



Analysis of the Perception and Behavior of Tourists in ICH Events: the Case of the Fiesta de los Patios de Córdoba (Spain)

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the perception, motivation and behavior of tourists attending the *Fiesta de los Patios* in the city of Córdoba (Spain), declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) by UNESCO in 2012. This research has categorized tourists based on two different models: the model developed by Poria *et al.* (2003) and the one developed by McKercher (2002). Four different tourist groups were obtained: alternative, cultural, emotional and heritage. The main result of this research is that the behavior of different types of tourists can be determined depending on the perception that the ICH tourist has. The main practical application of this research is to provide public administration and management companies with tourism tools that allow sustainable management of this ICH event.

Keywords: Intangible cultural heritage; Tourist perception and behavior; Córdoba.



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1. Introduction

This research aims to strengthen the academic literature related to tourist experiences in World Heritage Sites (WHS, UNESCO) or in events recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH, UNESCO). It aims to analyze the relationships between tourists' perception of an ICH event and their behavior. This research answers the need to investigate areas registered by UNESCO as WHS or ICH events (Adie and Hall, 2017).

Previous research on tourism impact on WHS or ICH events has turned out inconclusive. Ribaudo and Figini (2017) interpret the effect tourism generates in WHS based on the existing scientific literature (Poria *et al.*, 2006; Poria *et al.*, 2013; Su and Wall, 2011), considering the influence of being named a WHS or a ICH by UNESCO over the tourism promotion and management, its social and economic consequences, the analysis of visitors' perceptions, the study of attitudes and the impact that such labeling has on tourism flow.

This research focuses on an event called *Fiesta de los Patios*, held annually in May in the city of Córdoba (Spain). The methodology used in this research is survey fieldwork with a sufficiently representative sample of tourists who attended said ICH event. Through the fieldwork, primary information was obtained from tourists regarding their socio-demographic characteristics (age, sex, studies or profession) as well as their motivations, their assessment of said event or their perception as ICH. This research contributes to the existing academic knowledge in this area with empirical results that allow a better understanding of tourist behavior in a destination where an ICH event takes place. This allows for a sustainable management of the event and destination. Likewise, it also enables the development of adequate strategic planning by public and private agents participating in the tourism sector.

The methodology used focuses on two previous models. The model by Poria *et al.* (2003) analyzes how visiting patterns in a specific destination relate to tourists' perception, as well as their identification with their own cultural heritage. The second model used was McKercher (2002), where two dimensions are established to segment tourists who visit a particular cultural destination: cultural motivation and the degree of knowledge regarding cultural heritage.

Therefore, and according to the models of McKercher (2002) and Poria *et al.* (2003) tourists attending the ICH event *Fiesta de los Patios* will be classified. In order to achieve the objectives of this research, the study has been structured in the following blocks: after this first section, the main contributions of the existing academic literature are critically analyzed; then, the methodology used is described; and, lastly, main results obtained are highlighted. Finally, conclusions and bibliographic references are offered.

1.1. Heritage Tourism

The approach and elaboration of strategies oriented to optimize the management of a tourist destination is an essential element for managers and agents involved in tourist activity. Knowing and interpreting visitors' behavior properly is considered a fundamental aspect so that both the public and private sector can adequately design and implement these strategies. A proper analysis of the relationships between visitors and the artistic and monumental (or cultural) heritage of a destination allows deepening the knowledge of the differential aspects of heritage tourism. [Nguyen and Cheung \(2014\)](#), define heritage tourism as a personal experience perceived in a specific cultural destination, which means that, on occasions, tourists visit certain places based on its heritage.

The visit to a WHS destination or an ICH event is understood as the trip that a tourist makes to know their own heritage, and to understand and reinforce their own culture through such visit ([Poria et al., 2006](#)). According to [Poria et al. \(2003\)](#), the perception that a tourist develops about a certain destination, related to it as part of their own cultural heritage, is linked to their visiting patterns, and this can lead to a behavior differentiated from that of other visitors.

1.2. Categorization

In order to carry out both an efficient management of a tourist destination and an adequate strategy design according to the demands of the existing historical-heritage sites, it is necessary to identify and categorize tourists ([Saipradist and Staiff, 2007](#)). Similarly, within the visitors to WHS or ICH events, those called World Heritage tourist should be differentiated ([Adie and Hall, 2017](#)). The determination of different types of heritage tourists, their motivation, behavior and perception contribute to understanding these differences and also allow identifying heritage tourists more precisely ([Nguyen and Cheung, 2014](#)). Therefore, properly segmenting WHS or ICH, attracted by historical and artistic heritage, is essential for proper sustainable management of the destination.

Tourists have been classified on different research papers. Among them, [Silberberg \(1995\)](#) grouped them as such: accidental cultural, attached cultural, partly cultural, and especially cultural tourists. [McKercher \(2002\)](#) established a different typology in consideration of the importance of cultural motivations and the degree of depth of information that travelers possess: pragmatic, contemplative, casual, incidental, and fortuitous tourist. [Nguyen and Cheung \(2014\)](#), replicated the ([McKercher, 2002](#)) in a subsequent investigation.

[Poria et al. \(2003\)](#) carry out a classification of type of tourists based on their perception of the site's heritage, as well as the relationship between the place of destination and the tourist: tourists who are in places unrelated to their own heritage, tourists visiting places where there is an important part of their heritage, and tourists unaware that the place is a part of their heritage.

Therefore, in line with the scientific literature analyzed, the hypotheses to be tested are the following:

H₁: The emotional experiences acquired by some tourists lead them to feel more than to contemplate the place they visit or to participate in the corresponding event.

H₂: There are different types of tourists depending on the emotional experiences and cultural interest in an ICH destination.

1.3. The Sociodemographic Profile of Tourists

The knowledge of the tourists' sociodemographic characteristics is of special importance for the private and public administration of tourist destinations, contributing to its efficient management. Hence, in the academic literature, one of the most discussed topics is the classification of tourists according to their sociodemographic profile.

It has been analyzed whether tourists' attraction to certain WHS destinations or ICH events is strongly conditioned by gender, but there have been no conclusive results with empirical evidence. Several investigations conclude that women are more inclined towards cultural destinations ([Nguyen and Cheung, 2014](#); [Ramires et al., 2018](#); [Remoaldo et al., 2014](#); [Vong and Ung, 2012](#)), while others conclude the opposite ([Adie and Hall, 2017](#); [Antón et al., 2017](#); [Chen and Huang, 2018](#); [Correia et al., 2013](#)).

Age also remains a controversial variable, with various investigations establishing quite different age groups. [Chen and Huang \(2018\)](#) identify ages 21 through 31 as the most common; [Antón et al. \(2017\)](#), ages 30 through 44; [Remoaldo et al. \(2014\)](#), ages 26 to 45; [Huh et al. \(2006\)](#), ages 38 to 47; and [Correia et al. \(2013\)](#) and [Ramires et al. \(2018\)](#) ages 45 or older.

Regarding education, according to the existing literature, the most representative group visiting destinations where artistic and monumental heritage predominates is college educated ([Adie and Hall, 2017](#); [Antón et al., 2017](#); [Correia et al., 2013](#); [Huh et al., 2006](#); [Ramires et al., 2018](#); [Remoaldo et al., 2014](#); [Silberberg, 1995](#)). ([Chen and Huang, 2018](#)) establish the existence of another important group of tourists: students, who also usually go to WHS or ICH events.

The vast majority of empirical studies establish that the typical income level among visitors to cultural sites is medium and medium-high ([Antón et al., 2017](#); [Chen and Huang, 2018](#); [Ramires et al., 2018](#)).

On the other hand, the feelings expressed by tourists are closely linked to the cultural motivation they possess ([López-Guzmán et al., 2017](#)).

According to the scientific literature, the hypotheses to be tested would be the following:

H₃: Tourists' cultural interest in WHS or in ICH events increases with age.

H₄: Tourists with a greater cultural interest in WHS or ICH events have greater academic backgrounds.

H₅: The motivations to go to WHS or to attend ICH events are heterogeneous.

1.4. Destination Attribute Assessment

Lew (1987) points out that the set of elements that attract tourists to visit certain destinations or to participate in events represent the attributes available to that destination or that event. Social and personal benefits that individuals who visit the place or who participate in a given event may perceive will determine the ability to attract tourists. Therefore, destination attributes are an essential factor for tourists to have a memorable experience (Kim, 2014; Tung and Ritchie, 2011).

If tourists have a rewarding experience, their level of satisfaction increases, generating greater loyalty to the destination or the event and, consequently, its promotion (Ozdemir *et al.*, 2012). To shape this experience, some key elements such as heritage, infrastructure, gastronomy or cultural exchange must be adequately combined (Chi and Qu, 2008; Kim and Brown, 2012). In any case, it should be remembered that attributes do not generate equal competitive advantages of WHS or ICH events (Prayag, 2008). Certain scientific studies contribute to understanding how the attributes generate satisfaction and create an image of the destination, allowing to determine which are the fundamental attributes to be able to perform destination assessment and establish the components that collect these attributes. These include gastronomy and public safety (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Chandralal and Valenzuela, 2013; Chi and Qu, 2008; Crouch, 2011; Driscoll *et al.*, 1994; Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Kim, 2014).

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Questionnaire and Proceeding

The methodology used follows a fieldwork consisting of a structured questionnaire to be posed to a sufficiently representative sample of tourists who participated in the *Fiesta de los Patios*. Among the different survey options, a closed questionnaire that allowed for self-administration was chosen. In order to ensure the validity of the questionnaire, items were created based on different previous investigations (Correia *et al.*, 2013; Poria *et al.*, 2003; Remoaldo *et al.*, 2014). A first set of items was run by three stages: first, they were analyzed by a tourism expert researcher; second, they were reviewed by people responsible for tourism management in the city of Córdoba; and third, a pretest was run with 50 tourists. During the correcting process, some difficulty to understand some questions was detected, proceeding to edit them. Once all questions were assessed and the viability of the questionnaire was confirmed, the fieldwork was conducted using the final version of the instrument.

The final version of the questionnaire sought maximum clarity in the questions, maximum adjustment of the answers in order to achieve the objectives set in this investigation, as well as the greatest possible parsimony aimed at reducing the amount of time the interview takes. The questionnaires were completed in the different places where the *Fiesta de los Patios* was held, taking into consideration the amount of time the tourists chosen had participated in the event to therefore ensure they could give an informed opinion (Correia *et al.*, 2013; Remoaldo *et al.*, 2014).

The survey was structured in three blocks: firstly, it was used to collect data related to the characteristics of the trip or visit. Namely: number of visits previously made to the city, time spent in the city, type of establishment used to spend the night, means by which they had learned about the city, etc.; secondly, it focused on the motivations to participate in the *Fiesta de los Patios*, the emotional perceptions about this ICH, the assessment of the main attributes related to the visit, the level of satisfaction achieved based on the experience, and loyalty; and thirdly, this section included the sociodemographic profile of visitors, such as gender, profession, age, income level, or education.

Closed questions were established both in the first part of the questionnaire -on travel details- as well as in most of the items in the third block -related to the sociodemographic profile of the tourist. The second part of the questionnaire was designed as a five-point Likert scale. The questions were asked both ways, positive and negative, to avoid acquiescence. The surveys were distributed in Spanish and English. Each of the tourist chose the language of the survey.

The team of interviewers was made up of several people linked to the University of Córdoba, who had been trained in advance for an adequate performance, preparing for the presentation of the research to tourists and learning different techniques to answer their possible questions (in Spanish and English). This team was selected, coordinated and led by a local researcher belonging to the aforementioned university, with long experience in tourism research in the city.

The fieldwork was carried out between the 2nd and 14th of May 2017, days that corresponded to that year's celebration of the *Fiesta de los Patios*. A total of 670 surveys, of which 634 were valid, were filled in by national and foreign tourists visiting the city. The survey was carried out in different locations and on different days and hours of the week as well as at different times in order to guarantee the greatest and widest representativeness of the tourist population. The completion time of the questionnaire was below 10 minutes. The refusal to complete the survey by tourists was very low and not significant based on any variable. In this investigation, a convenience sampling was used, generally used in this type of research where the surveyed visitors are present in a specific space and time (Finn *et al.*, 2000). Finally, it should be noted that the participants were not stratified either by age, gender, academic level, marital status, or by any other variables, as there were no previous investigations that gave basis to said stratification.

2.2. Sample and Sampling Error

The target population of this research is specified as tourists who, being able to spend the night in the city of Córdoba or not, participated in the *Fiesta de los Patios* (ICH) in 2017, regardless of whether they made visits to other nearby places or not. The size of said target population has been determined considering the number of

133,000 visitors to this heritage celebration in the preceding year (2016), data provided by the city of Córdoba. Based on this information and giving it an indicative nature since it is a convenience sampling, the sample error, with a 95% confidence level, would be ± 3.9%.

2.3. Data Analysis

The tabulation and then the statistical analysis of the data obtained has been carried out with the statistical package SPSS v. 24. In order to know the degree of validity and reliability of the questionnaire responses, Cronbach's Alpha statistic has been applied in this research. Likewise, in order to carry out an analysis of the similarity that could exist between the people surveyed, the multivariate technique of grouping cases (K-mean conglomerates) has been used. Discriminant analysis was used to discriminate the groupings obtained in the analysis of clusters. Based on the groups or segments obtained, statistics and association measures have been applied to gather the necessary information to study the possible patterns of association between variables based on a two-dimensional contingency table. Similarly, in order to analyze the significant differences between clusters in the sample, non-parametric statistical procedures were used (Kruskal-Wallis H and Mann-Whitney U).

3. Results

3.1. Perception Historical Heritage and Cultural Interest

In order to analyze and segment the sample, surveyed tourists were required to assess their perceived emotions when participating in the *Fiesta de los Patios*. Six different questions were used, four as indicated by the model of Poria et al. (2003) and two according to that of McKercher (2002). The various items are listed in Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the final scale takes a value of 0.646, indicating a remarkable internal consistency between the elements of the scale. The critical level (p) associated with the Friedman statistic χ^2 (407.059) of the analysis of this research with the objective to contrast the null hypothesis that all the elements of the scale have the same mean is less than 0.001. So, we reject the hypothesis that states that means are equal.

A non-hierarchical analysis of clusters was carried out to develop similar groups and to know their characteristics. Under the criterion of maximization of variance between different typologies and minimization of variance within each of them, the best solution in this research that meets the criteria is the one that establishes four clusters or segments. A Kruskal-Wallis H test (Kruskal and Wallis, 1952) was carried out. The advantage of this test over the ANOVA F statistic is that assumptions of normality and equality of variances are not necessary. According to this test, for three possible groups - three, four and five conglomerates - the solution in four conglomerates gathered the highest statistical values.

Table 1 shows the characterization of the different clusters based on the averages of the four items used to measure tourist perception of their participation in the *Fiesta de los Patios* and the two items that assess their cultural motivation. The Kruskal-Wallis H statistic verifies that the means compared are not equal between the types of clusters, but it does not determine where the detected differences are found. To find out which means differ, the Mann-Whitney U statistic (Mann and Whitney, 1947) is used. Each of these segments have been classified, considering both Poria et al. (2003) and McKercher (2002) model, as: (1) alternative visitor, (2) cultural visitor, (3) emotional visitor, and (4) heritage visitor.

Table-1. Characterization from perception Historical Heritage and Cultural Interest

Perception Historical Heritage (Average)						
Visitor Clusters	H Kruskal-Wallis				χ^2	Sig.
	1	2	3	4		
I have felt a part of the cultural heritage of the city of Córdoba during my visit to the Fiesta of the Patios	2.28	2.43	3.99(*)	4.58(*)	378.515	< 0.000
The visit to the Fiesta of the Patios has touched me especially	2.87	2.78	4.09(*)	4.62(*)	335.367	< 0.000
The visit to the Fiesta of the Patios has increased my knowledge about the city's culture and traditions	3.01(*)	3.46(*)	4.09(*)	4.79(*)	255.908	< 0.000
The visit to the Fiesta of the Patios has helped me relax	3.21(*)	2.81(*)	4.06(*)	4.64(*)	241.923	< 0.000
Cultural Interest (average)						
Know its historical and monumental wealth	3.28(*)	4.74	4.27(*)	4.67	168.599	< 0.000
Deepen knowledge about heritage	2.48(*)	4.33(*)	2.88(*)	4.70(*)	416.275	< 0.000

(*) The values in bold type present significant differences in three of four of the means clusters. In order to be able to test for the significant differences between the different means the U-Mann-Whitney test was applied.

Clusters: 1 (alternative), 2 (Cultural), 3 (Emotional), 4 (Heritage).

Source: Own elaboration

The first group is made up of 14.5% of the tourists surveyed, yielding significantly low records in each of the items. This cluster is called alternative tourists and includes those visitors whose cultural identity is not related to the heritage of the city that they visit. The second group, named cultural tourists, represents 21.8% of the sample and is

characterized by tourists who, although they have an important cultural interest in this destination, their cultural identity is not related to the site visited. The third group is made up of 27.0% of those surveyed, scoring high on items related to the perception of historical heritage and medium-low scores in relation to cultural interest in the event. This cluster has been called emotional tourist. The fourth group (36.8% of the sample) is characterized by high emotional bonds with the event and cultural interest in it and has been called heritage tourists. Groupings were validated through the utilization of a discriminant analysis that yields the percentage of individuals who are correctly assigned. This analysis determined that the classification in four groups is valid, since 95.1% of the individuals are correctly classified.

These results also allow two of the research hypotheses raised to be tested. According to what is established in the previous academic literature (Bruner, 1996; Cheung, 1999; Poria et al., 2003; Poria et al., 2006; Urry, 1990), some tourists have emotional experiences that lead them to feel more than to contemplate when participating in an ICH event (H1). On the other hand, according to cultural interest and emotional experiences in the ICH event, there are different types of tourists (H2) (McKercher and Du Cros, 2003; Poria et al., 2003; Poria et al., 2006; Silberberg, 1995).

3.2. Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Surveyed Tourist

40.7% of the 634 interviewed tourists were men and 59.3% were women, without significant differences in data collection during fieldwork. The surveyed visitors were middle-aged, without a significant association between age and emotional relationship with heritage (contingency coefficient = 0.163; p = 0.297). This result fails to test the hypothesis (H3) about the increase in cultural interest for an ICH event according to the tourist's age (Pérez-Gálvez et al., 2017; Tse and Crotts, 2005). Regarding professional status, full-time employees, retirees, public officials, and students stand out among surveyed visitors.

Table 2 shows a high education level of surveyed tourists, highlighting a majority 52.1% of university graduates with college or postgraduate degree. Cluster differences were found where alternative tourists had the lowest number of visitors with postgraduate studies (Kruskal Wallis H statistic = 16,483; p = 0.001). Results support H4 hypothesis regarding the greater cultural interest for an ICH event by tourists with a higher level of academic training (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Pérez-Gálvez et al., 2017).

In relation to the place of origin, national tourism constitutes 77.6% of visitors who arrive in Córdoba to participate in the *Fiesta de los Patios*, followed by 16.2% of tourists from the rest of Europe, and 6.2% from the rest of the world. Among non-national tourists, French, Italians and Americans stand out.

Table-2. Sociodemographic profile of the tourists in La Fiesta de los Patios (Córdoba)

Variables	Categories	Tourist Clusters				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Sex (N=631)	Man	43.5%	46.4%	46.5%	32.0%	40.7%
	Woman	56.5%	53.6%	53.5%	68.0%	59.3%
Age (N=631)	Under 30 years of age	27.2%	23.2%	24.3%	17.7%	22.0%
	30-39 years old	10.9%	10.1%	14.2%	15.1%	13.2%
	40-49 years old	13.0%	11.6%	19.5%	12.5%	14.3%
	50-59 years old	25.0%	23.9%	22.5%	27.2%	24.9%
	60-69 years old	18.5%	23.9%	17.2%	21.1%	20.3%
	70 years old or more	5.4%	7.2%	2.4%	6.5%	5.4%
Educational level (N=628)	Primary education	23.2%	8.7%	10.6%	12.0%	15.0%
	Secondary education	32.0%	26.8%	34.7%	41.3%	33.0%
	University education	32.0%	47.8%	38.8%	31.5%	37.3%
	Master / PhD	12.7%	16.7%	15.9%	15.2%	14.8%
Occupation (N=629)	Prof. liberal / directive	9.8%	6.5%	5.3%	4.8%	6.0%
	Businessman	2.2%	5.8%	2.4%	3.5%	3.5%
	Official	12.0%	13.8%	9.4%	15.3%	12.9%
	Full time employee	22.8%	21.0%	30.6%	21.8%	24.2%
	Part time employee	1.1%	6.5%	4.1%	4.4%	4.3%
	Autonomous	9.8%	5.8%	6.5%	6.1%	6.7%
	Student	13.0%	10.1%	14.7%	10.5%	11.9%
	Unemployed	7.6%	5.1%	3.5%	4.4%	4.8%
	Retired	18.5%	23.9%	17.6%	23.6%	21.3%
	Housework	3.3%	1.4%	5.9%	5.7%	4.5%
Tourist origin (N=634)	Spain	80.4%	63.0%	81.3%	82.4%	77.6%
	Europe	15.2%	29.7%	12.9%	11.2%	16.2%
	Rest of the world	4.3%	7.2%	5.8%	6.4%	6.2%

Clusters: 1 (Alternative), 2 (Cultural), 3 (Emotional) and 4 (Heritage)

Source: Own elaboration

Table 3 shows family monthly income revealing that 14.0% of surveyed tourists report incomes below 1,000 euros per month compared to 32.8% who claim to earn more than 2,500 euros per month, and 16.6% declare an

income higher than 3,500 euros. This data reflects that tourists who attend this ICH event have a high or medium-high economic capacity. There were significant differences relating the level of income with the emotional linkage and cultural interest in this event (Kruskal Wallis H statistic = 24,322; $p = 0.002$). The average income declared by cultural tourists is higher than the rest of visitors. There is a positive relationship between the level of family income and the planned tourist spending (gamma coefficient = 0.298; $p = 0.000$), where tourists with higher income plan higher expenses, while those of lower income show lower spending intentions. The greater purchasing power of cultural tourists is reflected in a greater planned expenditure, with notable differences between the four groups (statistic H of Kruskal Wallis = 12,204; $p = 0.007$). Cultural tourists spend more money than others (Table 3). These results partly support H5 hypothesis that tourists with a greater cultural interest to visit this destination determine a greater economic impact on the visited destination (Fields, 2002; Hall *et al.*, 2003).

The repetition rate of participation in the event is low. 79.5% of tourists declare not having participated in this event before. In this sense, the group of tourists with greater emotional links (heritage and emotional tourist) registers a repetition rate somewhat higher than other groups (Kruskal Wallis H statistic = 13,636; $p = 0.003$), results that may imply that the tourists' emotional experience is associated with visiting the site more than once.

Table-3. Characteristics of the trip

Variables	Categories	Tourist Clusters				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Income (N = 592)	Under 700 €	5.9%	5.3%	5.8%	6.0%	5.7%
	From 700 to 1.000 €	4.7%	5.3%	10.3%	10.1%	8.3%
	From 1.001 to 1.500 €	21.2%	15.0%	24.4%	22.5%	21.1%
	From 1.501 to 2.500 €	31.8%	24.8%	31.4%	37.2%	32.1%
	From 2.501 to 3.500 €	16.5%	18.0%	17.3%	14.2%	16.2%
	Over 3.500 €	20.0%	31.6%	10.9%	10.1%	16.6%
Daily expenditure (N = 617)	Under 20 €	10.0%	5.9%	3.6%	7.1%	6.3%
	From 21 to 40 €	11.1%	10.3%	15.7%	14.2%	13.3%
	From 41 to 60 €	21.1%	10.3%	21.1%	22.2%	19.1%
	From 61 to 80 €	12.2%	11.0%	15.1%	15.1%	13.8%
	From 81 to 100 €	13.3%	17.6%	15.7%	12.4%	14.6%
	Over 100 €	3.3%	14.7%	13.9%	7.1%	10.0%
Visits (N = 634)	Never	73.9%	90.6%	78.4%	76.0%	79.5%
	From 1 to 3 times	21.7%	6.5%	19.3%	17.2%	16.1%
	From 4 to 6 times	2.2%	0.7%	1.2%	3.9%	2.2%
	Over 6 times	2.2%	2.2%	1.2%	3.0%	2.2%
Stay (N = 633)	No overnight stay	30.4%	21.0%	31.8%	35.2%	30.5%
	One night	20.7%	29.0%	22.9%	17.6%	22.0%
	Two - seven nights	38.0%	43.5%	37.1%	36.5%	38.4%
	More than 7 nights	10.9%	6.5%	8.2%	10.7%	9.2%
Overnights accommodation type (N = 415)	4 - 5 star hotels	28.8%	31.4%	21.9%	21.4%	25.1%
	2 - 3 star hotels	15.3%	25.5%	31.6%	27.1%	26.3%
	1 star hotel/hostel	13.6%	17.6%	14.0%	10.0%	13.5%
	Family/friends' house	16.9%	5.9%	14.0%	20.0%	14.5%
	Tourist apartment	25.4%	19.6%	18.4%	21.4%	20.7%
Clusters: 1 (alternative), 2 (Cultural), 3 (Emotional), 4 (Heritage).						

Source: Own elaboration

Among the visitors interviewed, 30.5% declare not spending the night in the city of Córdoba and almost 50% stay at least two nights, with no differences between different tourist groups (Kruskal Wallis H statistic = 1,948; $p = 0.583$). Regarding accommodation, 2 or 3 star hotels are the most requested, followed by the 4 or 5 star hotels. Cultural tourists stand out within the groups who opt for luxury or semi-luxury hotels. However, no significant differences are detected between the different tourist groups (Kruskal-Wallis H statistic = 3.842; $p = 0.279$).

3.3. Evaluation of Destination Attributes

In order to detect both strengths and aspects to improve, a question was introduced in the survey with different items that sought to obtain visitors' assessment on certain tourist attributes related to this event (Table 4). The valuation of some of these attributes, very specific aspects that incorporate personal factors for their valuation, determines that this is not as high as the valuation corresponding to the degree of general satisfaction. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient (0.841) of the scale shows a remarkable internal consistency since the critical level (p) associated with the Friedman statistic χ^2 (762,423) is less than 0.001. This verifies that means are not equal.

Table-4. Values tourism attributes

Tourism attributes		Mean	Ranking	
Services	Cronbach's alpha (0.575)	Residents' friendliness and hospitality	4.44	4
		Restaurant and bar availability in the surroundings	4.02	6
	Mean (3.52)	Purchase opportunity of interest items, e.g. crafts.	3.25	10
		Waiting time to start the visit	2.78	12
		Guided sightseeing tours – if used –	3.09	11
Historical and Monumental Heritage	Cronbach's alpha (0.702)	Joint beauty of the courtyards and their surroundings	4.56	2
		Conservation of the patios visited	4.55	3
	Mean (4.37)	Diversity and variety of courtyards to be visited	3.99	7
Infrastructures	Cronbach's alpha (0.663)	Care and cleanliness	4.59	1
		Information points and tourist signage	3.48	9
		Safety during the stay	4.32	5
	Mean (4.06)	Accessibility to the surrounding courtyards and spaces	3.86	8

Source: Own elaboration

The set of attributes was grouped into three dimensions: services, historical and monumental heritage, and infrastructures. Cronbach's Alpha for the three different dimensions denotes the reliability of the subscales. The analysis gathers an indicator of the importance granted by tourists to the different attributes of Córdoba's *Fiesta de los Patios* as a tourist event. Among the attributes that contribute to improving visitor satisfaction and destination image are "care and cleanliness", "Joint beauty of the courtyards and their surroundings" and "Conservation status of the patios visited". On the contrary, those that generate a lower competitive advantage and, consequently, demand its improvement in order to enhance the *Fiesta de los Patios* as a tourist event, were "Waiting time to start the visit" and "Guided sightseeing tours".

4. Conclusions

This research is a contribution to existing academic literature on the links between tourists' perceptions that attend ICH events and their behavior at the destination.

The declaration and registration of a specific place as a WHS or a specific event as a ICH by UNESCO is both a cultural recognition that entails the obligation to preserve them, as well as an important incentive for the promotion of a site or event for specific types of tourists. Therefore, they require adequate management. The cultural and tourist potential of Córdoba's *Fiesta de los Patios* reinforces the need to carry out research in order to obtain scientific results that favor tourism promotion and encourage continuous improvement plans. An exhaustive description of visiting tourists is necessary for the success of the differentiating strategies in the tourist offer, which entails not only an analysis of their socio-demographic profile but also event perceptions, motivations, interests or expectations.

Considering the emotions perceived when participating in an ICH event, following the model of Poria *et al.* (2003) as well as the model of McKercher (2002), empirical evidence is obtained on four types of tourists considered valid and useful to classify visitors who participate in the *Fiesta de Los Patios* as an ICH event: alternative, cultural, emotional, and heritage visitors. Of the four clusters identified, it is clear that, for the heritage tourist group, the link with the event and cultural interest plays a very important role.

The main practical application of this research derives from its contribution to understanding the characteristics of the various types of tourists and their assessment of an ICH event, which facilitates the creation and improvement of tourist and cultural products that better satisfy their needs, while respecting the sustainable management of this event.

The main limitation of this investigation is that the study is based exclusively on demand, with which there would be some difficulty in transferring the results of this research to other stakeholder groups such as the local community or tourism companies. A recommendation for new lines of research is to reinforce research that addresses tourism activity in ICH events considering the offer.

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Conflicts of Interest

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