CultureCase

A vibrant cultural scene helps ensure a more efficient tourism sector

This research was conducted by **Calogero Guccio, Domenico Lisi, Marco Martorana** and **Anna Mignos** at the **University of Catania, Italy**

Summary

This paper looks at the relationship between levels of cultural engagement and the performance of tourist destinations in Italy. It found that the regions with higher levels of cultural activity also had the most ‘efficient’ tourism sectors. The overall explanation for the results was that a vibrant cultural offering brings people to an area, gets visitors to stay longer, and encourages them to make the most of their time in a place. Increasing cultural vibrancy may therefore also have positive ‘spillover’ benefits on the tourism sector.

The tourism industry is important for Italy’s economy

The study took data from 21 regions in Italy between 2004 and 2010. It measured the efficiency of the tourism offer by comparing the number of hotel rooms and other visitor capacity of a location along with the number of tourists to the number of overnight stays in the area. The authors use this data to arrive at a measure of 'efficiency' of a tourist destination.

Meanwhile, they also analysed data on the cultural engagement of people in that region

'Engagement' included visits to archaeological sites, attendance at sports events, music concerts and other art forms. The paper also looked at the expenditure by people on cultural activities and tickets sold for certain types of events.

The authors point to a few caveats

One is that the data does not distinguish between business and leisure visits to the regions. This means that the sheer amount of international business conducted in Rome and Milan may have skewed the data for those areas. The other is that while increased tourism may boost the economy of some destinations, it also may have downsides for residents and put pressure on local resources.

Keywords

survey **tourism** **Italy**

Title	On the role of cultural participation in tourism destination performance: an assessment using robust conditional efficiency approach
Author(s)	Guccio, C. Lisi, D. Martorana, M. & Mignos, A.
Publication date	2017
Source	Journal of Cultural Economics, Vol. 41, Iss. 2, pp 129-154
Link	**https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10824-017-9295-z**
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