Mapping and Evaluating the Attractiveness of Pilgrim Routes from an Experiential Perspective: the Case of the 'Paths through Italy'

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The assessment of tourist offerings and the attractiveness of tourist destinations has been the subject of many studies in the tourism management literature over the years. Several authors have examined the territorial characteristics and factors that nurture tourist destination attractiveness in order to create flexible models that are capable of providing recommendations and instructions for destination management policies in the tourism industry. However, one of the fields in which this topic has so far been under-studied is with regard to pilgrim routes.

Calling upon the 'Atlas of the Paths through Italy' which represents the official census or count of Italian routes published and recognised by the Ministry of Environmental, Cultural and Tourism Heritage (MiBACT) in 2016, the purpose of this article is to compare all the 'Paths through Italy' and classify them according to their expressed or unexpressed tourism potential. In particular, through an experiential approach and the use of Fuzzy Set Ideal Type Analysis (FSITA) methodology, this article aims to evaluate the attractiveness of the Paths in terms of their structural capability, create a taxonomy of the Paths, identify the most attractive type of Path which should be taken as a best practice benchmark, and provide managerial and policy suggestions to improve the attractiveness of the weaker Paths.

The results of the analysis found that three Paths had strong potential and six Paths had good potential for tourism development. This study provides both a descriptive framework and an interpretative approach to the Italian Paths to help public intuitions manage and develop policies for the sustainable development of these pilgrimage routes.

Key Words: pilgrim routes, experiential tourism, slow tourism, Paths through Italy, FSITA

Introduction

The meaning of pilgrimage as a form of travel has profoundly changed over time. In the past, pilgrimage was exclusively considered as a manifestation of faith, bringing people together to seek the divine and to be in its presence. Nowadays, the meaning of pilgrimage has expanded by combining with other spiritual, historical, archaeological, and naturalistic motivations (Cerutti & Dioli, 2013; Fernandes *et al.*, 2012) to the point where it seems to be difficult to distinguish between the religious and the secular dimensions (Lucarno, 2016).

Notwithstanding these transformations, pilgrimage continues to remain a relevant phenomenon in the tourism sector. In fact, as highlighted by Griffin and Raj, it is possible to believe that

> *religious / faith-based / spiritual tourism / pilgrimage [does not represent only a niche or a rapidly growing segment but] a significant and constant element of the tourism industry* (2017:2).

A similar transformation has occurred in the context of pilgrim routes that have become a systematic tourism

offer dedicated to walking tourists. These paths, originally born as itineraries of faith, are now a combination and synthesis of the religious and secular in the context of various cultural and environmental backgrounds. Considering the contribution that these paths can offer to territories, especially marginal ones, scholars and policy makers agree that they can represent a tool for economic and social growth (e.g., Ambrósio *et al.*, 2019). In recent decades, numerous routes have been created throughout Europe to capitalise on this economic and social capital. However, despite a growing body of work, there is still an overall scarcity of empirical studies, particularly with focus on the comparative evaluation of their touristic attractiveness.

The current study aims to fill this gap by analysing the case of the 'Atlas of Paths through Italy', the official list of Italian routes recognised by the Ministry of Environmental, Cultural and Tourism Heritage (MiBACT) with the objective of increasing the level of services provided to the walkers and to promote the pilgrim tourism offer abroad. Considering the importance and the relevance of pilgrimage routes in Italy, the purpose of this article is to compare and classify these Paths through Italy. In particular, this article seeks to evaluate the attractiveness of the various paths in terms of structural capability and tourism potential, to create an attractiveness taxonomy of the Paths and, to provide managerial and policy tips to help improve the attractiveness of less developed and less popular paths.

To achieve this aim, this article begins by exploring the concept of attractiveness in the context of tourist destinations. The theoretical model used in this paper, inspired by an experiential approach, along with the methodology and the variables used in the analysis, are then described, after this, the research results are presented, and management and policy implications are outlined before concluding.

Attractiveness of Tourist Destinations: a Review of the Literature

The tourism potential of territorial assets has been the subject of several studies in the scientific literature. Generally, the perspective used to analyse and evaluate these assets is the attractiveness of tourist destinations. Attractiveness in this case refers to 'the extent to which the availability, quality and management of local tourist services satisfies the needs of the customer' (Cracolici

& Nijkamp, 2009:337). However, the concept of tourist destination attractiveness has been examined by scholars from various disciplinary approaches, which complicates what constitutes attractiveness beyond this simple definition (e.g., Lee, 2016; Cugno *et al.*, 2012; Calvo-Mora *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, scholars have tended to favour experimental surveys rather than theoretical insights in studying destination attractiveness. As argued by Formica and Uysal

> *the main concern of scholars, researchers, and practitioners is not related to the theoretical investigation of the attractiveness concept itself but to the possibility of finding a universal method for its measurement (2006: 418).*

Therefore, the studies on the attractiveness of tourist destinations appear heterogeneous, with theoretical conceptualisations overlapping and often subordinated to empirical approaches.

Based on these considerations, existing research on destination attractiveness can be classified and grouped according to the approach taken towards to the concept of attractiveness.

One approach focuses on the mapping of territorial resources. This approach assumes that the attractiveness of tourist sites stems from a particular set of tangible and intangible assets. From a static point of view, these resources are physically settled within territories and are represented by historical, cultural, and landscape endowments (Cho, 2008; Krešic, 2008). From a dynamic point of view, existing heritage is supported by current human activities, such as events and festivals, whether organised by tourist companies or local communities (Gregori *et al.*, 2013). Deng *et al.* (2002) differentiated between tourism resources, tourist facilities, accessibility, local communities, and peripheral attractions. They suggest that an initial recognition of these resources and a subsequent implementation of an evaluation and rating system of these resources should be done to establish and promote sustainability practices, protect territories, and improve the tourist experience. Likewise, Lee (2016) proposed four types of resources that can determine the attractiveness of tourist destinations: tourism attractions, accessibility, amenities, and complementary services. More recently, Ambrósio *et al.* (2019) focused on pilgrimage tourism resources, proposing a theoretical approach to identify and evaluate pilgrim-specific services and defining policies aimed at strengthening

the attractiveness of the territory and the involvement of stakeholders. Finally, other studies have attempted to map the territorial assets through the opinion of experts, verifying the extensiveness of the tourism offer and recognising resources and policies capable of increasing the attractiveness (e.g., Calvo-Mora *et al.*, 2011).

A second approach integrates the previous approach with tourist perception and satisfaction. According to this approach,

> *the reality lies in the reciprocal relationship between these two key elements, which is essential to the very existence of tourism'* (Formica & Uysal, 2006: 419).

Through using an inductive approach, the authors defined four main types of factors that affect the attractiveness of a rural tourist destination: tourist services and facilities, cultural and historical offerings, rural lodging, and outdoor recreation). Territorial attractiveness was subsequently tested through a survey of visitor demand, highlighting the existence of gaps between objective and subjective evaluation systems. Other researchers have considered the evaluation process and the level of tourist satisfaction, identifying the main supply factors that should be integrated or modified to improve tourism performance within a territory. To this end, specific types of territorial factors have been evaluated in relation to demand aspects (Cugno *et al.*, 2012; Iatu & Bulai, 2011). For example, Cracolici and Nijkamp (2009) outline eleven characteristics which tourists look for which subsequently led to the authors creating a destination competitiveness index. Similarly, in investigating the attractiveness of a region in India, Manoj and Babu (2008) , found fifteen types of static and dynamic territorial resources that tourists find attractive based on the importance-performance of these resources within the region.

Based on the discussion above, it is possible to argue that what constitutes attractiveness in the context of tourist destinations is a multidimensional phenomenon in which theoretical and empirical considerations, assessments, and constructions converge and overlap.

Assessment of the Attractiveness of Tourist Destinations from the Experiential Perspective

The experiential approach to understanding tourism destination attraction is an emerging research strand in the economic-managerial literature (e.g., Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Kranzbuhler *et al.*, 2018, Chaney *et al.*, 2018; Jain *et al.*, 2017; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) especially in the tourism field (Conti *et al.*, 2020; Forlani & Pencarelli, 2019). The tourist experience can be considered as a unique and unrepeatable event that takes place in a specific time and place as the result of an interaction (i.e., co-production) among tourists, economic actors, the local community, and territorial resources (Campos *et al.*, 2018; Forlani & Pencarelli, 2018; Adhikari & Bhattacharya, 2016; Walls *et al.*, 2011; Volo, 2009; Oh *et al.*, 2007). Using the experiential approach means making the tourist's experience the most important consideration, and as such, attempts to understand destination attraction should place the tourist experience as the main object of evaluation. Promoting the experiential approach above other research approaches, however, means that tourism resources as a component of territorial attractiveness no longer hold an absolute and objective value but rather a relative value—resource value is now dependent upon a supply-demand match as required by tourist market segments. An archaeological resource, for example, can be considered an element of attraction for a cultural experience, while it can also become the setting for a food and wine experience. Using this logic, tourists seeking a pilgrimage-like experience must be provided with the structural elements necessary for the specific meaningful tourism experience being sought to potentially occur.

Within this line of research, the authors have opted to use the '5A' model (Forlani & Pencarelli, 2018; Pencarelli & Forlani, 2016) to assess the attractiveness of the Paths through Italy. This model adjusts the classical models of Cooper *et al.* (1993) and Kelly and Nankervis (2001) based on the model of the domains of experience proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1998). This model also allowed the authors to include a large portion of the variables identified by the scientific literature which can be adapted or interpreted to be useful an experiential perspective.

The 5A model includes five characteristics that a destination should have to be attractive to tourists (Forlani & Pencarelli, 2018: 77-79):

- **A**ttractiveness (ATT): the presence of resources capable of attracting specific tourists and stimulating involving experiences;

- **A**tmosphere (ATM): the presence of atmospheric factors that create the 'scenography' of the experience;

- **A**ccessibility (ACC): the possibility and ease of access to the experience with public and private transport;

- **A**menity (AME): the presence of tourist support services (accommodation, facilities, catering, etc.) that make the experience feasible;

- **A**ttitude (ATI): the requisite cultural and social liveliness and consistency with the proposed experience.

The 5A model is a conceptual approach that can be applied to any form of tourism offer if adequately 'calibrated' to the specific experience. As such, this approach allows scholars to verify the suitability of territorial resources in terms of attractiveness for a specific tourism experience. However, this model does not allow scholars to evaluate the level of the attractiveness in a comparative way between several territories. In this paper, the 5A model is integrated with indicators that express an evaluation from a demand point-of-view.

Starting from the above-mentioned features, to set up the analysis model used in this research, the authors first sought to understand the territorial characteristics sought by a specific tourism experience—in this case the pilgrim's way. The most interesting aspect of pilgrimage routes supported by the literature concerns the motivations that lead a person to choose this kind of tourism experience. In their discussion paper, Griffin and Raj highlight that

> *while formal religious practices are less important to the individual, religious experiences are sought to give a person meaning and focus* (2017:5).

With regards to specific pilgrimage route experiences, such as the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, some studies argue that the walker is driven by religious-spiritual, cultural, and wellness motivations (Fernandes *et al.*, 2012; Murray & Graham, 1997; Olsen & Trono, 2018). Similarly, Lucarno (2016:54) states that for these walkers '*the religious stimulus is predominant, but a quarter of tourists travel for cultural interest*'. One study that analysed the experience of walkers traveling the Via Francigena in Italy, identified landscape perception, ethics, and nature as the main reasons for the choice to undertake this type of travel (Trampetti *et al.*, 2013). Research by Kato and Progano (2017) in Japan distinguished between pilgrimage (spiritual) and walking tourism and emphasised the importance of environmental stimuli both in generating an aesthetic experience (i.e., beauty of places and landscape) and in favouring an introspective or transformative experience (i.e., atmosphere).

These theoretical evidences allowed the authors to adapt the 5A model to the pilgrim experience in the following ways:

- The walker is attracted by religious/spiritual places, cultural heritage, landscape, and natural environment (Attractiveness – Atmosphere). The immersion of the walker in the environment through walking at a slow pace and the enjoyment of tourist attractions (i.e., goals to be reached) characterises the experiential proposal of the route.

- The other elements provided by the model (Accessibility – Amenity – Attitude) appear to support the experience. Although not decisive in the route selection processes, these factors should be themed with the rest of the path in order to improve the overall experience (e.g. pilgrim's hostels, pilgrim's menu, etc.).

Starting from the experience sought by walkers, it is possible to define the attractiveness of the paths through the creation of a typology using two macro-

	WORK OUT (ACC∧AME∧ATI)	**~ WORK OUT** ~ (ACC∧AME∧ATI)
Table 1: Matrix of the Ideal Types		
ASSET (ATT∧ATM)	Type A – **Strong**	Type B – **Prospective**
~ ASSET ~ (ATT∧ATM)	Type C – **Limited**	Type D – **Weak**

Figure 1: Map of the Italian Paths

Source: Ministry of Environmental, Cultural and Tourism Heritage (MiBACT)

dimensions rather than the five starting ones (5A): A) ASSET (Attractiveness, Atmosphere); B) WORK OUT (Accessibility, Amenity, Attitude). The first dimension, called Asset (ASS), discriminates the paths on the basis of experiential attractiveness (high or low presence of cultural, religious and environmental resources). The second dimension, called Work Out (WOT), discriminates the paths on the basis of facilities (Accessibility, Amenity) and the enrichment of the tourist experience (Attitude). With these two dimensions it is possible to create a matrix (Table 1) that identifies four ideal types:

1) Type A - Strong (ASS∧WOT);

2) Type B – Prospective (ASS∧~WOT);

3) Type C - Limited (~ASS∧WOT);

4) Type D - Weak (~ASS∧~WOT).

The Study Context

The Ministry of Environmental, Cultural and Tourism Heritage (MiBACT) published the 'Atlas of the Paths through Italy' in 2016 which represents the official census of Italian routes (see Figure 1)[1]. An analysis of the credentials[2] issued by the main Italian Paths[3] highlights the growing interest in this type of tourist experience. The

1 Available at: https://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/ multimedia/MiBAC/documents/1509714533266_Slide_ Cammini_dItalia_-_Conf._Stampa1.pdf

2 As stated by the official website of the Via Francigena, a 'Credential, or Pilgrim's Passport', is
   the fundamental document of the pilgrim that allows ... access to accommodating facilities located along the itinerary. The pilgrim will get a stamp in every location where he/she stays or passes (tourist offices, churches, hostels), until the conclusion of the walk' (https://www. viefrancigene.org/en/pilgrims-credential/)

3   https://www.terre.it/cammini-percorsi/i-dati-dei-cammini/ ora-i-camminatori-italiani-preferiscono-gli-itinerari-in-italia/

Table 2: The Italian Paths by length		
Length	N.	%
Short (< 100 Km)	4	8.7
Medium-short (from 101 to 200 Km)	15	32.6
Medium (from 201 to 350 Km)	8	17.4
Medium-long (from 351 to 500 Km)	9	19.6
Long (> 500 Km)	8	17.4
Not available	2	4.3
Total	46	100.0
Source: Collated from the 'Atlas of Paths through Italy'		

Table 3: The Italian Paths by theme		
Theme	N.	%
Cultural	19	41.3
Naturalistic	14	30.4
Religious	13	28.3
Total	46	100.0
Source: Collated from the 'Atlas of Paths through Italy'		

number of credentials in 2018 was 32,338, an increase of 37.3% as compared to the previous year. Today, the Italian Paths represent a tourism offering with strong potential that could represent an important incentive to the enhancement of rural and smaller urban destinations (Fotiadis *et al.*, 2015).

The MiBACT website houses a database (https://www.turismo.beniculturali.it/cammini/) that contains a variety of information on each path, such as the theme, the practicability (on foot, by bike or on horseback), the number of stages, and length among other characteristics. In terms of length (Table 2), almost two thirds of the Paths are of medium length (medium-short length 32,6%, medium length 17,4% and medium-long length 19,6%) as defined by MiBACT.

In addition to the physical characteristics of each path the 'Paths through Italy' are classified by theme (Table 3). These are mainly characterised as cultural (41,3%), naturalistic (30,4%) and religious (28,3%) content

These data suggest that the Paths are heterogeneously distributed within the national territory; they are concentrated in the North-East and in the Centre of the country while they are less present in the North-West and in the South. The data also suggests that from a strictly religious point of view, many of the Paths converge on Rome, serving as evidence of the past and present religious role assumed by this city. Other Paths are also religion-focused, with their endpoint at a religious site, often related to the life of a Saint (e.g., San Francesco, San Benedetto). Also, the data show that there are paths, especially in the southern part of Italy, which have been designed and conceived for more secular reasons, with a focus on landscape, natural, historical, and cultural aspects rather than on spirituality.

Research Methodology

From a methodological point of view, the use of matrix, derived from the 5A model necessarily requires the transformation of the five dimensions into operational variables. For this purpose, this study used the Fuzzy Set Ideal Type Analysis approach (FSITA, Kvist, 2007; 1999) which is part of the more general category defined as th Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA, Rihoux & Ragin, 2008). QCA allows the researcher to operationalise the analysed dimensions (5A) in a rigorous and transparent way through criteria defined *a priori* in compliance with the qualitative nature of the dimensions studied. While maintaining a binary logic, the Fuzzy Set

Table 4: Metrics related to the structural dimensions of paths

Variables	Description	Indicator	Source	Fuzzy set
Attractiveness (ATT)	Amount of attractions included in the path and their popularity	1. N° of attractors (ATT1) 2. Total number of reviews (ATT2)	1. Official website and social media pages 2. Tripadvisor	**Continuous fuzzy sets:** 1. (0, n° attractions /10, 1) 2. (0, n° rev./n° rev. max, 1)
Atmosphere (ATM)	Amount of environmental and atmospheric factors included in the path and their popularity	1. N° of environmental factors (ATM1) 2. Total number of reviews (ATM2)	1. Official website and social media pages 2. Tripadvisor	**Continuous fuzzy sets:** 1. (0, n° attractions /10, 1) 2. (0, n° rev./n° rev. max, 1)
Accessibility (ACC)	Quality and usability of road connections	Reachability of the paths' starting point from a standard point (Rome) and respective travel times by public and private transport	Google Maps	**Six-value fuzzy sets:** 0= no information 0.2= incomplete information 0.4= only driving – long time 0.6= only driving – short time 0.8= both driving and by train – long time 1= both driving and by train – short time
Amenity (AME)	Suitability of the facilities required	Amount and typologies of tourist services (themed accommodation, alternative accommodation, catering, path guide, travel organisers)	1. Official website and social media pages	**Six-value fuzzy sets:** 0= no information 0.2= 1 factor out of 5 0.4= 2 factor out of 5 0.6= 3 factor out of 5 0.8= 4 factor out of 5 1= 5 factors out of 5
Attitude (ATI)	Presence of non-commercial activities that improve and characterise the experience	Amount and typologies of social activities (hospitality of the local community, entertainment activities related to the path, visits to cultural places, events and other non-specific activities of the path, other attractions and activities reported by the website)	1. Official website and social media pages 2. Tripadvisor.	**Six-value fuzzy sets:** 0= no information 0.2= 1 factor out of 5 0.4= 2 factors out of 5 0.6= 3 factors out of 5 0.8= 4 factors out of 5 1= 5 factors out of 5

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (FSQCA, Russo *et al.*, 2016; Fotiadis *et al.*, 2015; Ordanini *et al.*, 2014; Fiss, 2011) allows the researcher to overcome the dichotomy between 0 (attribute not present) and 1 (present attribute) assuming the hypothesis of a continuum between 0 and 1 and a critical threshold that determines the change of the state. In terms of practical application, anchor values can be used (Rihoux & Ragin, 2008), whose numerical meaning is necessary to trace steps in the continuum. From this perspective, the decimal numbers that are used in the fuzzy analysis are more like 'labels' rather than quantitative values.

FSITA uses fuzzy set logic and techniques to create ideal Weberian typologies and to assign individual cases analysed to the various ideal types. The FSITA approach is used by social scientists (Hudson & Kühner, 2013) as a qualitative-quantitative alternative to the traditional statistical cluster. Through this methodology it is possible to use the *5A model* to build ideal types capable of classifying tourism offers that share the same type of experience (e.g., routes-based tourism).

Based on the FSITA approach, this research develops over four phases (Pencarelli *et al.*, 2019; Ciccia & Verloo, 2012; Kvist, 2007):

1) definition of the logical dimensions of the ideal type;

2) transformation of logical dimensions into indicators;

3) evaluation of the presence of each dimension in each case and;

4) evaluation of the belonging of each case to the different ideal types.

The completion of the first phase is summarised in Table 1. In the second phase, the '5A' dimensions were transformed into indicators (operationalisation) and fuzzy set metrics were applied to match each individual case to its associated 'A' (calibration). Each dimension was defined by one or two variables. For each variable, the membership metrics were determined *a priori* in order to transform the empirical observations into fuzzy scores from 0 to 1. For each dimension three points were defined: complete membership (0.75-1), no membership (0 - 0.25) and crossover point X ($0.25 < X < 0.75$). The crossover point is the point where a case begins to move from being outside the set to being inside the set (Ciccia & Verloo, 2012, Kvist, 2007). Finally, as shown in Table 4, for each structural dimension (single A), the aspect to be measured (i.e., the variable) and the related measurement metric were specified. In addition, the data sources used for empirical observations are indicated.

The metric adopted to assess the value of individual attributes was the users' perception. These perceptions were analysed through the official websites, the routes' social network accounts, and Google Maps. Tripadvisor was used to analyse the demand perception (Cioppi *et al.*, 2019; Neuhofer, 2016; Neuhofer *et al.*, 2014; Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2014). As argued by some scholars (e.g., Cerutti & Piva, 2016; Floyd *et al.*, 2014; Gruner *et al.*, 2014), online customer reviews have already proven to be excellent tools for evaluating consumer preferences and for estimating sales results (Hoskins & Leick, 2019, Khare *et al.*, 2011; Viglia *et al.*, 2014).

Table 4 shows the metrics for each indicator and the criteria for assigning fuzzy scores. They range from 0 (no presence of the required characteristics) to 1 (full presence of the required characteristics).

Two indicators were considered for attractiveness (ATT = ATT1∧ATT2) and for atmosphere (ATM = ATM1∧ATM2); and one each for amenity (AME), accessibility (ACC) and attitude (ATI). Furthermore, both continuous values and anchors with discrete values were used (Rihoux & Ragin, 2008), depending on the different characteristics observed for each phenomenon (number of attractiveness factors, number of reviews, etc.).

The third phase – data collection – took place between September and November 2018 using the sources shown in table 2. Subsequently, the scores obtained for each path and for each 'A' were calculated. Then, the thresholds were defined to identify the status changes of the variables (calibration). The calibration choices (Kvist, 2007) were set by detecting the presence of the phenomenon (●) with at least 60% of the required characteristics (discrete value: ATT1; ATM1; ACC; AME; ATI) or belonging to 33% of the best cases (continuous value: 0.01 for ATT2 and ATM2).

Each path was given a score using the metrics (see Table 2) and classified into one of the four ideal types contained in Table 1.

Findings

On the basis of the methodological approach described above, two types of paths emerge: complete paths, in which all the characteristics noted above are present, and paths which do not have all the characteristics[4].

The scores of each single A were calculated and then the state of the variable (present or not present) were assigned as shown in Table 5. Also, Table 5 shows the attribution of each Path to an ideal type through the application of the characteristics as presented in Table 1.

The application of this analysis model divided the 46 paths into the 4 ideal types as shown in Table 6.

As seen in Table 6, there were only three Paths that could be considered a Strong Path (Type A) (Cammino degli Dei, Cammino di San Benedetto, Via Francigena). These three paths are very different from each other in terms of theme (archaeological, religious and cultural) and length (120 km; 300 km; 1044 km). This suggests that attractiveness is not due to some ex-ante advantage linked to specific characteristics, but rather to a mix of structural elements and organised activities.

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4   In the following tables, the paths are identified using the numbering that is assigned in the 'Atlas of the Paths through Italy'.

Path	ATT	ATT1	ATT2	ATM	ATM1	ATM2	ACC	AME	ATI	Ideal type
Table 5. Structural dimensions of the Paths through Italy										
Crossover point		**0.60**	**0.01**		**0.60**	**0.01**	**0.60**	**0.60**	**0.60**	
1	⊗	0.8●	0.004⊗	●	0.8●	0.033●	0.2⊗	0.8●	0.8●	D
2	⊗	0.7●	0.006⊗	⊗	1.0●	0.000⊗	0.8●	0⊗	0.6●	D
3	●	0.8●	0.024●	⊗	0.8●	0.010●	1●	1●	0.6●	A
4	●	0.7●	0.026●	⊗	0.8●	0.000⊗	1●	0.6●	0.2⊗	D
5	⊗	1.0●	0.009⊗	⊗	0.8●	0.001⊗	0.8●	0.8●	0.8●	C
6	⊗	1.0●	0.001⊗	⊗	0.8●	0.000⊗	0.8●	1●	0.8●	C
7	⊗	0.6●	0.006⊗	⊗	0.8●	0.000⊗	0.6●	0.8●	0.6●	C
8	⊗	0.8●	0.007⊗	●	0.8●	0.020●	0.8●	1●	0.6●	C
9	⊗	1.0●	0.006⊗	⊗	0.6●	0.000⊗	1●	0.4⊗	0.8●	D
10	⊗	1.0●	0.003⊗	●	0.6●	0.023●	0⊗	0.8●	0.6●	D
11	⊗	1.0●	0.004⊗	●	0.8●	0.010●	0.4⊗	0.2⊗	0.6●	D
12	⊗	1.0●	0.000⊗	⊗	1.0●	0.000⊗	0.8●	0.2⊗	0.4⊗	D
13	⊗	1.0●	0.001⊗	⊗	0.8●	0.000⊗	0.6●	0⊗	0.6●	D
14	●	0.6●	0.010●	●	1.0●	0.017●	0.6●	1●	0.6●	A
15	●	0.8●	0.183●	●	0.8●	0.116●	0.8●	0⊗	0.6●	B
16	⊗	1.0●	0.000⊗	⊗	0.8●	0.001⊗	0.8●	0.8●	0.8●	C
17	●	0.7●	0.021●	●	1.0●	0.011●	0.8●	0.8●	0.2⊗	B
18	●	1.0●	0.127●	●	0.8●	0.059●	0.4⊗	0.4⊗	0.8●	B
19	⊗	0.7●	0.004⊗	●	0.8●	0.011●	0.4⊗	0.6●	0.8●	D
20	⊗	1.0●	0.008⊗	●	0.8●	0.017●	0.4⊗	0.4⊗	0.2⊗	D
21	⊗	0.5⊗	0.000⊗	⊗	1.0●	0.003⊗	0.2⊗	0.6●	0.2⊗	D
22	●	1.0●	0.014●	●	1.0●	0.010●	0.8●	0.6●	0.4⊗	B
23	⊗	0.7●	0.001⊗	⊗	1.0●	0.000⊗	0.4⊗	0.2⊗	0.2⊗	D
24	⊗	0.6●	0.000⊗	⊗	0.2⊗	0.000⊗	0.8●	0.6●	0.6●	C
25	⊗	1.0●	0.008⊗	●	0.8●	0.042●	0.8●	0.8●	1●	C
26	⊗	1.0●	0.003⊗	●	0.8●	1.000●	0.8●	1●	0.8●	C
27	●	0.6●	0.030●	⊗	0.6●	0.000⊗	0.4⊗	1●	0.6●	D
28	●	0.8●	0.028●	⊗	0.6●	0.004⊗	0.8●	1●	0.6●	C
29	●	0.9●	0.028●	●	0.8●	0.027●	0.6●	0.6●	0.4⊗	B
30	⊗	0.9●	0.001⊗	●	0.6●	0.201●	1●	0.6●	0.6●	C
31	⊗	1.0●	0.008⊗	⊗	0.6●	0.001⊗	1●	0.8●	0.6●	C
32	●	1.0●	0.078●	⊗	0.8●	0.000⊗	1●	0.8●	0.2⊗	D
33	⊗	0.0⊗	0.000⊗	⊗	0.0⊗	0.000⊗	0.4⊗	0.8●	0.2⊗	D
34	⊗	0.1⊗	0.000⊗	⊗	0.2⊗	0.000⊗	0.4⊗	0.4⊗	0.4⊗	D
35	●	1.0●	0.038●	●	0.6●	0.185●	1●	0.2⊗	0.6●	B
36	●	1.0●	0.021●	●	0.8●	0.092●	0.8●	0.8●	0.8●	A
37	⊗	0.7●	0.001⊗	⊗	0.6●	0.000⊗	0.8●	1●	0.4⊗	D
38	⊗	1.0●	0.004⊗	⊗	0.0⊗	0.000⊗	0.8●	0.2⊗	0.2⊗	D
39	⊗	0.8●	0.000⊗	⊗	0.8●	0.002⊗	0.4⊗	0.6●	0.6●	D
40	⊗	0.6●	0.002⊗	⊗	0.6●	0.000⊗	0.2⊗	0.8●	0.4⊗	D
41	⊗	0.9●	0.002⊗	⊗	0.4⊗	0.000⊗	0.2⊗	0.8●	0.2⊗	D
42	●	1.0●	1.000●	⊗	0.4⊗	0.000⊗	1●	0⊗	0.2⊗	D
43	⊗	0.8●	0.003⊗	⊗	0.6●	0.000⊗	0.8●	0.6●	0.6●	C
44	⊗	0.7●	0.003⊗	⊗	1.0●	0.000⊗	0.4⊗	0.2⊗	0.2⊗	D
45	⊗	0.6●	0.001⊗	●	0.6●	0.050●	1●	0⊗	0.2⊗	D
46	●	0.6●	0.017●	⊗	0.4⊗	0.000⊗	0.2⊗	0.6●	0.4⊗	D

Key: ⊗ = 0 or feature absent; ● = 1 or feature present

	WORK OUT (ACC∧AME∧ATI)	~ WORK OUT ~ (ACC∧AME∧ATI)
Table 6: Matrix of structural typologies of the Italian Paths		
ASSET (ATT∧ATM)	Type A – **Strong** (3 Paths: 3; 14; 36)	Type B – **Prospective** (6 Paths: 15; 17; 18; 22; 29; 35)
~ASSET ~ (ATT∧ATM)	Type C – **Limited** (12 Paths: 5; 6; 7; 8; 16; 24; 25; 26; 28; 30; 31; 43)	Type C – **Weak** (25 Paths: 1; 2; 4; 9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 19; 20; 21; 23; 27; 32; 33; 34; 37; 38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 44; 45; 46)

There were six Prospective Paths (type B) that were mainly naturalistic in nature. These Paths were heterogeneous in terms of length and had a medium level of difficulty. These Paths have significant potential for tourism development, considering the interest many tourists have for pathways that emphasise nature. Unlike the type A Paths, these type B Paths are not adequately valued, as there seems to be a lack of information regarding accessibility, themed hospitality services (hostels or low-cost beds) and support activities (events and initiatives for pilgrims) on the Internet.

There were twelve Limited Paths (type C) and twenty-five Weak paths (type D). The Paths belonging to these types (37 out of 46 in total) can be characterised as having a comparatively lower level of attractiveness than the Paths classified as strong or prospective. More specifically, considering the information available online, while some of these paths (15/36) seem unable to combine the two most typically attractive dimensions of the paths (historical-cultural or religious and environmental), the other Paths (21/36) seem to not have many relevant elements in which potential users may be interested.

It should be noted here that the reduced level of attractiveness of type C paths is compensated by an adequate infrastructural system as well as support activities, this is not the case for type D Paths which have a lack of these amenities. While Limited Paths could be improved by identifying new attractive factors and/or promoting them more effectively, type D (weak) paths seem to show substantial design problems and would need substantial amount of financial and social investment.

Comparing the results of this study with the data issued by the different Paths in 2018[5] it is interesting to notice a substantial match. The Paths, classified as strong in this study also rank in first place (Via Francigena, 17,092 credentials issued), third place (Via degli Dei, 3,800 credentials issued) and fourth place (Way of San Benedetto, 2,106 credentials issued). In second place we can find the Franciscan paths (Via di Francesco, Di qui passò Francesco and others with 7,352 credentials issued) which are made up of eight paths in total classified, according to this study, as the prospective (2), limited (3) and weak (3) types. By analysing the Franciscan routes in depth, it is possible to highlight that while achieving good results, their potential is still not fully expressed -

5   https://www.terre.it/cammini-percorsi/i-dati-dei-cammini/ora-i-camminatori-italiani-preferiscono-gli-itinerari-in-italia/

despite having the same theme, these paths have been excessively subdivided and thus, are in competition with each other (contrary to what happens with the Via Francigena).

Discussion

The purpose of this article is to compare all the Paths through Italy and classify them into four typologies based on their expressed or unexpressed potential. The analysis presents a picture of the characteristics of the Paths through Italy. Despite the growing interest of pilgrims and tourists to walk these Paths, only a few of these Paths (strong and prospective) are attractive for pilgrimage and tourism development. However, the majority of Paths show a low level of attractiveness. These limited and weak routes do not have the strong elements of attraction listed above or have not been recognised as an attractive tourism offering by tourists, in part because they lack accessibility, hospitality, and themed services. These paths, therefore, exist more on paper than as infrastructural endowments and are underutilised as a driving force for development in their territories.

While not being able to go deeply into the design and management of individual Paths, the analysis of the data collected still allows some initial thoughts on their greater utilisation as tourism resources. With the publication of the 'Atlas of the Paths through Italy', there has been an increase in interest in Paths that have become popular because of local governments and tourism entrepreneurs 'wanting to put flags in the Atlas'. The resultant planning of routes has followed a more political-territorial, top-down logic rather than adapting to the needs and demands of walkers and pilgrims. There has also been an excessive proliferation of themed Paths in some areas of Italy (centre and north-east), leading to, on the one hand, an imbalance in the geographic coverage of Paths in Italy, and, on the other hand, a dispersion of resources (economic and communication) in addition to duplication of effort and incomplete proposals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from an analysis of the attractiveness of paths included in 'the Paths of Italy Atlas', the need to review public policies is evident. It is necessary to support public and private structures and institutions that aim to promote the qualification of proposals rather than their proliferation. In particular, it is necessary to invest in attractive paths even if they lack pilgrim/tourist services (prospective Paths), as even if these Paths are not utilised as a tourism resource, these Paths carry a legacy that derives from history, even if the community, in its public and private component, has not yet been able to enhance it. In these cases, policies should have the aim of stimulating local communities to aggregate and self-organise and to encourage public and private actors to investment in these Paths.

This study also offers a theoretical contribution to the economic and managerial tourism literature, highlighting the relevance and usefulness of the 5A experiential model, as it facilitates comparison between tourism offerings in different geographical contexts provided they share the same type of experience offered. The 5A model can be used for interpretative aims (ie., to classify routes into ideal types); for predictive aims (ie., evaluating the potential of a path proposal and its development), and; to highlight the dimensions that need to be reinforced to facilitate the transition of Paths from a weak situation to the desired situation (e.g., type A).

The research also allows for the comparative analyses of tourism studies examining attractiveness even if they are undertaken at different times and by different authors. From a managerial point of view, the model represents an effective method for evaluating the potential of tourism offerings that can benefit both tourism businesses and government organisations. Through the comparison of a large number of projects (and future proposals) it is possible to identify how Paths under-perform and thereby identify the necessary interventions for the implementation of growth and improvement strategies.

From the theoretical point of view, the most relevant contribution of this paper is for public decision makers. Comparative evaluation through the development of typologies of a large number of tourism projects can provide information to support the implementation of selective policies aimed at encouraging tourism proposals which hold the greatest potential as well as identifying the areas which need intervention in order to enhance the weakest proposals. In other words, based on the objective criteria defined above, the model offers public decision-makers the opportunity to overcome the issues regarding the distribution of public resources.

There are two limitations to this research project. First, the collection of data was limited to the Italian Paths present in the Atlas (although several not present paths were identified during the study). Second, the analysis relates to only one year (2018). Other research efforts can help to overcome these limits and to improve the model in order to offer a better and more refined managerial tool capable of supporting the growth of these Paths and encouraging the tourist development of the regions through which they cross. This requires the testing and validating of a greater number of indicators, the iteration of the analysis in subsequent years, the broadening of the comparison with other Paths in other countries (e.g., the Camino de Santiago de Compostela) and measuring the overall performance of the routes (such as the number of credentials issued etc.) in order to measure the effectiveness of the variables used to estimate tourism destination attractiveness.

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