

Este es un manuscrito aceptado de un artículo publicado por Taylor & Francis en Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing el 6 de agosto de 20,17 disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2017.1358238>

Motivations of educational tourists in non-English-speaking countries: The role of languages

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Motivations of educational tourists in non-English-speaking countries: The role of languages

Learning or improving a language may be a key motivator so that students decide to participate in an exchange program, as well as to choose the destination to take part of their studies. Nevertheless, studies on educational tourism are limited, and there is no research on students' motivations visiting non-English-speaking countries. To fill this gap, this paper aims to examine the motivations of university students in non-English-speaking destinations by using the push and pull framework. Primary data were collected through an on-line survey from 190 and 205 students who participated in mobility programs in a Spanish university and in a German university, respectively. Empirical findings reveal that languages are a key motivating factor, either to grow personally through cultural enrichment, or to grow professionally. Furthermore, these data allow to make generic recommendations so that the destinations can attract a larger number of international students.

Keywords: edu-tourism; language tourism; international mobility program; university students; motives

Introduction

The number of students taking their studies partially or completely abroad has increased in recent years (Kelly & Brown, 2004; Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008; Townsend & Lee, 2004), and this growth is expected to continue (Lesjak, Juvan, Ineson, Yap & Podovsovnik, 2015; Student Marketing, 2012). This type of students is known as educational tourists (Kelly & Brown, 2004). When students make these trips, they contribute significantly to the economy of the host country (Babin & Kim, 2001; Ritchie, 2003; Tremblay, 2005), and more especially to the tourism industry (Weaver, 2003; Townsend & Lee, 2004). In particular, they contribute in a direct way thanks to the trips they make during their leisure time (Weaver, 2003; Townsend & Lee, 2004). The students who participate in International Exchange Programs (IEPs) are motivated

to travel as much as possible in the host country to get a better understanding of its culture and people (Babin & Kim, 2001; Teichler, 2004), and they become into domestic tourists and excursionists. International students also contribute in an indirect way to the tourism industry of the host country thanks to the visits they receive from their families and friends. Furthermore, the general impact on economy is important since exchange students stay more time in the host country than standard students (Weaver, 2003). In this period, students interact and develop emotional ties with the destination. This entails a closer relationship with the socio-cultural context of the host country that leads to the repetition of the trip in the future to continue learning (especially in the case of language tourism), to visit friends or to show the settings of past tourist experiences to their families and friends (Spanish Tourism Institute, 2013). These students, moreover, can also recommend other students their host country as a destination to study (Michael, Armsrong & King, 2003; Weaver, 2003; Townsend & Lee, 2004). What is more, these tourists can also become into real consultants, that is, into “ambassadors” of the country they have visited. Finally, their experiences may also act as an element to reduce stereotypes, as well as to spread the reality and cultural richness of the host country (Spanish Tourism Institute, 2013).

Universities need to encourage their internationalization, and also students’ international mobility. At the same time, students are aware of the importance of this mobility to improve their language, cultural and social competences, as there is no doubt that these skills increase their competitiveness in a globalized labour market (Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Chieffo, 2000; Tremblay, 2005). Among these competences, foreign languages play an essential role to improve students’ future employability. The need of multilingual citizens is more and more evident in different social contexts,

including the labour market, but also social integration, education and research contexts, among others (Nunan, 2003).

In this light, learning or improving a language may be considered as a key motivator so that students decide to enrol in an IEP, but also when they choose the destination to take part of their studies abroad. The desire to learn other languages has clearly triggered mobility to different countries, and it has also developed a new type of tourism: language tourism. Currently, the most studied languages as foreign languages are English, French, Spanish and German, in this order (Cervantes Institute, 2016).

Studies on educational tourism and language tourism are limited (Jason, Ahmad & Azhar, 2011; Iglesias, 2014). Some researchers analyse students' motivation to participate in IEPs, but they focus on English-speaking countries (Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008), or carry out a global analysis including several countries with different languages (Lesjak et al., 2015). Consequently, the role of languages is blurred among the different motivations to enrol in an IEP and to choose a destination.

There are no studies on students' motivations visiting non-English-speaking countries, such as France, Spain or Germany. This paper aims to fill this gap through an analysis of the experiences of students who participated in IEPs. The research is focused on the mobility towards a Spanish university (n=190) and towards a German university (n=205), by using the push-pull theory.

Regarding the Spanish language, it is the second most spoken language in the world, with more than 500 million of native speakers (Marca España, 2014). Some studies (e.g. the research carried out by the British Council, 2013) highlight that Spanish is the most useful and necessary foreign language to be learnt.

German, on the other hand, is the most spoken language in Europe, with 100 million of native speakers. Moreover, the range of professional possibilities opens up

for those who master this language, both in German-speaking countries (i.e. Germany, Austria or Switzerland) and in the labour market in general, as most countries have business ties with German-speaking countries (Goethe-Institut, 2015).

This research aims to provide a deeper knowledge on students' motivations in IEPs, as well as to make recommendations for the destinations to attract a larger number of international students. This study is particularly relevant due to the fact that the global competition among all countries is becoming more intense to attract international students.

After the introduction, the second section of this paper presents a review of the literature in the field of educational and language tourism, as well as tourists' motivations through the push-pull theory. The third section includes the methodology of the research conducted, while the fourth section shows the results and the discussion. The paper ends with the conclusions.

Literature review

Educational and language tourism

Educational tourism can be defined as that type of tourism in which the primary or secondary motivations of the trip are learning and education (Ritchie, 2003). This definition includes language tourism, where the primary or secondary motivation of the trip is learning or improving the knowledge of a foreign language (Iglesias, 2014).

Travelling because of learning or education is not a new concept (Holdnak & Holland, 1996). However, the links between learning or education and tourism have been scarcely analysed in previous literature (Ritchie, 2003). International students and tourists share a number of characteristics, as both groups are sojourners (Jamaludin, Sam, Sandal & Adam, 2016). Sojourners are characterised by the purpose of their visit

and their time framework. With regard to the aim of the visit, foreign students tend to focus on studying and achieving professional qualifications, while tourists usually seek relaxation and entertainment (Bochner, 2006). Nevertheless, tourists can travel for leisure, work or other purposes. These purposes can be very diverse, including thus learning and education among them.

With regard to the time framework, international students are classified into short-term students and long-term students as they remain in their destination for periods shorter than or longer than a year (Jamaludin et al., 2016). Considering the fact that a tourist is a person who travels to a destination outside their usual environment and stays overnight for at least one night but for a period of time shorter than a year (United Nations, 2010), short-term international students could also be considered as tourists.

According to the Canadian Tourism Commission (2001), different types of educational tourism can be identified in a continuum ranging from “general interest learning while travelling” to “purposeful learning and travelling”.

In this light, educational tourists can be classified into two segments depending on the importance given to education in comparison to tourism. In the first segment, education and learning are the main motivations for the trip. However, students have specific needs and consume different tourism resources. In the second segment, the trip is the main motivator, while the educational or learning component is a secondary factor (Ritchie, 2003; Kelly & Brown, 2004). According to Hattie (1997), international university students are considered to be in the second segment. On the contrary, Ritchie (2003) places international university students in the first segment.

It should be highlighted however that tourism motivation hardly ever results from a single reason. Tourism motivation is frequently complex and multidimensional (Crompton, 1979; Uysal, Gahan & Martin, 1993).

In general, motivation has become a meta-concept that works as a trigger for travel behaviour, and determines different aspects of the tourist activity, ranging from the reasons to travel, the specific destination and the general satisfaction with the trip (Castaño, Moreno, García & Crego, 2003).

Here the push-pull motivation theory is used to identify the factors that motivate students to take part of their studies abroad, as well as the factors that attract them to choose their destination.

Educational tourists' motivations

The push-pull motivation theory is widely used to analyse tourism motivations (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Yuan & McDonald, 1990; Klenosky, 2002). According to this theory, when people make the decision to travel, they are driven by internal reasons (push factors) and attracted by the attributes of the destination (pull factors) (Dann, 1977).

Most push factors are internal forces or intrinsic motivators, mainly of a social-psychological nature, such as the desire to relaxation that creates the desire to travel (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Klenosky, 2002). Pull factors, on the contrary, are external forces caused by the attributes of the tourist product or destination (e.g. the climate) that can reinforce the inherent push motivations, and encourage tourists to visit a specific destination (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994).

Therefore, the decision of students who enrol in an IEP is determined by a combination of both push and pull factors. The push factors have been found useful to explain students' desire to study abroad, while the pull factors help to explain the choice of the destination (González, Mesanza & Mariel, 2011). Firstly, students are driven by internal forces to participate in an IEP. Secondly, they are attracted to choose their destination, so they evaluate the different attributes the destination can offer.

Marketing strategies to attract students to IEPs should then combine push and pull factors. In general, knowledge on tourism motivation allows professionals to meet travellers' requirements, and offer better products and services according to their specific needs (Crompton, 1979; Jang & Cai, 2002).

Motivations to participate in a mobility program

Students can be encouraged to study abroad with the purpose of developing personal and professional skills, changing the living environment, leisure, relax and other benefits derived from the mobility (Stone & Perick, 2013; Vossenteyn et al., 2010).

Personal growth comprehends all the elements that may increase self-confidence, self-reliance and expand horizons thanks to meeting other people and contexts with different backgrounds and cultures (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004).

Professional growth is focused on activities that may help the development of knowledge and competences to improve students' academic performance as well as their careers (Bracht et al., 2006).

Other key motivators to stimulate IEPs can range from living and experiencing adventures, having a good time, or simply travelling (Daly, 2011; González et al., 2011; Keogh & Russel-Roberts, 2009; Teichler, 2004; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005).

Learning or improving a foreign language supports both the personal and professional growth, since it fosters a better understanding of the host country, as well as the specific business-like knowledge (Keogh & Russel-Roberts, 2009).

On the one hand, learning a language improves the establishment of interpersonal relationships and social support, which in turn enables cultural learning and socio-cultural adjustment (Ward, 1996). On the other hand, languages are an essential competence to increase future employability.

There is no doubt that languages should be considered as important factors to encourage students' mobility (Knight & Madden, 2010). Students will need to understand and be able to use the language of the host country, at least at a basic level, to thrive personally and/or professionally, and even to have fun.

Llewellyn and McCabe (2008) analysed the motivations of 93 international students in an Australian university. The authors found that the motivation to learn or improve their English skills was not considered as very important (being the penultimate position in a 13-item scale). It should be said, however, that the sample was composed of two groups of students: i) 31 English-speaking students, for whom the language had no relevance at all; and ii) 62 non-English-speaking students who considered that the language was an important factor. But even in this last case, the main motivations to participate in a mobility program were others.

On the other hand, Lesjak et al. (2015) analysed the motivations of 360 international students from 26 European countries. Their findings also showed that motivation to improve a language was not considered as very important, as ranked 6 in a 14-item scale.

Other studies, including Chen (2007), Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), and Yang (2007), analysed students' motivations to participate in IEPs, but motivation related to languages was not taken into account.

Motivations to choose the destination

Students can be attracted to study in a specific destination thanks to a series of attributes that may make a destination more attractive than others. These attributes can be related to: i) geographical factors, such as proximity or quality of the public transport (Cubillo, Sanchez & Cervino, 2006; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Price, Matzdorf, Smith & Agahi, 2003); ii) cultural factors, such as the language, climate, lifestyle, or leisure and cultural

attractions (Keogh & Russel-Roberts, 2009; Kim, Oh & Jogaratnam, 2006; Kim, 2008);
iii) socio-economic factors, such as the cost of living or ease of finding accommodation (Cubillo et al, 2006; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Price et al., 2003); or iv) academic factors, such as entry requirements, academic offer, academic level or language of instruction (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

Lesjak et al. (2015) considered “familiar language and lifestyle” as pull factor to choose the destination in the framework of the Erasmus program. More specifically, this was the only pull factor related to the language. It obtained the last position in their 12-item scale. It could be then that the attraction factor was precisely the opposite: a different language to be learnt. Other authors, such as Chen (2007), Llewellyn and McCabe (2008), Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) or Yang (2007), did not consider any pull factor related to the language.

It must be considered that attraction factors work in conjunction with push factors mentioned above in order to create the demand of educational tourism at the international level.

Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that the choice of exchange students is limited, as they can only select host universities with exchange agreements with their home universities (Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005).

Satisfaction with the destination

According to previous literature (e.g. Yoon & Uysal, 2005), the tourists’ motivations could determine their general satisfaction with the trip. Global satisfaction is essential in the field of tourism. Satisfaction plays a key role in repetitive purchasing patterns, that is, in loyalty to a product, brand or destination (Barsky & Nash, 2002; García & Gil, 2005; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), in favourable reviews and positive marketing transmitted by word of mouth (Oh, 1999; Oppermann, 2000; Rodríguez del Bosque, San Martín &

Collado, 2006), or in the increase of business profits (Anderson, Fornell & Lehman, 1994).

During their academic stays, students establish a close relation with the socio-cultural environment of the host country, and the satisfaction with the destination will favour the repetition of the trip in the future, as well as the recommendation of the destination to other students and/or other types of tourists (Michael et al., 2003; Weaver, 2003; Townsend & Lee, 2004; Spanish Tourism Institute, 2013).

This research therefore aims to explore the combination of push and pull factors that motivates students to participate in an IEP in the University of Córdoba (Spain) and the University of Nuremberg (Germany). And furthermore, it is also aimed to analyse for each destination the students' satisfaction with their exchange experience.

To analyse the students' satisfaction, we propose: i) to test whether the students' satisfaction with their destination is associated with the possibility to recommend it to others; ii) to test if there is a significant difference in satisfaction between international students in Córdoba and Nuremberg; and iii) to test if there is a significant difference in recommendation between international students in Córdoba and Nuremberg.

Methods

Research setting

The research was conducted with students who were enrolled in IEPs in Córdoba and Nuremberg. Among the different destinations where French, Spanish or German are spoken, Córdoba and Nuremberg were chosen due to the familiarity of the researchers with both destinations. This situation enabled a better data collection and interpretation of primary data.

Survey design

The survey was developed from a review of previous studies (Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008; Lesjak et al., 2015; Muntasira, Jiang & Thuy, 2009). In particular, 32 motivation factors based on these studies were developed and modified in order to apply them to the context of this research.

Then, a group of experts was selected, including 2 experts responsible for international study programs in Spain and Germany, respectively, and 2 students who had previously participated in IEPs in one of the two cities aforementioned.

The discussion of the experts resulted in 26 items: 12 push factors and 14 pull factors. These factors were evaluated by a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = “not important”, 5 = “very important”). Other studies on international students’ motivation have also used this scale (Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005).

The respondents were also asked to assess their level of satisfaction with the destination, their probability to recommend it, and the possibility to repeat the trip in the future. Their global satisfaction and the probability to recommend the destination were measured by using a single item and evaluated by a five-point Likert-type scale (for global satisfaction: 1 = “very dissatisfied”, 5 = “very satisfied”; and for recommendation: 1 = “unlikely to recommend the destination, 5 = “sure to recommend the destination”).

Prior to finishing the questionnaire, a pre-test with 15 surveys was carried out with an initial sample of tourists in each university. The purpose of this stage was to modify the description of the items to increase the reliability of the research, including comprehension at the international level, and to check whether the scales were valid and reliable (Jennings, 2001). As a result of this process, no modification was required.

Data collection

The questionnaires were administered via Internet, as in previous research (Lesjak et al., 2015; Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008). This decision was taken since the sample was formed by members of the Y Generation. Consequently, they would probably have better technological skills and it was more probable that they would respond the survey by using an electronic system (Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). Furthermore, the greater speed in data collection and the low cost of the process were also factors that led to the use of an on-line questionnaire (Jennings, 2001).

A total of 420 surveys was carried out, of which 395 were valid, from October 2015 to June 2016. Table 1 shows the datasheet of the research.

Take in Table 1

Reliability

The 26 motivation items were classified into 2 scales: push factors and pull factors. The scales were tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. According to Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe (2008), an alpha of ≥ 0.6 or greater was an indication of internal consistency (Leedy, 1989). Both scales had a reliability of ≥ 0.6 .

Results and discussion

In order to achieve the objectives of this research, firstly an analysis was carried out to know the profile of the university students participating in IEPs in the cities of Córdoba and Nuremberg. Secondly, the ranking of push and pull motivations of these students was created. Finally, an analysis about students' satisfaction with the destination was conducted.

Demographic profile

The demographic features of the respondents are shown in Table 2. In both cities, there was a female predominance (Córdoba: 64.21%, Nuremberg: 53.17%), and the most frequent age range was 22-24 years old (Córdoba: 59.47%, Nuremberg: 44.39%). Most of the students were undergraduate students (Córdoba: 82.63%, Nuremberg: 71.22%) in the branches of arts, and social and legal sciences (Córdoba: 53.15%, Nuremberg: 51.70%). In the case of Córdoba, a significant number of students came from Italy (32.1%), France (17.4%), and Germany (14.7%). On the other hand, in the case of Nuremberg, a significant number came from Spain (24.4%), Italy (19.5%), and France (9.8%). For most of them, this was their first time in the host country (Córdoba: 83.7%, Nuremberg: 93.2%), and they mainly stayed in their destinations for a period ranging from 6 to 12 months (Córdoba: 57.4%, Nuremberg: 45.9%). During their stay, they usually received the visit of friends and/or members of their families (Córdoba: 91.1%, Nuremberg: 72.2%).

Take in Table 2

Push and pull factors

The respondents were asked to assess the importance of 26 push and pull items using a five-point Likert scale (1 = “not important”; 5 = “very important”). The mean score of all items was calculated. Later, the items were ordered according to their level of importance. The 26 items were categorized into two scales (push and pull), and the global mean of each scale was calculated. The results show that the push factors that motivate students to participate in IEPs (average in Córdoba: 3.62, average in Nuremberg: 3.73) are more important than the pull factors that motivate students to choose a destination (average in Córdoba: 3.19, average in Nuremberg: 3.03). This

supports the works by Mazzaron and Soutar (2002) and Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe (2008), who suggested that students are motivated to take part of their studies abroad, and this decision guides the choice of their destination.

Ranking of push factors

Twelve items were used to determine the push factors that the students considered to be the most important factors in their decision to enrol in an IEP (Table 3). In both cases, the results highlight that the most important motivation was “live new experiences”. In fact, almost all the students in Córdoba and Nuremberg (92.6% and 87.4%, respectively) identified this factor as “important” or “very important”. This is consistent with the research carried out by Lesjak et al. (2015).

Take in Table 3

The desire to travel was the second most important item in the case of Córdoba, and the third in the case of Nuremberg. Other studies on exchange students also found that the desire to travel is a strong motivator to participate in IEPs (Chieffo, 2000; Llewellyn & McCabe, 2008; Teichler, 2004; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). This motivation could also explain their behaviour in the host country, students usually make numerous trips when they are in their destination (Babin & Kim, 2001; Teichler, 2004).

The motivation related to learn or improve a language is the second most important item in Nuremberg, and the third in Córdoba. It is proved then the importance of languages in both contexts. Learning German and Spanish are important motivators to enrol in an IEP.

Moreover, in the case of Córdoba, a social factor (meet new people) directly affected the respondents in their decision to participate in the IEP. This finding is consistent with literature in tourism, which suggests that social interaction is one of the most influential push factors to motivate people to travel (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979;

Leiper, 2004). Previous studies on exchange students also show that they are highly motivated to enrol in an IEP due to the social opportunities associated to their participation (Teichler & Steube, 1991; Hattie, 1997). As stated above, linguistic competence is important for the establishment of interpersonal relationships abroad (it affects both the quality and the quantity of the intercultural interactions). Therefore, it could happen that students want to learn Spanish with the purpose of meeting new people.

In the case of Nuremberg, however, the motivation to improve their employment opportunities had a direct influence in the respondents. As previously mentioned, learning German improves students' professional perspectives. Thus, it could happen that students want to learn German in order to increase their possibilities to find a job. As said before, a noticeable number of international students studying in Nuremberg are from Spain, Italy and France, where unemployment rates (18.4%, 11.8% and 10.1%, respectively) are higher than the average rate of the European Union (8.2%) (Eurostat, 2016). In Córdoba, on the contrary, the increase of employment opportunities was one of the three least important motivations. These results seem to suggest that students may think that participating in an IEP in Spain may not be highly appreciated by the future employers, in comparison with an IEP in a different destination (e.g. Germany). Furthermore, the employment opportunities in Spain are very low as compared to the opportunities in Germany. As said above, the unemployment rate in Spain currently is 18.4%, while Germany is the second country with the lowest rate in the European Union: 3.9% (Eurostat, 2016).

In Nuremberg, the third least important motivation was to learn and experience the host culture. This result is inconsistent with previous literature. For instance, Massey

and Burrow (2012) highlight that a new intercultural learning environment is the main motivation that students find in IEPs.

The least important push factors in both cases were leisure and entertainment opportunities, and the fact that their friends also participate in an IEP. This result is not consistent with the findings by Chieffo (2000), or Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe (2008). These authors found that the respondents were deeply influenced to participate in the IEP because of the expectation of having fun.

Ranking of pull factors

The respondents were asked to assess the importance of 14 pull factors considered to decide their destination (Table 4). In both cases, the respondents chose the IEP (Córdoba or Nuremberg) due to the language of instruction, which in both cases is the language of the host country. Therefore, these results show again the importance of languages, being the most important factor to choose the destination.

Take in Table 4

In the case of Córdoba, other important factors were climate, lifestyle, and leisure and cultural attractive (all of them factors of cultural nature). On the other hand, the following factors stood out in Nuremberg: socio-economic level, communication network, and academic offer (a combination of socio-economic, geographic and academic factors). Once again, it is remarkable the low motivation related to cultural factors, as all of them are low ranked (below the sixth position). It is undeniable that the cultural attributes of Córdoba are more attractive for international students than the cultural attributes of Nuremberg.

The students considered that the least important factors were geographic proximity and communication network in Córdoba, while in Nuremberg these factors were ease of accommodation and climate.

These results seem to show that students may believe that the communication network in Spain is worse than in other destinations like Germany. Similarly, it seems that the students may consider the ease of accommodation in Germany to be not as good as in other destinations.

Satisfaction with the destination

The participants were asked to score their satisfaction level with their chosen destination on a scale 1 to 5 (1 = “very dissatisfied”; 5 = “very satisfied”). Satisfaction percentages of the participants and mean scores derived from the descriptive statistical analysis are shown in Table 5. The results show that 85.8% and 67.3% of the participants were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their experience in Córdoba or Nuremberg, respectively. The mean score in Córdoba was 4.28, while in Nuremberg the mean score was 3.94.

Take in Table 5

The students were also asked whether they would recommend their destination and whether they would repeat their visit. A high percentage would recommend the destination (89% and 80.4% of the participants in Córdoba and Nuremberg, respectively, were “convinced” or “deeply convinced” to recommend the destination. The mean score was 4.61 and 4.10 in Córdoba and Nuremberg, respectively). Moreover, almost all of them would repeat the trip (98.9% in Córdoba, 98% in Nuremberg).

To test whether the students’ satisfaction with the destination is associated with the possibility to recommend it to others, the Pearson’s correlation coefficient was calculated (Córdoba: 0.624; Nuremberg: 0.391), being in both cases significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 6 shows the differences in assessment and recommendation between students in Córdoba and Nuremberg. According to independent samples t-tests results,

significant differences were detected between students from both destinations. Students' satisfaction in Córdoba was higher than students' satisfaction in Nuremberg.

Consequently, the possibility to recommend the destination was higher in the case of international students in Córdoba.

Take in Table 6

Conclusions

Learning or improving a language may be a key motivator so that students decide to participate in an IEP, as well as to choose the destination where they will take part of their studies.

As there are no previous studies analysing students' motivations visiting non-English-speaking countries, this research aims to fill this gap. Thus, this research examines international students' motivations in non-English speaking destinations by using the push and pull framework. To do this, we analysed the experience of students who participated in IEPs in a Spanish university and in a German university.

According to previous studies (i.e. Babin & Kim, 2001; Teichler, 2004; Weaver, 2003), the results of this research suggest that educational tourists have a deep impact in the economy of the host country –and especially in the tourist sector. This is due to the fact that this type of students is highly motivated to travel (consequently there is a high probability that they will make numerous trips in the host country), their friends and families visit them, they stay in the destination for a long period, they would repeat the trip in the future, and they recommend the visit when they feel satisfied with the destination.

The results show that the main motivations to participate in an IEP were internal socio-psychological push factors, such as live new experiences, the desire to travel, and learn or improve the language. These were considered to be more important than the

pull factors when they had to choose the destination. Nevertheless, attraction factors work together with push factors. In this case, the motivation to learn or improve a language is strongly linked to the choice of destination. Students choose a destination where the language they want to learn or improve is used in two possible contexts: i) this is the language of the host country, or ii) this is the language of instruction at university.

In the case of Córdoba, the desire to travel is higher than the motivation to learn or improve the language, so it could be considered that the educational component is secondary to the tourist experience, as Hattie (1997) suggested. In the case of Nuremberg, however, the motivation to learn or improve the language is higher than the desire to travel, as proposed in Ritchie (2003).

These conclusions have direct implications for both the managers of the destination and the marketing departments of the universities. As Crompton (1979) suggested, it would be valuable to focus marketing strategies on socio-psychological attributes (e.g. new experiences, trips, and languages), providing the future students with them during their IEP.

A key finding in this research is that languages are the most relevant factor when students choose their destination.

Moreover, in the case of Córdoba, there were other important factors, mainly of cultural nature, such as the climate, lifestyle, and leisure and cultural attractive. In the case of Nuremberg, however, the outstanding factors were not related to culture, but to the socio-economic level, communication networks, and academic offer.

Considering the combination of both push and pull factors, it would appear in general that those students who chose Córdoba as their destination mainly searched a higher personal growth, seeing learning the local language as a key component of their

cultural enrichment. On the other hand, those students who chose Nuremberg as their destination would look for more opportunities to grow professionally, being the language a key competence to achieve this goal.

The students who go to Nuremberg have more push motivations to enrol in an IEP. Nevertheless, the attributes of Córdoba are more attractive for international students than those of Nuremberg, and more especially in the case of cultural attributes. It may be because of this reason that students' satisfaction in Córdoba is higher. Consequently, as there is a positive correlation between the satisfaction with the destination and its recommendation, the possibility to recommend the destination is also higher.

Previous studies demonstrated that students' orientation towards the host culture has a positive influence in their intention to return to the destination or to recommend it to others (Jamaludin et al., 2016; Zea, Reisen, Beil & Caplan, 1997). The degree and quality of their engagement with the host culture is a significant determiner of students' socio-cultural adjustment. Those students who are more integrated in the local community improve their academic results, tend to be more satisfied with their stay abroad, are less anxious, and report a higher self-esteem (Ward & Kennedy, 1993).

In this way, the low motivation of international students in Nuremberg towards cultural factors could hinder their acculturation process and their adjustment to the host community.

Jamuldin et al. (2016) suggest that it is important that all educational destinations pay attention to culture in order to ensure students' loyalty. It must be considered that international students have to adapt socially very quickly to the new context if they want to move forward successfully in their new university environments.

In this light, a good social program, together with the cultural immersion in the host country, is essential for students (Batchelor, 2000).

This paper contributes to improve the understanding of students' motivations to enrol in IEPs in non-English-speaking countries. Considering that students tend to combine tourism with educational motivations, the findings of this study should be taken into account not only for the development of IEPs, but also for the development of complementary tourist offers. In both cases, marketing strategies used to attract students to IEPs should use a combination of the main push and pull factors.

The tourism business sector, both of public and private natures, should work closely to the educational institutions to attract international students, as well as to satisfy their expectations. In this light, the coordinators of IEPs should be aware of the students' needs and expectations, together with the potential benefits of these international exchanges. Accordingly, they should address properly to the students when advising the host institutions.

The main limitation of this study derives from the data, which were collected from a sample of visitors in a specific period of time. Furthermore, we also admit that the findings obtained in this research are based on correlations. Thus, causality is not inferred.

As a future line of research, this study could also be replicated with students visiting other universities in non-English speaking countries, especially in France.

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Table 1. Data sheet of the research.

| | Córdoba | Nuremberg |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| Total number of visitors per year (2014) | 370 | 430 |
| Sample | 190 | 205 |
| Confidence level | 95.0%; $p = q = 0.5$ | 95.0%; $p = q = 0.5$ |
| Sampling error | ± 4.97 | ± 4.96 |
| Procedure | Convenience sampling | Convenience sampling |
| Research period | Academic year 2015-16 | Academic year 2015-16 |
| Sample check | Development and supervision by the authors of the research | |

Table 2. Profile of the language tourist.

| | | Córdoba | | Nuremberg | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|---------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| | | N | % | N | % |
| Gender | Male | 68 | 35.79 | 96 | 46.83 |
| | Female | 122 | 64.21 | 109 | 53.17 |
| Age | 18-21 | 49 | 25.79 | 81 | 39.51 |
| | 22-24 | 113 | 59.47 | 91 | 44.39 |
| | 25-27 | 23 | 12.11 | 28 | 13.66 |
| | Over 28 | 5 | 2.63 | 5 | 2.44 |
| Education | Undergraduate Students | 157 | 82.63 | 146 | 71.22 |
| | Postgraduate Students | 33 | 17.37 | 59 | 28.78 |
| Field of Studies | Arts | 62 | 32.63 | 35 | 17.07 |
| | Social and Legal Sciences | 39 | 20.52 | 71 | 34.63 |
| | Others | 30 | 15.79 | 7 | 3.41 |
| | Sciences | 22 | 11.58 | 18 | 8.78 |
| | Health Sciences | 20 | 10.53 | 23 | 11.22 |
| | Engineering | 17 | 8.95 | 51 | 24.88 |
| Country of Origin | Spain | - | - | 50 | 24.4 |
| | Italy | 61 | 32.1 | 40 | 19.5 |
| | Germany | 28 | 14.7 | - | - |
| | France | 33 | 17.4 | 20 | 9.8 |
| | Poland | 20 | 10.5 | 17 | 8.3 |
| | Hungary | 0 | 0 | 17 | 8.3 |
| | United Kingdom | 8 | 4.2 | 13 | 6.3 |
| | Others | 40 | 21.1 | 48 | 23.4 |
| Number of Visits | First Time | 159 | 83.7 | 191 | 93.2 |
| | Once | 17 | 8.9 | 8 | 3.9 |
| | More Than One | 14 | 7.4 | 6 | 2.9 |
| Length of the Stay | Less than 6 months | 9 | 4.7 | 7 | 3.4 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----|-------------|-----|-------------|
| | 6 months | 68 | 35.8 | 88 | 42.9 |
| | From 6 to 12 months | 109 | 57.4 | 94 | 45.9 |
| | 12 months | 4 | 2.1 | 16 | 7.8 |
| | Yes | 173 | 91.1 | 148 | 72.2 |
| Visit(s) from friends/relatives during the stay | No | 17 | 8.9 | 19 | 9.3 |
| | Do not know / Do not answer | 0 | 0 | 38 | 18.5 |

Table 3. Push factors ranked by mean score.

| CÓRDOBA | | | | NUREMBERG | | | |
|---------|--|------|------|-----------|--|------|------|
| Ranking | Push Factors | Mean | SD | Ranking | Push Factors | Mean | SD |
| 1 | Live New Experiences. | 4,65 | 0,74 | 1 | Live New Experiences. | 4,43 | 0,89 |
| 2 | Desire to Travel. | 4,48 | 0,88 | 2 | Learn or Improve the Language. | 4,32 | 0,90 |
| 3 | Learn or Improve the Language. | 4,40 | 1,08 | 3 | Desire to Travel. | 4,00 | 1,05 |
| 4 | Meet New People. | 4,26 | 0,94 | 4 | Improve the Employment Opportunities. | 3,80 | 1,14 |
| 5 | Increase the Number of Relationships. | 3,82 | 1,38 | 5 | Meet New People. | 3,79 | 1,06 |
| 6 | Be Independent. | 3,65 | 1,22 | 6 | Be Independent. | 3,78 | 1,07 |
| 7 | Learn and Experience the Host Culture. | 3,51 | 1,21 | 7 | Increase the Number of Relationships | 3,65 | 1,24 |
| 8 | Educational Experience of Studying in a Different Country. | 3,36 | 1,16 | 8 | Face Challenges. | 3,50 | 1,22 |
| 9 | Face Challenges. | 3,30 | 1,21 | 9 | Educational Experience of Studying in a Different Country. | 3,35 | 0,93 |
| 10 | Improve the Employment Opportunities. | 3,15 | 1,37 | 10 | Learn and Experience the Host Culture. | 2,81 | 0,92 |
| 11 | Leisure and Entertainment Opportunities. | 2,72 | 1,17 | 11 | Leisure and Entertainment Opportunities. | 2,77 | 0,84 |
| 12 | My Friends Also Participate in a Mobility Program. | 2,19 | 1,42 | 12 | My Friends Also Participate in a Mobility Program. | 2,62 | 1,39 |

Table 4. Pull factors ranked by mean score.

| CÓRDOBA | | | | NUREMBERG | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|------|------|-----------|--------------------------------------|------|------|
| Ranking | Pull Factors | Mean | SD | Ranking | Pull Factors | Mean | SD |
| 1 | Language of Instruction. | 3,92 | 1,17 | 1 | Language of Instruction. | 3,97 | 1,04 |
| 2 | Climate. | 3,87 | 1,06 | 2 | Socio-Economic Level. | 3,71 | 1,09 |
| 3 | Lifestyle. | 3,80 | 1,16 | 3 | Communication Network. | 3,69 | 1,14 |
| 4 | Leisure and Cultural Attractive. | 3,71 | 1,18 | 4 | Academic Offer. | 3,66 | 0,93 |
| 5 | Geographic Location. | 3,62 | 1,21 | 5 | Geographic Location. | 3,55 | 1,16 |
| 6 | Academic Offer. | 3,38 | 1,24 | 6 | Size of the City. | 3,53 | 1,09 |
| 7 | Size of the City. | 3,10 | 1,30 | 7 | Leisure and Cultural Attractive. | 3,45 | 0,97 |
| 8 | Cosmopolitan City. | 2,98 | 1,15 | 8 | Geographic Proximity. | 3,11 | 1,31 |
| 9 | Ease of Accommodation. | 2,95 | 1,24 | 9 | Lifestyle. | 2,83 | 0,95 |
| 10 | Entry Requirements to University. | 2,85 | 1,27 | 10 | Entry Requirements to University. | 2,68 | 1,21 |
| 11 | Socio-Economic Level. | 2,84 | 1,18 | 11 | Academic Difficulty Level | 2,50 | 1,05 |
| 12 | Academic Difficulty Level. | 2,67 | 1,12 | 12 | Cosmopolitan City. | 2,41 | 0,98 |
| 13 | Geographic Proximity. | 2,59 | 1,35 | 13 | Ease of Accommodation. | 1,79 | 1,04 |
| 14 | Communication Network. | 2,37 | 1,17 | 14 | Climate. | 1,51 | 0,89 |

Table 5. Satisfaction levels.

| Satisfaction | Very Dissatisfied (%) | Dissatisfied (%) | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (%) | Satisfied (%) | Very Satisfied (%) | Mean | SD |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--|---------------|--------------------|------|-------|
| Córdoba (n = 190) | 0 | 2.6 | 11.6 | 41.1 | 44.7 | 4.28 | 0.771 |
| Nuremberg (n = 205) | 0.5 | 2.4 | 29.8 | 37.1 | 30.2 | 3.94 | 0.861 |

Table 6: Differences on students' satisfaction and recommendation according to the host city.

| | Córdoba | Nuremberg | <i>p</i> |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|
| Satisfaction with the Destination | 4,28 | 3,95 | 0.000* |
| Recommendation of the Destination | 4,61 | 4.10 | 0.000* |

* $p < 0.01$.