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Impact of Customs and Artifacts on Tourism Development in South of Italy

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Abstract

Customs and artifacts play a pivotal role in shaping the tourism development of a destination. They offer unique insights into the cultural heritage and traditions of a place, attracting tourists seeking authentic and immersive experiences. When preserved and showcased thoughtfully, these elements become a compelling draw for visitors, contributing significantly to the growth of the local tourism industry. The research strategy for this study was descriptive. 20 tourists' destination managers in South Italy were the intended audience. From a potential sample of 20 tourists' destination managers in South Italy, 15 were interviewed for the research. The data was gathered with the use of questionnaires. In the South of Italy, the rich tapestry of customs and artifacts plays an integral role in the region's tourism development. These treasures, steeped in history and tradition, not only provide a unique window into the area's cultural heritage but also serve as a magnetic force for travelers seeking genuine and immersive encounters. By preserving and promoting these customs and artifacts, Southern Italy can continue to thrive as a top tourist destination, where visitors can savor the authenticity and beauty of the region's unique cultural identity. The study recommended that South of Italy should allocate resources to safeguard and showcase its customs and artifacts, creating museums, cultural centers, and interactive exhibits to educate and engage tourists about the rich heritage of the region. Collaborative efforts involving local communities and artisans can be encouraged to ensure that customs and artifacts are not only preserved but also revitalized, thereby creating sustainable economic opportunities and fostering a sense of pride and ownership. Develop marketing strategies that emphasize the cultural richness of the South of Italy, highlighting the customs and artifacts as key attractions, and utilize digital and social media platforms to reach a wider audience, attracting travelers who seek authentic and immersive experiences.

Keywords: *Customs and Artifacts, Tourism Development, Italy*

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1.0 Background of the Study

Customs refer to established social practices, behaviors, and traditions within a specific cultural or societal context. These customs often dictate how people interact, celebrate, and conduct themselves in various aspects of life. Artifacts, on the other hand, are physical objects or items that hold cultural, historical, or artistic significance (Banks & O'Connor, 2021). They can include tools, artworks, clothing, or any tangible items that provide insights into a particular culture, era, or civilization. Together, customs and artifacts are intertwined elements of culture, with customs representing the intangible aspects of tradition and behavior, while artifacts represent the tangible manifestations of that culture's history and identity. The South of Italy, known for its rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and warm hospitality, has seen a significant transformation in its tourism industry over the years (Santoro, Venturi & Agnoletti, 2020). This transformation has been influenced by a myriad of customs and artifacts that have deep historical and cultural significance.

One of the most significant customs in the South of Italy is its Mediterranean cuisine. The use of locally sourced ingredients, such as olive oil, tomatoes, and fresh seafood, has not only contributed to the region's gastronomic fame but also attracted food enthusiasts from around the world (Trono, 2019). The Southern regions of Italy, including Sicily and Campania, have a long history of wine-making. The local wineries and vineyards offer tours and tastings, giving tourists an opportunity to explore the art of winemaking and savor some of the finest Italian wines. South Italy is known for its vibrant festivals and celebrations. Events like the Carnival of Venice, which takes place in the Veneto region, draw tourists from all corners of the globe who come to witness the elaborate masks and costumes. Traditional craftsmanship is another integral aspect of South Italian culture. From intricate ceramics in Sicily to finely crafted leather goods in Naples, tourists can explore centuries-old artisan traditions and purchase unique souvenirs. The South of Italy boasts an abundance of ancient ruins, such as Pompeii and Herculaneum, which offer tourists a glimpse into the past (Chard, 2020). These archaeological sites showcase the advanced engineering and architectural skills of the ancient Romans.

South Italy is home to several important religious sites, including the Basilica of San Nicola in Bari and the Sanctuary of Saint Rosalia in Palermo (Andino, 2021). Pilgrims and tourists alike visit these sites, contributing to local economies. Tarantella, a lively folk dance, and traditional Southern Italian music add a unique cultural flavor to the region. Tourists can often enjoy live performances and even learn a few dance moves themselves. The South of Italy is dotted with picturesque historical towns and villages, such as Matera and Alberobello, known for their distinctive stone architecture. These charming locations offer tourists a glimpse into a bygone era. Weekly markets, known as "mercato," are a common sight in Southern Italy (Latif, 2021). These markets are a treasure trove for tourists looking to purchase local produce, handmade crafts, and souvenirs. Along the coastline, traditional fishing villages still practice age-old customs. Tourists can witness the daily routines of fishermen and enjoy freshly caught seafood in seaside restaurants.

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Religious processions are a significant part of Southern Italian culture. Events like the Good Friday procession in Sorrento are not only spiritually meaningful but also draw tourists for their grandeur. The Amalfi Coast is renowned for its production of Limoncello, a lemon liqueur. Visitors can tour local lemon groves and distilleries, learning about the craftsmanship behind this popular Italian beverage (Bonetto & Sainsbury, 2022). The South of Italy is home to magnificent historical theaters like the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples. These venues host opera, ballet, and classical music performances that attract art and culture enthusiasts. In some regions of the South, traditional clothing is still worn during festivals and special occasions. Tourists can admire and even try on these elaborate garments, adding to their cultural experience. Numerous museums in the South of Italy, such as the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, house artifacts and artworks that tell the story of the region's rich cultural heritage (Varriale, Volpe & Noviello, 2021). These institutions contribute to a deeper understanding of Southern Italian customs and history.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The South of Italy remains significantly less visited by international tourists compared to regions in the northern part of the country, such as Tuscany and Venice. This disparity raises the question of why this region, with its captivating customs and artifacts, has not fully capitalized on its tourism potential. The South of Italy possesses a rich cultural heritage, encompassing traditions, festivals, gastronomy, historical sites, and artisanal craftsmanship. However, there is a growing concern that these customs and artifacts are underrepresented and undervalued in the tourism sector. This issue demands a comprehensive investigation into the extent to which this cultural heritage has been integrated into tourism offerings. The economic disparities between the northern and southern regions of Italy are evident, with the South lagging behind in terms of income, employment opportunities, and overall economic development. Effective tourism development can serve as a catalyst for economic growth, but the region's failure to fully harness its customs and artifacts has perpetuated these disparities.

As tourism in the South of Italy remains underdeveloped, there is a risk that its unique customs and artifacts may face neglect, commodification, or even erosion due to insufficient conservation efforts. Preserving these customs and artifacts is essential not only for cultural heritage but also for maintaining the authenticity that tourists seek. The South of Italy faces challenges related to infrastructure and accessibility, hindering the ease with which tourists can explore the region's customs and artifacts. Poor road networks, limited public transportation options, and inadequate tourist facilities can deter visitors and limit their engagement with the local culture. Sustainability is a growing concern in the tourism industry worldwide. The South of Italy should address the delicate balance between tourism development and the preservation of customs and artifacts without compromising the environmental and cultural integrity of the region.

2.0 Literature Review

Qiu, Zheng, Xiang and Zhang (2019) noted that there is a positive feedback loop between cultural tourism and the economic health of an area or country. Because it attracts and accommodates so

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many people from all over the world, Taiwan is a perfect example of cultural and social variety. Despite Taiwan's well-known cultural variety, research on the tourist industry often make the mistake of focusing on products rather than markets. The purpose of this research was to determine how much of a role cultural celebrations, traditions, and artifacts have in driving tourist growth in Taiwan. The study was conducted using a qualitative and quantitative mixed-methods exploratory research methodology. Seven resort managers, three county government officials, 399 members of the Community, and 395 visitors were the units of study. The total number of participants was 804. Questionnaires and an interview guide were used to compile the data. Content analysis, together with descriptive and inferential statistics, were used to examine the data. The results showed that cultural celebrations had a favorable and statistically significant relationship with tourist growth ($r=0.228$, $p=0.00$). The findings also revealed a favorable and statistically significant relationship between traditions and artifacts and tourist growth ($r=0.223$, $p=0.00$). The research suggested that cultural events be given more funding by the tourist industry to help both fields. Profiles and records of customs and artifacts should be made available to visitors.

Kumar, Kumar and Nicolau (2023) conducted study to investigate the influence of cultural practices on tourism development in Israel. The research strategy adopted was an exploratory one, and the methodologies used were a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. 8 destination managers, 5 government officials, 200 community members, and 150 visitors were the units of study. The total number of participants was 363. Questionnaires and an interview guide were used to compile the data. Content analysis, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation, regression) were used to examine the data. The results showed a favorable and substantial association between cultural practices (culture festivals, customs & artefacts, and traditional rituals) and tourism growth in Israel, both for visitors and locals. There was a favorable and statistically significant connection between cultural celebrations and tourist growth ($r=0.248$, $p=0.00$). A strong and statistically significant relationship ($r=0.232$, $p=0.00$) between traditions and artifacts and tourist growth was also found. Similarly, a favorable and statistically significant correlation ($r=0.129$, $p=0.001$) between the growth of tourism and the practice of traditional rites was found. According to the results of a regression study, customs and artifacts have the greatest impact on tourist growth, followed by traditional rituals. Cultural traditions have an impact on tourist growth, and if they are fostered, Israel might see rapid tourism expansion. It was concluded that culture has a great untapped potential for tourism, and that new tourist goods should be produced from culture. Those cultural practices, like rainmaking ceremonies and purification rites that have official sanction might be refined into tourist draws. The tourist industry should give cultural celebrations a higher priority in order to promote tourism and preserve culture.

Horaira and Devi (2021) reported that heritage sites draw tourists as points of interest for cultural tourism. Tourists nowadays are interested in experiencing other cultures outside of their own, as well as seeing the distinctive and universal relics of ancient civilizations. This paves the way for communication between individuals from all corners of the globe, regardless of language, ethnicity, religion, or political persuasion. Tourism impacts the environment, which includes both

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natural and human elements, and so has repercussions for both visitors and locals. Many different sociocultural impacts of tourism emerge as a result of this interaction, some of which are positive (revival of local arts, crafts, and traditional cultural activities; revitalization of social and cultural life of the local people; restoration of local architectural traditions, etc.) and others of which are negative (demonstration effect; cultural damage; authenticity; increases in drug use; prostitution; crime; etc.). There may be regional variations in the timing of these shifts. While some locations are warm and welcoming to tourists at all times, some with a declining reputation may be downright hostile. As a result, only the societal and cultural effects on historic sites will be considered, and the results of previous research on this topic will be presented properly. Several hypotheses on the societal and cultural effects of tourism will also be summarized. Sociocultural consequences of tourism development on historic sites and research into the effects of tourism on locals (also known as hosts) and visitors are the only focus of this study. The researcher will also assess the validity of other ideas that have been advanced to explain the societal and cultural effects of tourism. Some explanations will conclude with case studies to help cement the material.

Wu, Shen, Wang, Hou and Yang (2019) conducted study to look at how exhibitions of art and design, particularly those shown in historic buildings, contribute to the growth and viability of local tourist destinations. In this project, information was gathered from local cultural heritage by reading existing literature, doing surveys and observations in the field, conducting a case study, and engaging in an iterative design, prototyping, and collaborative process with the local community, MSMEs, and government. Supporting tourism growth via the display of art and design may have a significant effect on a destination's ability to preserve and activate its local cultural heritage. When the community is involved in the planning and execution of an exhibition event, the cultural heritage is activated, and the community reaps the benefits. The findings of this study provide a fresh angle on the preservation of regional cultural artifacts by proposing the use of architectural landmarks as venues for contemporary art and design shows. Curated collaborative creative products and entertainment of local community, designers, and MSMEs in Siak Regency tell a new story about the region's rich cultural heritage, which has benefits for product competitiveness, cultural preservation, community welfare, and the development of tourism in Indonesia.

Chen (2019) noted that the tourism industry in Malaysia is growing at a dizzying rate, and one of the sectors contributing to the country's allure is heritage tourism, which serves as a key marketing tool for luring visitors with an interest in history and culture. Both foreign visitors and local Malaysians are beginning to see cultural heritage tourism as a viable option for their vacations. A rich legacy and an amalgamated culture are reflected in Malaysia's architecture, handicrafts, traditional costume, music, and dance due to the country's diverse population. Tourism administrators, stakeholders, governments, and cultural heritage administrators, as well as the local population, all confront challenges in Malaysia's cultural heritage tourism administration. In order to reliably maximize the value of the cultural heritage tourism industry in Malaysia, it is necessary to establish a system or management that takes into account on all issues and challenges relating

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to the preservation, conservation, and maintenance of cultural heritage resources and assets. The goal of this study is to examine cultural heritage tourism in Malaysia and analyze its current state, as well as any problems or obstacles that it faces.

Tsartas, Stergiou, Sarantakou, Kostopoulou, Kontis and Giannopoulos (2021) mentioned that the tourism business has a multiplier effect on rural economies, and it also serves as a platform for cultural interaction. Despite the potential negative economic and environmental effects of the tourist sector, the emphasis of this thesis study was on the positive cultural effects that tourism has had on the residents of Tainan's Southwest shore. One other goal is to learn about the current and future growth of the Southwest coast area. The second goal is to encourage visitors and locals alike to think more carefully about how their presence may affect the local culture. This thesis discussed the cultural effects of the tourist sector in the Southwest Coast Region of Tainan, Taiwan, and made some broad recommendations. The commissioner gained fresh understanding from the data, which facilitated the expansion of regional services. This study used a mixed method strategy, including both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The research approach included semi-structured interviews, a quantitative survey, and quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The findings of the thesis indicate that all relevant parties and factors must be taken into account during destination management and planning. Finding a middle ground between people, culture, and the economy was important for preventing war, cultural extinction, and environmental degradation. In addition, everyone connected with the area was tasked with safeguarding the destination's physical and immaterial resources.

Yulius (2023) argued that as civilizations evolve and the ancient period fades away, roads are built and improved to keep pace with the development of other social institutions. Meanwhile, explorers in both the East and West have made discoveries that have laid the groundwork for millennia of harmony between humans and the natural world. Because of this, significant and lengthy roadways began to develop. Because of how obvious it was, well-known routes like the Silk Road were built. Merchants, pilgrims, monks, soldiers, nomads, and urban dwellers from China and India to the Mediterranean Sea used the Silk Road (also known as the Silk Route) to trade goods and ideas with people from the West and the East. Agricultural, industrial, artisanal, and mineral goods formed the mainstay of trade along the Silk Road. It's also important to remember that the cultural, social, and political interactions that occurred along this winding path between countries were not limited to business.

3.0 Research Methodology

The research strategy for this study was descriptive. 20 tourists' destination managers in South Italy were the intended audience. From a potential sample of 20 tourists' destination managers in South Italy, 15 were interviewed for the research. The data was gathered with the use of questionnaires.

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4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Correlation Analysis

The results presented in Table 1 shows the correlation analysis

Table 1: Correlation Analysis

		Tourism Development	Customs & Artifacts
Tourism Development	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Customs & Artifacts	Pearson Correlation	.207 **	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000

The correlation results from table 1 show that customs and artifacts was positively and significantly related with tourism development ($r=.207, p=.000$). This concurs with Qiu, Zheng, Xiang and Zhang (2019) articulated that customs and artifacts play a pivotal role in enhancing tourism development by providing unique cultural experiences and historical insights that attract and engage tourists, contributing to the enrichment of destinations and the promotion of cultural heritage.

4.2 Regression Analysis

The section includes model fitness, analysis of variance and regression of coefficient. The findings in Table 2 show the model fitness

Table 2: Model Fitness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.207a	0.225	0.178	0.1287667

The findings from Table 2 reveal that customs and artifacts was found to be satisfactory in explaining tourism development in South Italy. This was supported by the coefficient of determination, which is R square of 0.225. It indicates that access to customs and artifacts explain 22.5% of the variations in the tourism development in South of Italy

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Table 3: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.62	1	5.62	14.192	.000b
	Residual	7.92	20	0.396		
	Total	13.54	19			

The findings in Table 3 indicates that the overall model was statistically significant. The results show that tourism development is a good predictor in explaining the customs and artifacts in South of Italy. This was supported by an F statistic of 14.192 and the reported p-value of 0.000 which was less than the conventional probability significance level of 0.05.

Table 4: Regression of Coefficient

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.661	0.195		3.390	0.062
Customs & Artifacts	0.519	0.189	0.572	2.746	0.011

According to the findings in Table 4, it was discovered that customs and artifacts was positively and significantly associated to tourism development ($\beta=0.519$, $p=0.011$). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 2.746 that is larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. These results indicates that when customs and artifacts increases by one unit, the tourism development in South of Italy will increase by 0.519 units while other factors that influence the tourism development in South of Italy remain unchanged. Wu, Shen, Wang, Hou and Yang (2019) mentioned that customs and artifacts are indispensable elements in the realm of tourism development, as they not only serve as a source of cultural enrichment for travelers but also contribute significantly to the economic growth of destinations through increased visitor engagement and appreciation of local heritage. To harness the full potential of customs and artifacts, it is imperative for destination managers to prioritize their preservation, promotion, and sustainable integration into tourism experiences, fostering a harmonious balance between cultural heritage conservation and economic benefits.

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5.0 Conclusion

The customs and artifacts unique to the South of Italy, deeply rooted in its historical, cultural, and natural heritage, represent invaluable assets that can significantly contribute to tourism growth. It is evident that the South of Italy possesses a wealth of customs and artifacts that set it apart from other regions. These cultural treasures, including traditional festivals, culinary traditions, ancient ruins, and artisanal craftsmanship, provide a distinctive and immersive experience for tourists seeking authenticity. These customs and artifacts play a pivotal role in attracting tourists to the region. The allure of experiencing age-old traditions, savoring traditional cuisine, and exploring historical sites is a powerful draw. However, it is crucial to balance preservation with commercialization to maintain the authenticity that travelers seek. Despite their potential, these customs and artifacts face various challenges, including infrastructure limitations, inadequate promotion, and concerns related to sustainable tourism. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach involving government support, community engagement, and collaboration between stakeholders. It is imperative that policymakers, local communities, and tourism stakeholders work collaboratively to develop sustainable strategies for harnessing customs and artifacts to fuel tourism growth. This should include investments in infrastructure, cultural preservation initiatives, and effective marketing campaigns that highlight the uniqueness of the South of Italy. Recognizing and preserving customs and artifacts in the South of Italy is not only essential for the economic development of the region but also for safeguarding its rich cultural heritage. By doing so, the South of Italy can unlock its full potential as a top-tier tourist destination, enriching the experiences of travelers while ensuring the longevity of its customs and artifacts for generations to come.

6.0 Recommendations

To fully capitalize on the region's customs and artifacts, it is crucial to improve infrastructure and accessibility. Investment in transportation, including roads, airports, and public transportation, will make it easier for tourists to reach cultural and historical sites in the South of Italy. Moreover, upgrading facilities at these sites, such as visitor centers and amenities, will enhance the overall tourism experience. Effective promotion and marketing strategies are essential to attract more tourists to the South of Italy. Collaborative efforts between government bodies, tourism boards, and local businesses should focus on showcasing the region's unique customs and artifacts. This can include creating themed cultural routes, hosting cultural festivals, and leveraging digital platforms to reach a broader audience. A strong online presence and partnerships with travel agencies can also help raise awareness. Engaging local communities in tourism development is vital. Encourage community participation in preserving customs and artifacts by providing incentives for cultural preservation projects. This can include grants, training programs, and incentives for artisans and traditional craftsmen. Empowering local residents to take pride in their heritage and actively contribute to tourism efforts can foster a sense of ownership and authenticity.

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Implement sustainable tourism practices to protect customs and artifacts for future generations. Establish clear guidelines for responsible tourism, including rules for visitors at historical sites and cultural events. Encourage eco-friendly tourism activities and accommodations to minimize environmental impact. Striking a balance between tourism revenue and cultural preservation is essential for long-term success. Foster collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, local businesses, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Partnerships can lead to innovative projects that showcase customs and artifacts in unique ways. Encourage collaborations with museums, universities, and research institutions to conduct ongoing studies and exhibitions related to the region's cultural heritage.

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