Impact of touristic sustainability on satisfaction with touristic services in a world heritage city. The case of the equestrian show in Córdoba (Spain)

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Abstract

Purpose – The main objective of this research is to analyze satisfaction with tourist services linked to the concept of sustainability in the context of a visit to the so-called equestrian show. The equestrian show adds values from the cultures that passed through the city. Specifically, the study focuses on tourist loyalty based on satisfaction with tourist services, satisfaction with the equestrian show and its overall quality. The fieldwork has been conducted in Córdoba, Spain. There are few studies on the relationship between tourist services linked to the concepts of sustainability and loyalty from the perspective of equestrian show management, making this a novel contribution to research.

Design/methodology/approach – The methodology used is based on a partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach.

Findings – To achieve the proposed objective, a structured questionnaire was used, and the results obtained confirm that satisfaction with tourist services linked to the concept of sustainability and the assessment of quality positively influence tourist loyalty. Consequently, they recommend returning to the destination and repeating the visit.

Originality/value – Heritage in Córdoba, Spain, is internationally recognized. Its uniqueness, with four world inscriptions along with the cultures that inhabited it, left a material heritage legacy in the city. Over time, this legacy has made it a magnet for visitors, making it essential to delve into its management and how concepts such as satisfaction with tourist services, combined with sustainability, impact the improvement of the visit.

Keywords Management, Sustainability, Loyalty, Tourism, Heritage

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Tourism, in its constant evolution, has undergone a paradigm shift towards sustainability, where contemporary tourists seek experiences that not only meet their expectations but also align with environmental and social values (Suhartanto *et al.*, 2020). This shift in tourist preferences has led to the need to understand how sustainability influences the perception of the quality of tourism services and, consequently, tourist satisfaction and loyalty. The declaration of Córdoba as a World Heritage City adds an additional layer to this analysis. Heritage cities are not only custodians of cultural heritage but also highly sought-after tourist destinations facing particular challenges in the sustainable management of tourist flows. This duality between heritage preservation and the provision of quality tourism services

establishes fertile ground for exploring the relationship between tourist satisfaction and the sustainability perspective.

The main objective of this study is to analyze the interrelation between tourist satisfaction with the equestrian show, the perception of sustainability in Córdoba, and its effect on tourist loyalty to the city. By exploring these dimensions, we aim to contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of how heritage cities can manage their tourism offerings sustainably, enhancing tourist satisfaction and fostering loyalty. In this context, we focus on the equestrian show in Córdoba as an illustrative case study. Cultural and artistic events often play a crucial role in a city's tourism offerings (Timur and Getz, 2008). The equestrian show not only represents a manifestation of Córdoba's rich historical tradition but also an opportunity to examine how the tourist experience in specific cultural events contributes to satisfaction and loyalty.

As a methodology, a partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) has been utilized as a tool for analyzing complex interrelationships between observed and latent variables. This methodology has been widely used and validated for scientific research in the tourism sector (Sarstedt et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2020). The model employs four variables to measure the recommendation to the city, specifically based on the equestrian show and with factors related to sustainability. The satisfaction with the city's tourism services (SATsv), loyalty (LOY), satisfaction (SAT) and the quality of the equestrian show (QUAL) are individually analyzed (Nguyen et al., 2018). Loyalty is a variable that destinations must study as it is directly related to the profitability of products and services (Ahsan et al., 2019). The results confirm that satisfaction with tourism services linked to the concept of sustainability and the assessment of quality, positively influence tourist loyalty, thus recommending a return to the destination and a repeat visit.

1.1 Satisfaction with tourist services and sustainability perspective

The relationship between satisfaction with tourist services in a city and the sustainability perspective is an emerging topic in contemporary tourism research. The growing environmental and social awareness has led to a shift in how tourists evaluate and experience destinations. This state-of-the-art study will explore existing literature on how tourist satisfaction with a city's services is linked to sustainability perception. Tourist satisfaction is a central construct in tourism research, encompassing the positive evaluation of various aspects of the tourist experience, from service quality to hospitality and cultural authenticity (Chi and Qu, 2008). The well-established positive relationship between tourist satisfaction and loyalty to a destination gains an additional dimension in the context of sustainability. Tourism sustainability involves the responsible management of natural and cultural resources, as well as the promotion of long-term well-being for local communities (Buckley et al., 2019). The sustainability perspective in tourism has become a key factor influencing travel decisions for conscientious and ethical tourists (Dolnicar et al., 2008). Concerns about the environmental and social impact of tourist destinations are shaping tourists' preferences and expectations. Literature suggests that tourist satisfaction with a city's services may be intrinsically linked to sustainability perception. Research indicates that tourists experiencing tourist services aligned with sustainable principles tend to be more satisfied (Han et al., 2019). Factors such as responsible waste management, conservation practices and local community engagement can positively influence tourist satisfaction (Hall, 2010). The perceived quality of sustainable tourist services, spanning environmental management to social equity, can enhance tourist satisfaction and, consequently, loyalty to the destination (Gössling et al., 2021). Transparency in sustainable practices and effective communication about these initiatives are also key elements influencing tourist perception and satisfaction (López-Guzmán et al., 2016).

1.2 Satisfaction with tourist services regarding loyalty and satisfaction
Tourist satisfaction with a city's tourist services plays a crucial role in their travel experience and can influence loyalty to the destination. The relationship between satisfaction with tourist services, loyalty and destination satisfaction has been the subject of numerous studies in tourism. Tourist satisfaction with tourist services refers to visitors' subjective evaluation of various aspects related to their travel experience, such as service quality, staff hospitality, facility comfort and meeting their needs and expectations (Chi and Qu, 2008; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). It has been demonstrated that tourist satisfaction is positively related to their intention to revisit a destination in the future (Bigné *et al.*, 2002). Additionally, satisfaction can influence tourists' intention to recommend the destination to other potential travelers (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). On the other hand, tourist loyalty to a destination refers to their intention to revisit it in the future and recommend it to others (Backman and Crompton, 1991; Chi and Qu, 2008). Loyalty is an important indicator of the satisfaction and emotional connection that tourists have established with the destination (Lee *et al.*, 2005). Several studies have found a positive relationship between tourist satisfaction with tourist services and loyalty to the destination (Bigné *et al.*, 2002; Chi and Qu, 2008). When tourists are satisfied with the services received, they are more likely to revisit the destination in the future and recommend it to other travelers. Destination satisfaction refers to tourists' overall evaluation of the destination as a whole, including aspects such as quality of life, hospitality of residents, natural beauty and cultural resources (Chi and Qu, 2008; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). Destination satisfaction is closely related to satisfaction with tourist services, as these contribute to the overall travel experience (Bigné *et al.*, 2002; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). A destination that achieves high levels of satisfaction among tourists can generate greater loyalty to the place and a higher likelihood of visitors returning in the future.

1.3 Satisfaction with tourist services regarding quality
Tourist satisfaction is a multidimensional construct encompassing various aspects of the tourist experience, including the quality of services provided (Bigné *et al.*, 2002). Research indicates that tourist satisfaction is closely related to the quality of tourist services provided by a city (Chi and Qu, 2008). Tourists tend to positively evaluate destinations where services, from infrastructure to hospitality, meet or exceed their expectations (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). Perceived quality is a crucial indicator in the tourism context, and its importance lies in its link to tourist satisfaction (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1990). Studies suggest that the perceived quality of tourist services has a direct impact on tourist satisfaction and, ultimately, loyalty to the destination (Bigné *et al.*, 2002; Chen and Tsai, 2007). The literature highlights several factors contributing to the perception of the quality of tourist services. Safety, cleanliness, efficiency, cultural authenticity and positive interaction with staff are key aspects (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). The quality of services in transportation, accommodation, gastronomy and tourist attractions also plays an essential role (Chi and Qu, 2008). The positive relationship between satisfaction with tourist services and perceived quality has significant implications for tourist loyalty. Satisfied visitors are more likely to return to the destination and recommend it to others (Backman and Crompton, 1991). Perceived quality becomes a key predictor of tourist loyalty to a city as a tourist destination (Chi and Qu, 2008).

1.4 Destination image and satisfaction regarding loyalty
Tourist satisfaction is directly related to loyalty to the destination, so promotional strategies should focus on relevant factors such as travel quality and tourist satisfaction (Suhartanto *et al.*, 2020). In this regard, the destination image is considered a significant factor influencing tourist behavioral intentions and subsequent decisions (Kanwel *et al.*, 2019). Both destination

image and perceived value are considered important antecedents of tourist satisfaction and can influence destination choice (Sun *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, it is crucial to consider dimensions closely related to destination loyalty, such as perceived well-being, received services and destination image. These variables are directly linked to acquired loyalty and play a relevant role in the decision to return to the destination (Chen and Tsai, 2007) and in spreading positive references about it (Ryglová *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, factors such as pre-travel evaluation, reference search and expectations before the trip, as well as post-trip experiences, are all relevant elements in tourist loyalty to the destination (Baloglu, 2001).

2. Hypothesis development

Loyalty is a variable that must be studied by destinations as it is directly related to the profitability of products and services (Ahsan *et al.*, 2019). It encompasses variables that impact tourists' intention to visit a cultural heritage site and recommend it to others. To achieve this objective, satisfaction with the city's tourist services (SATsv), loyalty (LOY), satisfaction (SAT) and the quality of the equestrian show (QUAL) (Nguyen *et al.*, 2018) are individually analyzed. The proposed model for this study employs four variables to measure the recommendation to the city, specifically based on the equestrian show and factors related to sustainability.

In this section, the hypotheses for empirical research are established. The main goal of this research is to identify significant factors influencing recommendation, utilizing attendance at a show whose sustainability and alignment with the city are emphasized in its promotions. In this regard, a methodology is proposed that analyzes five hypotheses based on the literature previously reviewed. Therefore, based on the literature review conducted, the following hypotheses are presented:
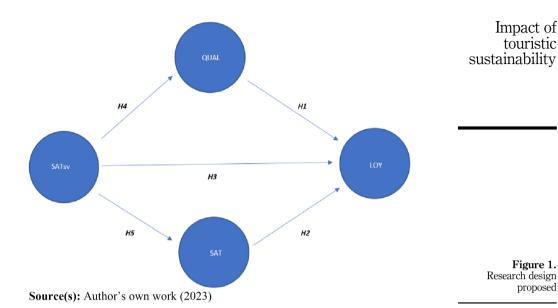
H1. The quality of the equestrian show has a significant and positive relationship with loyalty to the destination.

H2. Satisfaction with the equestrian show has a significant and positive relationship with loyalty to the destination.

H3. Satisfaction with the city's tourist services at the equestrian show has a significant and positive relationship with loyalty to the destination.

H4. Satisfaction with the city's tourist services has a significant and positive relationship with the quality of the equestrian show.

H5. Satisfaction with the city's tourist services has a significant and positive relationship with satisfaction with the equestrian show.

The relationships between the different factors observable in the model are illustrated in Figure 1 (Proposed Model).

3. Methodology

3.1 Description of Cordoba's culture and its relationship with horses

Cordoba is a tourist destination focused on heritage tourism, as it is a city with four inscriptions on the World Heritage List, chronologically: The Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba in 1984, the Historic Center of the City just ten years later, the Festival of the Patios of Cordoba in 2012 as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and finally, in 2018, the declaration of the City of Medina Azahara as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site in addition to receiving numerous awards or accolades from tourism and travel platforms as one of the most visited/best-rated destinations in the world.

Figure 1.
Research design
proposed

Source(s): Author's own work (2023)

The city of Cordoba has a rich and diverse history, dating back to before the city's foundation, with the presence of pre-Roman civilizations in the Iberian Peninsula and our land. Since its foundation in 169 B.C., by the Roman general Claudio Marcelo, Cordoba has had two significant periods in history when it was a renowned city. From its designation in 27 B.C. as the capital of Bética Hispana, carried out by Emperor Augustus, Roman Corduba experienced a period of splendor, becoming one of the most important cities in the Roman Empire. Later, after the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 711, Al-Andalus was founded and Cordoba was named the capital of the emirate of the Umayyad dynasty, founded by Abderraman I. From this moment onwards, Cordoba entered another period of splendor, reaching its peak during the Caliphate of Cordoba, where the city became the main cultural center of the West. Cordoba was the cradle of purebred Arabian horses, as horse breeding saw significant development in Al-Andalus, reaching its peak during the Caliphate, with Cordoba as the capital where the best and most advanced techniques for conservation and purity were concentrated.

After the end of Muslim rule in 1,492, a few years earlier, Cordoba became annexed to the Kingdom of Spain. In this context, with cultures overlapping and imprints left on the city in 1,572, Felipe II ordered the construction of the "Royal Stables of Cordoba." This building was erected next to the so-called Alcazar of the Christian Monarchs and during this period, the Arabian breed was crossed with the so-called baroque horse, thus creating the pure Spanish breed.

The Royal Stables of Cordoba building was used for horse breeding from 1842 until 1995 when it became a Cavalry barracks, dedicated to equine reproduction. The Army Stallion Depot was established there until 1995, after which it was repurposed. In 1996, it began to host the spectacle "Passion and Spirit of the Andalusian Horse," fulfilling Felipe II's dream for the delight of the observer (Carrasco and López Rodríguez, 2016).

3.2 Questionnaire and scale
Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire given to each visitor after experiencing the equestrian show "Pasión y Duende del Caballo Andaluz." Surveys were conducted between September and December 2022. The proper validation of the survey and

the formulation of questions were based on established items from previous research. Once the items were obtained, a two-stage refinement process was followed. First, the proposed items were analyzed by one researcher; second, the final survey was tested and verified by the researcher from the University of Córdoba. With this procedure, the proper validity of the items comprising the constructs of the theoretical model designed in this research was verified twice.

The interviews were organized into four parts. Firstly, questions were asked about satisfaction with the equestrian show, secondly, about satisfaction with tourist services before the show, then questions about recommending the show and the intention to return to the city, and finally, questions about the demographic profile of the tourist. The questions were measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1: totally disagree to 5: totally agree. Questions previously tested in other studies, as shown in Table 1, were adapted and used in this research. Before starting the interview, visitors were asked for their cooperation, and their anonymity was assured. The interviews constituted the questionnaire with the four parts of the designed theoretical model (Figure 1): satisfaction with the show, quality, satisfaction with tourist services and loyalty. Demographic profile items were included at the end of the survey. The total number of items used for our model was 30, after the item refinement process through calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each construct. A pretest of 10 surveys was conducted. In total, the number of valid questionnaires was 325.

Following Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), the total Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the items was calculated, resulting in a value of 0.911, which is considered acceptable since a scale is generally deemed acceptable if its Cronbach's alpha is above 0.7. The data from this research have been tabulated and analyzed using the statistical system IBM SPSS 23 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, New York, USA) and the structural equation modeling software Smart-PLS (Partial Least Squares). The SEM method is considered the most appropriate form in the literature to validate the hypotheses proposed in structural equations and to confirm the model of complex relationships. The Smart-PLS 3.2.9 program for partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) is used as a tool for analyzing complex interrelationships between observed and latent variables and has been widely used and validated for scientific research in the tourism sector (Sarstedt et al., 2019, 2020).

4. Results

The main findings from the fieldwork are described below, differentiated by the addressed blocks. Firstly, the results of the descriptive analysis regarding the sociodemographic profile of the surveyed tourists during their visit to the equestrian show are presented (see Table 2); secondly, an evaluation of the reliability and validity of the proposed model is conducted; and finally, the hypothesis testing is carried out.

Concerning the descriptive results of the sociodemographic profile of visitors to the equestrian show, as shown in Table 2, it is observed that 50.46% of the respondents were women, while 49.54% were men. The surveys were answered by age groups: under 25 years (9.85%), 26–39 years (24.00%), 40–59 years (49.23%) and 60 or more (16.92%).

4.1 Evaluation of model reliability and validity

The proposed model for this study, as shown in Figure 1, illustrates the interaction of relationships among the research elements. An evaluation of the model was conducted to analyze the validity and reliability of the constructs, identifying which of them are reflective or formative. The obtained results indicate that the observed variables measure the theoretical constructs proposed earlier (Hair et al., 2011).

Authors	Dimension	Indicator
Ghanbari *et al.* (2021), González Santa Cruz *et al.* (2020), Hassan *et al.* (2020), Adzovie and Jibril (2020), Chen and Huang (2019)	Quality (QUAL)	(QUAL 1) The staff in the venue is attentive and responsive to the audience, (QUAL 2) The presenter is suitable and the explanations are appropriate, (QUAL 3) The venue has a tourism quality label or similar, (QUAL 4) The appearance of the venue staff is correct, (QUAL 5) Watching the show makes me feel special as a tourist or visitor, (QUAL 6) The visit is comfortable and appropriate, (QUAL 7) The group size is suitable, (QUAL 8) The restrooms are adequate, (QUAL 9) There was language availability, (QUAL 10) The stands are comfortable
Goncalves *et al.* (2021), Saneva and Chortoseva (2020), Yin and Dai (2021), Ali *et al.* (2019), Agyeiwaah *et al.* (2019)	Loyalty (LOY)	(LOY1) I will recommend to family and friends, (LOY2) I am satisfied with visiting Córdoba and attending an equestrian show, (LOY3) I will boast about my visit to the Royal Stables and the world of horses, (LOY4) I will seek this type of tourism in other destinations again, (LOY5) The horse and the culture around it make visiting a destination attractive
Rogerson and Rogerson (2021), Davras and Özperçin (2021), Deng and Tang (2020), Yasami *et al.* (2020), Hsu and Scott (2020)	Satisfaction Tourist Services (SATsv)	(SATsv1) Restaurants aligned with sustainability, (SATsv2) Security, (SATsv3) Accommodation aligned with sustainability, (SATsv4) Souvenir shop, (SATsv5) Artisan shop, (SATsv6) Tourist information office provides sustainable concepts, (SATsv7) Cultural activity
Hernández-Rojas and Huete Alcocer (2021), Mora *et al.* (2021), Rodríguez-Gutiérrez *et al.* (2020), Widjaja *et al.* (2020), Perles-Ribes *et al.* (2020), Carvache-Franco *et al.* (2020), Özdemir-güzel and Baş (2020)	Satisfaction (SAT)	(SAT1) The show caters to the audience and is sustainable, (SAT2) The show is dynamic, (SAT3) The horses and riders master the performed dance and show, (SAT4) After the visit, I understand the equestrian world and its relationship with culture, along with sustainability, (SAT5) It is worth the price paid because it contributes to maintenance, (SAT6) The historical building is worth visiting, (SAT7) The horses and riders master the performed dance and show while being sustainable, (SAT8) The show adapts to the audience

Source(s): Authors' own work (2023)

Subsequently, the validity and reliability of the construct means were ensured before drawing conclusions about the relationships between them (Tompson *et al.*, 1995). The constructs that are formative in the model (loyalty) have been evaluated following recommendations (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2020). Initially, loyalty is considered, following Henseler (2017), as a formative indicator in the proposed model. In line with other authors (Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer, 2001; Mathieson *et al.*, 2001), when using formative constructs, we must assess the presence of multicollinearity among the different indicators composing the construct. Following this idea, positive tests of convergent validity have been

Variable	Categories	Absolute frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender (n = 325)			
Male		161	49.54
Female		164	50.46
Age (n = 325)			
[Up to 25]		32	9.85
[26–39]		78	24.00
[40–59]		160	49.23
60 or more		55	16.92
Education level (n = 325)			
High school		26	8
University studies		173	53
Professional training		116	36
Others		10	3
Source(s): Authors' own work (2023)			

conducted through redundancy analysis of these constructs (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). These tests were followed by assessing collinearity, with the calculation of the variance inflation factor (VIF) < 5. A value of 5 or less would indicate the absence of high multicollinearity (Belsley, 1991). The indicators of formative constructs were evaluated through weighting, finding them to be significant (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2020), as shown in Table 3. The resulting values in Table 3 demonstrate the absence of collinearity in the variables forming the loyalty construct.

4.1.1 Composite reliability (CR). Therefore, construct reliability allows us to verify whether the indicators truly measure the constructs. The results in Table 4 indicate that all constructs are reliable, as their composite or joint reliability is > 0.7. These values are considered "satisfactory to good" because they fall between 0.70 and 0.95 (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2014). The composite reliability (CR) index is similar to Cronbach's alpha, with the difference that CR is not influenced by the number of items in the scale. Following Hair *et al.* (2012), the accepted level of CR is 0.7 and 0.8 more strictly. In our study, CR is observed in Table 4. The more stringent level of 0.8 is exceeded in all four indicators, thus validating the internal consistency of the model.

4.1.2 Convergent validity. Convergent validity is used to assess the extent to which all items aim to measure the same thing, with all indicators being highly correlated. The most common measure to evaluate convergent validity in PLS-SEM is the average variance extracted (AVE). Using the same basis as that used for individual indicators, an AVE value of 50% or more means that, on average, the construct explains more than half of the variance of its own indicator (Hair *et al.*, 2011; Henseler *et al.*, 2015; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2020). Table 5 shows the AVE value, with a value above 0.5 in all constructs. As demonstrated in Table 5, all indicators meet these criteria because the diagonal elements should be significantly larger than the off-diagonal elements in the corresponding rows and columns (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). This condition is fulfilled for each construct concerning the other constructs.

4.1.3 Discriminant validity. This index indicates the extent to which a construct is different from others. The positive acceptance range requires values on the diagonal to be significantly higher than those in the respective rows and columns. In the case of this research, discriminant validity is shown in Table 6. The mentioned requirements are fulfilled by the model.

4.2 Hypothesis testing
4.2.1 Explained variance (R^2). Once the measurement model of the samples was validated, the evaluation of the internal model was carried out. This was done to verify the proposed

	External weights	VIF
Loy1	0.236	2.898
Loy2	0.261	2.782
Loy3	0.228	2.466
Loy4	0.206	2.012
Loy5	0.243	2.684
Qual1	0.137	2.483
Qual2	0.041	4.445
Qual3	0.142	2.668
Qual4	0.151	3.718
Qual5	0.170	3.315
Qual6	0.153	2.902
Qual7	0.173	2.436
Qual8	0.123	2.055
Qual9	0.128	2.022
Qual10	0.073	1.634
Sat1	0.167	4.666
Sat2	0.153	3.364
Sat3	0.149	3.780
Sat4	0.117	2.567
Sat5	0.157	4.287
Sat6	0.156	3.702
Sat7	0.116	1.793
Sat8	0.159	2.570
Satsvos1	0.236	2.282
Satsvos2	0.236	2.320
Satsvos3	0.223	2.143
Satsvos4	0.124	3.048
Satsvos5	0.125	2.675
Satsvos6	0.148	2.344
Satsvos7	0.199	2.043

Source(s): Authors' own work (2023)

Table 3.
Individual item reliability (formative)

Constructs		Fiabilidad Compuesta
LOY	Loyalty	0.933
QUAL	Quality	0.878
SAT	Satisfaction	0.926
SATsv	Satisfaction Services	0.909

Source(s): Authors' own work (2023)

Table 4.
Composite reliability

		Average extracted variance (AVE)
LOY	Loyalty	0.658
QUAL	Quality	0.512
SAT	Satisfaction	0.678
SATsv	Satisfaction services	0.509

Source(s): Authors' own work (2023)

Table 5.
Average variance extracted

hypotheses for the relationships between constructs. To do this, the R^2 value was calculated, and the significance of the relationships could be analyzed (Hair *et al.*, 2011). Table 7 shows the results corresponding to the explained variance of the endogenous constructs, which was found by analyzing the calculated values, for R2 values, allowing for the assessment of the predictive power of the model (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

4.2.2 Bootstrapping. Following the aforementioned, a Student's t-distribution with 499 degrees of freedom (n-1, where n represents the number of subsamples) is performed to calculate the significance of the Path Coefficients. In this way, values with significance levels of 0.007, 0.000 and 0.010 are obtained. Accordingly, Table 8 presents the relationship under study, the expected effect of that relationship, the Path Coefficient, the t-value and whether the relationship has been supported or not. Thus, it is confirmed that all five proposed hypotheses are accepted.

H1. The quality of the equestrian show has a significant and positive relationship with the loyalty of the visit to the destination.

H2. Satisfaction with the equestrian show has a significant and positive relationship with the loyalty to the destination.

H3. Satisfaction with the tourist services of the city in the equestrian show has a significant and positive relationship with loyalty to the destination.

	LOY	QUAL	SAT	SATsv
LOY	1.000	0.727	0.802	0.685
QUAL	0.727	1.000	0.784	0.598
SAT	0.802	0.784	1.000	0.658
SATsv	0.685	0.598	0.658	1.000

Table 6. Discriminant validity

Source(s): Authors' own work (2023)

	Loy	Qual	Sat	SatSv
Loy	0.811			
Qual	0.727	0.716		
Sat	0.802	0.784	0.824	
SatSv	0.685	0.598	0.658	0.713

Table 7. Explained variance

Source(s): Authors' own work (2023)

Hipótesis	Effect	Coefficient *Path*	Valor *t*	*p*-Valor	¿Soportada?
QUAL → LOY	+	0.201	0.141	0.000	SI
SAT → LOY	+	0.481	0.159	0.000	SI
SATSV → LOY	+	0.248	0.115	0.000	Sí
SATSV → QUAL	+	0.598	0.097	0.001	Sí
SATSV → SAT	+	0.658	0.088	0.000	Sí

Table 8. Hypothesis testing

Note(s): a = 0.001 (***); a = 0.01 (**); a = 0.05 (*); n.s. = not supported
Source(s): Authors' own work (2023)

H4. Satisfaction with the tourist services of the city has a significant and positive relationship with the quality of the equestrian show.

H5. Satisfaction with the tourist services of the city has a significant and positive relationship with the satisfaction of the equestrian show.

Thus, Hypothesis H1 (there is a positive and significant relationship and the quality of the equestrian show has a significant and positive relationship with the loyalty of the visit to the destination), Hypothesis H2 (Satisfaction with the equestrian show has a significant and positive relationship with the loyalty to the destination), and Hypothesis H3 (Satisfaction with the tourist services of the city in the equestrian show has a significant and positive relationship with loyalty to the destination) have been supported. H4. Satisfaction with the tourist services of the city has a significant and positive relationship with the quality of the equestrian show is confirmed. H5 Satisfaction with the tourist services of the city has a significant and positive relationship with the satisfaction of the equestrian show. Figure 2 shows the causal relationships of the proposed model.

5. Discussion
This study delves into the growing importance of the sustainability concept, investigating how sustainability, combined with tourism services, is directly related to visitor loyalty. The analysis focuses on tourist services, satisfaction and the overall experience, specifically in the context of equestrian shows. The study identifies the most differentiating aspects influencing
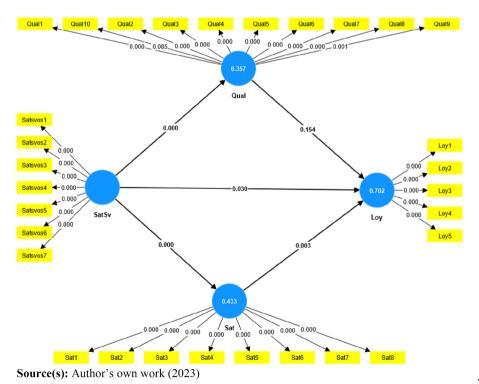

Figure 2.
Causal relationships of the model

Source(s): Author's own work (2023)

tourist loyalty when attending an equestrian show in a city with a rich cultural history shaped by diverse civilizations.

The opinions of visitors during their visits helped identify the factors influencing loyalty through satisfaction with the equestrian show and satisfaction with tourist services. The goal was to pinpoint the most significant determinants for the study. The first hypothesis (H1) demonstrated that the quality of the equestrian show has a significant and positive relationship with the loyalty of the visit to the destination. Accordingly, visitors who enjoy the show appreciate the accumulated culture in the region, understanding the city's evolution and providing recommendations. In practical terms, destination managers should identify shows that meet the quality standards necessary to attract recommendations and repeat visits.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) tested how satisfaction with the equestrian show has a significant and positive relationship with loyalty to the destination. This relationship between satisfaction and loyalty has been demonstrated in various contexts, such as gastronomy, museum visits, or archaeological site visits. However, this study makes a unique contribution by focusing specifically on equestrian shows.

Satisfaction with tourist services in the city, coupled with sustainability concepts in the equestrian show, was found to have a significant and positive relationship with loyalty to the destination (H3), the quality of the equestrian show (H4) and satisfaction with the equestrian show itself (H5). Previous research supports these relationships in terms of loyalty, quality and overall satisfaction with tourist services.

The American customer satisfaction index (ACSI) model was employed in this study to investigate visitor loyalty in the context of an equestrian show experience. This type of experience plays a significant role in the future of cultural cities, especially those with a strong historical connection to horses. The created structural equation model was used to study loyalty and its relationship with satisfaction with tourist services, the quality of the equestrian show and satisfaction with the show itself.

6. Conclusion and limitations
Equestrian shows in the context of a UNESCO World Heritage city can act as a magnet, provided they have a historical connection with horses, as is the case in Córdoba. To be effective, these shows must offer high-quality performances, sustainable tourist services and viewer satisfaction. Such shows can contribute to positive recommendations from visitors, as evidenced by the study's results. Key factors that enhance the equestrian show experience include attentive staff, language availability, comfortable and accessible facilities and supplementary services such as sustainable restaurants and hotels. These positive perceptions influence visitor loyalty to the destination, especially when the show successfully combines "dance" and "horses." The brand established by the show, coupled with the perceived quality after the visit, becomes a recognized attribute for travelers seeking to explore local culture through accessible heritage.

This study holds significant theoretical and practical implications for territorial management in culturally rich cities with historical remnants, emphasizing sustainability. Firstly, it underscores the importance of tourist services and their connection to sustainability to increase repeat visits to the city. To foster tourist loyalty, involved stakeholders should address tourist expectations, the perceived service quality, visitor satisfaction and their intention to recommend the destination and revisit. The study recommends the careful management and improvement of equestrian shows and associated services. Theoretical understanding of how the ACSI model operates in the context of equestrian shows can enhance tourist loyalty. From a practical perspective, the results affirm that equestrian show management can influence future visitor behavior, implying that the

tourism sector should consider these factors to enhance tourist loyalty. Policymakers should explore new management methods to provide tourists with memorable experiences, encompassing information management, preservation, prestige and safety.

Despite its contributions, the research has potential limitations. Firstly, the sample used was limited to visitors of a specific equestrian show, which may indicate that the data collected are indicative of that particular tourist site. This limitation could be addressed by conducting surveys at other equestrian shows in cities with a strong cultural heritage component. Additionally, a longitudinal study capturing tourists' emotions over time would enable a more precise measurement of variables. Another limitation is the lack of measurement for the visitor's perspective on care and perception, suggesting the need for further exploration. Future research should include other internal and external variables, offering a more in-depth examination of the relationship between tourist services, satisfaction with the equestrian show experience and loyalty.

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