EXPERIENCE, DISCOVER & VALORISE HIDDEN TREASURE TOWNS AND SITES OF THE ADRIATIC AREA

EXCOVER –LOCAL REPUTATION ANALYSIS

MONTEFELTRO REGION

MONTEFELTRO SVILUPPO CONSORTIUM

OUTLINE

1. INTRODUCTION TO REPUTATION ANALYSIS

Montefeltro region participates in the EXCOVER Project with the objective of developing sustainable tourism as privileged driver of economic growth, because currently tourist inflows are scarce, well below the potential level that local resources could be able to attract. Therefore, in order to devise an effective strategy to make Montefeltro a popular tourism destination, it is necessary to understand why much people do *not* choose it as a destination for their trips and vacations, and what changes could enhance its tourist attractiveness. In particular, the focus is on:

➢ how (little) popular Montefeltro is,

➢ which aspects it is better known for,

➢ with what it is associated in the thought of people from different countries,

To investigate the collective judgments of potential tourists about Montefeltro as a tourism destination, a demand-based Reputation Analysis is carried out. The object of investigation is the reputation of the area: it has been shown that a favorable reputation can positively influence the image of a destination[1] (that is conveyed to the general public of potential visitors), the perception of its value and the tourists' loyalty[2].

The current Reputation Analysis relies on an indirect (web-based) approach. This report, examines information from *Google Trends.*

2. GOOGLE TRENDS ANALYSIS

In order to assess how much Montefeltro is actually (un)known at both the national and international level, what it is associated with it in the view of the general public and how popular local attractions are, data from Google Trends were analyzed (period of the execution: 28 June 2015 – 20 June 2020). Google Trends is a search trends feature that allows to see how often specific

---

[1]Marinao, E.,Torres,E.,Chasco, C. (2012).Trust in tourist destinations.The role of local inhabitants and institutions. Acad. Rev. Latinoam. Adm.51,27–47.

[2]Christou, E. (2007).Tourist destinations as brands: the impact of destination image and reputation on visitor loyalty. In:Keller, P., Bieger,T. (Eds.), Productivity in Tourism: Fundamentals and Concepts for Achieving Growth and Competitiveness. Erich Schmidt Verlag, Berlin, pp. 57–67.

keywords, subjects and phrases have been queried over a specific period of time, by showing the frequency with which a given term is entered into Google's search engine, relative to the site's total search volume, based on a sample of Google searches.

The search terms, used in the analysis, are the following:
- Montefeltro, which is both the name of the area and the name of the historic family that ruled the region (the most outstanding member of the family was Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, also depicted in Piero Della Francesca's well known portrait),
- Belforte all'Isauro (town in Montefeltro region that is involved in the project)
- Lunano (town in Montefeltro region that is involved in the project)
- Sassocorvaro (town in Montefeltro region that is involved in the project)
- Urbino (in comparison with Montefeltro),
- Pesaro (in comparison with Montefeltro),
- Marche (in comparison with Montefeltro),
- Romagna (in comparison with Montefeltro).

For the search word "Montefeltro", along with the global search volume, the following categories were taken into account:
- Arts & Entertainments,
- Travel.

Searches run from the following countries were analyzed:
- Italy,
- Worldwide.

Analysis

For the last 5 years, worldwide searches of "Montefeltro" seemed to be quite stable, also in seasonal terms, with negligible swinging and only a few isolated peaks (figure 1). We cannot recognize specific reasons for such peaks.
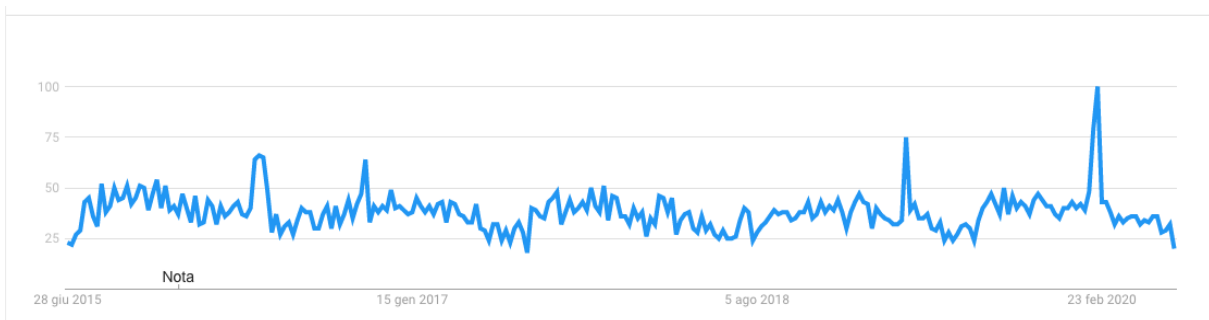

figure 1. Worldwide searches for "Montefeltro"

The great majority of these worldwide searches are originated in Italy. Little values are associated to Greece and Spain, two Mediterranean Countries (each of them had about 15% of the searches made in Italy). Even lower values in terms of searches (under 15% of Italian searches) were displayed from USA, Finland, France, Portugal, Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden, Canada, Argentina, Netherlands, UK, Germany, Polland, Brazil, Russia, Australia, Mexico and Turkey (see figure 4). So the "Montefeltro" name seems to be known in the world, but it does not stand out as a relevant "brand" (for instance, the word "Tuscany" was searched almost with the same frequency in the world and in Italy).

For this reason, the main focus of the Google Trends Analysis has been within Italy. Figure 2 shows Italian searches for "Montefeltro" within Italy in the same period.
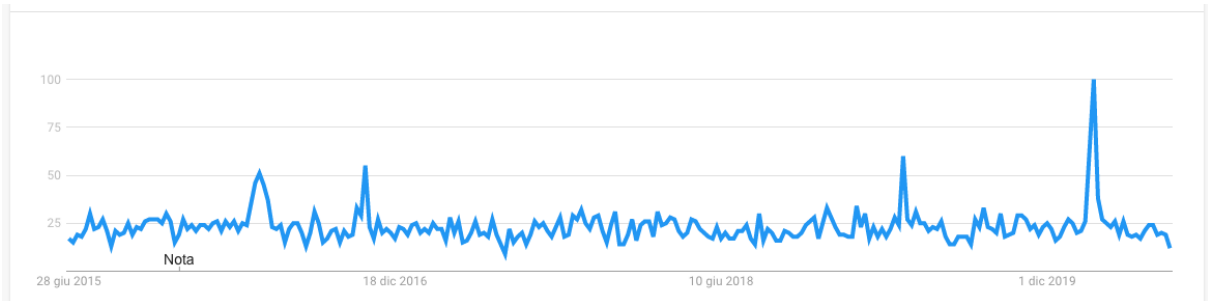

figure 2. Italian searches for "Montefeltro"

Given the predominance of Italian searches in the worldwide total, the Italian chart displays the quite the same graph curve. It is relevant to observe how, within italy, the majority of searches are made in Marche and in the neighboring regions (figure 3).
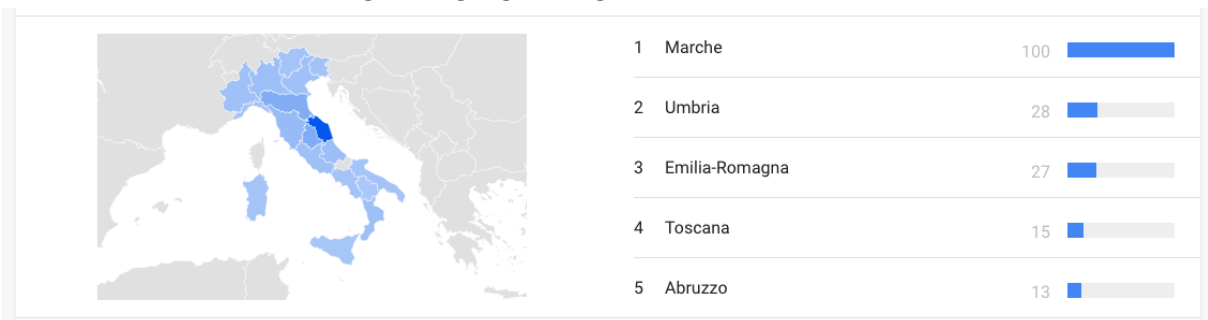

figure 3. Italian searches for "Montefeltro" by regions

Montefeltro's reputation seems to depend strongly on the territorial proximity: the more people are distant, the less they seem interested in or aware of Montefeltro.

Two more specific trends were evaluated: Italian searches in "Arts & Entertainment" category (as Montefeltro is a land rich of art and history) and in Travel. In both cases there are not significant

seasonal variations. Some interesting elements are visible in regional results. As for "Arts & Entertainment", adjacent Umbria is the most interested region (apart from Marche) in Montefeltro. With regards to "Travel", apart from Marche the most interested region is neighboring Emilia-Romagna (and again Umbria): these results show short-distance interest, and maybe suggest that the most relevant touristic model corresponds to short visits (even day trips).

In general (but also in specific categories) the most important related items in search are "Federico da Montefeltro", "Urbino", and other words related to art (like "Piero Della Francesca" and his works). "Benelli" (a local guns manufacturer) is also searched.

Since the EXCOVER project will take place in three municipalities in the Montefeltro region, the Reputation Analysis was focused on these three towns as well: Belforte all'Isauro, Lunano and Sassocorvaro Auditore. All of them are known and searched only in Italy (figure 4).

figure 4. Worldwide searches for "Montefeltro", "Belforte all'Isauro", "Lunano" and "Sassocorvaro"

Within Italy, the most searched of these three municipalities is Sassocorvaro Auditore, which is the most known of them also because of its Rocca (Stronghold) Ubaldinesca; Sassocorvaro is searched in most regions of Italy. Searches for "Lunano" are displayed only in central-northern regions of Italy (Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Lazio and obviously, most of all, Marche). Belforte all'Isauro, the smallest town among the three, was searched only in Marche and Emilia-Romagna. So nowadays the municipal level of the territory seems to have low, or even none at all, reputation and appeal beyond the local area.

Back to Montefeltro as a whole, its reputations on Google Trends has been put in comparison with four more search words: Pesaro, Marche, Urbino and Romagna. "Pesaro" and "Marche" represent the bigger scale of the territory, respectively the Province and the Region where Montefeltro is (and Pesaro is also the name of the chief city in the Province). Urbino, the main destination in the

territory (being a UNESCO site), is the major urban centre near Montefeltro, strongly linked with its history and culture (suffice to say that the dukes of Urbino belonged to the Montefeltro family). Finally, Romagna is the name of the eastern area of Emilia-Romagna region, often identified with the city of Rimini, and is a big touristic destination, especially for summer and sea tourism. The Romagna area and the Montefeltro area are adjacent, the second being the inner territory.

With regards to "Pesaro" – without distinguishing the Province and the city – figure 5 shows how Montefeltro is way weaker in terms of search frequency.
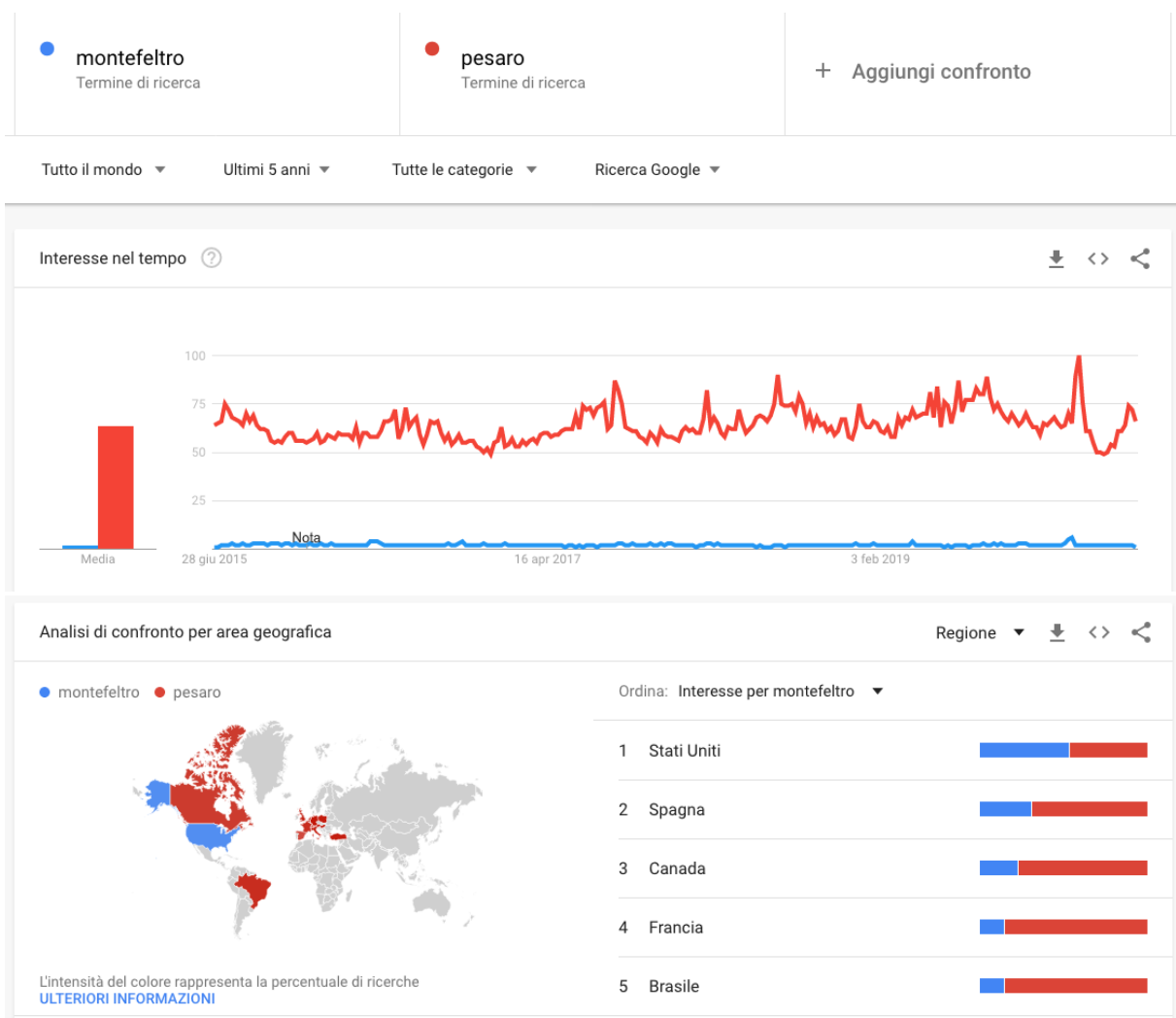

figure 5. Worldwide searches for "Montefeltro" and "Pesaro"

It is interesting to observe how, on a worldwide scale, Pesaro is always the predominant search word, except for the USA: this is related to the search word "Benelli", the gun manufacturer that operates in this territory – and among its models there is the Montefeltro Max-5 rifle. So, that the explanation for such exception is not of a touristic kind.

The same phenomenon can be observed with reference to the search word "Marche" (figure 6), which is the name of the region (certainly not the most known Italian region in the world).
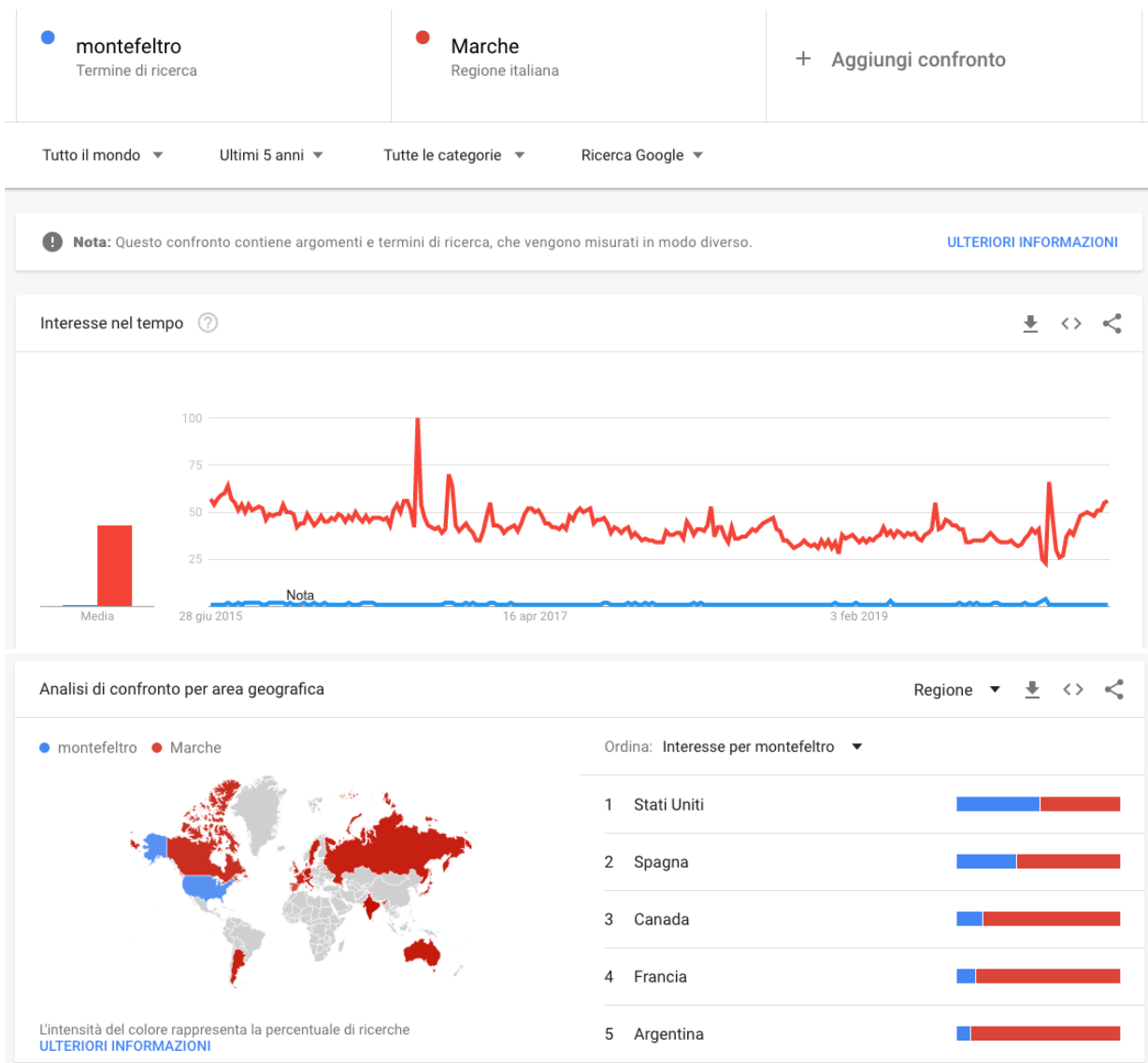
figure 6. Worldwide searches for "Montefeltro" and "Marche"

Figure 7 shows how the "Montefeltro" search succumbs also to "Urbino", though the spread between these two terms is not as large as the ones with "Marche" and especially with "Pesaro". In this case, Montefeltro is not the predominant search neither in the USA. This deserves some attention. Though the city of Urbino is where Benelli operates, most relevant search words in the USA related to Urbino are not in the weapon field: on the contrary, they are related to art and history. So, while Urbino is searched in the USA for touristic-connected contents, its nearby territory Montefeltro is searched due to the name of a rifle.
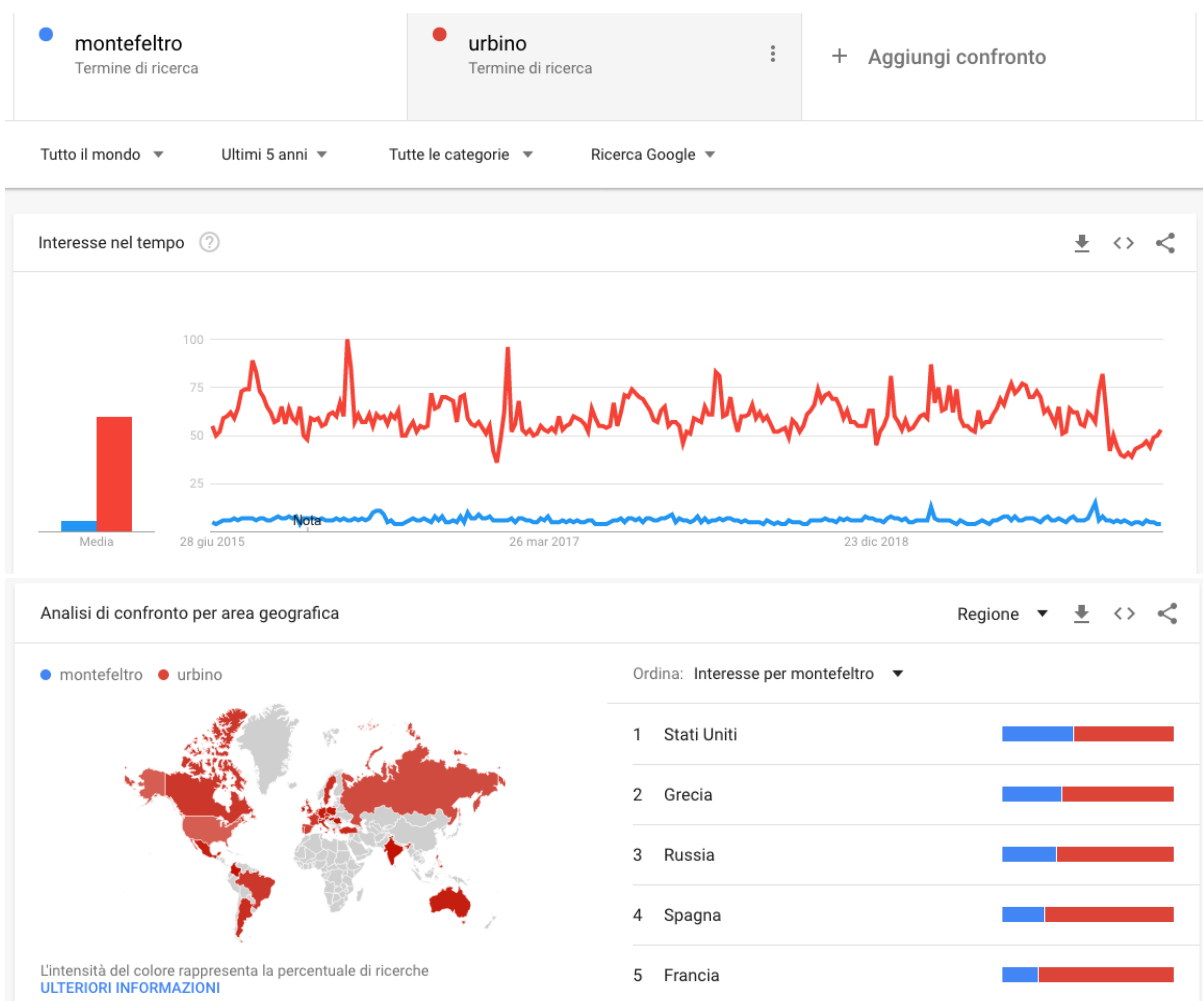

figure 7. Worldwide searches for "Montefeltro" and "Urbino"

Finally, also compared to "Romagna", Montefeltro shows a considerable lack of reputation (figure 8: the peaks in February 2020 are probably related to the starting phase of the Covid19 emergency in Italy).

figure 8. Worldwide searches for "Montefeltro" and "Romagna"

In conclusion, Montefeltro's reputation needs to be strongly enhanced. What this analysis allowed to observe is that:

- Montefeltro is known in the world, but is searched mainly by nearby potential tourists.
- Montefeltro is less known than nearby destinations (including its own region and province).
- Montefeltro is not able enough to ride the advantage of being near relevant touristic destinations like Urbino and Romagna.
- Particular places inside the Montefeltro territory (like the three towns of Belforte all'Isauro, Lunano and Sassocorvaro Auditore) do not work as reputational assets; on the contrary, they are known only in the neighboring regions.

All these factors suggest that the "Montefeltro brand" needs a strategy to be launched in the touristic market.