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A Framework on Eudaimonic Well-Being in Destination Competitiveness

Eduardo Moraes Sarmento [1,*], Sandra Loureiro [2], Zorro Mendes [1], José Mascarenhas Monteiro [3] and Sandra Fernandes [3]

[1] Lisbon School of Economics and Management (ISEG Research/ISEG/University of Lisbon), Rua do Quelhas, nº 6, 1200-781 Lisboa, Portugal; zorro@iseg.ulisboa.pt
[2] Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE), Avenida das Forças Armadas, 1649-026 Lisboa, Portugal; sandramloureiro@netcabo.pt
[3] Universidade de Santiago (Cape Verde), Avenida Bolanha, Assomada 7310, Cape Verde; jose.mascarenhas@us.edu.cv (J.M.M.); sandra.fernandes@us.edu.cv (S.F.)
* Correspondence: eduardosarmento@iseg.ulisboa.pt

Abstract

This research proposes a framework for Eudaimonic well-being in destination competitiveness. This framework is based on the theoretical Ritchie and Crouch's model (1993, 2000, 2003) and the recent theoretical notion that a travel trip may influence life satisfaction through tourists' experiences. We conducted a qualitative study based on 34 in-depth interviews with key tourism stakeholders in Cape Verde, a small island developing country (SIDS) dependent on the tourism sector. The findings contribute to identifying specific sources of positive and negative effects that may affect the tourists' and residents' overall sense of well-being and thus affect the overall destination competitiveness.

Keywords: tourism well-being; destination competitiveness; eudaimonic experience; resources and attractors; supporting factors; qualified determinants

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1. Introduction

Tourism has gradually become one of the main economic activities in the world because of its capacity to create jobs, wealth, destination development, and other impacts (WTTC, 2024). This path is not only expected to continue strong growth into the foreseeable future, but international tourist arrivals will also escalate to 1.8 billion by 2030 (Soh et al., 2023; WTTC, 2024).

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2024), almost all regions will benefit from the increase in international tourism, and Africa will also experience this. Cape Verde, a small island developing country in the Atlantic, has also benefited from this activity over the years, as explained later in this research. There has been a huge recognition of these countries as a distinct group of developing countries facing some unique social, economic, and environmental limitations and vulnerabilities (Coke, 2023; Lewis et al., 2024) along with limited land dimension, economic openness, traditional migrant flows, reduced populations, remoteness from international markets aggravated by expensive transportation costs, multiple islands, fragile land, and marine ecosystems (Birmingham, 2019; Mycoo & Roopnarine, 2024; Mycoo, 2018). Consequently, different destinations compete to attract tourists, and destination competitiveness emerges as a relevant concept to both academics (Abreu-Novais et al., 2016; Amini et al., 2024) and practitioners (e.g., the World Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index).

The competitive tourism market has highlighted the need for a clear conceptualization of competitiveness. Early models focused on destination image (Bramwell & Rawding, 1996; Chon et al., 1991), while later models integrated national competitiveness frameworks (Porter, 1990) and combined perspectives (Enright & Newton, 2004; Ritchie & Crouch, 1993). Ritchie and Crouch (2000) updated Calgary's model by including five elements: supporting factors, core resources, destination management, policy and planning, and qualifying determinants.

This study examines the tourism competitiveness and well-being of Cape Verde, a service-based small island developing state (SIDS), where tourism has been considered by the local government as a key strategy to eradicate poverty and enhance development. We have chosen Cape Verde based on the proposal of Alonso et al. (2014) that suggested that it would be beneficial to create some smaller SIDS subgroups along issues-based categorization. Cape Verde is one of the smallest SIDS in various aspects, from the territorial dimension (4033 km^2) to its limited economic options or reduced natural resources apart from salt, basalt rock, limestone, fish, clay, and gypsum (CIA, 2025). The country also faces several natural hazards, such as prolonged droughts; the seasonal harmattan wind that produces obscuring dust; and volcanically and seismically active volcanism (Fogo Island), turning the country particularly vulnerable to environmental hazards. In 2024, the country had a total of 611,014 inhabitants (CIA, 2025). Cape Verde is a typical open economy whose openness makes it particularly vulnerable to external economic conditions, like other SIDS countries, over which they have no direct control.

This small and dispersed population throughout various islands imposes reduced fragmented internal markets and a limited state capacity. This situation not only reduces the capacity to generate economies of scale but also makes various costs higher, such as with production, transportation, service delivery, and infrastructure (OECD, 2018). As a result, many SIDS economies, Cape Verde included, have focused their economic strategy on a limited number of sectors (e.g., mainly tourism and services) to try to foster their narrow economic bases. The small and dispersed populations over nine islands impose high transaction, transportation, and service delivery costs. This situation is a burden to the public sector, making these expenditures higher when compared to other developing countries (OECD, 2018).

Cape Verde has long relied upon an economic strategy of migrations, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy (MIRAB). However, in the last few years, the government has diversified this model by relying on a tourism strategy. This has allowed the country to achieve a more sustainable economic growth, to fight the poverty problem, as well as to achieve more consistent job opportunities for the local population (Sarmento & Silva, 2024). Therefore, the country is now considered a medium human development country with a HDI (Human Development Indicator) of 0.661 in 2022 (131st place among 193 countries) (UNDP, 2024), and GDP evolved in the last three years from 4 billion USD in 2021 to 4.6 billion USD in 2022 and 4.9 billion USD in 2023 (CIA, 2025). However, in the short term it is expected that there will be some economic risks due to its small size, limited economic diversification, and the weight of domestic demand, which makes the country vulnerable to external shocks, such as those that could affect tourism demand and the prices of raw materials. The country currently faces not only an elevated risk of over-indebtedness, but also the need to diversify its production base, limit its dependence on emigrant remittances, and the need to attract larger volumes of investment (BP, 2025).

The current research aims to propose a framework for Eudaimonic well-being in destination competitiveness. Specifically, we pursue to answer: What are the (i) supporting factors, (ii) core resources and attraction factors; (iii) the most significant competitive strengths and weaknesses factors that could determine the well-being of an island destination?

Therefore, we conducted a comprehensive theoretical discussion of the main tourism determinants based on Ritchie and Crouch's model (1993, 2000, 2003) along with the most recent literature that establishes the importance of connecting the eudaimonic and hedonic well-being (EWB and HWB) approach with Crouch and Ritchie's model of tourism competitiveness. The authors utilized these dimensions and key competitiveness indicators to evaluate competitiveness and well-being through in-depth interviews with the country's primary stakeholders, managers, and politicians. By focusing on Cape Verde, we obtain valuable insights about a small island developing country whose economy has been dependent on tourism, thus enriching the discussion on destination competitiveness and providing a new framework that can be used for future comparisons with other destinations.

The findings can enhance policymakers' and destination managers' understanding of this phenomenon. By examining local policies and tourism strategies implemented in Cape Verde, we can gather crucial insights into destination competitiveness and well-being, providing valuable information to enhance and develop both the country and global tourism levels.

2. Literature Review

The concept of destination competitiveness was first presented by Poon (1993). Due to the increasing global competitiveness among tourism destinations, the concept of destination competitiveness and its determinants continues to be discussed in the literature (Dwyer, 2022) as a framework to identify the challenges that require policy attention and help managers formulate tourist strategies based on their strengths and weaknesses (WEF, 2020).

The competitiveness literature can be grouped into three major groups of thoughts. First, the comparative and/or price competitiveness perspective focuses on each country's price factor and economic characteristics (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Fern&ø& Long, 2012; Porter, 1990). Second, the strategic and management perspective mainly focused on companies and on recognizing the importance of resources (e.g., human skills, assets, organizational structure) that may influence the creation and maintenance of competitive advantage. Third, the political, historical, and social-cultural perspectives (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

Competitiveness has also been discussed as a micro-perspective from the firm's behaviors (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Porter, 1990; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Pearce's (1997) technique was also presented to measure the competitiveness of a destination or Jenkin's (1999) visitor's image of a tourism destination or attractiveness (Andrades-Caldito et al., 2013; Chon et al., 1991; Hu & Ritchie, 1993). Bahar and Kozak (2007) argue that competitiveness stems from the well-being of residents, whereas Cvelbar et al. (2017) suggest that tourism's total contribution to GDP can measure competitiveness.

The solution for better sustainable tourism planning can be based on a set of driving constructs along with indicators of social media to understand the changing attitudes and behaviors of tourists, complemented by the perceptions of social media from a traveler's point of view (Canovi & Pucciarelli, 2019) as well as providers' perspectives. Destination attractiveness is one of the important determinant factors that could enhance tourism and provide destination loyalty. But the inevitable contact between tourists and populations will inevitably shape residents' behaviors and attitudes (Nasira et al., 2020), and therefore, the involvement of the local community is vital to the success of tourism development efforts (Alzaydi & Elsharnouby, 2023; Draçi & Kraja, 2023).

According to Dwyer and Kim's model (2003), tourism destination competitiveness is a function of six categories of characteristics: (i) natural and cultural heritage resources, (ii) created resources, (iii) support resources, (iv) destination management, (v) demand

factors, and (vi) situational factors. Crouch and Ritchie's model (1993, 2003) is considered the most comprehensive in tourism competitiveness (Baruca & Čivre, 2023). They proposed a model intending to provide superior travel experiences compared to rival destinations. Their model considers five pillars: core resources and attractions, supporting factors and resources, policy, planning and development, destination management, and qualifying and amplifying determinants.

Although there is a lack of consensus on the best definition of destination competitiveness, several researchers (Enright & Newton, 2004, 2005; Hudson et al., 2004) agree that the most prominent investigation about tourism competitiveness was presented by Crouch and Ritchie (1999) and Ritchie and Crouch (1993, 2000, 2003). Their models are based on Porter's framework of the diamond of natural competitiveness, which interrelates four core determinants to achieve a national comparative economic advantage and ultimately to have (un)success in reaching international competition and ultimately contribute to the well-being of its inhabitants (Cvelbar et al., 2017). This is a crucial issue since the current practices of several tourists often marginalize Indigenous communities, perpetuating limited participation and avoiding the full opportunities for cultural exchange. It also limits the community empowerment, reduces its potential to shape host communities (Jørgensen et al., 2021), and diversifies the economic base of rural communities (White et al., 2024). This interaction can promote cross-cultural understanding and environmental stewardship (Croes et al., 2024).

Historically, community-based tourism projects often fail to enhance rural livelihoods because they do not adapt to the local livelihood context and create inequitable participation opportunities. It is, therefore, essential to understand tourism development within the local livelihood context and how these initiatives may provide tourism job opportunities, generate equitable income-earning opportunities, and create jobs within communities (Legatzke et al., 2024).

Although few interviewers stated their gender concerns, international studies alerted to the importance of this practice in employment practices, that is, gender in leadership activities and in entrepreneurial performance (e.g., Makwembere et al., 2024; Matz & Linguère, 2023). These studies highlight that several aspects of employment, leadership, and entrepreneurship appear gendered, multifaceted, and constantly negotiated. According to this, tourist practices must realize the various viewpoints (identities) and reduce conventional masculinized ideologies in employment, leadership, and entrepreneurship (Datiko, 2024).

However, there is a gap in the previous destination competitiveness model since there is increasing recognition that human well-being is a key determinant for destination development. Accordingly, several authors (e.g., Iriarte & Musikanski, 2019; Stiglitz et al., 2018a; Stiglitz et al., 2018b) have proposed a change from a "production-oriented" measurement system into a new one focused on the well-being of current and future generations (Dwyer, 2022).

In recent models, there is an increased recognition that the economic measures per se fail to embrace essential aspects of human development, quality of life, or social progress (Dwyer, 2022; Iriarte & Musikanski, 2019), and it is essential to focus on the well-being of current and future generations. Even though there is no consensual definition of well-being, there is an acceptance that this is a multi-dimensional concept that embraces all aspects of human life and enhances an improvement in the quality of life, incorporates material comforts, and gives opportunities to people to improve their capabilities (Tov, 2018), and improves social, mental, emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual, and environmental aspects that contribute to society's quality of life (Clissold et al., 2022; Konstantopoulou et al., 2024).

Smith and Diekmann (2017) proposed a model of the Integrative Well-being Tourism Experience, suggesting that well-being-enhancing tourism should regard three dimensions: (i) pleasure and hedonism (such as having fun, relaxation, and rest), (ii) meaningful experiences (including education, self-development, or self-fulfillment), and (iii) altruistic activities and sustainability (such as being environmentally friendly or benefiting local communities).

Traditionally, well-being tourist activities, if properly managed, may improve the destination's competitiveness and attractiveness, therefore turning a destination more popular by capturing more tourists and benefiting the population by generating more income and jobs. The concept of hedonic well-being can be understood as a result of those things that make a tourist experience a memorable (positive or negative) experience and this way provides life satisfaction and happiness for their visit. The eudaimonic well-being is related to how tourists maximize the various physical and spiritual aspects of well-being in life. Thus, it focuses on the inner attitude of living one's life and therefore "helping people to have creative inspiration, exceptional human performance, and self-transcendence, producing greater feelings of self-confidence and a deeper sense of meaning and purpose" (Ritpanitchajchaval et al., 2023, p. 3).

Both concepts focus their attention on how to lead a happy life (Cai et al., 2020). However, it is important to notice that there are some differences between these two concepts. While hedonic well-being encompasses positive and negative emotions and life satisfaction (Newman & Graham, 2018), eudaimonic well-being deals with human achievements with the activity of the soul whose final goal is to get a tourist experience that drives a better level of well-being because of self-actualization (Ryff et al., 2021). The eudaimonic well-being view stresses the pleasurable life and the meaning of life following one's true self and the seeking of the goal of well-being, which is the human self-actualization in life (Daneels et al., 2021). In conclusion, the eudaimonic experience can be broadly defined as a tourist experience of feeling complete life fulfillment and a sense of achievement before, during, and after traveling, which is a consequence of different attributes: self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, positive relationships, and personal growth (Ritpanitchajchaval et al., 2023).

Another situation that cannot be left aside is related to the impact of over-tourism on the quality of life of a community since it may have several consequences. Mohd-Saufi et al. (2024) claimed that while overtourism does not significantly diminish quality of life, it positively influences community resilience. Further, community resilience strongly correlates with quality of life and mediates between overtourism and quality of life. They highlighted the positive economic effects of over-tourism with positive results that contributed to improved living standards for locals despite the various challenges (Mohd-Saufi et al., 2024). Anyway, some authors claim that the "application of positive psychology in tourism is still in its early stages" (Chen et al., 2025, p. 142). It is important to notice that emotional well-being significantly influences tourists' motivations and choices regardless of the type of tourism that has been chosen (Dornbach-Bender et al., 2020; Wendt et al., 2019) with huge impacts on the final tourist experience as well as the tourist consumption. Thus, the concept of destination competitiveness and its determinants is quite important in actual tourism literature (Dwyer, 2022) because these frameworks help destination managers and stakeholders to formulate the best tourist strategies according to the destination's comparative and competitive advantages as well as its strengths and weaknesses (WEF, 2020). However, more recently, especially in the social sciences, researchers recognize that human well-being is a multi-dimensional concept and a core element of a long-term sustainable strategy because tourism competitiveness depends on the improvement of the well-being of stakeholders, residents, and tourists (Berbekova et al., 2022; Santos-Júnior et al., 2020).

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Cape Verde: Location and Characterization

Cape Verde is a small island in West Africa's central Atlantic Ocean that was selected as the target to be analyzed to develop the proposed framework. The archipelago consists of ten volcanic islands covering a total area of 4033 km^2 (1557 sq mi) and has an estimated population of about 611,014 inhabitants in 2024 (CIA, 2025).

Economically, Cape Verde is considered a stable, middle-income country with a service-oriented economy. Due to limited natural resources and agricultural production, over 50% of the food consumed is imported. Commerce, transport, and public services comprise more than 70% of the GDP. The country has experienced strong GDP growth, driven by the recovery of the tourism sector, poverty reduction efforts, and reliance on foreign remittances and aid. In 2022, the GDP reached 2.23 billion USD, with a 17% annual increase, and in 2023, it stood at 2.3 billion USD, with a 6.8% annual increase (BCV, 2024; BP, 2025).

Unemployment remains a significant issue, though it has improved recently, dropping from 11% in 2022 to 10.3% in 2023. Agriculture faces challenges because of the climate and lack of water, with main products including sugarcane, tomatoes, coconuts, pulses, goat milk, vegetables, bananas, milk, cabbages, and potatoes. The industrial sector produces food and beverages, processes fish, manufactures shoes and garments, mines salt, and has a traditional ship repair industry.

Tourism is a significant economic activity in Cape Verde. In 2022, the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was 654.2 million USD (32.8% of GDP), and it is forecast to rise by 6.0% annually to 1253.1 million USD by 2033 (43.4% of GDP). The sector's contribution to employment was 85,147 jobs in 2022 (42.1% of total employment), and it is expected to support 145,405 jobs by 2033 (60.9% of total employment), growing at 4.6% annually. Visitor exports generated 577.6 million USD in 2022, and international tourist arrivals are projected to reach 1,261,000 by 2033, generating 1076.3 million USD in expenditure, with a 6.5% annual increase. Tourism attracted 119.8 million USD in capital investment in 2022, and its share of total national investment is expected to be 22.0% by 2033 (WTTC, 2023, 2024).

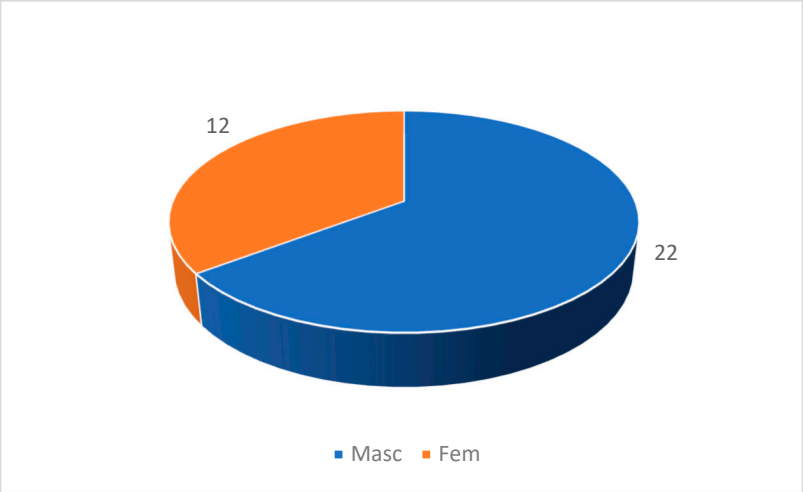
3.2. Procedure

We used a qualitative methodology in this study. We identified several stakeholders directly and indirectly involved in this activity and used a face-to-face interview technique as a data collection process to identify the core elements of tourism competitiveness in Cape Verde. Researchers prescreened the initial list of 34 respondents (65% male and 35% female—Scheme 1) to ensure the sample included individuals with diverse perspectives and backgrounds, such as local authorities and representatives from various sectors and functions (see Table A1).

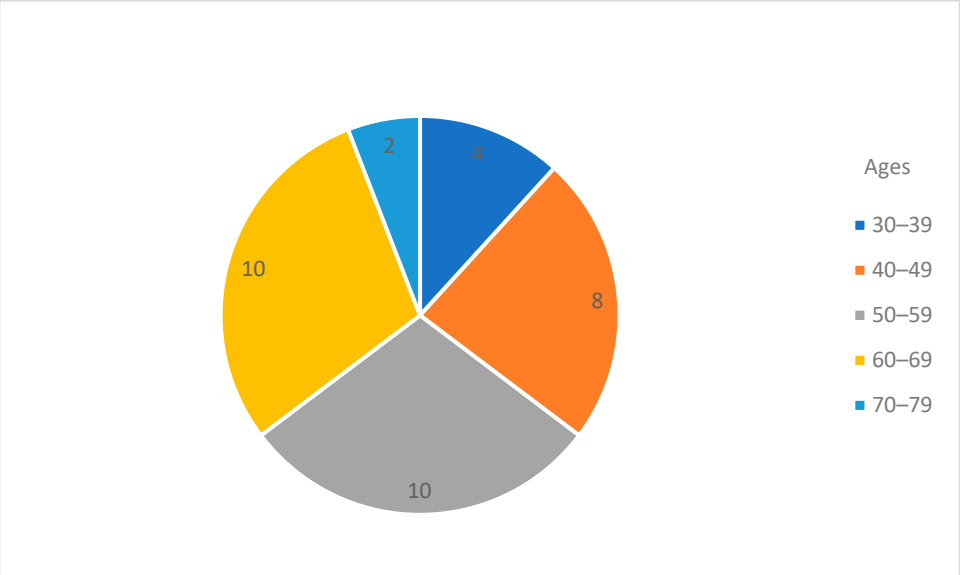
Concerning the age distribution of the participants, this sample has an average age of 52.7 years old, with the youngest one being 30 years old and the oldest one being 70 years old, as seen in Scheme 2. Most of the participants are between 50 and 69 years old.

All the participants were previously contacted before the interview to formally explain the purpose of the interview, with a formal request for collaboration and scheduling. Each of the 34 in-depth interviews (applied: August/September 2023 and between August and November 2024) began by explaining the purpose of the research and the request to record, following the planned questions, according to Gubrium and Holstein (2001) and Johnson (2001). The average time for each interview was 23 min, the longest one 65 min, and the quickest one 15 min. Local interviewers guided the discussion, probing the potential and weaknesses regarding competitive and sustainable tourism. Some specific questions were asked: From your perspective, what supporting factors could enhance Cape Verde's competitiveness? What are Cape Verde's core resources and attractions? Can they bring

well-being to inhabitants and tourists? What are Cape Verde's most significant competitive strengths and weaknesses?



Scheme 1. Respondents distributed by gender.



Scheme 2. Respondents distributed by age classes.

During the interview, other factors were analyzed concerning infrastructure facilities and services, transportation systems, public and private firms and their cooperation, entrepreneurial and hosting capabilities, social, cultural, and environmental safety issues, and destination marketing communication. Data collection and analysis were based on a full recording of all the interviews and complemented with extra notes from the interviewers, whose answers were transcribed verbatim. This situation allowed authors to examine the information repeatedly and facilitated a deeper and more nuanced analysis (Flick, 2022).

Concerning the main steps in the coding process of interviews, authors have used the following methodology: (i) transcription of the material through the conversion of audio recordings into written text in a Word document. This was conducted manually. This information was later transcribed into an Excel document to better understand the main contact and divergence aspects; (ii) familiarization with the materials. Authors have read the transcriptions to gain an understanding of the content. In this step, authors looked for initial impressions and recurring themes; (iii) initial coding. In this step authors

have divided the text into smaller segments and assigned labels (codes) to the various segments based on their content or meaning; (iv) theme development to get a higher-level understanding of the data and reveal significant findings; (v) revisit the themes to ensure they accurately represent the data. In this step, authors have managed to refine, merge, and, when necessary, split themes to enhance a more robust and relevant discussion in relation to the research questions; (vi) assign the final codes and themes to the data segments. Here, authors have re-read the interviews to ensure major consistency and prepare final data for interpretation; (vii) data interpretation through the analysis of the various themes and patterns to draw conclusions and insights; (viii) report the collected findings in a structured format.

In this paper, the authors opted to use an inductive analysis since, from the observation, the analysis moved from a particular instance to a broader generalization. The process was based on the data collection from the specific stakeholders. After gathering all the information in an Excel database, the authors have tried to identify patterns or trends in the data collected. Finally, from this analysis, the authors achieved the final conclusions based on the observed patterns. This kind of analysis is often used in qualitative research, and it is more exploratory.

3.3. Tourism Competitiveness and Well-Being Framework

Scheme 3 provides the proposed conceptual framework for Eudaimonic well-being in destination competitiveness. The framework results from the previous discussion of destination tourism competitiveness models, incorporates well-being outcomes, and aggregates interview findings.

Scheme 3. Competitiveness Framework. Source: authors' elaboration.

The "supporting factors and resources" include those aspects that allow a destination to establish a successful tourism industry and comprise the extent and condition of a destination's general infrastructure that encompasses the underlying support systems that enable tourism to function smoothly, including transportation networks, communication systems, utilities, and public services, companies, a range of facilitating resources, together with other factors that influence the destination's accessibility.

The "core resources and attractors" include things like the local atmosphere, traditions, culture, museums, special events like local festivities or international events performed in the country, and the overall superstructure, e.g., the physical and organizational components that directly cater to tourists, such as hotels, restaurants, tour operators, and attractions.

The "destination management" depends on activities that implement the policy and planning framework to enhance the appeal of the core resources and attractors, strengthen the quality and effectiveness of the supporting factors, and adapt to constraints imposed by "qualifying and amplifying determinants". Generally, the most important aspect of management is the destination marketing and communication systems, along with a wider set of management activities such as services, organization, and maintenance of the key tourism resources and attractors.

The "qualifying and amplifying determinants" include various factors that can modify, possibly in a negative sense, the influence of the other components. The qualifying factors are determined by the accessibility, safety and security, the availability of essential services (water, electricity, and sanitation) along with the quality of accommodation and hospitality services, and the natural and cultural attractions. The amplifying determinants include those factors that enhance the appeal of a destination and the decision-making process, which is a result of the existence of successful marketing and promotion campaigns (brand, advertising strategies, and the presence on social media and travel platforms. The quality of experience, along with the destination's reputation and the sustainable practices, also plays an important role.

The "destination policy, planning and development" is linked to the philosophy/values, vision, positioning/branding, development, competitive/collaborative analysis, monitoring, evaluation, and audit. Therefore, destination policy, planning, and development should be formulated as an integrative system of mechanisms designed to work in concert, such that overall competitiveness and sustainability goals can be achieved.

Finally, the most recent models have proposed another complementary factor ("Well-being lens") to Ritchie and Crouch's multifaceted model of tourism destination. When applying a well-being lens to tourism, it is essential to strike a balance between economic growth, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability (OECD, 2018) along with various determinants (e.g., economic, social, environmental, physical, mental, and emotional well-being). By considering these dimensions, the tourism industry can foster a more holistic approach that benefits both travelers and the communities they visit.

Cape Verde is a traditional consolidated tourism destination. Considering the main supporting factors and resources, accessibility appears as the major concern to both tourist development and the local population because of two things. First, inter-island maritime options face huge limitations both in the number of trips and especially the time of travel among the islands. This situation is complemented by the limited and expensive tickets for internal flights that create various constraints. Finally, although Santiago Island, Sal, Boavista, and São Vicente have significantly improved their road infrastructures, there are still several security limitations because there are no signals or indications on the roads. Besides this, Cape Verde is known for its stunning landscapes (mountains, beaches, volcanic mountains, and unique preserved ecosystems) that provide opportunity to implement various tourist activities such as water sports, hiking and trekking all over the islands, especially in Santo Antão, fishing, whale watching, scuba diving, snorkeling, windsurfing, and sailing, particularly in Sal, or experimenting with other cultural experiences. This economy is supported by various other resources that may contribute to the tourist experience, such as small-scale farming, the marine resources with huge potential for fish and seafood, and ecotourism based on bird watching or even turtles.

In relation to the core resources and attractors, the country has a vibrant atmosphere, preserved natural resources, and pleasant weather all year long. This destination has a UNESCO world heritage site (Cidade Velha—Santiago) along with the typical famous music (Morna and Coladeira). Mindelo (São Vicente) hosts a vibrant music scene with colonial architecture and several important festivals, like the Carnival. Local food and drink

are also significant attractors, with food tourism becoming increasingly popular. However, most of the restaurants still do not have the capacity to receive large groups at the same time. Although the country is still not a massified destination, Sal and Boavista have seen a constant rise in tourist flows, and their carrying capacity is starting to be at the edge. There are still a few museums all over the country, an aspect that should be addressed by local government or other stakeholders.

Concerning the destination management, Cape Verde has a strong tourist tradition based on the quality of their products and service provision. The marketing and promotion strategy is clear, and stakeholders have tried to broaden its tourist base, which is now very focused on limited destinations, such as Italy, Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal. This may create a problem if there are any kinds of problems in these countries.

Management issues in Cape Verde also face several other challenges. The most popular islands of Sal and Boavista may experience an overcrowding tourist effect with environmental degradation or concerns because natural habitats and biodiversity may be threatened by tourism activities, creating pollution, deforestation, and beach erosion, among other challenges. It is therefore important to establish protected areas and promote eco-friendly practices among tourists and businesses. Cultural preservation may also be at risk. The commercialization of local culture, as happens in Sal and especially in Boavista, can lead to the dilution of traditions and loss of authenticity. In this case, it is important to encourage cultural tourism that respects and showcases local customs, arts, and traditions while involving the community in decision-making.

Most importantly, in a country with poverty issues, the local community engagement, if not properly addressed in tourism planning, may lead to resentment and a lack of benefits for residents. It is vital that the management strategy promotes community-based tourism initiatives that empower local populations and ensure they benefit economically from tourism.

The qualifying and amplifying determinants have shown that the country is known as a secure destination with a competitive price for the restaurants, events, and hotels. The populations are extremely welcoming and hospitable.

Concerning the destination policy, planning, and development, this archipelago has been implementing various policies, planning, and development strategies to enhance its tourism sector and overall economic growth. The country has a consolidated democracy system and a stable political government. The country has several tourist master plans for the various islands, which are reflected in the National Development Plans of the various governments since their independence. The tourist development strategy is based on several major goals: (i) Cape Verde aims to develop a sustainable tourism strategy to balance economic growth with environmental conservation; (ii) all the governments have been working to diversify tourism offerings beyond sun and beach tourism, promoting eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and adventure tourism for example; (iii) government intends to reinforce the community engagement and capacity building by encouraging local communities to participate in tourism development, ensuring that they benefit from economic opportunities and by creating further training programs for local workers in hospitality and service management to improve service quality and employability; (iv) ensure international partnerships like the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to enhance more capacity and access resources; (v) engage foreign investors to build hotels, resorts, and other tourism-related infrastructure. This must be implemented with a proper regulatory framework that allows the existence of laws to protect natural resources and promote responsible tourist practices and to receive tax incentives for investment in those businesses that may contribute to the tourism infrastructure.

As stated earlier, this framework has also proposed the well-being of the lens as a complementary factor. The previous aspects may undermine or foster the tourism sector since the well-being framework plays a major role in achieving a more competitive tourist destination and therefore enhancing a destination's capacity to achieve a positive tourist and resident well-being. Specifically in Cape Verde, this is a challenging issue and raises the impact of mountain or environmental tourism and wellness activities, as well as any outdoor activity that may induce a sense of self-fulfillment and contribute to the tourist's happiness and satisfaction.

It is important to ensure that the income and wealth of the local population and households are met. Individual well-being is strongly influenced by the access of these households to income and consumption. In other words, wage levels and quality of jobs, along with gender and the wage gap, must be addressed to reduce unemployment and people at risk of social exclusion, poverty, and deprivation. The quantity and quality of housing is also an important measure of material well-being (Dwyer, 2022).

4. Results

4.1. Supporting Factors and Resources

The country has good tourism infrastructure (I3, I8, I33). Cape Verde has several international airports equipped to accommodate all types of tourism demand. However, internal flight prices between different airports have been high, and there have been some scheduling issues (I8, I1). The maritime option is still limited because of its price and the duration of the trips (I18, I19, I20).

Roads have been improved on many islands, but somehow, security is a problem because several speed bumps were built by the local population (not the nationally certified entities), and so they are not marked or comply with the legal requirements regarding height, being a danger to travelers (World Bank, 2022). Transport limitations (I1, I2, I4, I5) hinder the full tourism potential of various islands, as they restrict both the ability to visit other islands and the availability of goods for consumption (I5, I15, I16, I19, I26, I27).

These limitations can create a vast tourism shortage because a successful tourist strategy must be linked not only to the destination but also to the community (Sofield et al., 2017). Thus, the resolutions of these limitations may not only benefit tourists but also contribute to better local communities' well-being and lifestyles (Drake, 2003). There is no doubt about the importance of commercial air transport growth and its technological evolution and its pivotal role in facilitating increased people movement across nations because of mainly three crucial socioeconomic factors that shaped this global reality: globalization, countries' economic structure, and the dynamics within this structure (Ventura et al., 2024). This is both an international and a national fact in Cape Verde.

I4 stressed the importance of fiscal exemptions to overcome some banking limitations toward hotel investors. All the interviewees emphasized the importance of this being a medium-distance destination in the European market, enabling it to attract new markets. Thus, Cape Verde has, in general, good tourist facilities and attractions that have proved to be attractive to foster the tourism sector. However, there are still several problems, as there are internal transport limitations (roads, sea, and air) that impact the full potential of tourism.

4.2. Core Resources and Attractors

The environmental resources appear as a main attraction goal, mainly the beaches and natural parks, as it happens in the occidental islands (Santo Antão, São Nicolau, São Vicente, and Santiago) and the oriental islands, mainly the Sun and Sea. This is complemented by its strong culture, history, music, gastronomy, and the iconic (I8, I26, I33) "cachupa,

couscous and fagacida" (I23), and it is necessary to avoid tourism massification, which is very sensitive to local communities and tourism success (I. Dias et al., 2018).

According to I1, it is "necessary to have a strategic plan to maintain the quality of our attractions because they can easily be affected by tourism". This perspective is also defended by I20, which claims: "The distribution of tourist resources is still limited with a focus on sun, sea, and sand."

Cape Verde has a strong tradition in education, both university and technical. "Anyway, young workers still face some problems with foreign languages and some technical skills" (I9). "It is necessary "to educate for tourism and educate the population to know how to receive tourists, complemented by the creation of attractive tourist products" (I7). This is key to implementing a creative atmosphere and enhancing the destination experience (Remoaldo & Cadima-Ribeiro, 2019).

There are several typical restaurants, but many cannot accommodate extra groups of clients. Additionally, the waiting time for a meal is often too long. The diversification of local gastronomy is an important and distinctive aspect mentioned in all interviews. Overall, Cape Verde has good restaurants, but there is a need to improve both the quantity and quality of service across the islands (I8).

The country has few museums to attract cultural tourists (I1). While there are some museums, they are often small and lack adequate facilities. However, Cape Verde has a rich tradition of music and dance, which is crucial for attracting tourists and providing them with a unique experience. Concerning fauna, the major aspects to visit were the different types of turtles, whales, mannequins, harlequins, and others. It is also essential to reinforce local capacity and skills to establish a career development internship within Cape Verde's leading institutions to channel graduates into significant roles in marinas, shipyards, or charting companies (I29, I30, I34). This is quite important because the cultural characteristic of the destination is the basis for a country to develop its tourist activities (Tan et al., 2016).

Complementary to this, implementing a wastewater and sewage disposal regulation in ports and marinas is essential to ensure environmental sustainability (I22, I31, I33). The primary strategic tourist resources are its peacefulness, culture, gastronomy, and the possibility to experience complementary tourist activities on different islands. This is extremely important because these experiences are inextricably linked to co-creation and result from the capacity to implement participative activities that allow tourists to have an authentic local lifestyle experience and, thus, customer satisfaction (Duxbury & Richards, 2019; Remoaldo & Cadima-Ribeiro, 2019). We can conclude that the country has a proper atmosphere and strong cultural habits, especially due to its local music, gastronomy, festivities, and way of life. However, the country still faces several restrictions due to the lack of qualified people prepared to serve in the tourism sector even though the country has a high educational level and even a Tourism School. National museums are limited among the islands and not well prepared for tourists if we compare them with international destinations.

4.3. Destination Management

Cape Verde has long been a politically stable country, which benefits political transitions and has been crucial in stabilizing the tourism political vision (I3, I12). Over time, the country has developed significant national tourism plans (e.g., Major Operations of Sustainable Tourism Development Plans, GOPEDS, Islands Master Plans, Tourism, Operational Program) essential for consolidating the tourism strategy (I3).

On Boavista Island, better coordination between local authorities and the central government is needed because of a lack of basic infrastructure, such as parks, to attract tourists from the hotels (E1). Local investors face challenges with hotel evaluations, which

can be conducted by the local Tourism Institute and local mayors (I4). While Cape Verde national entities have supported hotels, small hotels face unique challenges that are not experienced by international groups (I4).

Local agents and authorities play a vital role since Cape Verde is a decentralized country, with 22 municipalities on the nine inhabited islands. This situation shows just how important local government is in Cape Verde. Therefore, starting from the top, the central government, in this case, the Ministry of Tourism, which has the sector's portfolio, must visualize the sector as a strategic sector, planning its implementation in terms of what is known as the tripod, social sustainability, economic sustainability, and environmental sustainability (I3).

The influence of local and central authorities on destination tourism management is limited. Travel agencies and tour operators are the main promoters of the country (I5, I7, I19, I22). The tourism tax, a significant source of income, is not being utilized efficiently for island development, leading to pressure on resource management (I21). Anyway, it is important to notice that the participation of local communities in tourist development plans should include the sharing of benefits, as well as be adapted to the type of tourist capacity of the place (Daly et al., 2020).

Although micro and small enterprises (MSEs) play a central role in the tourism industry, they generally face numerous challenges, especially (i) lack of funding, (ii) lack of training, (iii) lack of education and awareness, and (iv) lack of skills. Thus, policymakers and other stakeholders must be aware of this situation to properly manage these issues of funding, skills, training, education, and awareness sustainably hindering MSEs (Trupp et al., 2024). In this sub-section we can stress the importance of political stability over the years along with several tourism plans that have been presented by several different governments. However, it is important that the local population, along with the local small investors, can benefit from this activity.

4.4. Qualifying and Amplifying Determinants

Nautical tourism in Cape Verde holds great potential because of its geographic location, natural conditions, and overall commitment to tourism as a way of economic development, promoting political and social stability (I3, I6, I8, I33). Under this issue, Cape Verde needs to create a policy framework with stakeholders like ENAPOR, ITCV, and DGP (General Directorate of Tourism) (I12, I22).

Although there were some historic security issues, this is now considered a "safe destination next to the main emission markets" (I1, I3, I4). Cape Verde is a reputed nation with a stable political government and economic activity. "Diversity is an essential key element" of this determinant (I5) since the country has various possible tourist products. To guarantee long-term quality, "it is important to have good tourism supervision and focalization" (I5). Some sustainable problems in some islands "exacerbate the importance of improving waste management and implementing recycling practices mainly in the most visited islands such as Boavista" (I1). All these issues are important because they may affect tourist satisfaction, and the consideration of territory as an expansive dimension of heritage offers a unique opportunity to promote both the conservation of assets and the development of the surrounding area (Ramírez-Guerrero et al., 2024).

According to I6 and I8 among others, although Cape Verde has been attracting external investment, it must consolidate the efforts between public and private entities to qualify the destination. Among other issues, it is necessary "to improve the quality of infrastructures and services mainly in the health area and civil protection" (I6). Other respondents stated the importance of diversification with "the involvement of local communities that are fundamental to achieve Cape Verdean tourism competitivity and sustainability" (I11).

According to the interviews, it is possible to conclude that the country still faces several challenges, mainly due to water shortage and the need to improve its sustainable practices concerning the tourism sector (e.g., recycle more, use less plastics). The tourist activity is not equally distributed over the islands because Sal and Boavista account for the most accommodations. This may create an undesirable future mass tourism destination in these islands, and it is important that the other islands can also attract more tourist flows. To do so, it is important to improve internal connections among the various islands (by sea and air).

4.5. Destination Policy, Planning, and Development

National tourism plans facilitate the sharing of diverse perspectives and visions from different governments regarding this activity. Consequently, although the country has progressively become internationally recognized as a tourism destination (I2, I3) it still needs to diversify the tourist experience with more connections among the islands (I5), as well as education. Fostering competitiveness depends on the acquisition of solid competences and skills by all the intervenients in the tourist activity. If not attended to, tourism competitiveness may impose competitiveness problems such as a lack of experience and skills (Duxbury et al., 2019).

Although Cape Verde has been depending on tourism to achieve its economic goals, there are still some constraints because of logistics and infrastructure development, mainly a better transport network and the dynamization of local agriculture toward hotels and restaurants (E1). Thus, "Cape Verde has achieved a great job" (I4), and the country is now a consolidated tourism destiny (I3, I4). Each island must keep its tourist identity (mass tourism in Sal and Boavista), while the others must be prepared to receive different types of tourists (I3, I4). However, some major islands (e.g., Santiago) have a very low carrying capacity, and most tourists have already faced problems. Therefore, a new policy should be implemented (I12). Stakeholders find the quality of tourism planning unclear I1, I2, I4, I26, I27). This may be an unsustainable situation since the long-term sustainability of local institutions and businesses may be endangered (Remoaldo & Cadima-Ribeiro, 2019). Local DMOs (Destination Management Operators) are crucial in identifying and communicating with experienced tourists who seek unique learning, as well as participative and innovative experiments (Zhang & Xie, 2019). The country's values, vision, and positioning are well defined. However, Cape Verde needs to broaden its tourist products, and the maritime/nautical activities have immense potential to be strengthened and provide a unique tourist experience. This is vital for the success of this activity.

4.6. Well-Being Lens

Several stakeholders emphasized the importance of reinforcing the need to develop rural areas as a complementary way to increase residents' prosperity, strengthen and diversify economic growth, promote local production, create jobs in remote places, and generate multiple benefits for other economic activities. This is extremely important because this option may also contribute to revitalizing the existing infrastructure and cultural heritage assets by transforming them into tourist attractions. Regardless, Cape Verde can easily pursue its idyll through its cultural traditions and calm style of life inherent to an island destination whose features, such as remoteness, idyllic landscape, and morphology, fascinate tourists (Boukas, 2019).

The diversity of islands can potentially develop a qualitative tourist product for travelers and improve the lives of residents. Following the literature, aspects associated with specific local food and wine can contribute positively to the local economy (I1, I4, I28)

and the development of agriculture that may economically benefit the local population as well as the tourist experience through this strategy (I6, I8).

According to I3, I9, I10, I12, and I29, education plays a major role in Cape Verdean strategy, which is in line with international studies that conclude about the importance of education, training, lifelong learning, and skills acquisition to reach better jobs, work satisfaction, and economic prosperity since all these aspects are associated with better health, greater equality of income and wealth, lower crime and delinquency rates, tolerance between people, and appreciation of cultural diversity, which will enhance individual and social well-being as well as deeper personal fulfillment (Llena-Nozal et al., 2019; Sachs, 2019). The well-being lens enriches this discussion because it estimates the resident's as the tourist's satisfaction. Concerning the local population, it is imperative that the labor force benefit from this activity and receive a proper income that allows the household to have some kind of financial security. Cape Verde has been benefiting from the education because of this activity. But, in terms of civic engagement, populations still do not benefit as much as they could from this interaction with tourists.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Theoretical Implications

This research aimed to comprehensively analyze and typify the major economic and tourist determinants of a typical small island developing states (SIDS). Cape Verde, like other similar islands, exhibits significant variations in size, geography, governance, economy, and population density (Ballesteros et al., 2023; Hernández-Delgado, 2024) and has long been facing risks from climate change (Thomas et al., 2020). The country comprises less than 600,000 people, a territory of 4033 km^2, a history of periodical problems with droughts and famine crises, and a lack of valuable natural resources. Thus, considering all these limitations, the successive national governments have long opted to choose a political and economic strategy of international inclusion into the world market, hoping to contribute to the valorization of its national strengths and consolidation of a long-term sustainable tourism strategy (Republic of Cape Verde, 2019).

As stated earlier in the introduction, this research intended to list the (i) supporting (ii) core resources and attractions, and (iii) most significant competitive strengths and weaknesses factors that could determine the competitiveness and the well-being of an island destination.

The study culminated in an empirical analysis based on the theoretical frameworks of tourism competitiveness, such as the one proposed by Crouch and Ritchie (1999) and Ritchie and Crouch (2000, 2003), and the new frameworks that recognize the importance of human well-being as an essential element of sustainable development (Arrow et al., 2012; Dwyer, 2022; Iriarte & Musikanski, 2019), complemented by in-depth interviews with major local stakeholders.

The current study provides several major outputs for enhancing Cape Verde's destination competitiveness within the case of a small island developing country (SIDS) whose tourism sector has historically represented a significant economic and social activity in contrast to other economic alternatives that ca not be implemented in this country due to their historical lack of natural resources.

The research contributions to tourism literature are also threefold. Firstly, we methodologically expanded tourism literature by adopting a complementary approach, giving arguments to integrate this community well-being discussion into a destination competitiveness analysis, and enhancing the existence of additional information to support the decisions of tourist stakeholders and policymakers.

Secondly, the research analyzed the discussion about tourism impacts through a host community (stakeholders, government) perspective to highlight the weaknesses of their specific vulnerabilities and the major strengths that may best be used or mitigated to support effective tourism development (history, culture, local traditions, peace and security, government stability, and environmental conditions, among others). Through the proposed research framework, it is possible to potentially address future tourism management strategies considering the existing spatial disparities between the increasing tourism impacts on individual communities. This is very important in a country that faces poverty issues and where the tourism sector may be a viable alternative to the local integration of the most vulnerable population (employment opportunities, business creation, and local training, among others).

Third, considering the in-depth interviews and analyzing local tourism policies, this research provided a conceptual framework for Eudaimonic well-being in destination competitiveness by identifying specific essential insights for improving destination competitiveness on small islands that may contribute to developing and strengthening the tourism sector in other island destinations. Several aspects arise with huge potential to implement this activity and diversify its impacts. We can list some of the most important ones, such as local events, festivities, recreational facilities, hospitality (Morabeza), overall tourism quality (infrastructure and superstructure), safety, and global destination market competitiveness. All these previous key factors can either facilitate or hinder the national tourism development strategy and, therefore, can ensure an overarching tourist experience as corroborated by Dwyer and Kim (2003) or Fernandéz et al. (2022). It is also essential to notice the importance of a thriving tourism strategy whose final goal should be the well-being of its population (Cvelbar et al., 2017), especially in these island countries, because communities are the main instrument to offer distinctive and new experiences to tourists (A. Dias et al., 2023).

The current findings also illustrate that increased tourism flows can simultaneously create community cohesion or contribute to community erosion in a continuous process that will shape each community's identity in a two-way process. A strong community identity fosters a win-win situation and becomes a tourist attraction (C. Yu et al., 2018). If properly managed, the benefits of increased tourism can make communities more cohesive and supportive of future tourism developments. However, if this situation is improperly handled, local communities may become critical of tourists and tourism projects. So, tourism policies must address resident concerns in their decisions and plans, especially for communities experiencing (over)tourism (White et al., 2024). Finally, the study's methodology can also be a reference for future research.

5.2. Managerial Implications

This research identifies key tourism factors. It provides valuable insights for managers, policymakers, local authorities, and academics. These insights help in designing future tourism plans and strategies. The goal is to enhance destination competitiveness and well-being. This can boost tourism income, reduce unemployment and poverty, and strengthen local community involvement.

Based on previous tourist determinants, we can conclude that the most critical four primary factors that may affect destination competitiveness and well-being are destination resources, quality and quantity of infrastructure, support services, human resources, and the overall business environment (Woyo & Slabbert, 2023), which in the case of Cape Verde has been improving over the years regardless of some limitations previously discussed. Hence, it is possible for policymakers to design new sustainable tourist practices and leverage the country's strengths to be better positioned within the international tourist

community. This research also concludes with the importance of a permanent collaboration between stakeholders and national authorities to achieve an overall tourist experience based on local heritage, narratives, and stories that make a destination a distinctive factor (Duxbury & Richards, 2019), contributing to the creation of a solid distinctive brand (Warren et al., 2019), enhancing an emotional response, and, thus, creating the potential to stimulate positive emotional responses among tourists (Lv et al., 2024).

This link to a place is essential for two major reasons: to foster community involvement (Sofield et al., 2017), to improve community well-being (Cvelbar et al., 2017) and thus create destination competitiveness that will be difficult to imitate (Hoarau, 2014) and will ultimately create a unique value to the destination (Sun & Xu, 2019) and well-being among stakeholders.

Customer satisfaction is a huge source of competitive advantage. As previously discussed, it may be affected by accommodation services, amenities, tourist activities, transportation services, local hospitality, appealing image, pricing (Vojtko et al., 2022), and adequate infrastructure (Agina & Nwambuko, 2023), which must be permanently addressed by local institutions and managers.

According to theoretical studies previously discussed, at the end of the overall experience, tourists who achieve an enjoyable vacation emotional expertise are more likely to benefit from higher levels of well-being and personal satisfaction (G. Yu et al., 2021). This overall evaluation of their experiences will influence their well-being and wish to return.

However, it is essential to note that this situation can be affected by several other factors, such as the price, the quality of accommodation and the provided service, the level of customer service, the impact of the overall atmosphere of the destination (Saayman et al., 2018), and the adoption of technologies to enhance the experience and satisfaction of visitors (Gonzáles-Santiago et al., 2024). Therefore, tourists who have enjoyable vacation experiences and experience positive emotions such as pleasure, relaxation, or excitement are more likely to achieve higher levels of satisfaction/well-being with their leisure life/travel experiences (Kang, 2020; G. Yu et al., 2021).

The previous discussion also demonstrated the importance of correctly defining and implementing a distinctive and sustainable tourist product, which, in most cases, is the consequence of its usefulness, excellence, and potential to provide a hedonic value (Warren et al., 2019), as well as a destination's capacity to create a memorable experience (Khoi & Le, 2022; Tran et al., 2024).

Finally, the study also concluded that in this competitive and globalized tourism world, it is imperative to strengthen the tourist information, the communication network, and the presentation of targeted content as theoretically proposed by Amini et al. (2024).

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

This study has contributed significantly to understanding destination competitiveness and well-being within the context of developing countries on small islands, focusing mainly on Cape Verde. This paper has contributed to minimizing a gap in the literature concerning destination competitiveness assessments. Based on the empirical discussion and the application of established theoretical frameworks and methodologies, the research provides different strategies for enhancing tourist destination competitiveness.

The study of the defined tourist strategies, policies, and initiatives in Cape Verde provided valuable insights into the discussion of destination attraction, sustainable practices, stakeholder collaboration, and major industry competitiveness. The collected conclusions can contribute to strengthening tourism sectors locally and worldwide.

The findings of this study also allow us to identify the main determinants and indicators that can be used to develop comprehensive strategies to enhance destination

competitiveness and well-being, and highlight the importance of collaboration among tourist stakeholders. Although the current research achieved its goals through numerous in-depth interviews with major stakeholders, some limitations were identified, as not all islands were included in the sample. In future studies, it may be important to conduct a quantitative study to allow for better consolidation of the results.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Interviewees profile.

Entity/Company	Age	Gender	Duration (min)	Interview
Director of Riu Palace (Boavista)	40	M	20	I1
Director of Pestana Tropico (Santiago)	58	M	44	I2
ITCV Administrator	60	M	45	I3
Hotel Pérola	30	F	38	I4
Agency IsaTour	55	F	15	I5
President of CCS (Eastern Chamber of Commerce)	65	M	50	I6
Praia Tour	62	F	47	I7
President of Cape Verde Chamber of Tourism	70	M	45	I8
Lecturer at Santiago University	60	F	55	I9
Lecturer at Hotel School Santiago	55	F	42	I10
Director of Executivotur Agency	65	F	39	I11
International tourism local consultant	50	M	48	I12
Praia City Hall	60	M	54	I13
Tarrafal City Hall	45	M	27	I14
Sal City Hall	65	M	33	I15
São Vicente City Hall	65	M	25	I16
EMAR (Sea School)	42	F	40	I17
ENAPOR (Cape Verde Port Authority in São Vicente)	40	M	37	I18
IMP (Maritime Port Institute)—São Vicente	45	M	40	I19
IMP (Maritime Port Institute)—Sal	54	M	26	I20
IMP (Maritime Port Institute)—Santiago	38	M	25	I21
ONAVE—São Vicente	41	F	37	I22
Port of Palmeira—Sal	40	M	55	I23
Port of Praia—Santiago	55	M	48	I24
Port of Tarrafal—Santiago	61	M	59	I25
Director of Odjo d'Água Hotel (Sal)	70	M	38	I26
Director of Oásis Salinas Sea Hotel (Sal)	56	M	48	I27

Table A1. *Cont.*

Entity/Company	Age	Gender	Duration (min)	Interview
Nice-Kriola	55	F	35	I28
EMAR The School of the Sea	39	F	58	I29
ISECMAR Higher Institute of Marine Engineering and Sciences	38	F	47	I30
DNAP–National Directorate of Aquaculture and Fisheries	42	M	39	I31
Interisland Transport of Cape Verde	51	M	25	I 32
Ministry of Sea	65	M	42	I33
São Vicente Marina Administration	53	F	65	I34

Source: Authors' elaboration.

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