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An Analysis of Tourism Attractiveness and Competitiveness in Italian Provinces

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Extended Abstract

Tourism plays an important role for the development of regions and countries. It contributes to economic growth, creates employment opportunities, and fosters progress (WTTC, 2023). Currently, the tourism sector is undergoing many changes, especially due to the development of information and communication technologies, which gives the possibility to provide tourist services in a different form.

Given the importance of the tourism sector, it is relevant to investigate the potential of regions and provinces to entice visitors. We define this potential as the maximum number of tourists a region or province can absorb, given their specific characteristics. The present study, thus, aims at examining the ability of Italian provinces to attract foreign tourists and evaluate the changes of tourist inflows over time. To this purpose, we consider several factors including climate, seasonality, cultural heritage, technology, competitiveness and infrastructures as possible driver of tourism demand and evaluate their influence on tourism performance. We try to assess which provinces are efficient and which inefficient.

The analysis focuses on Italy, the fifth-largest recipient of tourists in the world. Italy is an interesting case to examine because the country has a long-standing tradition in tourism since the Grand Tour of the 18th Century described by Goethe in his Italian Journey. The country is then characterized by a strong North-South divide. Although internal economic disparities are evident in almost every

country in the EU, Italy presents particularly high regional and province contrasts in terms of GDP per capita, unemployment rate, export values and tourism performance (ISTAT, 2024). Thus, improvements in efficiency from a provincial perspective are needed to heighten the competitive position of tourism sector.

From a methodological point of view, we will adopt a panel framework and will consider data from EUROSTAT and the national statistics for our analysis.

References

ISTAT (2024) www.istat.it

WTTC (2023), World Travel and Tourism Council, <https://www.wttc.org/>