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Tourism as a local development factor in Fafe

<https://doi.org/10.2478/ejthr-2026-0015>

received February 3, 2025; accepted June 3, 2026

Abstract: The aim of this study is to analyse whether tourism can be considered a factor of local development, taking the municipality of Fafe as a case study. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with local stakeholders from both public and private sectors involved in tourism, culture, and hospitality, which were recorded for subsequent content analysis and thematic categorisation. A detailed SWOT analysis of the existing tourism potential was carried out, considering the periods 2012–2015 and 2018–2024, allowing for the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the local tourism offerings. The findings highlight the distinctive characteristics of Fafe's attractions, including its cultural, natural, and gastronomic heritage, such as the renowned *Vitela Assada à Moda de Fafe*, revealing significant comparative advantages and potential strategies for territorial enhancement. The study's limitations relate to the small number of interviews and the exclusive focus on the tourism supply side, without addressing the demand perspective. It is concluded that the municipality has implemented strategies to promote the destination; however, clear opportunities exist for further improvement, particularly in diversifying tourism offerings, promoting authentic local products, and implementing innovative digital technologies. These findings contribute to the sustainable development of the region, providing a solid foundation for future research aimed at effectively maximising Fafe's tourism potential.

Keywords: Local development; tourism potential; SWOT analysis; strategic planning; Fafe

1 Introduction

Tourism is widely recognised as a strategic driver of local development, contributing to employment generation, cultural promotion, heritage preservation, and the stimulation of regional economies. Sustainable tourism development involves the responsible management of both natural and cultural resources, ensuring that local communities derive economic, social, and cultural benefits from tourism activities (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2017). Within this context, small and medium-sized municipalities face both opportunities and challenges in leveraging tourism as a mechanism for local development, particularly when considering the integration of innovation, diversification, and stakeholder collaboration (Pike et al., 2016; Roman et al., 2022). This study focuses on the municipality of Fafe, located in the Braga district of northern Portugal, known for its rich gastronomy, cultural heritage, and natural landscapes. The primary objective is to analyse whether tourism can be considered a factor in local development in Fafe, with attention to its comparative and competitive advantages, constraints, and potential for innovative tourism product development. To address this objective, the study formulated three research questions: (1) What are the constraints and challenges for tourism in Fafe? (2) What are the comparative and competitive advantages of Fafe as a tourist destination? (3) To what extent is tourism development in Fafe based on innovation, differentiation, and diversification?

A qualitative methodology was adopted, employing a multiple case study approach to enable in-depth exploration of real social phenomena and to capture the perceptions of local stakeholders (Padgett, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Watkins, 2012). Data were collected through six semi-structured interviews with public and private actors involved in tourism, culture, and hospitality. These interviews were subsequently analysed using content analysis, providing insights into the evolution of Fafe's

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tourism potential and informing a detailed SWOT analysis (Roman et al., 2022).

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the literature on local development, tourism supply and demand in local development, and SWOT analysis; Section 3 details the methodology; Section 4 presents the findings; Section 5 offers a discussion of results in light of the study objectives and theoretical frameworks; and Section 6 presents the conclusions, study limitations, and recommendations for future research.

2 Literature review

2.1 Local development

Local development encompasses the diversification and enhancement of economic, social, and cultural activities within a specific territory, through the coordinated mobilisation of both tangible and intangible resources. It is not only a perspective on regional growth but also a strategic framework for evaluating and leveraging the assets of a given locality (Pike et al., 2016). This approach emphasises the capacity of local actors, governments, businesses, and civil society to generate sustainable economic, social, and cultural benefits within their territory.

The relevance of local development has increased in the context of globalisation, which has intensified market integration and competitiveness. Globalisation has produced profound transformations in economic, social, and cultural structures, creating both opportunities and risks for territories that are less globally competitive (McCann & Acs, 2019; Stimson et al., 2021). Within this context, local development is often viewed as a strategy to counteract social exclusion and economic marginalisation, emphasising inclusiveness, sustainability, and the valorisation of territorial identity (Somoza Medina & Relea Fernández, 2024).

Territorial identity is a central element in local development. It is defined by distinctive characteristics, historical heritage, cultural practices, and social networks that differentiate a territory from others. The recognition and promotion of local identity allow communities to create comparative and competitive advantages by leveraging unique local resources (Roca & Oliveira-Roca, 2007). In addition, local development strategies aim to capitalise on both endogenous resources (such as local knowledge, traditions, and skills) and exogenous opportunities (including investment, tourism, and trade) to foster sustainable growth (Boschma & Martin, 2020).

Operationally, local development involves three main dimensions (Renzi & Piacenti, 2024):

1. Resource identification and knowledge generation: the development of tools and methodologies for territorial diagnostics, assessing both tangible and intangible resources to understand potential growth areas
2. Coordination and cooperation: mechanisms for mobilising stakeholders, such as forums, working groups, or partnerships, to align efforts and maximise the value of existing resources
3. Project development and implementation: the creation of initiatives and policies, formal or informal, that drive sustainable territorial development through innovation, diversification, and strategic management

Moreover, environments differ in their conduciveness to development, depending on the relationships between local businesses, institutions, and the wider community. Innovative territorial environments that foster knowledge exchange, collaboration, and creativity have been shown to significantly contribute to economic development and resilience (Boschma & Martin, 2020).

Local development also prioritises diversification over single-specialisation strategies, recognising that economic, social, and cultural resilience depends on multiple sectors working synergistically. This approach aligns with sustainable development principles, ensuring that economic growth does not compromise environmental integrity or social cohesion (OECD, 2019).

In the context of tourism, local development strategies must integrate cultural, natural, and gastronomic resources into broader territorial planning. By fostering unique experiences, supporting local businesses, and encouraging community participation, tourism can act as a catalyst for local development, generating income, promoting heritage, and strengthening territorial identity (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Sharpley & Roberts, 2004).

2.2 Tourist supply and demand in local development

Tourism is a multidimensional sector that directly influences local economic development through the interplay of supply and demand. The tourist supply of a destination encompasses all resources, infrastructure, and services made available to visitors, including natural landscapes, cultural sites, accommodations, gastronomy, and organised events (Cunha, 2003; Roman et al., 2022). A well-developed supply ensures that a destination can meet the

expectations of different tourist segments and fosters a competitive advantage relative to other regions.

In small municipalities such as Fafe, the integration of natural and cultural resources plays a pivotal role in differentiating the destination. Natural resources such as parks, rivers, and mountains offer opportunities for outdoor recreation, while cultural heritage—including historical buildings, festivals, and traditional gastronomy—creates unique experiences that attract visitors and enhance the territory's identity (Gössling & Peeters, 2020; Somoza Medina & Relea Fernández, 2024). For instance, the Vitela Assada à Moda de Fafe and local crafts are tangible expressions of local culture that contribute to the development of tourism products and strengthen the competitive positioning of the municipality.

The demand side of tourism refers to the preferences, behaviours, and expenditures of visitors, both domestic and international (Descals-Tormo *et al.*, 2024). Understanding demand is crucial for aligning tourist offerings with the expectations of different market segments. In rural and small urban areas, tourist demand is often seasonal and concentrated on specific attractions, requiring careful management of resources and targeted marketing strategies (Andrade & Caeiro, 2020).

Effective destination management depends on the coordination among local stakeholders, including public authorities, tourism operators, cultural organisations, and local entrepreneurs. Collaborative strategies, such as partnerships with travel agencies, digital promotion tools, and event-based tourism, can enhance both the quality and visibility of the destination, leading to sustained economic benefits (Jamal & Camargo, 2021; Ritchie & Jiang, 2019). Moreover, sustainable tourism practices, such as reducing environmental impact and promoting local craftsmanship, are increasingly important to satisfy demand from environmentally conscious visitors and to secure long-term competitiveness (Gössling & Peeters, 2020; Santos *et al.*, 2024).

By integrating tourist supply, demand, and the strategic use of local resources, municipalities like Fafe can leverage their unique cultural and natural assets to stimulate economic activity, create employment opportunities, and foster territorial development. Such integration ensures that tourism becomes a tool for sustainable local development, aligning economic growth with cultural preservation and environmental stewardship (Pike *et al.*, 2016; Somoza Medina & Relea Fernández, 2024).

2.3 SWOT analysis in tourism and local development

SWOT analysis is one of the most widely used tools for formulating strategic plans, not only in business but also in tourism and local development contexts. Developed in the 1960s by Kenneth Andrews and Roland Christensen, both professors at Harvard Business School, this tool provides a structured framework for identifying internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats, thereby facilitating informed decision-making (Serra *et al.*, 2015; Al-Haffi, 2023).

In tourism studies, SWOT analysis enables researchers and policymakers to systematically evaluate the assets and limitations of a destination, the potential for growth, and the risks that may hinder sustainable development (Platon, 2017; Roman *et al.*, 2022). By linking SWOT categories to local characteristics, decision-makers can design targeted interventions that leverage cultural, natural, and economic resources while addressing constraints and threats.

Specifically, in the context of small municipalities such as Fafe, SWOT analysis helps identify the distinctive advantages that contribute to tourism development, such as historical heritage, gastronomy, and natural landscapes, while also highlighting challenges like limited infrastructure, human resource gaps, and competition from neighbouring destinations (Mota, 2016). The matrix thus serves as both an analytical and a practical tool, guiding the development of strategies to enhance tourism offerings, increase visitor satisfaction, and support local economic growth (Table 1).

This framework ensures that SWOT analysis is directly linked to empirical findings and stakeholder insights. In practice, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats listed in Table 1 are derived from both content analysis of interviews with local actors and the evaluation of existing tourism resources, providing a nuanced understanding of Fafe's tourism potential and guiding strategic recommendations for sustainable local development.

3 Method and data collection: A multiple case study supported by semi-structured interviews

This study is grounded in the premise that tourism functions as a strategic vector of local development, shaped by the perceptions of key stakeholders regarding cultural,

Table 1: Key elements in a SWOT analysis for tourism and local development

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Rich cultural heritage (historical sites, festivals, gastronomy)	Limited tourist infrastructure	Expansion of cultural and rural tourism markets	Competition from nearby destinations
Natural landscapes and outdoor recreational resources	Insufficient marketing and promotion	Use of digital technologies to enhance visitor experiences	Economic downturns affecting tourism spending
Unique gastronomy (e.g., Vitela Assada à Moda de Fafe)	Limited accommodation capacity	Partnerships with travel agencies and tour operators	Seasonal fluctuation in tourist arrivals
Existing tourism events (e.g., Rally of Portugal)	Lack of trained human resources in tourism.	Sustainable tourism initiatives and green policies	Environmental degradation or natural hazards
Strong local business and entrepreneurial networks	Poor coordination among local stakeholders	Development of new tourism products (crafts, museums)	Decline in visitor satisfaction due to service gaps

Source: Adapted from Al-Haffi (2023); Mota (2016); Platon (2017); Roman et al. (2022).

natural, and heritage resources within the municipality of Fafe. The methodological design was constructed to capture these interpretive perspectives and translate them into a systematic strategic assessment. Specifically, the interviews were designed to explore three principal analytical dimensions: (i) perceived strengths and weaknesses of Fafe's tourism sector; (ii) external opportunities and threats; and (iii) strategies for consolidating, expanding, and diversifying the local tourism offerings. Each dimension was aligned with the objectives of the study and subsequently integrated into the SWOT analytical framework. To ensure coherence between the research objectives and the content elicited from participants, the interview guide was structured around four core questions, each corresponding to a specific SWOT category (Table 2).

Given the exploratory nature of the research, a qualitative approach was adopted, operationalised through a multiple case study design. This approach allows for the in-depth examination of real-world social dynamics, particularly when the objective is to understand actors' lived experiences and subjective interpretations (Padgett, 2008; Watkins, 2012). Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that qualitative inquiry is appropriate when the aim is to analyse complex social processes that cannot be reduced to numerical indicators. Similarly, Yin (2017) highlights that case studies facilitate close interaction with participants and provide rich contextual detail, enabling analytical depth beyond what can be achieved through standardised data collection techniques. Data were collected through six semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, all of which were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim for systematic coding and content analysis. One interview was conducted in 2015, three in September 2023, and two in June 2024, with an average duration of approximately one hour. Participants were selected based on their professional involvement in tourism, culture, or hospitality in Fafe,

ensuring that each informant possessed relevant and context-specific knowledge. To preserve anonymity and maintain analytical clarity, interviewees are identified as Interviewee 1 (I1) through Interviewee 6 (I6). Participants included:

- I1 (2015): Councillor for Tourism, Fafe City Council
- I2 (2023): Senior Tourism Technician, Fafe City Council
- I3 (2023): Head of Department, Fafe City Council
- I4 (2023): Senior Technician specialising in events, Fafe City Council
- I5 (2024): Director, Hotel Fafense
- I6 (2024): Owner, Casa do Penedo

The inclusion criteria were defined to ensure that participants had direct knowledge of the tourism sector and could contribute meaningfully to the research objectives. As Creswell and Creswell (2017) emphasise, transparent justification of participant selection strengthens the theoretical and methodological coherence of qualitative research. Patton (2015) similarly stresses the importance of purposeful sampling in capturing information-rich cases that reflect the diversity of experiences associated with the phenomenon under study. Transparent articulation of the criteria used to select participants enhances the credibility and transferability of the findings (Silverman, 2019).

All interviews were analysed using content analysis, following Bardin's (2004) procedural stages of coding, categorisation, and thematic interpretation. The resulting categories were cross-referenced with the a priori-defined analytical dimensions and subsequently integrated into the SWOT matrix. This combined approach—qualitative inquiry followed by strategic analytical synthesis—ensures

Table 2: Mapping interview questions, research objectives, and SWOT categories

Interview Question	Research Objective	SWOT Category
What are Fafe's main attractions?	Identify strengths and unique tourism resources	Strengths
What challenges does local tourism face?	Examine structural and organisational weaknesses	Weaknesses
Which opportunities could be developed?	Identify external opportunities for sector expansion	Opportunities
Which threats may affect local tourism?	Anticipate external risks and emerging constraints	Threats

Source: Adapted from Mota (2016)

that the SWOT output is directly grounded in empirical evidence derived from stakeholders' perceptions.

With respect to methodological rigor and to ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative procedures, several measures were systematically implemented throughout the research process. Credibility was strengthened through the triangulation of perspectives obtained from participants occupying heterogeneous institutional and entrepreneurial positions within the local tourism ecosystem, which enabled cross-validation of emergent themes and reduced the risk of single-source bias. Dependability was reinforced by maintaining a transparent audit trail documenting all methodological decisions, including interview scheduling, transcription protocols, iterative coding procedures, and the integration of categories into the SWOT framework. Confirmability was supported through a structured coding process grounded in verbatim quotations, limiting the influence of prior assumptions and enhancing analytical neutrality. Finally, transferability was promoted by providing detailed contextual descriptions of Fafe's socio-territorial features, the professional backgrounds of the interviewees, and the institutional context in which tourism-related decisions occur, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to other small municipalities undergoing tourism-driven development processes.

4 Findings

The findings of this study derive from the testimonies of six local actors from different sectors within Fafe's tourism ecosystem, collected through semi-structured interviews. Content analysis was applied to the interviews and relevant literature, following established procedures for coding and thematic interpretation (Krippendorff, 2018), thereby identifying key patterns regarding the municipality's tourism potential. These findings informed the preparation of the SWOT analysis, highlighting both

the strengths and weaknesses of Fafe's tourism offerings, as well as external opportunities and threats.

The analysis revealed multiple strengths of Fafe as a tourist destination. These include its rich cultural heritage encompassing historical sites, festivals, and gastronomy (I2, I3, I4, I5, I6), natural landscapes and outdoor recreational resources such as the *Queimadela* Dam and municipal parks (I2, I5), unique gastronomy including *Vitela Assada à Moda de Fafe* and traditional sweets from Fornelos (I5, I6), as well as existing tourism events like the Rally of Portugal and other motorsport activities (I2, I3, I4). Strong local business and entrepreneurial networks supporting tourism initiatives were also highlighted by I2, I3, and I4, emphasising the importance of stakeholder collaboration in promoting tourism.

Opportunities identified include the expansion of cultural and rural tourism markets (I2, I3, I4), the use of digital technologies to enhance visitor experiences (I2, I4), partnerships with travel agencies and tour operators to diversify the tourism offerings (I2, I3), sustainable tourism initiatives and green policies (I2, I3, I6), and the development of new tourism products such as crafts, museums, and straw weaving (I5, I6). Conversely, weaknesses include limited tourist infrastructure, including accommodation and visitor services (I5, I6), insufficient marketing and promotion (I3, I5, I6), lack of trained human resources (I3, I4), and poor coordination among local stakeholders (I3, I4). Threats include competition from nearby destinations like Porto and Guimarães (I2, I3), economic downturns affecting tourism spending (I1, I3), seasonal fluctuations in visitor arrivals (I2, I4), environmental degradation or natural hazards (I2, I5), and a potential decline in visitor satisfaction due to service gaps (I3, I5). All these elements are presented in Table 3, mapping SWOT categories with references to the interviewees.

The interviews provided rich insights into specific attractions. I2 emphasised the importance of nature tourism around the Barragem da Queimadela as a draw for visitors from outside the municipality. I3 and I4 highlighted the economic and social impact of the Rally de Portugal, while I5 and I6 underscored the potential of gas-

Table 3: SWOT Analysis of the existing tourism potential in Fafe (with interview reference)

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Rich cultural heritage (historical sites, festivals, gastronomy) – I2, I3, I4, I5, I6	Limited tourist infrastructure (accommodation, visitor services) – I5, I6	Expansion of cultural and rural tourism markets – I2, I3, I4	Competition from nearby destinations (Porto, Guimarães) – I2, I3
Natural landscapes and outdoor recreational resources (Queimada Dam, parks) – I2, I5	Insufficient marketing and promotion – I3, I5, I6	Use of digital technologies to enhance visitor experiences – I2, I4	Economic downturns affecting tourism spending – I1, I3
Unique gastronomy (e.g., Vitela Assada à Moda de Fafe, Fornelos sweets) – I5, I6	Limited accommodation capacity – I5	Partnerships with travel agencies and tour operators – I2, I3	Seasonal fluctuation in tourist arrivals – I2, I4
Existing tourism events (Rally of Portugal, motorsport events) – I2, I3, I4	Lack of trained human resources in tourism – I3, I4	Sustainable tourism initiatives and green policies – I2, I3, I6	Environmental degradation or natural hazards – I2, I5
Strong local business and entrepreneurial networks supporting tourism initiatives – I2, I3, I4	Poor coordination among local stakeholders – I3, I4	Development of new tourism products (crafts, museums, straw weaving) – I5, I6	Decline in visitor satisfaction due to service gaps – I3, I5

Source: Adapted from Al-Haffi (2023); Mota (2016); Platon (2017); Interviews I1–I6 (2015–2024).

tronomy and local crafts, such as the *Museu da Palha* and artisanal rye straw weaving, as elements capable of diversifying the tourism offer. Traditional sweets, including *Pão-de-ló de Fornelos* and *doces de gema*, were considered complementary products to strengthen Fafe's gastronomic appeal.

The SWOT analysis synthesises these findings, illustrating the competitive advantages of Fafe's cultural, historical, and natural resources, alongside the areas requiring strategic intervention. Strengths provide a foundation for differentiated and sustainable tourism development, while identified weaknesses and threats indicate the need for improved planning, stakeholder coordination, and resource allocation. Opportunities highlighted through the analysis guide strategic initiatives, including leveraging digital tools, sustainable practices, and innovative tourism products, such as the proposed "Welcome Fafe" mobile application.

5 Discussion

The findings of this study provide a multifaceted view of Fafe's tourism potential, derived from the perceptions of local stakeholders, and highlight both the opportunities and challenges associated with tourism-driven local development. The analysis demonstrates that Fafe possesses a diverse cultural, historical, and natural heritage that constitutes a strong foundation for tourism development. These include rural heritage, archaeological sites, unique gastronomy, local traditions, motorsport events, and dynamic cultural infrastructures such as the Municipal

Theatre (I2–I4). The presence of active local business and entrepreneurial networks supporting tourism initiatives (I5, I6) further reinforces Fafe's capacity to leverage tourism as a strategic tool for local development.

The weaknesses identified—such as limited tourist infrastructure, lack of coordination among stakeholders, insufficient promotion, and inadequate hotel capacity—align with the literature emphasising that small municipalities often face structural and organisational challenges that constrain their ability to fully exploit tourism potential (Mota, 2016; Roman et al., 2022). These findings suggest that, while Fafe's tangible and intangible resources are considerable, strategic planning and investment are required to overcome these limitations.

Opportunities highlighted in the SWOT analysis include the promotion of unique events, the valorisation of cultural and religious heritage, partnerships with nearby urban centres, and the adoption of digital technologies to enhance visitor experiences (Platon, 2017). These findings resonate with theoretical perspectives on local development, which emphasise the mobilisation of both tangible and intangible resources and the importance of multisectoral coordination to achieve sustainable growth (Pike et al., 2016; Stimson et al., 2021). By leveraging these opportunities, Fafe could enhance its regional competitiveness while promoting inclusive and sustainable tourism.

Threats identified, such as economic constraints, demographic changes, and competition from nearby destinations, underline the vulnerability of small municipalities to external factors (Roman et al., 2022). These threats reinforce the need for proactive strategic management, including the development of innovative tourism products,

collaborative governance, and targeted marketing to strengthen resilience against environmental and economic risks.

The discussion also highlights the strategic role of gastronomy and traditional crafts as unique selling propositions for Fafe. Local stakeholders emphasised the potential of products such as *Vitela Assada à Moda de Fafe*, traditional sweets, and rye straw weaving, which can be integrated into tourism packages and cultural itineraries. This aligns with the literature on experiential tourism and rural development, which underscores the capacity of cultural and gastronomic heritage to differentiate destinations and stimulate economic growth (Platon, 2017; Roman et al., 2022).

Importantly, the qualitative methodology adopted in this study enabled a nuanced understanding of local perceptions, allowing for the identification of interdependencies between strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. However, the limited number of interviews ($n = 6$) constitutes a methodological constraint, restricting generalisability. Despite this, the study provides rich, context-specific insights that can inform municipal strategies and guide further research.

Finally, the discussion underscores the practical implications of the findings. Fafe's municipality can utilise these insights to design integrated strategies that capitalise on local strengths, address weaknesses, exploit emerging opportunities, and mitigate potential threats. This approach is consistent with theories of sustainable local development and endogenous growth, emphasising the strategic mobilisation of local resources, stakeholder collaboration, and adaptive governance to enhance territorial competitiveness (Boschma & Martin, 2020; OECD, 2020).

6 Conclusions

This study aimed to examine the tourism potential of Fafe by assessing the perceptions of local stakeholders regarding the municipality's cultural, natural, and patrimonial resources, and by integrating these insights into a SWOT analysis. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the objectives of the research have been successfully achieved. Specifically, the study identified the main strengths and weaknesses of Fafe's tourism ecosystem, explored external opportunities and threats, and highlighted strategic actions for enhancing the municipality's tourism offerings.

The analysis of the interviews demonstrates that Fafe possesses distinctive and valuable tourism resources. Core strengths include rural heritage, archaeological sites such

as *Castro de Santo Ovídio*, intangible cultural assets like traditional pilgrimages, and a rich gastronomy exemplified by *Vitela Assada à Moda de Fafe*. Other cultural landmarks, including the Municipal Theatre and historical homes of returning Brazilian emigrants, together with natural attractions such as *Parque da Cidade*, *Jardim do Calvário*, *Queimadela* Dam, and *Casa do Penedo*, further enhance the municipality's appeal. Motorsport events, particularly the Rally of Portugal and its dedicated museum, constitute a unique selling proposition that the municipality can leverage to strengthen its regional visibility.

Despite these strengths, the study also reveals several constraints that must be addressed. Stakeholders reported limitations in infrastructure, human resources, promotional strategies, and coordination among local actors. Moreover, the absence of comprehensive tourism packages and underdeveloped marketing initiatives reduce the potential to increase tourist stay duration and spending. These findings align with prior studies highlighting that infrastructural development and institutional coordination are critical for sustainable tourism growth in small municipalities (Mota, 2016; Roman et al., 2022).

The study highlights key opportunities for the municipality, including the promotion of sustainable tourism practices, the adoption of digital technologies such as the "Welcome Fafe" mobile application, and the strategic development of partnerships with travel agencies and cultural organisations. However, threats such as competition from nearby destinations, economic fluctuations, and environmental risks necessitate proactive management and strategic planning to safeguard the municipality's tourism competitiveness (Roman et al., 2022).

In summary, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of Fafe's tourism potential and provides evidence-based recommendations for enhancing its position as a regional destination. Recommended strategies include better promotion of cultural and natural assets, investment in infrastructure, capacity building for tourism personnel, and fostering stakeholder collaboration. Limitations of the study relate primarily to the small number of interviews conducted and the exclusion of external tourist demand and visitor profiles. Future research should address these limitations by including analyses of tourist segmentation and demand patterns to better align municipal tourism policies and offerings with visitor needs.

Overall, the study demonstrates that Fafe possesses significant tourism assets and diversified offerings. By combining strategic planning, resource valorisation, and sustainable management practices, the municipality can enhance its attractiveness, improve visitor experiences, and strengthen the contribution of tourism to local development.

Bionotes

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