

## Research Article

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# Tourist motivations in a heritage destination in Spain

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**Abstract:** The inscription of an area as World Heritage Site (WHS) is of utmost significance to preserve the historical and artistic heritage and at the same time, to encourage visits to the site. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the study of the relationship between WHS and tourism by presenting the results of a research conducted in the city of Córdoba (Spain) which analyses the socio-demographic profile and motivations of tourists who visit this City, differentiating between domestic and foreign tourists. The main results of the research show the important educational level of respondent tourists, the significant number of countries of origin, the high motivation to learn about the heritage roots of the city, the importance of gastronomy as a part of its cultural identity and the high satisfaction of tourists. As a point of improvement, the results show the low level of overnight stays in the city.

**Keywords:** World Heritage Site; Culture; Motivation; Satisfaction; Cordoba

**Resumen:** El reconocimiento de un lugar como Patrimonio de la Humanidad significa preservar la herencia histórica y artística y, al mismo tiempo, incrementar el número de visitas a este lugar. El objetivo de este artículo es contribuir

al estudio de las relaciones entre lugares Patrimonio de la Humanidad y turismo, presentando los resultados de una investigación realizada en la ciudad de Córdoba (España) que analiza el perfil sociodemográfico y las motivaciones de los turistas que visitan la ciudad, diferenciación entre turistas domésticos e internacionales. Los principales resultados de esta investigación muestran el importante nivel educativo de los visitantes, el significativo número de países de origen, la alta motivación para aprender acerca de las raíces patrimoniales de la ciudad, la importancia de la gastronomía como parte de la identidad cultural y la alta satisfacción de los turistas. Como punto a mejorar, los resultados muestran el bajo nivel de pernoctaciones en la ciudad.

**Palabras Clave:** Patrimonio de la Humanidad, Cultura, Motivación, Satisfacción, Córdoba.

## 1 Introduction

Since the adoption of the Convention on the Protection of the World's Natural and Cultural Heritage in 1972, around 1,052 sites worldwide have been declared a World Heritage Site (UNESCO, 2016). The inscription of a specific place or an intangible element in these lists involves the consideration of outstanding universal value and, at the same time, this registration allows us to understand that all the people in the world are owners of (and responsible for) that place or of that intangible cultural heritage. Thus, according to Saipradist and Staiff (2007), the World Heritage Listing ensures the identification, conservation, presentation, and transmission of places or monuments to the future generations that have outstanding universal value from the perspective of history, art, science, aesthetics, and conservation.

Although the main aims of UNESCO listings are to preserve and conserve, some studies indicate that the designation of WHS often implies an increase in demand and

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tourism influx (Tucker & Emge, 2010, Yang, Lin & Han, 2010). Moreover, it is perceived as ‘brand’ (Timothy, 2011) of those sites, thus creating a strong relation between the WHS listing and tourism (Breakey, 2012). Therefore, it is paradoxical that while the objective of UNESCO’s inscription of WHS is to promote their protection, some destinations are prioritizing their tourism development (Su & Wall, 2011), especially in the new designations, little known by tourists, starting by encouraging domestic tourism and then international tourism (Su & Wall, 2011). That is, WHS means protecting this area for future generations and at the same time, it implies an increase of tourists (Landorf, 2009).

Let us recall that as a result of the UNESCO inscription of these places as being of universal excellence, it is for them to create a cultural image associated with places (Ung & Vong, 2010), and they become a unique attraction as a tourist destination (Breakey, 2012). Culture is one of the most significant conductive motivations for tourists to decide on a particular destination (Correia, Kozak & Ferradeira, 2013), which Di Giovine (2009) defines as Heritage-Scape. There has been growing interest in the impact of tourism on sites qualified as WHS in recent years (Landorf, 2009). However, although there is a significant increase of tourists in places that are included in that list, it is necessary to improve the scientific information in relation to the characteristics of heritage tourism and the heritage tourists (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014). And this is because the knowledge of tourists and their behaviour is fundamental to the management of tourism in these destinations (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014), given that tourism could affect the local culture itself (Abuamoud, Libbin, Green & Alrousan, 2014).

The aim of this paper is to present an analysis of the profile of tourists who visit a WHS, the city of Córdoba (Spain), to know their socio-demographic profile, the way to know the city as a tourist destination, the previously planned expenses, and the motivation that has made them visit the city, differentiating between domestic and foreign tourists. The need of the heritage managers, as well as business operators, to be aware of the experiences gained by visitors in World Heritage cities led to this research. And hence, to satisfy the needs of this typology of tourists, which is increasing in number. To achieve this goal, after this introduction, the paper is structured in a second section where a literature review is made; a third section that shows a description of the city of Córdoba; a fourth section where the research methodology is presented; and the last section where the main results of this research and debate are shown. This paper ends with the conclusions of the research and the bibliographical references used.

## 2 Background

The relationship between tourism and heritage is one of the most discussed topics in recent years by academic literature introducing the concept of heritage tourism. A predominant part of recent papers of scholars seem to accept cultural/heritage tourists as anyone visiting a cultural/heritage attraction, and it is necessary to identify the different types of heritage tourists (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014). Thus, heritage is one of the most significant and rapid growths of tourism (Poria, Butler & Airey, 2003). Heritage tourism refers to activities of visiting or experiencing heritage, taking into account its natural, cultural, and urban types (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014); it implies that visitors are seeking a connection with its roots and its heritage (Remoaldo, Vareiro, Ribeiro & Santos, 2014). This means that sometimes, the designation of WHS is perceived as a ‘branding’ (Timothy, 2011) or ‘labelling’ (Yang et al., 2010) and this recognition has a strong attraction for tourists and on numerous occasions, it means an overall recommendation to visit the destination (Poria, Reichel & Cohen, 2013). Tourists travel in search of authentic experiences and genuine places (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Wang, Yang, Wall, Xu, Han, Du & Liu, 2015).

Among other books that analyse this relationship, we can highlight Timothy and Boyd (2003), Di Boniface (2009), Timothy (2011) and Park (2014). Furthermore, there are also studies on places recognized as WHS from different countries, such as Portugal (Remoaldo et al., 2014, Correia et al., 2013), Israel (Poria et al., 2003), China (Yang & Lin, 2014; Wang et al., 2015), Spain (Antón, Camarero & Laguna-García, 2017), Turkey (Tucker & Enge, 2010), or Vietnam (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014).

Currently, there are two main lines of research in heritage tourism (Sue & Wall, 2011): first, the definition and categorization of heritage and heritage tourism; second, the relationship between heritage preservation and tourism development. Similarly, according to Timothy and Boyd (2003), there are two ways to approach the question of what is heritage tourism: first, the presence of an individual in space exhibiting historic artefacts or at locations classified as heritage spaces; second, the perception of site in relation to the individual’s own heritage. According to Poria, Reichel and Biran (2006), this implies that visiting historic attractions only as recreational experiences and ignoring the aspects which are relevant to understand the individual’s behaviour in historic spaces.

Tourists choose to travel because of the push and pull motivation (Correia et al., 2013), and culture is also one of the main motivations. In turn, we must study the destination, since there is a great diversity of sites and variables

affecting each one of them (Breakey, 2012); although at the same time, there is strong competition between destinations to attract tourists, especially international tourists (Remoaldo *et al.*, 2014). According to Abuamoud *et al.* (2014), demand for heritage sites by tourists is also influenced by the services provided by public authorities and by the availability and viability of the local community to stimulate tourism in these areas.

Identifying and understanding the typologies of heritage tourists, their motivations, their behaviours, their perceptions and their experiences to achieve a better management of destinations and defining the corresponding strategies. Thus, according to Vong and Ung (2012), there are four factors related to heritage tourism: history and culture, facilities and service at heritage sites, heritage interpretation and heritage attractiveness.

In this regard, in certain destinations, tourists find that heritage is not part of their own history or culture and they find themselves like a film viewer (Saipradist & Staiff, 2007), which implies that it is necessary to consider the context of cross-cultural visitation at heritage sites (Saipradist & Staiff, 2007). Ultimately, strengthening the understanding of the WHS and clarifying the cross-cultural attitudes toward the designation (Poria *et al.*, 2013), especially when it comes to international tourists (Tucker & Carnegie, 2014).

As per scientific literature, the hypotheses to be contrasted are mentioned below:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Visitors have, in addition to cultural motivation, other types of social or psychological motivations that affect their tourism behaviour (Crompton, 1979; Aziz, Rahman, Hassan & Hamid, 2015).

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Given the different motivations to visit a certain destination, there are differences among tourists according to their respective places of origin (Silbergberg, 1995; Nyaupane & Andereck, 2014; Alonso, Sakellario y Pritchard, 2015).

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Tourist satisfaction is an indispensable requirement for a good positioning in the market of every tourist destination (Chi y Qu, 2008; Yuskel, Yuskel & Bilim, 2009).

### 3 Description of the geographical area

The city of Córdoba is located in southern Spain, in the region of Andalusia. Its population is approximately 3,28,000 inhabitants and its economy is mainly based on the tertiary sector, emphasizing tourism therein. In 1984, the Mosque-Cathedral of the city was declared a World Heritage Site and subsequently in 1994, so was its Historic Centre. Moreover, the Festival of the Patios which takes place during the month of May, was declared Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in 2012. Today, the city is one of the major benchmarks of cultural tourism both in Spain and elsewhere in Europe, and it is a meeting point for thousands of travellers who arrive in the city each year attracted by its rich culture, heritage and gastronomy. Table 1 shows the evolution of the number of travellers and overnight stays for the period 2011-2015, according to data from the Hotel Occupancy Survey conducted by the National Statistics Institute of Spain (NSI).

As it appears in Table 1, the number of tourists in the time period analysed increased by 20%, and in the case of foreign tourism by more than 32%; this evidence supports the significance of this cultural destination. Furthermore, there has also been a significant increase in overnight stays.

The city of Córdoba features an enormous cultural wealth, where 119 monuments, 15 wall paintings and 513 buildings are recorded. Thus, the city collects a symbiosis between the Roman, Christian, Muslim and Jewish who have left their mark on the city, where the Mosque-Cathedral

**Table 1:** Evolution of the number of tourists and overnight stays in the city of Córdoba. Period 2011-2015

| Year                     | 2011      | 2012      | 2013      | 2014      | 2015      |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| National tourists        | 446,735   | 449,032   | 459,733   | 478,166   | 496,923   |
| Foreign Tourists         | 344,899   | 364,825   | 364,365   | 421,703   | 457,011   |
| Total Tourists           | 791,634   | 813,857   | 824,098   | 899,869   | 953,935   |
| National overnight stays | 737,991   | 746,064   | 756,340   | 777,470   | 839,404   |
| Foreign overnight stays  | 511,882   | 539,985   | 534,663   | 615,374   | 697,863   |
| Total overnight stays    | 1,249,873 | 1,286,049 | 1,291,003 | 1,392,844 | 1,537,267 |

Source: Own calculations based on NSI (2016)

is the major player, given that with a capacity for 17,000 worshippers, it became one of the largest prayer centres in the world. Along with the Mosque-Cathedral, the city of Córdoba features the Synagogue, the ancient Baths of the Caliphate, the *Alcázar* (Palace) of the Christian Monarchs, the 14 churches ordered to be built by the King Fernando III with the purpose of Christianizing the city and the ruins of the caliphal city of *Medina Azahara*.

## 4 Methodology

The methodology used in this research was based on conducting fieldwork amongst tourists who visit the city of Córdoba to know their socio-demographic profile and motivation, while differentiating between domestic and international tourists. The surveys were conducted at five points located within the historic centre, with the premise that respondent tourists had already spent some time in the city, and therefore, could give a substantiated opinion (Correia et al., 2013; Remoaldo et al, 2014). The survey used in this research is based on various previous works (Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Okumus, Okumus & McKercher, 2007; McKercher, Chan & Lam, 2008; Dawson, Homes, Jacob & Wade, 2011; López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012) and responds to four aspects: socio-demographic characteristics of tourists, motivation for the trip, perception and valuation of the different features of heritage.

Surveys were conducted between the months of January and March 2015. The questionnaire was distributed in four languages (English, French, German and Spanish). Participants completed the survey with complete independence, although the interviewers were present in case they had some kind of difficulty in filling it. The survey was completely anonymous. A pilot survey was conducted amongst 15 tourists for validation. The total number of questionnaires obtained was 924. A stratification was performed by country, and within domestic tourism by region. For foreign tourists, it was as per the percentages of tourists from each country according to the data from NSI (2016), and for domestic tourists according to the data from the Córdoba Tourism Observatory of 2012 (Town Hall of Córdoba, 2013). Thus, among the countries the tourists belong to or the origin of international tourist, we can highlight France (25.1%), UK (11.1%) and Germany (7.1%). Meanwhile, as regards domestic tourists, we can highlight those from the region of Andalusia (24.2%) and Madrid (23.5%). A convenience sampling was used in this research; this being commonly used in such type of researches where respondents are available to be

interviewed at a specific location and time (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton, 2000).

The items used are intended to respond to the indicators and measurements proposed for the realization of a demand analysis proposed in order to make systematic comparisons between different destinations (Getz & Brown, 2006). The number of items was 21. Thus, a combination of technical issues was used through a Likert 5-point scale (to judge the motivations and expectations), yes/no answers and both open-ended and closed-ended questions, where the surveyed tourists could make their comments about their experience in the city of Córdoba. The total number of tourists who stayed in hotel establishments in the city of Córdoba in 2014 amounted to 899,869 (NSI, 2016), which is considered as the total study population. The research sampling error was 3.22%. Table 2 shows the technical specifications of the research. The reliability of the study variables was checked by Cronbach's alpha.

The data collected were organized, tabulated and analysed using the SPSS 19.0 programme. Data processing was performed using univariate and bivariate statistical tools.

## 5 Results of the investigation and discussion

Table 3 shows the socio-demographic profile of respondent tourists, distinguishing between national tourists and foreign tourists. The results show that the tourists surveyed are mostly women, and there are no differences between national and foreign, under 40 years of age, mostly employed full time; although there is a significant percentage of public workers amongst the natives answering the surveys, and students and self-employed workers

**Table 2:** Technical sheet of the investigation

| Number of tourists (2014) | 899,869 people  |
|---------------------------|---|
| Sample                    | 924 surveys   |
| Sampling error            | +/- 3.22%   |
| Performance period        | January to March 2015   |
| Procedure                 | Convenience sampling  |
| Sample Control            | Implementation and monitoring of fieldwork by the authors of the research |

Source: Own elaboration

amongst the foreign tourists. They also have a high educational level, preferably university and, a medium-high income level, especially in the case of foreign tourists.

Although foreign visitors have greater purchasing power, they spend less money than visitors of national origin (Table 4). Thus, the average planned expenditure of domestic tourists surveyed amounted to 76 euros per day compared to 66 euros per day for foreign tourists. This result is related to the fact that there is a greater number of foreign tourists with expectations to spend up to €40 (25.1%) compared to the case of domestic tourists (15.3%). It also explains the lower overnight stay of these foreign tourists in the city. We have detected a significant association between the planned spending per day and nationality ( $\chi^2$  Pearson coefficient = 33.472;  $p = 0.000$ ).

The rate of repeat visits is high as one in three respondent tourists has visited the city of Córdoba previously,

a fact that reinforces the loyalty of tourists to this destination. Unsurprisingly, the largest number of returning

**Table 4:** Daily planned expenditure of visitors

| Planned spending  | Spanish | Foreigners | Total  |
|-------------------|---------|------------|--------|
| Under €20         | 5.4%    | 4.5%       | 4.9%   |
| From €21 to €40   | 9.9%    | 20.4%      | 15.6%  |
| From €41 to €60   | 19.0%   | 22.9%      | 21.2%  |
| From €61 to €80   | 21.0%   | 20.0%      | 20.4%  |
| From €81 to €100  | 18.0%   | 15.1%      | 16.4%  |
| From €101 to €120 | 10.9%   | 5.7%       | 8.0%   |
| Over €120         | 15.8%   | 11.4%      | 13.3%  |
| Total             | 100.0%  | 100.0%     | 100.0% |

Source: Own elaboration

**Table 3:** Socio-demographic profile of respondent tourists

| Variable              | Variable                  | Spanish | Foreigners | Contingency coefficient (p-value) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Gender                | Male                      | 42.9%   | 42.9%      | 0.000<br>(0.996)                  |
|                       | Female                    | 57.1%   | 57.1%      |                                   |
| Age                   | Under 30 years old        | 20.8%   | 25.5%      | 0.198<br>(0,000*)                 |
|                       | 30-39 years old           | 31.6%   | 20.6%      |                                   |
|                       | 40-49 years old           | 25.4%   | 17.2%      |                                   |
|                       | 50-59 years old           | 12.2%   | 18.0%      |                                   |
|                       | 60-69 years old           | 8.9%    | 15.1%      |                                   |
|                       | 70 years old or more      | 1.1%    | 3.6%       |                                   |
| Professional Activity | Full time employed        | 32.1%   | 27.1%      | 0.288<br>(0,000*)                 |
|                       | Civil Servant             | 22.4%   | 12.4%      |                                   |
|                       | Independent professional  | 7.1%    | 15.2%      |                                   |
|                       | Part time employed        | 7.1%    | 3.8%       |                                   |
|                       | Student                   | 6.8%    | 17.3%      |                                   |
|                       | Retired                   | 6.6%    | 12.2%      |                                   |
|                       | Unemployed                | 6.3%    | 1.6%       |                                   |
|                       | Self-employed             | 5.6%    | 5.8%       |                                   |
|                       | Entrepreneur              | 4.4%    | 3.6%       |                                   |
|                       | Housewife                 | 1.6%    | 1.0%       |                                   |
| Level of education    | Primary                   | 10.0%   | 2.2%       | 0.363<br>(0,000*)                 |
|                       | Secondary                 | 28.2%   | 11.4%      |                                   |
|                       | University Graduated      | 51.7%   | 45.3%      |                                   |
|                       | University Post-Graduated | 10.1%   | 41.1%      |                                   |
| Income                | More than € 3,500         | 7.5%    | 29.7%      | 0.312<br>(0,000*)                 |
|                       | From € 2,501-3,500        | 19.9%   | 19.9%      |                                   |
|                       | From € 1,501-2,500        | 31.1%   | 23.8%      |                                   |
|                       | From € 1,001-1,500        | 27.5%   | 12.2%      |                                   |
|                       | From € 700-1,000          | 11.3%   | 8.0%       |                                   |
|                       | Less than € 700           | 2.7%    | 6.4%       |                                   |

Source: Own elaboration

\* Correlation is significant at level 0.01



visitors is national, 48% of Spanish tourists repeat visits compared with 18% of foreign tourists (F Snedecor Anova coefficient = 40.847;  $p = 0.000$ ) and they are mostly from France and UK. From the persons interviewed, 27% did not spend the night in the city and the remaining 73% spent at least one night. The average overnight rate was 3.3 nights, with significant differences between domestic and foreign visitors (F Snedecor Anova coefficient = 45.359;  $p = 0.000$ ) as the foreign overnight stay rate is 20% lower than the national.

As regards how they came to know about the city of Córdoba as a tourist destination, the results in Table 5 show that tourists used the recommendation of friends and family, their own experience through a previous visit and information found on internet as the primary sources of information. This question is multiple choice and, therefore, the result is greater than 100.

On the other hand, one of the main objectives of this research is to understand the motivations of travellers to visit the city of Córdoba. Thus, the reason or grounds for the visit were shown through the tenth question in the questionnaire. To analyse these motivations, we designed a question that tried to collect the most frequent and relevant key motivations for the travel analysed in previous research, adapting them and taking into account the specific characteristics of this tourist destination for visitors (Lee, Lee & Wicks, 2004; Devesa, Laguna & Palacios, 2010). After conducting a pretest, a total of 13 items were selected, measured on a Likert 5-point scale, being 1-little and 5-much, to determine the relative importance of several factors in their decision to visit the city. Internal and external factors were included, as set by the Crompton theory (1979) among reasons to drag and grounds to push. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the final scale of this

issue reaches a value of 0.652, indicating a meritorious internal consistency among scale items.

The results of the investigation as to the motivations for visiting the city of Córdoba show something that was previously known: the great importance of heritage as a tourist attraction in these cities. Thus, 72% of respondents consider the historical and monumental wealth of the city as the main reason for the visit. The desire to know new places (4.42), tourist popularity and reputation of the city (4.19), and the desire to disconnect from everyday life (4.07) also excel as fundamental reasons. At the opposite pole, the less powerful motivations for visiting the city are work or business (1.31), visiting family or friends (1.66) and proximity to the place of residence (1.95). Furthermore, the data shows that there are significant differences depending on the nationality of visitors. Thus, in the case of both domestic and foreign visitors, the historical and monumental wealth is the main reason for visit. However, while for the Spanish, the second most important factor is to disconnect from everyday life; for foreigners this goes to the fifth place (Table 6).

In line with the core of Crompton's (1979) motivational theory and several investigations (Aziz et al., 2015), the results obtained allow us to contrast one of the research hypotheses: visitors have, in addition to a cultural motivation, another type of motivation of a social or psychological nature that affects its tourist behaviour ( $H_1$ ), one of which is that one can know other places of world heritage. It can be argued, therefore, that visitors want to accumulate experiences in places or destinations, collecting places (Timothy, 1998; King & Prideaux, 2010).

The statistical analysis allows us to contrast that the compared averages are not equal for all motivation factors set out in Table 7. To make the comparisons, it cannot be assumed that population variances are equal (the critical

**Table 5:** Information sources used to know Córdoba as a tourist destination

| Sources of Information                                      | Spanish | Foreigners | Total |
|---|---------|------------|-------|
| Recommendation from friends and family                      | 37.5%   | 43.5%      | 40.8% |
| Own experience of previous visits                           | 40.4%   | 17.0%      | 27.5% |
| Information found in Internet                               | 9.1%    | 30.6%      | 20.9% |
| Tourist brochures   | 4.3%    | 1.5%       | 10.2% |
| Advertising in the traditional media                        | 9.6%    | 8.3%       | 8.9%  |
| Recommendation in social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) | 3.5%    | 6.2%       | 5.0%  |
| Recommendation by an 'online' travel agency                 | 2.4%    | 5.1%       | 3.9%  |
| Recommendation by a 'face to face' travel agency            | 1.4%    | 3.8%       | 2.7%  |

Source: Own elaboration

**Table 6:** Rating of motivations to visit the city of Córdoba

| Motivations for the visit                             | Spanish | Foreigners | Total |
|---|---------|------------|-------|
| Learning of its historical and monumental wealth      | 4.60    | 4.65       | 4.63  |
| The desire to know new places                         | 4.42    | 4.41       | 4.42  |
| The tourist popularity and reputation of the city     | 4.39    | 4.03       | 4.19  |
| Disconnecting from everyday life                      | 4.46    | 3.75       | 4.07  |
| Deepening the knowledge on heritage                   | 3.87    | 4.03       | 3.96  |
| Savouring its gastronomy                              | 4.17    | 3.34       | 3.71  |
| It being an affordable tourist destination            | 3.98    | 3.10       | 3.51  |
| Viewing the Patios of Córdoba                         | 3.84    | 3.08       | 3.42  |
| Just another visit in my tourist itinerary            | 2.56    | 3.39       | 3.04  |
| Attending cultural events: exhibition, festival, etc. | 2.08    | 2.08       | 2.08  |
| Its proximity to my place of residence                | 2.50    | 1.50       | 1.95  |
| Visiting family or friends                            | 1.83    | 1.53       | 1.66  |
| Work or business visit (meeting, conference, etc.)    | 1.40    | 1.25       | 1.31  |

Source: Own elaboration.

level associated to the statistic of Levene is less than 0.05 for most cases, so the equality of variances is rejected). The ANOVA F statistic is based on the fulfilment of two assumptions: normality and homoscedasticity. Since it is not possible to assume that the population variances are equal, we used the Brown-Forsythe statistic as an alternative to the ANOVA F statistic (Table 8). Since the critical level associated with the statistical level is less than 0.05, we can reject the hypothesis of equal means and conclude that the averages of the motivational variables gathered in Table 7 and 8 among Spanish and foreign tourists are not equal.

On the other hand, there are no significant motivational differences between tourists and excursionists, except for the motivation of savouring its gastronomy and viewing where the Festival of the Patios takes place. In both cases, the valuation of tourists is greater than that of excursionists (3.84 on average compared to 3.38 in the case of gastronomy, and 3.54 versus 3.10 in the case of the patios).

In line with other researches (Silbergberg 1995, Nyaupane & Anderecek, 2014; Alonso *et al.*, 2015), the results allow us to contrast the hypothesis of research proposed: considering the motivations, there are differences between tourists according to their place of origin ( $H_2$ ).

On another level, one of the most interesting and conclusive result is the high degree of satisfaction declared by respondents visiting the city. Thus, the average level is 4.69 on a Likert 5-point scale, with a high percentage of people who declare themselves fully satisfied, 72.4%

rated their satisfaction with the visit of the city with a 5. This group most often includes women and people over 70 years. Additionally, focusing on the small percentage of tourists who state that they are not satisfied at all with their visit to the city, we find that this group has more foreigners than Spaniards. This allows us to show evidence that tourism satisfaction is an indispensable prerequisite for improving market positioning of all tourism destinations (Chi y Qu, 2008; Yuskel *et al.*, 2009) ( $H_3$ ).

On the other hand, the level of satisfaction is higher in those who have visited the city previously and who stay overnight. Therefore, one can conclude that it is necessary to devote more time to the city, like any other cultural tourism destination, for greater satisfaction with the visit.

## 6 Conclusions

The inscription of a particular area as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO represents, in addition to a cultural recognition and an obligation of its preservation, a major attraction to promote a destination for a specific type of tourism; therefore, it also implies the need to properly manage this area. The findings contribute to both tourism theory and practice. With regard to theory, this exploratory study indicates that, tourists act in line with their motivation, which is one of the main factors that influence the decisions of individuals, being the force that pushes them to choose a destination. The main motivation for

**Table 7:** ANOVA analysis motivations for the visit based on nationality

| Motivations for the visit                  | ANOVA  |        | Equality of variances statistics |        |
|--|--------|--------|----------------------------------|--------|
|  | F      | Sig.   | Levene                           | Sig.   |
| Savouring its gastronomy                   | 51.164 | < .001 | 12.425                           | < .001 |
| Viewing the Patios of Córdoba              | 16.180 | < .001 | 3.941                            | < .005 |
| Disconnecting from everyday life           | 20.462 | < .001 | 12.342                           | < .001 |
| Its proximity to my place of residence     | 59.332 | < .001 | 98.768                           | < .001 |
| Just another visit in my tourist itinerary | 20.867 | < .001 | 1.620                            | < .204 |
| It being an affordable tourist destination | 35.005 | < .001 | 1.331                            | < .249 |

Source: Own elaboration.

**Table 8:** Equality stress test of average motivations for the visit

| Motivations for the visit                  | Brown-Forsythe | gl1 | gl2     | Sig.   |
|--|----------------|-----|---------|--------|
| Savouring its gastronomy                   | 59.883         | 1   | 330.074 | < .001 |
| Viewing the Patios of Córdoba              | 9.235          | 1   | 169.301 | < .003 |
| Disconnecting from everyday life           | 24.549         | 1   | 340.398 | < .001 |
| Its proximity to my place of residence     | 42.218         | 1   | 197.622 | < .001 |
| Just another visit in my tourist itinerary | 20.364         | 1   | 266.357 | < .001 |
| It being an affordable tourist destination | 38.580         | 1   | 306.633 | < .001 |

Source: Own elaboration.

visiting the city is to know its heritage, and to a lesser extent and differently for domestic and international tourists, tasting the gastronomy or knowing where the Festival of the Patios (declared as an Intangible Cultural Heritage) is held. There are also the so-called existence tourists, who have among their main motivations to collect memories of places, which cannot be forgotten. Visitors cannot build a relationship with the World Heritage brand if they are unaware of its existence.

From an applied perspective, among the key results found, it is interesting to highlight the prevailing socio-demographic profile of the tourists, embodied in a tourist with a university education, with a medium-high level of income and employed, who has seen the city of Córdoba through recommendations from friends and family, and with a high degree of loyalty to the destination.

We believe that the main practical application of this research is to contribute to understand the socio-demographic features of tourists who visit the city and their motivations, in order to conceive the tourist and cultural products that best meet the needs of tourists, which are at the same time compatible with the sustainable management of this intangible heritage.

Like any research, this study also has several limitations. These primarily include the date of completion of surveys, which were conducted during the first term of 2015, that is, during the months where there is no type

of special event in the city, such as the Festival of the Patios during the month of May that appeals especially to visitors.

For any future research, we propose a deeper study of heritage tourism conducting similar studies in other cities declared the World Heritage Cities by UNESCO to be able to identify common links and differentiating features among visitors.

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