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A GLOBAL ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF GOVERNANCE ON IMPROVING TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS

UMA ANÁLISE GLOBAL DA INFLUÊNCIA DA GOVERNANÇA NA MELHORIA DA COMPETITIVIDADE DO TURISMO

UN ANÁLISIS GLOBAL DE LA INFLUENCIA DE LA GOBERNANZA EN LA MEJORA DE LA COMPETITIVIDAD TURÍSTICA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of the study was to identify the influence of governance on tourism competitiveness as measured by tourism GDP per capita, using structural equation modeling.

Methodology: The study was descriptive correlational and applied quantitative documentary approach. Data from secondary sources from the World Bank and The World Travel & Tourism were used to obtain measures of governance and tourism GDP for 172 countries during the year 2021.

Results: Governance was found to have a significant influence on tourism competitiveness, with government effectiveness, regulatory quality and rule of law emerging as the main predictors of governance. It was also found that most countries with high tourism performance have good governance, especially those countries that are small and specialized in tourism. Developed countries enjoy a high governance index, but do not lead the ranking in tourism GDP per capita. Countries with low tourism performance have poor governance.

Conclusions: Governance is a crucial factor in the success or failure of the tourism sector, and the positive and significant relationship between governance and tourism competitiveness has important implications for the formulation of policies and strategies to promote sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Governance; tourism competitiveness; tourism GDP per capita

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo do estudo foi identificar a influência da governança na competitividade do turismo, medida pelo PIB per capita do turismo, usando modelagem de equação estrutural.

Metodologia: O estudo foi descritivo correlacional e aplicou uma abordagem documental quantitativa. Foram usados dados de fontes secundárias do Banco Mundial e da The World Travel & Tourism para obter medidas de governança e PIB do turismo para 172 países durante o ano de 2021.

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Resultados: Verificou-se que a governança tem uma influência significativa na competitividade do turismo, com a eficácia do governo, a qualidade regulatória e o estado de direito emergindo como os principais preditores da governança. Também foi constatado que a maioria dos países com alto desempenho no turismo tem boa governança, especialmente os países pequenos e especializados em turismo. Os países desenvolvidos têm um alto índice de governança, mas não lideram a classificação do PIB per capita do turismo. Os países com baixo desempenho no turismo têm governança ruim.

Conclusões: A governança é um fator crucial para o sucesso ou fracasso do setor de turismo, e a relação positiva e significativa entre governança e competitividade do turismo tem implicações importantes para a formulação de políticas e estratégias para promover o desenvolvimento do turismo sustentável.

Palavras-Chave: Governança, competitividade do turismo, PIB per capita do turismo.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: El objetivo del estudio era identificar la influencia de la gobernanza en la competitividad del turismo, medida por el PIB turístico per cápita, utilizando modelos de ecuaciones estructurales.

Metodología: El estudio fue descriptivo correlacional y aplicó un enfoque documental cuantitativo. Se utilizaron datos de fuentes secundarias del Banco Mundial y The World Travel & Tourism para obtener medidas de gobernanza y PIB turístico de 172 países durante el año 2021.

Resultados: Se comprobó que la gobernanza influye significativamente en la competitividad turística, y que la eficacia del gobierno, la calidad de la reglamentación y el Estado de Derecho son los principales factores predictivos de la gobernanza. También se constató que la mayoría de los países con un alto rendimiento turístico tienen una buena gobernanza, especialmente los países pequeños y especializados en turismo. Los países desarrollados tienen una elevada puntuación en materia de gobernanza, pero no encabezan la clasificación por PIB turístico per cápita. Los países con bajos resultados turísticos tienen una gobernanza deficiente.

Conclusiones: La gobernanza es un factor crucial para el éxito o el fracaso del sector turístico, y la relación positiva y significativa entre gobernanza y competitividad turística tiene importantes implicaciones para la formulación de políticas y estrategias que promuevan el desarrollo sostenible del turismo.

Palabras clave: gobernanza, competitividad turística, PIB turístico per cápita.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, tourism has experienced steady growth and has become one of the main economic sectors, generating about 10% of global GDP and 1 in 10 jobs worldwide (World Economic Forum, 2019). However, changes and negative effects of activities linked to tourism were reported during the last years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, being essential to know the changes produced (Mahadiansar et al., 2021) and the influence that countries' governance has on tourism.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, tourism accounted for 10% and 26% of GDP, including 10% and 35% of employment. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, tourism was significantly affected, generating a decrease in GDP from 8 percentage points to 1 percentage point (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2020). While in Europe there was also a 13.9% decrease in GDP from the second half of the year (Moreno-Luna et al., 2021). Therefore, during the pandemic, countries proposed various measures in relation to tourism competitiveness (Li et al., 2022). Some of them focused their efforts on implementing effective health policies to control the spread of the virus and protect their citizens and visitors, which resulted in a decrease in tourism flows (Félix & García, 2020; Hambira et al., 2022). On the other hand, some countries reinforced their tourism promotion strategies to stay in the minds of travelers and maintain their position in the market (UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee, 2021). These strategies focused on highlighting the natural and cultural attractions of the destinations, as well as offering tourism packages adapted to the new needs and preferences of travelers (Sigala, 2020). Also, the opportunity was taken to boost domestic tourism and encourage the development of new forms of tourism, such as rural tourism or nature tourism. These initiatives not only allowed citizens to enjoy their own destinations, but also helped to keep the local economy afloat (Hall, 2019; Padma et al. 2019; Teles da Mota & Pickering, 2020).

Post-pandemic, tourism continues to be an industry highly influenced by global economic conditions, such as inflation, exchange rates, interest rates, and economic growth (Scarlett, 2021). Economic fluctuations can affect both tourism demand and

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supply, so it is important for tourism destinations to understand and respond to these conditions to remain competitive (Tsai, 2021). Likewise, government regulations and policies can influence a destination's tourism competitiveness, for example, immigration laws, visa requirements, transportation regulation, and land ownership. Even social factors, such as demographic trends, cultural perceptions and changes in consumer behavior, also influence tourism competitiveness (Strelnikova, et al. 2023)

Therefore, political conditions, such as political stability, security and social peace, are also important factors in tourism competitiveness (Ekeocha et al., 2021). Countries offering tourism destinations with a secure and stable political environment are more attractive to international tourists and can be an important economic driver and contribute significantly to the GDP of a country or destination. While in the environment of technological innovations is also important in the tourism competitiveness of each country, such as mobile technology, social networks, blockchain and artificial intelligence, are changing the way tourism companies interact with customers and how trips are planned and booked. Tourism destinations that adopt and use innovative technologies can improve their competitiveness, which is why state-driven technology policies can be instrumental in improving the tourist experience and increasing the economic impact on a region or country (Rana et al., 2022; Valeri & Baggio, 2021).

Governance, defined as the process through which agreements are reached on collective action in situations where there are multiple preferences, uncertainty and scarcity of resources (Bevir, 2012), which are used to direct and control an organization or system, and which may include legislation, rules, supervision, monitoring and evaluation (Rhodes, 1996; J. Rosenau & Czempiel, 1992). It constitutes an important factor for tourism competitiveness, involving collaboration between the different stakeholders involved in tourism development, including local governments, tourism businesses, interest groups and local communities, to achieve sustainable tourism development that is beneficial to all (Pechlaner et al., 2010; Stoker, 1998; Flores & Cruz, 2021). In this regard, there are a number of governance indicators (Bramwell, 2011), but the most widely used is the World Governance Indicator (WGI), which is a dataset that measures the quality of governance in 215 countries and territories around

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the world. It is produced annually by the World Bank and is based on a survey of experts from different disciplines, such as economics, law and political science. The WGI has six dimensions of governance: control of corruption, rule of law, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, accountability and citizen participation (World Bank, 2010).

Tourism competitiveness is defined as "the ability of a tourism destination to attract and maintain visitor preference and increase tourism expenditure in a highly competitive market with a constantly changing macroeconomic environment" (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

The theories linked to tourism competitiveness address different aspects, such as comparative advantage (Ricardo, 1817), the value chain (Porter, 1990) and the life cycle of the tourist destination (Butler, 1980), offering useful tools for understanding the factors that influence tourism competitiveness and designing strategies to improve it.

Two broad approaches to measuring destination competitiveness can be identified from the literature. The first approach can be referred to as the generic approach, as it encompasses all the relevant factors and indicators that make up competitiveness and, therefore, has been the most widely disseminated in publications (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). This approach has its limitations, and includes a myriad of indicators, not all of which have the same importance or influence in determining competitiveness particularly with developing countries. The second approach is linked to tourism competitiveness based on the idea that a tourism destination should be evaluated through a set of factors that influence its competitiveness. These factors are grouped into three categories: tourism resources and attractions, general business conditions and environment, and government and community attitudes. This approach seeks to evaluate the capacity of a tourism destination to attract and maintain tourism demand, offering a satisfactory and sustainable experience for visitors (Enright & Newton, 2005). There are also other models that have been criticized mainly related to the large number of indicators and their practical application (Mazanec et al., 2007), because they develop an evaluation

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model that incorporates a wide range of factors, including tourism supply, business environment, governance, service quality and image of a particular destination and others (Dwyer & Kim, 2010; Ahmed & Krohn, 1990; Chon & Mayer, 1995; Mazanec, 1995). Finally, a recent research develops an approach to measure competitiveness considering GDP as an indicator (Pérez León et al., 2022). Therefore, tourism competitiveness is a concept that can be measured in different ways, and GDP is one of the most common measures used to assess the tourism competitiveness of a country or region. Tourism GDP, or the contribution of tourism to GDP, is a measure used to quantify the importance of tourism in a country's economy (Eugenio-Martin et al., 2011). Tourism GDP includes income generated by tourists, as well as income generated by businesses and employees in the tourism sector. It also includes tourism-related government expenditures, such as promotion and maintenance of tourism destinations (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Li et al., 2016; Murphy, 2013).

Regarding the relationship between governance and tourism competitiveness, a number of research studies highlight that governance has a significant influence on tourism competitiveness, and that good governance can improve a country's tourism competitiveness and ensure tourism sustainability (Agyeman et al., 2022; Ahn & Bessiere, 2022; dos Anjos & Kennell, 2019; Khan et al., 2021; van Niekerk, 2014).

Therefore, it can be concluded that tourism is one of the world's most important economic sectors and its contribution to global GDP continues to grow. Understanding how governance affects tourism competitiveness and GDP per capita is essential to help governments and businesses develop more effective policies and strategies to promote tourism and maximize economic and social benefits. Therefore, in the current study, we set out to identify the influence of governance on tourism competitiveness as measured by tourism GDP per capita, using structural equation modeling.

2. METHODOLOGY

The approach of the study was quantitative documentary applied. (Mishra & Alok, 2017). Secondary source data from the World Bank and The World Travel &

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Tourism have been used to obtain the measures of governance and tourism GDP respectively for descriptive and correlational analysis. To demonstrate the hypothesis, a structural equation model (Hancock, 1997; Tehran, 1997; Tehran, 1997; Hancock, 1997; Tehran, 1997) was used. (Hancock, 1997; Teo, 2011) was used to establish relationships between the variables analyzed.

2.1. DATA

Governance is shaped and explained by government effectiveness (GE), regulatory quality (RQ), and rule of law (RL), for which The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) scores have been used. (World Bank, 2022) of 172 countries for the year 2021.

To measure tourism competitiveness, the gross domestic tourism product per capita (GDPTPC) has been used (Pérez León et al., 2022). (Pérez León et al., 2022) of 172 countries for the year 2021, the source of which was the data published by The World Travel & Tourism (Travel & Tourism Economic Impact | World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), n.d.).

2.2.   INDEXES

It has been constructed with the WGI scores (GF, RL, CC) as well as the GDPTPC in indexes, on a scale from 0 to 1, using the methodology proposed by Croes which is expressed by $Xci = [(Xci - Xci\ mini) / (Xci\ maxi - Xci\ mini)]$ (Croes, 2011; Kubickova & Martin, 2020a)where "c" represents the countries and "i" the variable.

2.3.   PROCEDURE AND DATA ANALYSIS

To carry out the data analysis, the data were transformed into indexes and Pearson's descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations were calculated with SPSS version 24 software to evaluate the relationships between variables. To estimate the proposed SEM structural equation model, Amos version 25 softwares was used. The

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relationships of the regressions and the goodness of fit of the model were evaluated using criteria such as chi-square normalized by degrees of freedom (CMIN/df less than 3), residual root mean square (SRMR, 0.080 or less), residual root mean square of approximation error (RMSEA, 0.080 or less) and comparative fit index (CFI, 0.900 or more) as parameters to determine whether the model had a good fit. (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).

3.   RESULTS

Figure 1 shows information on the results of the most representative countries in the relationship between governance expressed as the average of the indexes of government effectiveness, regulatory quality and the rule of law with tourism competitiveness expressed by tourism GDP per capita. It was found that Macao leads the ranking, having excellent governance and tourism performance, and it was also found that most of the countries that lead the tourism competitiveness index are small and island countries highly specialized in tourism such as Aruba, Luxembourg, Iceland, Cayman Island, Antigua Barbuda, and Bahamas, and all of these countries also express high governance indices. It can also be seen that most of the Nordic countries enjoy high governance indexes above 0.8 and tourism performance above 0.15. Countries with good governance above average 0.5 to 0.8 and tourism performance index above 0.15 include Unit Arab Emirates, Portugal, Cyprus Seychelles, Italy, Jamaica, China, Moldova and others. And among the countries with poor performance in governance and tourism performance are Lesotho, Guatemala, Lebanon and Iran. Lastly, the countries with very poor performance in tourism governance and performance are Haiti, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen.

Figure
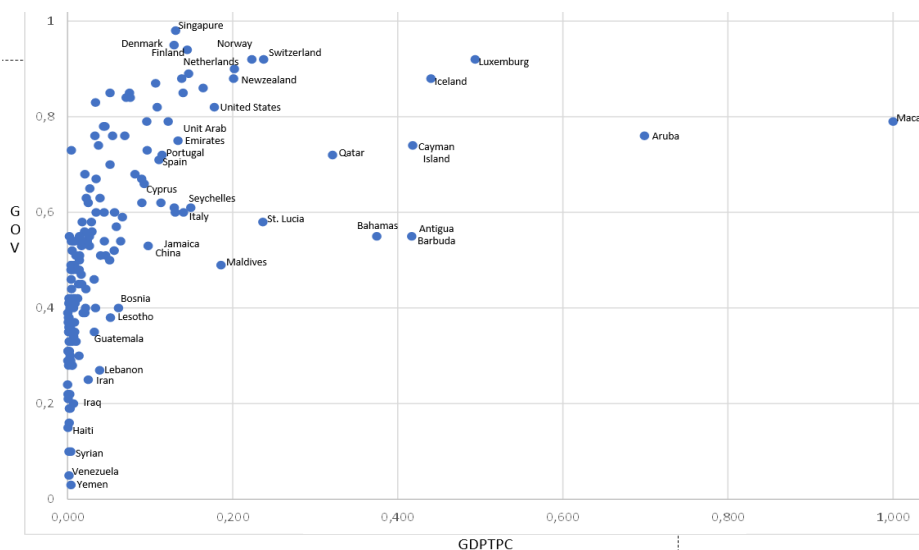
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Relationship between governance and tourism competitiveness (2021)
Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

Table 1 shows that the mean of the indices of the governance dimensions ranges from 0.51 to 0.53, the per capita tourism domestic product index of the countries studied has a mean of 0.06 with a standard deviation of 0.12, so there is great variability in the GDPTPC indices among the countries analyzed. The correlation between the dimensions of governance is above 0.93 being this strong, positive and with a p-value of less than 0.01 between them, so this correlation between the dimensions of governance is very significant. With respect to the correlation between governance dimensions and GDPTPC all are positive, moderate and significant with a p-value less than 0.05.

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Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations (Pearson)

	M	SD	GE	RQ	RL	GDPTPC
GE	0,5121	0,20790	1			
RQ	0,5112	0,21315	,934[**]	1		
RL	0,5340	0,21785	,930[**]	,937[**]	1	
GDPTPC	0,0633	0,12333	,495**	,511**	,484**	1

Note: Government effectiveness (GE), Regulatory quality (RQ), Rule of law (RL), Gross domestic tourism product per capita (GDPTPC). Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

3.1. MEASUREMENT MODEL (AFC)

In Figure 2, the latent variable governance is presented, evidencing that it is explained by government effectiveness, regulatory quality and rule of law since the standardized regression weights are .963 for government effectiveness, .970 for regulatory quality and .965 for rule of law. Furthermore, the P-values indicate that the relationship between governance and each of the three outcome variables is highly significant ($p < .05$), which means that the probability that the relationship is a fluke is very low. Now with respect to the relationship between governance and tourism competitiveness measured by tourism GDP per capita has a positive relationship, since the standardized regression weight is 0.514, the strength of this relationship being moderate, furthermore, the P-value indicates that the relationship between governance and tourism competitiveness is highly significant ($p < 0.05$), which means that the probability that the relationship is a chance is very low.
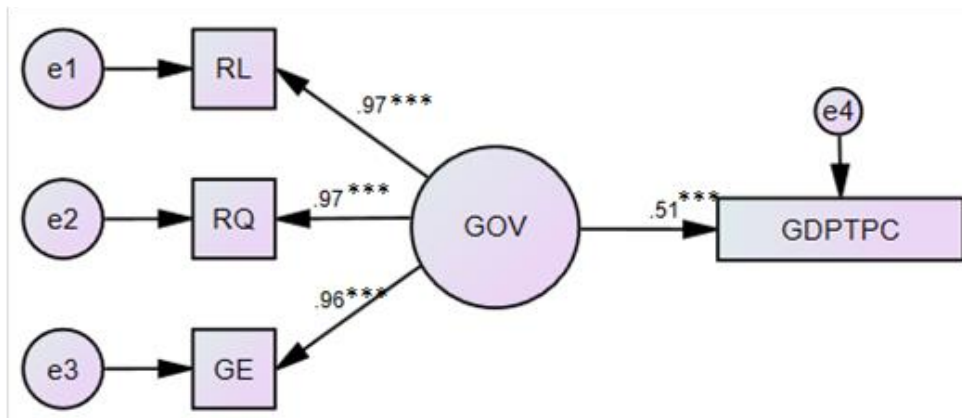
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Figure 2. Structural equation model: Governance influences tourism competitiveness as measured by tourism GDP per capita. Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).
Note: χ^2/df = chi-square/number of degrees of freedom, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, RMSEA Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. Values to evaluate the model proposed by (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003)

The goodness of fit of the measurement model (AFC) presented in Table 2 shows the CMIN/DF value to be close to 1, suggesting that the relationship between the variables fits well. In addition, the CFI value is equal to 1, implying that the model has an outstanding fit. This index measures the improvement in model fit compared to the null model fit, and a value of 1 indicates that the model fits perfectly.

The Standardized RMR value is 0.005, which is considered good. This index measures the average magnitude of the standardized residuals of the model, and a value of less than 0.05 is considered good.

Finally, the RMSEA value is 0.000, which means that the model has an excellent fit. This index measures the amount of error in the model approximation, and a value less than 0.05 is considered a good fit.

The goodness-of-fit data suggest that the model examining the relationship between governance and tourism competitiveness has a good fit and can be used to predict tourism competitiveness as a function of governance.

Table 2. Goodness of fit of the measurement model

Measure of adjustment	Good fit	Acceptable fit	Results	Model condition

χ2/df	0 ≤ χ2/df ≤ 2	2 < χ2/df ≤ 3	0,563	Good
IFC	.97 ≤ CFI ≤ 1.00	.95 ≤ CFI < .97	1000	Good
SRMR	0 ≤ SRMR ≤ .05	.05 < SRMR ≤ .10	0,005	Good
RMSEA	0 ≤ RMSEA ≤ .05	.05 < RMSEA ≤ .08	0,000	Good

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

Table 3 shows the regression between governance and tourism GDP per capita, where an increase of 0.877 in the level of tourism GDP per capita is expected for each unit increase in governance and the variability of tourism GDP per capita is explained by 0.514 (std.all) by governance. Hypothesis testing indicates that the relationship is statistically significant, with a p-value less than 0.001. It can then be stated that governance significantly influences tourism competitiveness as measured by tourism GDP per capita. However, it is important to note that the strength of the relationship is not very strong (0.514), indicating that other factors may also influence the level of GDP per capita.

The goodness-of-fit values of the structural equation model were the same as the measurement model where the CMIN/DF value =0.563, the CFI value = 1, the Standardized RMR = 0.005, and the RMSEA value = 0.000. Which means that the structural model has an excellent fit.

Table 3. Regression between governance and tourism GDP per capita

Estimate	Std.Err	z-value	P value	Std.lv	Std.all
0,877	0,226	3,873	0	4,184	0,514

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

4.   DISCUSSION

The study aimed to find the influence of governance on tourism competitiveness as measured by tourism GDP per capita, using structural equation modeling. The results found demonstrate that governance has a significant influence

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on tourism competitiveness, with government effectiveness, regulatory quality and rule of law emerging as the main predictors of governance. These findings are consistent with the literature reported by previous studies conducted by (Adedoyin et al., 2022; Detotto et al., 2021; Kubickova & Martin, 2020b), which confirm the importance of good governance in fostering tourism and economic development.

Furthermore, the results suggest that most countries with high tourism performance have good governance, especially those countries that are small and specialized in tourism. It is worth noting that developed countries enjoy a high governance index, but nevertheless do not lead the ranking of tourism GDP per capita as small specialized countries, due to the diversification of their economy and economic sectors related to the industry that contribute more to their GDP. On the other hand, those countries with low tourism performance often have poor governance. These findings suggest that governance is a crucial factor in the success or failure of the tourism sector.

Importantly, the positive and significant relationship between governance and tourism competitiveness has important implications for the formulation of policies and strategies to promote sustainable tourism development. Good governance translates into creating an enabling environment for investment (Rudo Makoni, 2018), improving the quality of public services, protecting property rights and enforcing contracts (Gozgor et al., 2019). All these factors are essential for the development of a sustainable and successful tourism industry. In that sense the results suggest that government effectiveness, regulatory quality and rule of law are critical factors that need to be addressed by policy makers to improve governance and thus tourism competitiveness. Countries wishing to improve their tourism competitiveness should pay attention to these factors and take steps to improve them.

This study represents a contribution to the field of tourism research by using structural equations (SEM) to analyze the relationship between governance and tourism competitiveness, which has allowed obtaining significant and accurate results in terms of the influence of governance on tourism competitiveness. Although the SEM approach has been widely used in other disciplines, it has been little used in tourism studies. Thus, the present study demonstrates that the use of this analysis technique

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can be very useful in understanding the complexity of the relationship between governance and tourism competitiveness.

The findings obtained can serve as a starting point for future studies that seek to delve deeper into this topic and apply this methodology in other tourism contexts and settings. It is hoped that the findings presented will provide valuable information for policy makers and key stakeholders in the tourism sector worldwide and serve as a basis for future research on the topic.

5 LIMITATIONS

It is important to note that the study has some limitations. First, to measure tourism competitiveness it was based only on tourism GDP per capita, which may not fully reflect a country's competitiveness in the tourism sector. It would be interesting to explore other indicators in the model, such as the quality of tourism services, infrastructure, diversity of tourism products, among others. Secondly, the study was limited to a sample of countries for a single year. It would be necessary to replicate this study in different contexts and time periods to confirm the robustness of our findings.

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