

COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF TOURISM RESOURCES AND YOUNG ENTREPRENEURIAL POTENTIAL OF CORDOBA, ESKISEHIR, AND TREVISO

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ABSTRACT

The tourism sector plays a pivotal role in the economies of many nations, significantly bolstering national incomes by paving the way for new employment opportunities. A prime avenue for employment within the tourism sector is entrepreneurship, fundamentally viewed as a process of value creation. For budding tourism entrepreneurs, possessing a deep understanding of a region's tourism resources and activity hubs is paramount. Against this backdrop, this research seeks to juxtapose the tourism resource potential of Cordoba, Eskisehir, and Treviso for aspiring entrepreneurs. In the study's initial phase, a comprehensive database detailing the tourist attractions of these cities was crafted under the Erasmus+ project titled "Anti-Fragile Young Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Rural Tourism: Yes for Rural Tourism." Concurrently, the volume of tourists frequenting these regions was ascertained. Utilizing this database, standout labels within the tourism sectors of Cordoba, Eskisehir, and Treviso were pinpointed using "Word Cloud" analysis. This method effectively highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism landscapes in each province. Ultimately, this research endeavors to provide a roadmap for young tourism entrepreneurs and bolster the efforts of fellow researchers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a critically important economic sector, offering tangible opportunities for sustainable and inclusive economic growth both on global and local scales. It generates foreign exchange, spurs regional development, and directly supports a plethora of businesses, thereby presenting a vast arena for entrepreneurship (Zaei & Zaei, 2013; Gwenhure & Odhiambo, 2017; Dwyer, 2022). As one of the most rapidly expanding sectors worldwide, tourism is increasingly appealing to entrepreneurs (Işık et al., 2019). Policies devised to bolster the tourism industry, and consequently enhance innovation and value creation, have notably centered on entrepreneurship. This is attributed to the efficacy of the tourism sector in allowing entrepreneurs to adapt innovatively to evolving tourism demands (Crnogaj et al., 2014). Furthermore, the individual innovation perceptions of entrepreneurs poised to engage in the tourism sector play a pivotal role in shaping the industry's future and fostering

social value creation (Işık & Türkmendağ, 2016). Entrepreneurs are also anticipated to possess the aptitude to transmute ideas into tangible outcomes, discern opportunities, embrace risks, optimize resources, and generate additional value (Işık et al., 2019). Tourism entrepreneurship integrates innovation, risk-taking, and proactivity within a tourism environment (Ratten, 2018). It encompasses burgeoning areas like technological innovation, digitization, geographical nuances, and cultural evolution. To thrive, a tourism entrepreneur must be adept at discerning a destination's allure and leveraging it innovatively.

Destinations are locales that pique the interest of tourists. A site devoid of tourist footfalls is not

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recognized as a destination (Howie, 2003). The allure of tourism destinations has been the subject of extensive academic inquiry (Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Kim, 1998; Kim & Lee, 2002; Buhalis, 2000; Formica & Uysal, 2006; Kim & Perdue, 2011; Vengesayi, 2008; Vengesayi et al., 2017; Khairi & Darmawan, 2021). Swarbrooke (1995) characterizes destination attractions as facets of the natural environment, manmade buildings, landmarks, and sites with intrinsic allure, like cathedrals, as well as those explicitly crafted for tourists, such as theme parks and signature events. These attractions are categorized into three tiers: primary elements (cultural, sports, recreational amenities, physical attributes, sociocultural elements), secondary constituents like hotels, eateries, markets, and retail outlets, and supplementary features, which include access and parking amenities, along with tourist-centric facilities like information centers, guides, maps, and the like (Jensen-Verbeke, 1986; Page, 1995; Howie, 2003). Tourists remain unmotivated to embark on journeys to destinations they deem unattractive. Gunn (1998) underscores the significance of identifying and meticulously analyzing available tourism resources as essential precursors to enticing tourists to a particular destination.

Factors influencing the destination choices of tourists can be broadly categorized into two groups: push and pull factors. Push factors encompass elements like the desire for escape, rest, relaxation, adventure, health, and prestige that prompt individuals to travel. Pull factors, on the other hand, include attractions such as natural wonders, cultural and historical resources, accommodation and recreational amenities, and other entertainment opportunities. In the realm of tourism, the "pull factors" of a target destination often outweigh individual internal motivations (Baloğlu & Uysal, 1996). Thus, pinpointing and enhancing these attractive factors pivotal to destination choices is crucial (Howie, 2004).

This study sheds light on Cordoba, Eskisehir, and Treviso: three Mediterranean provinces situated in Spain, Türkiye, and Italy, respectively. Tourism is a cornerstone of their local economies. Notably, none of these provinces boasts coastal access, rendering them less competitive in the popular 'sea, sand, and sun' tourism commonly associated with Mediterranean countries. However, they are hubs for tourism centered around culture, history, and natural attractions. Each province stands as a significant tourist hotspot within its nation. Cordoba, Eskisehir, and Treviso are steeped in rich histories, having been the cradle of various civilizations. They flaunt distinctive landscapes shaped by geological and geomorphological processes, and are endowed with natural water bodies, diverse flora, and fauna. Their historical and archaeological treasures further elevate their appeal to tourists. All three are prominent domestic tourist destinations, and tourism offers a promising entrepreneurial avenue for the younger generation. Yet, in spite of the rural potential, there's a prevalent trend among the youth to gravitate towards urban centers. As such, evaluating the tourism potential of these provinces could serve as a strategic means to breathe new life into their rural regions. In recent years, Córdoba's tourism industry has emerged as one of its most dynamic sectors (Perona & Molina, 2016).

This rapid growth can be attributed to a diverse array of tourism offerings, from stunning natural landscapes to historical and sports events, music festivals, scientific and cultural events, and business meetings. These attractions draw millions of visitors annually. Yet, while Córdoba stands as one of Spain's premier tourist destinations, it primarily serves the domestic tourism market, accounting for a third of all its visitors. The city has also carved a niche for itself in gastronomy tourism, a subject explored extensively in academic literature (Dancausa Millán, & Millán Vázquez de la Torre, 2022). Córdoba boasts myriad tourist draws: mountains, lakes, cultural institutions, and festivals. Wine tourism, buoyed by international gastronomy tourists eager to sample local wines and traditional dishes, is another significant economic driver. Architectural gems like the Mezquita-Catedral de Córdoba further underscore its allure, drawing millions annually. To bolster tourism, there's a pressing need to cultivate international tourist interest alongside domestic efforts. This involves showcasing Córdoba's distinct cultural and gastronomic offerings, which, in turn, promises budding tourism entrepreneurs ample opportunities.

Switching focus to Eskisehir, most insights into the city's tourism potential are confined to newspaper articles (Aydın & Aydın, 2019). These publications spotlight parks, museums, historic regions, varied tourism types, and notable avenues and streets. Günay et al. (2020) provided a spatial analysis of Eskişehir's tourism resources, categorizing them in depth. The city, as an urban destination, is replete with attractions. Nonetheless, the representation in news articles often fails to captivate potential visitors fully. While Eskişehir boasts a plethora of attractions fit for an urban destination, the portrayal in news articles often doesn't capture the reader's full attention. According to Yilmaz (2014), Eskişehir sets itself apart from competitors with a unique allure that's inimitable. Argan (2016) posits that the city distinguishes itself in the region due to its natural vistas, supplemented by man-made recreational zones. These aspects not only enhance the city's identity but also cement the significance of its outdoor parks in shaping its image. Evren and Kozak's research (2012) illustrates that visitors perceive Eskişehir as a hub for travel, entertainment, and culture, further emphasized by its noteworthy local governance. Kaşlı et al. (2015) point out Eskişehir's unique position as a melting pot of diverse cultures, highlighting its distinct gastronomic offerings that can entice tourists. Drawing on the rich tapestry of Anatolian culture, Üsküdar et al. (2014) argue that Eskişehir mirrors this cultural diversity. With roots stretching back to antiquity, the city's historical, archaeological, and cultural treasures not only showcase its depth but also amplify its allure for cultural tourism. A notable observation from these studies is that, with the exception of Günay et al. (2020), most have centered on the theme of city tourism.

Treviso, meanwhile, is dotted with tourist hotspots: mountains, lakes, cultural sites, gastronomy, and festivals (Boatto et al., 2013). Wine tourism flourishes here, complemented by the globally renowned dessert, Tiramisu. With its top-tier products and culinary traditions, Treviso is poised as a gastronomic epicenter. Tiramisu, a testament to Sema Ekincek, Merve Özgür Göde, Önder Yayla, İsmail Yenilmez, Şükrü Acıtaş, Semra Günay, Yeliz Mert Kantar, Jesús Blas Ruiz Leal, Handan Akarsu Scarabello

local culinary ingenuity, is primed to lure gastronomy enthusiasts, further galvanizing the region's tourism industry (Ziliotto, 2011). Roma (2019) emphasizes local wine's pivotal role in sparking tourism interest and product promotion.

This study endeavors to juxtapose the tourism potential of Córdoba, Eskişehir, and Treviso, offering invaluable insights for aspiring young tourism entrepreneurs. To this end, we conducted a numerical overview and content analysis of tourism attractions to pinpoint the standout ones and arm entrepreneurs with foundational knowledge. Initially, a database detailing tourist attractions across the three provinces was established, followed by an assessment of tourist inflow. Subsequently, the attractions were distilled into concise descriptors utilizing the word cloud or tag cloud methodology.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs fundamental descriptive statistical tools and the word cloud methodology to encapsulate the tourist attractions in Cordoba, Eskişehir, and Treviso. The attractions are classified under four primary categories: natural, historical and cultural, urban, and sport tourism resources for each province. Initially, a document analysis, a prominent qualitative research method, was undertaken. The data gleaned from this analysis were imported into a Word program and subsequently subjected to word cloud analysis. To discern the tourism potentials of the provinces of Cordoba, Eskişehir, and Treviso, this study relied on a detailed document analysis of the project book authored by Kantar et al. (2023). As per Wach & Ward (2013), document analysis in qualitative research entails the meticulous and systematic examination of the content of written materials. This method is applicable to both print and electronic documents. A word cloud, at its core, is a visual representation of textual data (Atenstaedt, 2012). It visually organizes words based on their frequency within the text. As highlighted by McNaught & Lam (2010), a word cloud graphically showcases text data by emphasizing words according to their occurrences. This visual technique clusters key terms to produce a word cloud, whereby the size of each term is directly proportional to its prevalence within the text. For this purpose, the R software, augmented with the "worldcloud2" package, was employed. It's imperative to mention that the text was refined to garner more lucid insights about tourism attractions. For instance, terms like Eskişehir, Treviso, and Cordoba, which recur numerous times, were omitted from the analysis.

3. FINDINGS

This section elucidates the study's findings, which are bifurcated into two segments. The initial part delves into the outcomes of the document analysis for Cordoba, Eskişehir, and Treviso. Subsequently, the results derived from the word cloud analysis based on the aforementioned data are showcased.

Findings for Document Analysis

General Overview of the Provinces (Cordoba-Eskişehir-Treviso)

The figures, 1, 2, and 3, visually depict the salient tourist attractions for Cordoba, Eskişehir, and Treviso, respectively. Through these figures, one can gain a visual understanding of the main sites and landmarks that contribute to the tourism appeal of each province.



Figure 1. Mosque-Cathedral in Cordoba (Jesus Ruiz photo archive)

Recognized as one of the world's most outstanding architectural marvels, the Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba has been a World Heritage Site since 1984 and stands as a paramount monument within the Islamic world.



Figure 2. Porsuk River in Eskişehir (Taken from Photo Archive of Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality)

Information on the area and population of the three provinces is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Land Areas and Populations of Eskişehir, Treviso,	
and Cordoba	

City	Land Area (km2)	Population
Cordoba	13,771	758,451
Eskişehir	13,925	898,361
Treviso	2,479.83	85,760



Figure 3. Treviso (comune.treviso.it)

Upon examining the surface areas of the three provinces, Eskişehir notably possesses a more expansive area than the other two. Cordoba's surface area is roughly commensurate with Eskişehir's. Such data is pivotal when analyzing tourist attractions. Furthermore, Table 1 denotes Eskişehir as having the most substantial population among the three provinces. Conversely, Treviso's population is markedly lesser in comparison to Eskişehir and Cordoba. Notwithstanding the evident disparities in both area and populace, the provinces become analogous when evaluating the ratio of surface area to population.

 Table 2. Comparison of The Annual Average Number of

 Domestic and International Tourists of Cordoba, Eskişehir,

 and Treviso

City	Number of Domestic Tourists	Number of International Tourists	
Cordoba	660,964	366,467	
Eskişehir	269,865	7,939	
Treviso	810,474	704,864	

Table 2 delineates the annual influx of domestic and international tourists for Cordoba, Eskişehir, and Treviso. The table underscores Treviso's pronounced aptitude to magnetize both domestic and international visitors. Cordoba, too, emerges as a compelling hub for both domestic and international travelers. Eskişehir enjoys considerable popularity among Turkish tourists, even though it isn't nestled along Türkiye's coastal belt. Nevertheless, there's room to bolster Eskişehir's appeal to international tourists.

Different Types of Tourism Resources vs. Number of Activities (Cordoba-Eskişehir-Treviso)

This section offers a descriptive exploration of the three cities, anchored in two graphical elucidations. The initial chart (Figure 4) illustrates the array of tourism activities associated with diverse tourism resources, whereas the subsequent chart (Figure 5) demarcates the tourism activities per square kilometer for each metropolis. Figure 4 provides a visual breakdown of activities within natural, historical, cultural, urban, and sports tourism for Eskişehir, Treviso, and Cordoba. As delineated in Figure 4, Treviso outstrips the other cities in activities across all tourism resource types. Eskişehir follows suit in nature and sports tourism, while Cordoba secures the second spot in historical, cultural, and urban tourism. Figure 4 encapsulates a total of 49, 85, and 50 activities for Eskişehir, Treviso, and Cordoba, respectively. This accentuates Treviso's multifaceted tourist attractions.



Figure 4. Side-by-Side Bar Plots Depicting the Number of Activities for Each Region

Nonetheless, Figure 4 exclusively encapsulates activity numbers without weighing the land area of each city—an integral dimension. As highlighted in Table 1, Treviso's land footprint is considerably more compact than either Eskişehir or Cordoba. This prompted us to compute tourism activities on a per-square-kilometer basis, with results showcased in Figure 5.



Figure 5 underscores Treviso's preeminence in terms of tourism activities per square kilometer, attributed to its dense array of attractions within a confined geography. In juxtaposition, both Eskişehir and Cordoba, with territories nearly quintuple Treviso's, exhibit fewer tourism activities per square kilometer, as outlined in Figure 5. Moreover, Eskişehir claims the second berth in nature and sports tourism, while Cordoba parallels in the other tourism categories. Collectively, accounting for both geographical expanse and activity density, Treviso emerges as a hotspot teeming with tourist attractions.

Comparison of Young Entrepreneurial Potential (Cordoba-Eskişehir-Treviso)

In this subsection, the young entrepreneurial potentials of Eskişehir, Treviso, and Cordoba are juxtaposed across distinct age cohorts, emphasizing the proportion of youth within each city. These percentages are calculated by dividing the number of young individuals by the total population of the respective city and multiplying by 100. Figure 6 graphically represents these percentages for various age groups, without gender differentiation.



Figure 6. Age-wise Distribution of Youth in Each Province

Data in Figure 6 elucidates that Eskişehir boasts the most significant proportion of young individuals at 44%, succeeded by Cordoba at 36%, and Treviso at 34%. Eskişehir is distinct in its high number of individuals aged 20-24, while both Treviso and Cordoba present a more substantial demographic within the 40-44 age bracket. This infers that Eskişehir might harbor a more pronounced potential for nascent entrepreneurs. However, Treviso and Cordoba too exhibit robust promise in this domain. The ensuing charts, Figure 7 and Figure 8, incorporate Sema Ekincek, Merve Özgür Göde, Önder Yayla, İsmail Yenilmez, Şükrü Acıtaş, Semra Günay, Yeliz Mert Kantar, Jesús Blas Ruiz Leal, Handan Akarsu Scarabello

gender into the analysis, delineating potentialities for young female and male entrepreneurs, respectively. Both these figures underscore Eskişehir's superior potential across genders, with the city's potential for young female entrepreneurs paralleling that of their male counterparts.



Figure 7. Distribution of Female Population Across Age Groups in Cordoba, Eskişehir, and Treviso



Figure 8. Distribution of Male Population Across Age Groups in Cordoba, Eskişehir, and Treviso

In summation, Figures 6, 7, and 8 collectively intimate that Eskişehir, especially within the 20-24 age cohort, surpasses the other cities in its potential for emerging entrepreneurs. Eskişehir's promise for young female entrepreneurs is notably high, closely rivaling that for males. Given its distinction as one of Europe's youngest, highly-educated populations, Eskişehir holds the capability to bridge the workforce disparity between itself and other European nations.

Findings from Word Cloud Analysis

This investigative study seeks to encapsulate the touristic lures of the scrutinized provinces and to spotlight their salient attractions. The study engages in elementary content analysis of the touristic resources across these cities, leveraging the word cloud technique. The "wordcloud2" package within the R software environment facilitates this analysis. The results highlight diverse touristic offerings across the cities. Figure 9 portrays the prominence of natural tourism features like regions, lakes, and parks in Eskişehir, Treviso, and Cordoba respectively.



(a) Cordoba

(b) Eskişehir

(c) Treviso

Figure 9. Word Cloud Representations for Natural Tourism Resources in Cordoba. Eskisehir, and Treviso



Figure 10. Word Cloud Representations for Historical and Cultural Tourism Resources in Cordoba, Eskişehir, and Treviso

Figure 11 underscores variances in urban tourism resources across Eskişehir, Treviso, and Cordoba. Parks emerge as the primary magnet in Eskişehir, closely followed by festivals. Treviso is typified by its museums and castles serving as cultural tourism pillars, whereas Cordoba's urban allure largely hinges on its various routes.



Figure 11. Word Cloud Representations for Urban Tourism Resources in Cordoba, Eskişehir, and Treviso

Lastly, Figure 12's interpretation shows that Eskişehir is abundant in sports tourism resources, predominantly marked by trails conducive for pursuits like hiking and running. Treviso, conversely, carves a niche in cycling tourism, courtesy of its myriad cycling tracks. Cordoba diversifies its portfolio with an array of sports facilities catering to tennis, golf, and more, positioning itself as a viable sports tourism destination.



Figure 12. Word Cloud Representations for Sports Tourism Resources in Cordoba, Eskişehir, and Treviso.

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Tourism, particularly in its rural manifestation, has surged as a prominent catalyst for economic, social, and cultural transformation. Amidst a global landscape that is swiftly transitioning, rural tourism acts as an antidote to the ubiquity of urban-centered development, offering sustainable pathways for economic advancement. Rooted in this paradigm, the present research embarks on a comprehensive analysis, juxtaposing the tourism potentialities of Eskişehir, Treviso, and Cordoba, thereby shedding light on invaluable avenues for aspiring tourism visionaries.

Eskişehir's ascent in the tourism narrative is undeniably robust, mirroring the scholarly attestations delineated by Günay et al. 2020; Yılmaz, 2014; Argan, 2016; Evren & Kozak, 2012; Kaşlı et al. 2015. In contrast, Cordoba, traditionally celebrated for its cultural nuances as documented by Perona & Molina (2016), unfolds a newer facet to its charm - the emerging allure of sports tourism. Treviso, despite its more consistent portrayal in prior literature such as Boatto et al., 2013, offers a dense mosaic of rural

attractions.

The innovative deployment of word clouds in this study amplifies its analytical prowess, rendering tangible the core tourist draws across the three regions. The naturalistic splendors of Eskişehir's parks and Treviso's lakes capture the imagination. Eskişehir's Odunpazarı, steeped in historical significance, contrasts poignantly with the cultural fabric of Treviso, rich with museums and ancient relics. Cordoba, with its confluence of historical epochs, complements this panorama. In the urban context, Eskişehir's bustling city spaces, juxtaposed against the festive fervor of Treviso and the urban intimacy of Cordoba, paint a compelling picture.

In essence, each of these provinces unfurls as a repository of unique tourism resources, proffering insights vital for destination strategists. Treviso, within its compact geographical footprint, astounds with a plethora of offerings, emphasizing its strength in rural tourism. Eskişehir, expansive and pulsating, paradoxically showcases a sparse tourism activity spectrum relative to Treviso. Yet, it's youthful demographic primes it as a fertile ground for emergent entrepreneurs, a sentiment echoed strongly in Günay et al.'s study (2020). Cordoba, while showcasing prowess in historical and cultural tourism, presents potential areas of growth in the natural and sports tourism sectors.

The synthesis of this research underscores a salient narrative: Eskişehir, Treviso, and Cordoba each harbor tremendous potential for young entrepreneurs and holistic tourism growth. These insights can shepherd policymakers and regional stakeholders in their pursuit of refining tourism strategies, underpinned by a deeper understanding of regional strengths and opportunities.

Drawing from the insights, Eskişehir stands on the precipice of a significant transformation, with an inclination towards urban tourism. Yet, the alignment between its rural and urban potential remains nascent. Taking cues from Treviso's rural success and juxtaposing it with Cordoba's urban strengths can inform its strategic trajectory.

While the current research offers a rich tapestry of insights anchored in the three regions, it prompts a broader exploration. Diversifying the regional spectrum and weaving in additional tourism facets can bring richer hues to the academic discourse. Eliciting and integrating the voice of the ultimate stakeholders – the tourists – can further refine and deepen future research narratives.

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