



## Culture, tourism and World Heritage Sites



Francisco González Santa-Cruz<sup>a,\*</sup>, Tomás López-Guzmán<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Agrifood Campus of International Excellence, ceia3, Faculty of Law and Business Administration, C/ Puerta Nueva, s/n, 14071 Córdoba, Spain

<sup>b</sup> Agrifood Campus of International Excellence, ceia3, Faculty of Labour Sciences, C/ Adarve, 30, 14071 Córdoba, Spain

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

World Heritage Site  
Culture  
Satisfaction  
Tourism  
Cordoba  
Spain

### ABSTRACT

The recognition of a place as a World Heritage Site (WHS) by UNESCO is fundamental to preserve its historical and artistic inheritance and, at the same time, to encourage visits to that area. The purpose of this article is to contribute to the study of the relationship between WHS designation and cultural tourism, with a markedly sustainable character, through the presentation of the results of research conducted in the city of Cordoba (Spain). The study analyzes the sociodemographic profile of the tourists, the variables that influence their levels of satisfaction and loyalty, and the classification of the travelers through different variables. The principal results of the research show the significant educational level of the surveyed tourists, as well as the high level of satisfaction with the visit, the high number of countries of origin and the outstanding motivation for knowing the city's heritage roots.

### 1. Introduction

Cultural committees of UNESCO in Paris publish annual lists of World Heritage Site (WHS) properties and Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) elements. Furthermore, each inscribed WHS property is identified as a cultural, natural or mixed element; each WHS property or ICH element can be identified as in danger. The inclusion of a certain place or intangible element in the list supposes the consideration of an exceptional universal value and, at the same time, that inscription allows understanding that all the persons of the world are owners of (and are responsible for) that place or intangible element. With this it seeks, moreover, its sustainability. In this way, and according to Saipradist and Staiff (2008), the World Heritage lists reinforce the identification, preservation and transmission towards future generations of extraordinary places and monuments from the perspective of history and of art.

Nonetheless, although the main purpose of these recognitions by UNESCO is to preserve and conserve these sites, it has signified in many cases a significant increase of tourists, especially from other countries, in these places, generating a strong relationship between these lists and tourism (Breakey, 2012). In this way, it is paradoxical that, while the basic objective of UNESCO in the designation of the WHS is to promote their protection and preservation, some destinations are prioritizing their tourist development (Su & Wall, 2011), especially in the new designations, little known by the tourists, where it begins by encouraging domestic tourism and, subsequently, a strong commitment to international tourism is made (Su & Wall, 2011) with the aim of

economically developing these geographical areas. That is to say, with the recognition by UNESCO as a WHS, the area is protected for future generations, but implicitly, at the same time, this mention implies an increase in tourism given the important attraction value (Breakey, 2012; Landorf, 2009), which in some cases can put into danger the very survival of the WHS. In fact, the inscription in the lists of World Heritage is the reason for which millions of tourists visit these places (Yan & Morrison, 2007).

In this regard, culture becomes one of the most significant motivators of tourists in choosing a certain destination (Correia, Kozak, & Ferradeira, 2013), which Di Giovine (2009) defines as heritage-scape. There is an increase in the interest of the impact of tourism on World Heritage Sites in recent years (Landorf, 2009). Thus, it is necessary to reinforce the scientific studies that analyze the characteristics of the heritage tourists (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014). This type of information is basically to know this type of tourist and his or her behavior with the aim of managing these destinations in a sustainable way (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014) since the tourism could affect, and on occasions does affect significantly, the local culture (Abuamoud, Libbin, Green, & Alrousan, 2014).

The objective of this paper is to advance in the knowledge of the tourist who visits a WHS. For this, we analyzed the results of a study that presents different aspects of this type of tourism visiting the city of Cordoba (Spain). Thus, we intend to know the sociodemographic profile, the level of satisfaction in relation to the different variables that are defined in the destination and that influence the loyalty and the classification thereof, using different variables such as age, accommodation

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [td1gosaf@uco.es](mailto:td1gosaf@uco.es) (F. González Santa-Cruz), [dt1logut@uco.es](mailto:dt1logut@uco.es) (T. López-Guzmán).

and number of nights he or she remains in the city. To fulfil this objective, this article is structured, after the [Introduction](#), in a [Section 2](#) where a review is made of the literature; a [Section 3](#) that presents a description of the city of Cordoba; a fourth where the [Methodology](#) used is shown; and a [Section 5](#) providing the results of the research and its discussion. This article ends with the [Conclusions](#) of the study and the bibliographical references used.

## 2. Review of the literature

The relationship between tourism and heritage is one of the most discussed subjects in recent years by the academic literature. Thus, most of recent articles accept the idea that heritage tourism is not just anyone who visits the heritage/cultural attractions, with it being necessary to identify different types of heritage tourists (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014). In this regard, Poria, Reichel, and Biran (2006) present a triple focus with respect to this type of tourist: first, all the tourists who visit places with heritage attributes are heritage tourists; second, heritage tourists are those who are aware of the heritage attributes of the site; third, heritage tourists are those tourists who are motivated by the heritage attributes of the site and think that the site forms part of their own heritage. In addition, for Yan and Morrison (2007), it is also essential to consider what importance the tourist gives to this site, that is, if he or she considers the importance of that heritage.

Furthermore, there are different studies in which the relationship between WHS properties and tourism is analyzed. Among others we can highlight those focused on certain sites of Portugal (Correia et al., 2013; Remoaldo, Vareiro, Ribeiro, & Santos, 2014), Canada (Donohoe, 2012), Israel (Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2003), China (Yang & Lin, 2014), Romania (Bucurescu, 2015), Spain (Antón, Camarero, & Laguna-García, 2014) and Vietnam (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014). On the other hand, different books analyze this relationship, and among them we can underscore those of Timothy and Boy (2003), Di Giovine (2009), Timothy (2011) and Park (2014). In any case, we must specify that heritage tourism refers to the activities of visiting or of experiencing heritage areas whether they are natural, cultural or urban (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014) and that involve the visitor seeking a connection with his or her roots and with his or her heritage (Remoaldo et al., 2014).

This signifies that, on occasion, the designation of a certain site as a WHS is perceived as “branding” (Timothy, 2011) or “labeling” (Yang, Lin, & Han, 2010) and that the recognition by UNESCO, in addition to reinforcing the protection of the heritage, has a strong attraction for the tourist, signifying a global recommendation so that a certain type of tourist visits who destination (Poria, Reichel, & Cohen, 2013), especially for those who travel seeking authentic experiences and genuine places (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). For this reason, heritage is seen as one of the most significant and fastest growing aspects of tourism (Poria et al., 2003). According to Vong and Ung (2012), there are four factors related to heritage tourism: history and culture, facilities and services at heritage sites, heritage interpretation and heritage attractions.

Currently two research lines exist in this field (Su & Wall, 2011): first, the classification and the definition of heritage and of heritage tourism; second, the relationship between conservation and preservation of the heritage and the tourism development that is carried out in these areas. On the other hand, and according to Timothy and Boy (2003), the analysis of heritage tourism can be done through two different channels: first, the simple presence of the visitors in sites where the heritage is found, that is, the visit to certain destinations where the tourists find that the heritage is not part of their own history or culture and they are positioned as a mere visitor (Saipradist & Staiff, 2008), which implies that it is necessary to consider the transcultural context of the heritage sites (Saipradist & Staiff, 2008); second, the perceptions that the visitors feel in these places, which means, according to the contributions of Poria et al. (2006), that a visitor in a certain heritage site not only seeks a recreational experience but rather, on occasion and

for certain tourists, he or she seeks part of his or her own roots in the visit to these historical sites. In short, and in both channels, it is necessary to reinforce the understanding of the WHS and clarify the cross-cultural attitudes towards the designation (Poria et al., 2013), especially when it deals with international tourists (Tucker & Carnegie, 2014).

Moreover, the tourists decide to travel because they have internal and external motivations (Correia et al., 2013) and in some specific types of tourism the culture becomes one of the principal attractions. In turn, one must analyze both the destination, since a great diversity of sites exist, and the different variables that affect each of them (Breakey, 2012). At the same time, there is strong competition between the destinations to attract tourists, especially international ones (Remoaldo et al., 2014). In fact, heritage is one of the attributes that differentiates some sites from others, due to the complex system in which the destination is included and to the sustainable development with many facets in which the cultural inheritance has to be preserved (Bell, 2010; Bucurescu, 2015). In this regard, it is necessary to reinforce in the tourism destination such aspects as the quality of the accommodations, cleanliness, citizen safety and gastronomy, adapting them to the needs of this type of tourist. According to Abuamoud et al. (2014) the demand of tourists in the heritage sites is also influenced by the services provided by the public authorities and by the availability and feasibility of the local community to stimulate tourism in these areas. In this regard, it becomes necessary to identify and understand the types of heritage tourists, their motivations, behavior, perceptions and experiences in order to carry out better management of the destinations and to define the corresponding adapted strategies, seeking as a priority the safeguarding of the heritage that makes them unique. In short, better knowledge of the tourist who visits these places implies an improvement in the management of the destination, seeking, above all, the sustainability of the historical heritage that attracts this type of tourist.

The variety of places and visitors creates significant differences for knowing the visitors' characteristics and, therefore, as indicated earlier, the better management of these places. And all this must also take into account that the behavior model of the tourists visiting these places is different in each case (Poria et al., 2006).

In the studies conducted to define the sociodemographic profile of the tourists, the different authors concur that they have high education, the majority with university studies (Saipradist & Staiff, 2008; Correia et al., 2013; Remoaldo et al., 2014). Likewise, this type of tourist expresses significant satisfaction with respect to the visited sites (Breakey, 2012). This satisfaction is related basically with three groups of variables existing at the destination: novelty, knowledge and facilities (Correia et al., 2013). These variables allow orienting and reinforcing the different tourism management policies.

## 3. Description of the geographic area

The city of Cordoba is situated in the south of Spain, specifically in the region of Andalusia, a geographic area where there is strong sun-and-beach tourism as well as an important focus on cultural tourism with World Heritage cities such as Granada and Seville, in addition to Cordoba. The population of the city is approximately 325,000 inhabitants and its economic structure is based fundamentally on the tertiary sector, with the tourist activity and the public administration being predominant. The city has two declarations of World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, the first in 1984 was the Mosque-Cathedral and, subsequently, in 1994 this classification was granted to its historic center. Furthermore, the Festival of the Courtyards, which is held in the month of May, was declared Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2012. In addition, Cordoba, as the rest of Andalusia, also has the so-called Mediterranean diet and Flamenco declared Intangible Cultural Heritage. All these recognitions imply that, at present, the city is one of the most representative of cultural tourism, both in Spain and in the rest of Europe, and constitutes a meeting point for thousands of travelers

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5108750>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5108750>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)