creative services amounted to USD 1.7 trillion in 2024, while their share of global services exports reached 20% (UNCTAD, 2026).

At the same time, assessing the contribution of creative industries remains a complex methodological task. According to UNCTAD estimates, the creative economy accounts for between 0.5% and 7.3% of gross domestic product across countries and for between 0.5% and 12.5% of employment (UNCTAD, 2024a). These differences are associated with differing approaches to defining sector boundaries and accounting for self-employment, digital services, and intangible assets. Another important problem is the fragmented nature of existing assessments, in which the number of business entities, employment, sales volumes, and exports are analysed separately and therefore do not provide a comprehensive view of the sector's performance.

For Ukraine, this issue is of particular importance in the context of the full-scale war. The digital nature of creative activity, remote work, and orientation towards external markets contribute to maintaining entrepreneurial activity. However, the quantitative presence of business entities is not always accompanied by corresponding sales volumes, employment, and labour productivity. Therefore, the contribution of creative industries should be assessed by taking into account the interrelationship among its entrepreneurial, economic, labour, and export components.

International approaches to measuring the creative economy have been developed by United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). These approaches cover different aspects of the sector's functioning but do not provide a universal composite indicator of its economic contribution (UNCTAD, 2024b; UIS, 2025; WIPO, 2026).

The potential for using composite indicators was examined by Daubaraitė-Radikienė and Startienė (2022). Further development of this line of research is reflected in recent international studies. Mikulić and Jelušić (2026), having reviewed approaches to constructing composite indices for the creative economy, identify a number of methodological limitations associated with the selection of components of such indices, robustness and sensitivity testing of the results, their validity, and the possibility of decomposition. Rania et al. (2026) assessed urban creativity by combining cultural heritage and creative economy indicators using DEA, SFA, and entropy weighting. Their findings demonstrated that individual components contribute unequally to the overall assessment.

Recent studies also confirm that the economic performance of creative industries depends on the regional, institutional, and technological conditions under which they operate. Homsombat et al. (2025), examining regions of Thailand, found a positive effect of the creative economy and a favourable environment on regional economic outcomes, whereas cultural activity alone did not produce a comparable effect. Of particular relevance to Ukraine are the findings of Arauzo-Carod and Moroz (2025), who used data for 2013–2020 to examine the effect of territorial proximity to regions affected by military conflict on the development of cultural and creative industries and emphasised their role in future economic recovery. Valiati and Möller (2025), analysing the development of cultural and creative industries in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, highlight digital dependence, structural heterogeneity, and differences in the capacities of individual segments of the sector.

Certain aspects of the development of creative industries in Ukraine have been examined by Zabaldina et al. (2025), Samiilenko (2020), and Kaleniuk and Kuznetsova (2022). The present article, in turn, continues the authors' previous research (Niedielko, 2024; Osadcha & Niedielko, 2025a, 2025b). At the same time, a comprehensive assessment of the contribution of creative industries to Ukraine's economic development that would combine entrepreneurial, economic, labour, and export components and enable the identification of internal imbalances in the formation of this contribution remains insufficiently developed.

The purpose of this article is to substantiate and test a methodological approach to the composite assessment of the contribution of creative industries to Ukraine's economic development. To achieve this purpose, a system of indicators was developed, sub-indices and a composite index were constructed, and the results for 2020–2024 were assessed.

The study is based on the hypothesis that the contribution of creative industries is multidimensional and cannot be objectively determined using a single indicator. The hypothesis was tested using official data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. The composition of the sector was defined in accordance with Order No. 265-r of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated

24 April 2019 and the Classification of Economic Activities DK 009:2010 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2019; State Committee of Ukraine for Technical Regulation and Consumer Policy, 2010). Indicators for 2020–2024 were normalised using the min–max method and aggregated into indices of entrepreneurial activity, economic contribution, labour contribution, and export capacity. The composite index was calculated as the arithmetic mean of the sub-indices.

The limitations of the study are associated with incomplete official statistics. Gross value added was excluded from the composite assessment because comparable data for 2024 were unavailable, regional indicators because of their static nature, and the share of micro-entities because of the ambiguity of its economic interpretation. Official statistics also do not fully capture freelancing and platform employment. Therefore, the proposed index should be regarded as a tool for the comparative assessment of the dynamics of the creative sector.

The main body of the article is structured into three sections. The first section summarises approaches to assessing creative industries and develops a system of indicators of their contribution to economic development. The second section substantiates the procedure for normalising the indicators and constructing the sub-indices and the composite index. The third section applies the proposed approach to Ukrainian data for 2020–2024 and analyses the dynamics and structure of the contribution of creative industries to economic development.

1. Methodological foundations for Assessing the contribution of creative industries to economic development

In international practice, the assessment of creative industries is based on different approaches. The *UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)* considers them a component of the cultural and creative ecosystem; *United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD)* focuses on economic contribution and international trade; the *World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)* focuses on the creation and commercialisation of copyright-protected works; and the UK *Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)* focuses on value added, employment, the number of enterprises, and exports (*UNESCO Institute for Statistics*, 2025; *UNCTAD*, 2024; *WIPO*, 2015; *DCMS*, 2016). The application of these approaches in Ukraine requires adaptation to the national classification of economic activities and the available statistical base.

In Ukraine, the composition of creative industries is defined by Order No. 265-r of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 24 April 2019, while they are statistically identified using the relevant KVED-2010 codes (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2019; State Committee of Ukraine for Technical Regulation and Consumer Policy, 2010). This approach makes it possible to delineate the boundaries of the sector under study and ensure the comparability of indicators; however, it does not fully account for creative activity within other types of economic activity, self-employment,

freelancing, and platform work. The transition to the *NACE* 2.1-UA classification from 1 January 2027 will require revising the composition of creative industries and ensuring the comparability of statistical data compiled under the current and new classifications.

In our view, the indicators used to assess the contribution of creative industries should be grouped into six blocks: economic, entrepreneurial, labour, export, innovation and digital, and regional. The authors have systematised the set of indicators that may be used for such an assessment (*Table 1*).

Table 1

System of Indicators for Assessing the Contribution
of Creative Industries to Economic Development

Block	Key indicators	Assessment focus
Economic	Value added; sales volume; sector share in the economy; labour productivity	Scale and performance of the sector
Entrepreneurial	Number of active business entities; enterprises and individual entrepreneurs; share of micro-entities	Entrepreneurial activity and business structure
Labour	Number of employed persons; number of employees; share of employed persons	Contribution to employment and the use of human capital
Export	Exports of creative goods and services; share and dynamics of exports	Export capacity of the sector
Innovation and digital	Indicators of digital activities; intellectual property assets	Digitalisation and commercialisation of intangible assets
Regional	Regional share in the number of business entities; density of creative businesses; localisation	Spatial concentration of the sector

Note. The composite assessment for 2020–2024 includes the economic, entrepreneurial, labour, and export blocks. Innovation and digital indicators, as well as regional indicators, are analysed separately because complete comparable time series are unavailable.

Source: compiled by the authors based on UIS (2025), UNCTAD (2024a, 2024b), WIPO (2015), DCMS (2016), the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2019), and KVED-2010.

It should be noted that these blocks should be analysed in relation to one another, since quantitative growth of the sector is not always accompanied by a corresponding improvement in its economic performance. At the same time, certain indicators require careful interpretation. In particular, a high share of micro-entities may indicate both the development of entrepreneurial initiative and the fragmentation of the sector, while official statistics do not fully capture self-employment, freelancing, and platform employment.

2. Construction of sub-indices and the composite index of the contribution of creative industries

Given the availability of complete and comparable data for 2020–2024, the composite assessment was conducted across four dimensions: entrepreneurial activity, economic contribution, labour contribution, and export capacity. Innovation and digital indicators and regional indicators

were not included because complete time series were unavailable, while regional data were used separately to characterise the spatial structure of the sector in 2024. Gross value added was not included because a comparable value for 2024 was unavailable, and the share of micro-entities was not included because of the ambiguity of its economic interpretation.

The indicators selected for calculating the sub-indices are expressed in different units of measurement. To ensure their comparability, the min–max method was applied. This method is one of the commonly used approaches to data normalisation in the construction of composite indicators (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, & European Union, 2008). Its application allows the observed values to be rescaled to the interval from 0 to 1.

The indicators were normalised using the following formula:

$$Z_{ij} = \frac{X_{ij} - X_{imin}}{X_{imax} - X_{imin}}, \quad (1)$$

where: Z_{ij} is the normalised value of the (i)-th indicator in year (j);

X_{ij} is the observed value of the (i)-th indicator in year (j);

X_{imin} and X_{imax} are, respectively, the minimum and maximum values of the (i)-th indicator over the period 2020–2024.

All indicators included in the calculation are stimulants. An increase in their values indicates an increase in the contribution of creative industries in terms of entrepreneurial activity, economic performance, employment, or exports. For destimulant indicators, the methodology provides for an inverse normalisation procedure; however, such indicators were not used in the initial application of the methodology.

At the same time, normalised values of 0 and 1 should not be interpreted as critical and optimal levels of sector development. They represent the minimum and maximum values, respectively, of the relevant indicator only within the period under study.

The entrepreneurial activity index was calculated as the arithmetic mean of the normalised number of active business entities in the creative industries and their share in the total number of active business entities:

$$I_{EA,j} = \frac{Z_{1j} + Z_{2j}}{2}, \quad (2)$$

where: Z_{1j} is the normalised number of active business entities in the creative industries in year (j);

Z_{2j} is the normalised share of creative industries in the total number of active business entities.

The use of both absolute and relative indicators makes it possible to assess not only changes in the number of business entities but also the position of creative industries within the structure of the business sector.

The economic contribution index includes the normalised values of sales volume, the share of creative industries in total sales, and labour productivity:

$$I_{EC,j} = \frac{Z_{3j} + Z_{4j} + Z_{5j}}{3}, \quad (3)$$

where: Z_{3j} is the normalised sales volume of products, goods, and services;

Z_{4j} is the normalised share of creative industries in total sales;

Z_{5j} is the normalised labour productivity.

Labour productivity was calculated as the ratio of the sales volume of products, goods, and services to the number of employed persons in the creative industries. Thus, the index reflects not only the scale of the sector's activities but also the efficiency of labour utilisation.

The labour contribution index was constructed using the number of employed persons and employees:

$$I_{LC,j} = \frac{Z_{6j} + Z_{7j}}{2}, \quad (4)$$

where: Z_{6j} is the normalised number of employed persons in the creative industries;

Z_{7j} is the normalised number of employees.

Distinguishing between these indicators is particularly important for the creative sector. The number of employed persons reflects overall labour participation, whereas the number of employees reflects the sector's capacity to create formal jobs.

The export capacity index was determined based on the normalised volume of exports of creative-digital services:

$$I_{EXC,j} = Z_{8j}, \quad (5)$$

where: Z_{8j} is the normalised volume of exports of creative-digital services in year (j).

Including the export component makes it possible to account for the role of creative industries in generating foreign earnings. This is particularly important for digital and information services, which can be provided remotely in international markets.

To calculate the composite index, equal weights were assigned to the sub-indices. In our view, at the stage of testing the methodology, this approach is the most justified, since there are insufficient grounds for giving preference to any one of the components.

The composite index of the contribution of creative industries was calculated using the following formula:

$$I_j = \frac{I_{EA,j} + I_{EC,j} + I_{LC,j} + I_{EXC,j}}{4}. \quad (6)$$

The composite index ranges from 0 to 1. An increase in its value indicates a strengthening of the overall contribution of creative industries across the dimensions examined, whereas a decrease indicates a deterioration in the results of one or more components.

At the same time, the composite index does not replace an analysis of its structure. The same value of the index may result from different combinations of the sub-indices. In particular, an increase in entrepreneurial activity is not always accompanied by a corresponding increase in sales volumes, employment, or labour productivity.

3. Assessment of the contribution of creative industries to Ukraine's economic development in 2020–2024

The proposed methodological approach was tested using data on Ukraine's creative industries for 2020–2024. The results of calculating the sub-indices and the composite index are presented in *Table 2*.

Table 2

Results of the Calculation of the Composite Index of the Contribution of Creative Industries to Ukraine's Economic Development

Year	Entrepreneurial activity index	Economic contribution index	Labour contribution index	Export capacity index	Composite index
2020	0.000	0.794	0.891	0.000	0.421
2021	0.606	0.999	1.000	0.910	0.879
2022	0.906	0.247	0.776	1.000	0.732
2023	0.904	0.055	0.000	0.733	0.423
2024	0.751	0.475	0.827	0.698	0.688

Note. The indices were calculated using the min–max method for stimulant indicators. The composite index includes indicators for which comparable time series for 2020–2024 were available. Value added, the share of micro-entities, and regional concentration were excluded because of comparability limitations or ambiguity in their economic interpretation.

Source: calculated by the authors based on official data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (n. d.-a, n. d.-b).

The highest value of the composite index was recorded in 2021 (see *Table 2*). During this period, the economic and labour contribution indices reached their highest values, while the export component also attained a high value. Thus, the 2021 result was driven by increases in sales volumes, labour productivity, employment, and exports.

In 2022, the composite index declined. At the same time, the entrepreneurial activity index increased, while the export capacity index reached its maximum value over the period under study. However, the economic contribution decreased substantially. This indicates that, during the first year of the full-scale war, creative industries maintained a substantial number of active business entities and a high level of export activity, but this did not offset the decline in sales volumes and labour productivity.

In 2023, the composite index was almost equal to its 2020 value (see *Table 2*). However, these similar values were formed by different combinations of the sub-indices. In 2020, the economic and labour components were higher, whereas in 2023 the entrepreneurial and export components were higher. At the same time, the economic and labour contribution indices reached their minimum values in 2023. This result indicates a substantial gap between the number of active business entities and the results of their activities. The labour contribution index for 2023 should be interpreted with due regard to gaps in employment statistics associated with the confidentiality of statistical information.

In 2024, the composite index increased. This increase was driven by the recovery of the economic and labour components, whereas the entrepreneurial activity and export capacity indices declined slightly. Therefore, the 2024 results indicate a partial recovery of the sector following the deterioration observed in 2023, but not a return to the 2021 levels.

In 2024, creative industries accounted for 14.72% of all active business entities but only 1.79% of total sales. Compared with 2021, sales volume decreased by 36.96% and labour productivity by 32.67% (calculated by the authors based on data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, n. d.-b). Thus, the substantial share of business entities in the creative industries within the business sector does not translate into a corresponding share of economic outcomes.

In 2024, micro-entities accounted for 99.3% of all business entities in the creative industries (calculated by the authors based on data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, n. d.-b). On the one hand, this indicates the accessibility of creative activity to self-employed persons and small-scale entrepreneurial initiatives. On the other hand, this structure points to the fragmentation of the sector and limited opportunities for scaling up activities.

The number of employed persons in the creative industries in 2024 was 383,016, including 128,954 employees (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, n. d.-b). The recovery of the labour contribution index compared with 2023 does not imply a return to the 2021 level. The low share of employees confirms the significant role of self-employment, which contributes to the flexibility of the sector but limits its contribution to the creation of stable jobs.

Exports of creative-digital services increased from USD 3068.3 million in 2020 to USD 4106 million in 2022, after which they declined to USD 3792.9 million in 2024 (calculated by the authors based on data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, n.d.-a). Despite this decline, the export volume remained higher than in 2020. At the same time, export activity did not offset the decrease in domestic sales volumes and labour productivity.

The results of the structural analysis showed that, in 2024, *IT* and information services accounted for 71.9% of business entities and 66.3% of sales volume. Together with advertising and communications, these activities

generated 83.5% of total sector sales (calculated by the authors based on data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, n.d.-b). At the same time, cultural, artistic, and certain professional activities recorded substantially lower levels of sales and labour productivity. Overall, this confirms the considerable internal heterogeneity of creative industries and the dependence of the sector's overall results on a limited range of digital and commercially oriented activities.

Thus, changes in the entrepreneurial, economic, labour, and export components during 2020–2024 were not synchronous. A comparison of the 2020 and 2023 results confirmed that similar values of the composite index may be formed by fundamentally different internal structures. Therefore, the composite index should be used together with the sub-indices, which makes it possible to identify the sources of its changes and reveal internal imbalances within the sector.

Conclusions

The study made it possible to substantiate and test a methodological approach to assessing the contribution of creative industries to Ukraine's economic development. For this purpose, a system of indicators was developed, sub-indices of entrepreneurial activity, economic contribution, labour contribution, and export capacity were constructed, and a composite index for 2020–2024 was calculated. The results obtained confirm that the research objective was achieved.

The calculations showed that the contribution of creative industries changed unevenly over the period under study. The highest value of the composite index was recorded in 2021. In 2023, it declined, but increased markedly in 2024. The recovery observed in 2024 was driven primarily by the economic and labour components; however, it did not represent a return to the 2021 results. At the same time, in 2024, creative industries accounted for 14.72% of all active business entities, while their share of total sales was only 1.79%. Thus, maintaining a substantial number of business entities does not in itself indicate a corresponding level of economic return.

The research hypothesis was confirmed. The contribution of creative industries is multidimensional and cannot be objectively assessed using a single indicator. In 2022–2023, relatively high values of the entrepreneurial and export components were accompanied by a substantial deterioration in economic performance. This provides grounds for arguing that the resilience of the sector should be assessed not only by the number of active business entities or the maintenance of exports, but also by their capacity to generate economic outcomes, provide employment, and increase labour productivity.

The comparison of the 2020 and 2023 results is particularly revealing. The values of the composite index in these years were almost identical (see *Table 2*), but they resulted from different combinations of the sub-indices. In 2020, the economic and labour components were higher, whereas in 2023 the entrepreneurial and export components were higher. Thus,

similar values of the composite index may characterise different states of the sector. Therefore, the composite index should be used only in conjunction with an analysis of the sub-indices, which makes it possible to identify the sources of change and reveal internal imbalances.

The structural heterogeneity of creative industries also requires particular attention. In 2024, IT and information services, together with advertising and communications, accounted for 83.5% of the sector's total sales. At the same time, cultural, artistic, and certain professional activities demonstrated considerably lower economic performance. Overall, this indicates that aggregate sector indicators depend to a large extent on the performance of digital and commercially oriented activities and do not fully reflect the state of its other components.

The scientific novelty of the findings lies in the further development of a methodological approach to assessing the contribution of creative industries based on the combination of entrepreneurial, economic, labour, and export components. The proposed approach makes it possible not only to identify the overall dynamics of the sector, but also to determine the causes of changes in the composite index and to distinguish between the quantitative preservation of activity and genuine economic recovery. The practical application of the methodology may be useful for monitoring creative industries and assessing the effectiveness of national and regional programmes supporting creative industries. In our view, the principal criterion for the effectiveness of such programmes should be not an increase in the number of business entities, but an enhancement of their capacity to create, commercialise, and scale creative products.

Further research should focus on expanding the information base for the assessment, in particular by incorporating indicators of gross value added, innovation activity, the use of intellectual property assets, regional concentration, and non-formalised forms of employment. It is also important to conduct regional analysis, test the sensitivity of the results to changes in the weights assigned to the sub-indices, and update the methodology following Ukraine's transition to the NACE 2.1-UA classification.

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