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Does local cuisine influence the image of a World Heritage destination and subsequent loyalty to that destination?

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Abstract

The World Heritage Cities face various challenges including how to gain the loyalty of tourists and visitors while ensuring sustainability. This study explores tourist loyalty to World Heritage Sites based on traditional gastronomy and in particular the role played by tourists' satisfaction with restaurants serving local cuisine. First, a literature review was carried out, on the basis of which a questionnaire was developed to administer to a sample of tourists who had experienced the local gastronomy of the city. The objective of this study is to analyse whether the gastronomic satisfaction with the traditional cuisine of the place influences the overall image that visitors have of a World Heritage City, as well as the cognitive and affective image, and their future behaviour in terms of repeating the visit and subsequently recommending the city of Córdoba (Spain).

The research method used is PLS-SEM with a structural equation model to evaluate the eight proposed hypotheses. The results show how satisfaction with traditional restaurants influences visitors' cognitive, affective and overall image of the city, and also positively influences their loyalty to this destination. A novel aspect of this research concerns the influence that satisfaction with traditional restaurants exerts on the image of a destination. As a result, potential areas for improvement in traditional gastronomy at World Heritage sites have been identified.

Keywords: traditional restaurant, loyalty to destination; cognitive image, affective image, overall image.

1. Introduction

Food has become an essential element in the attractiveness of a tourist destination (Lai et al, 2018; Stone et al, 2018; Kim et al., 2021). Gastronomy offers new opportunities and resources in addition to generating economic benefits (Andersson et al., 2017). Competition to attract visitors means that tourist destinations, particularly destinations that have a World Heritage component, have to present their most attractive image (Huang et al, 2021). The general aim of doing so is economic improvement (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al, 2015). In this context, it is necessary to explore new ways of enhancing the tourist visit and differentiating the destination from other World Heritage Cities, since the image of the destination is considered a primary element in

tourists' final assessment of the destination and their future behaviour (Bigné et al, 2001; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). When a tourist or visitor has a positive image of a certain product or tourist destination, they are more likely to repeat the trip in the future (Loi et al., 2017) in addition to recommending it to family and friends (Prayag et al., 2017).

In this study, gastronomy and tourist satisfaction with gastronomy are measured to determine their influence on the image of the destination, which represents a contribution of this research.

The gastronomy of a region as a characteristic and intrinsic value is used by destinations to attract tourists and visitors (Lai et al, 2018), generating a relationship between the gastronomic experience and the image of the destination (Hsu and Scott, 2020). As a result of tourist's experience, their image of the destination can be modified by actual emotional experiences and their post-visit assessments (Akgün et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to understand the relationship between the traditional gastronomic experience through restaurants and the cognitive and affective image of the destination, and in turn tourists' loyalty to the destination and likelihood of recommending it. Thus, to implement effective tourism policies and strategies, it is essential to understand tourists' choice of destinations (Pan et al , 2021) according to the different characteristics of the place. Taking as a starting point the abovementioned relationships, the image of the destination is a factor that influences the choice of a tourist destination.

In the literature, the concept of the image of the destination is linked to the satisfaction with the tourist site, behavioural intentions and the choice of it in the future. However, the image that a tourist may have of a destination can be very personal, involving individual and relative perceptions about a place (Bigné et al., 2001; Gallarza et al., 2002; San Martín and del Bosque, 2008). Consequently, tourists' opinions are very subjective as they may have a very different appreciation of the same tourist destination, depending on their thoughts and emotions. Numerous authors have investigated the components that form the image of a tourist destination, primarily focusing on the cognitive and the affective. The cognitive image represents the tourist's knowledge and beliefs about a place, while the affective image refers to the tourist's feelings or emotional responses to it. These variables have been widely studied in the literature (Garther, 1994; Baloglu, 1998; Chen and Uysal, 2002; Beerli and Martin, 2004; Pike and Ryan, 2004; San Martín and del Bosque, 2008, 2011; Royo-Vela, 2009; Maher and Carter, 2011; Smith et al., 2015). The combination of these two components, the affective and the cognitive, form the overall image (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). Said image includes individual characteristics and both tangible and intangible features; that is, common aspects as well as the unique elements that distinguish a place (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003). Therefore, when tourists and visitors have enjoyed something (activities, food, events, etc.) in a destination, they often link it to the image they create of the destination (Huang et al., 2015).

Thus, this study analyses the relationships between the following variables: satisfaction with a restaurant serving traditional gastronomy and the cognitive and the affective image of the destination, the overall image as a combination of both components, and loyalty. In the literature, there are several studies including these variables; however, only a few take into account the relationship between gastronomic satisfaction and the image of the destination and loyalty to it. Thus, a contribution of the present study is that it analyses how satisfaction with the traditional restaurant of the destination affects the image of it. Many authors conclude that a traditional restaurant is one that is based on the local food movement and that sources produce mainly or exclusively from local farmers (Akama and Kieti, 2003; Campbell et al, 2014; Lang and

Lemmerer, 2019), making recipes that have been passed down from generation to generation (Youn et al., 2020). Thus, examining the nature and processes that cognitive factors influence the perception of the taste of local food, help in the development of gastronomic tourism destinations. This work adds value in this concept. Therefore, it is empirically reaffirmed how psychology, neuroscience, and design are causing changes not only in what we put on our plates, but also in the way we experience and perceive it (Spence, 2011).

This research can be used to enhance the management of the image of Córdoba (Spain), a World Heritage City, especially in order to secure benefits with regard to attracting potential tourists, the likelihood of tourists recommending the city as a destination for its traditional gastronomy, and their intention to visit it again, among many other factors. The research uses an American Customer Satisfaction Index (Fornell et al., 1996) model that has been fully tested for use in research on tourism (Bezerra and Gomes, 2019), tourism satisfaction (Huang et al., 2015), heritage (Jimber et al., 2020) and gastronomy (Hernández-Rojas et al., 2021). To this end, the first section conducts a review of the literature on the main variables; the proposed model is aimed at analysing the influence that satisfaction with the gastronomic experience exerts on the overall image perceived by tourists, as well as on the aforementioned cognitive and affective components. Finally, the relationship of the overall image with loyalty to a destination has been studied, intention to revisit or recommend the Spanish city of Córdoba. The second section presents the design of the survey and the methodology used, the third details the results obtained, and the last, the discussion and conclusions of the research.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 The gastronomic experience in traditional restaurants and its influence on destination image

Tourists' experience with food has a significant influence on their feelings about the place (Stajcic, 2013), thus strengthening the relationship between the food experience and the image of the destination (Hsu and Scott, 2020). Baloglu and McCleary (1999) highlight the relevance of the image of the destination as an influence on the choice of tourist destinations. Therefore, the image is appreciated as a primary factor in tourists' intention to return and recommend the destination; therefore, it is critical for the managers of those destinations (Bigné et al., 2001).

The concept of the image of the destination has been one of the most widely researched topics in tourism studies (Cherifi et al., 2014; Fu et al, 2016), with analyses from a range of different perspectives, including sociology, environmental management and psychology or marketing and consumer behaviour (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005; Stepchenkova and Morrison, 2008). All these studies converge on the importance of the image of the destination as a fundamental element in the promotion of tourist destinations, and a factor that differentiates one destination from another, thus being a determining factor of success (Gallarza et al, 2002; Qu et al., 2011). The first work on the image of the destination dates back to the work of Hunt (1971) (Gartner and Hunt, 1987; Embacher and Buttle, 1989; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991), and it remains a much studied subject. Indeed, the relevance of the role played by the image in the tourist promotion of a given place is reflected in the notable number of studies that have contributed to the literature in recent decades, coming from various

different approaches (Deng and Li, 2014). Studies have mostly focused on its conceptualization and dimension (Hunt, 1971; Crompton, 1979; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Tasci and Gartner, 2007; Tasci et al., 2007; Stepchenkova and Morrison, 2008), the effect of destination image on tourist behaviour (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005; Tasci and Gartner, 2007), destination image management (Goodrich, 1978; Baloglu, 1998; Pike, 2009), and the formation of image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Beerli and Martín, 2004; Royo-Vela, 2009). Of these topics, the formation of the target image is probably the most critical and extensively examined (Deng and Li, 2014).

2.2 Satisfaction with the traditional restaurant and its relationship with cognitive and affective aspects of the image of the destination

The cognitive and affective images of a destination, as well as satisfaction with restaurants have been studied in relation to full-service restaurant by Jani and Han (2011), restaurants located in luxury hotels, confirming the relationship with future behavioural intention (Han and Hyun, 2017), or steakhouse restaurant chains (Wu, et al., 2020). However, there are few studies on traditional gastronomy in World Heritage Cities and its relationship with cognitive and affective aspects of destination image. This study makes a contribution in this regard.

The cognitive aspect of the image can help us to know the different opinions or beliefs that tourists may have about the functional attributes of the destination. To evaluate the cognitive component of the image, it is necessary to take into account the attributes analysed in several studies (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Fakey and Compton, 1991; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Gallarza et al., 2002; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Beerli and Martin, 2004; Chi and Qu, 2008; Beerli and León, 2012). They include: great variety of fauna and flora; places of historical or cultural interest; the richness and beauty of the landscape; uncommon ways of life and customs; interesting cultural activities; shopping; good nightlife; varied gastronomy; opportunities for sport activities; good general infrastructure and access; luxury; fashion; exoticism; a good name and reputation; a good quality of life; offers personal security; cleanliness; friendly, hospitable people; good beaches; good weather; and good infrastructure in terms of hotels and apartments (Beerli and Martín, 2004).

Most of the studies carried out only take into account the cognitive component of the image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Beerli and Martin, 2004; Chi and Qu, 2008). In fact, in the work of Pike (2002), it is shown that of the 142 studies carried out, only 6 address the affective or psychological component. However, more and more researchers are taking into account the role of the affective dimension of destination image. Examples of this are the 24 studies identified by Afshardoost and Eshaghi (2020) that analyse the affective image of various tourist destinations. However, the effect that the cognitive image exerts on the affective one must also be highlighted (Huete-Alcocer et al., 2019; Styliadis, 2020).

Although the affective component has been explored in fewer studies, it turns out to be of special relevance in improving the tourist's perceived image of a destination (Beerli and León, 2012), since it relates to the feelings that he/she has about a destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Hallmann et al., 2015). Some studies have sought to explain feelings, as information, in terms of how individuals make use of their emotions and impressions to develop a predisposition towards a destination (Kock et al., 2016). The fact that the affective component of image has been less studied does not make it any less important (Huete and López, 2020). To measure it, Baloglu and

McCleary (1999), as well as many other authors (Bigné et al., 2001; Kim and Richardson, 2003; Beerli and Martín, 2004; Pike and Ryan, 2004; Chi and Qu, 2008; Chen et al., 2016), have leaned on the work of Russell and Pratt (1980), agreeing that the attributes that can best capture this component of the image are unpleasant/nice; stressful/relaxing; boring/fun; depressing/exciting (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Bigné et al., 2001; Kim and Richardson, 2003; Beerli and Martín, 2004; Chi and Qu 2008, Chen et al., 2016; Stylos et al. 2016; Styliadis et al., 2017); and negative/positive (Stylos et al. 2016).

2.3 Satisfaction with the traditional restaurant: its relationship with the overall image of the destination and its cognitive and affective components

The relationship of restaurant satisfaction with the overall image of the destination has been confirmed by some studies (Prayag, 2009; Nam, 2011), although often linked with other concepts such as shopping tourism (Al-Ansi and Han, 2019). However, there has been less attention exclusively on the traditional gastronomic experience in the context of World Heritage Cities.

A worthwhile issue to study in tourism research is thus how tourists or visitors value and prefer destinations depending on their characteristics, with gastronomy being a relevant factor in the choice of a tourist destination and in the formation of destination image. In this regard, tourist image has become a fundamental factor when it comes to attracting tourists; indeed, Akama and Kieti (2003) suggested that success in attracting tourists to a destination may depend more on the overall image than on any other more specific dimension. Thus, the attributes that Baloglu and McCleary (1999) considered in their study of the overall image have been taken into account in numerous subsequent investigations: (1) the overall image is positive, (2) selecting this destination was a good choice, (3) it is a good destination to visit and (4) its reputation is good.

The fact that the overall image of a destination is influenced by cognitive and affective assessments has been widely recognized in the tourism literature (Stern and Krakover, 1993; Baloglu, 1996; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Mackay and Fesenmaier, 2000; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Hosany et al., 2007), as has the intermediary role played by the affective component between the cognitive dimension and the overall image of a tourist (e.g., Beerli and Martín, 2004; Fu et al, 2016).

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) set out a general framework of destination image formation is based on the cognitive, affective and overall or general components, with the latter being the combination of the first two. Thus, studies such as that of Marine-Roig and Clavé (2016) demonstrated that cognitive elements represent 58% of the overall image and affective components the other 42%. That said, for tourists, the affective component has a significant influence on both satisfaction and loyalty to the destination (Marine-Roig and Clavé, 2016; Akgün et al., 2020).

In the field of tourism research, the image of the destination has been identified as a direct antecedent of satisfaction (Bigné et al., 2001; Chen and Tsai, 2007; Chi and Qu, 2008; Qu et al., 2011; Hallmann et al,2015). However, this study first evaluates the satisfaction of the tourist with the gastronomic experience in order to then see how it affects the formation of the image of a World Heritage City. This in itself is a novelty of the research, since the aim is to demonstrate how satisfaction with gastronomy influences the image of a tourist destination.

2.4 The role of the traditional restaurant experience in loyalty to the destination

A number of different studies have evaluated the quality of the local gastronomic experience and its contribution to the intention to return and recommend the destination to future tourists (Correia et al., 2020; Ghanem, 2019; Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019). In this context, there are studies on foreign tourists in places like Indonesia (Widjaja et al., 2020) and their gastronomic experiences, with an emphasis on local food markets (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2013). The study by Allan (2016) focuses on the Middle East, specifically Jordan, identifying a lack of commercialization of local cuisine in the management of the destination. In Italy, there are studies on gastronomic experiences based on unique gastronomic specialties of a region, where these types of local products are found to improve the probability of recommending the destination (Alderighi et al., 2016).

Participation and memorable food-based experiences can foster food tourist's lasting loyalty to local produce and destination. Studies show that culinary experiences can engage tourists and provide new customers with positive memories, encouraging their intention to continue buying, when they return to their place of residence, local products tasted during a holiday, and to revisit the destination in the future (Di-Clemente et al, 2019).

In short, these studies show that the greater tourists' satisfaction with the experience of the destination in general and specifically the culinary experience, the stronger their intentions to revisit the place or recommend it to others. The positive experience of the local food will lead to their satisfaction with the local cuisine and the destination, as well as increasing their intention to recommend and revisit the destination.

2.5 Hypothesis Development

Based on the literature reviewed, this study has been carried out in a World Heritage City; namely, Córdoba, Spain. The aim of the research is to analyse how tourists' satisfaction with traditional cuisine can affect the image of this tourist destination and the loyalty towards it, in the specific context of a World Heritage City. To this end, a reflective model is proposed (Jarvis et al, 2003). Moreover, the analysis seeks to determine whether the effect is greater in the affective or cognitive components of the image. An additional aim is to yield results about how the gastronomic experience measured through tourists' satisfaction with the traditional restaurant influences their intention to return or recommend visiting the city. To this end, the following hypotheses are proposed, and a conceptual model is developed (Figure 1):

Hypothesis 1 (H1): the satisfaction with traditional restaurants positively and significantly influences the overall image.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): the satisfaction with traditional restaurants positively and significantly influences the affective image.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): the traditional restaurants positively and significantly influence the cognitive image.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): the cognitive image positively and significantly influences the affective image.

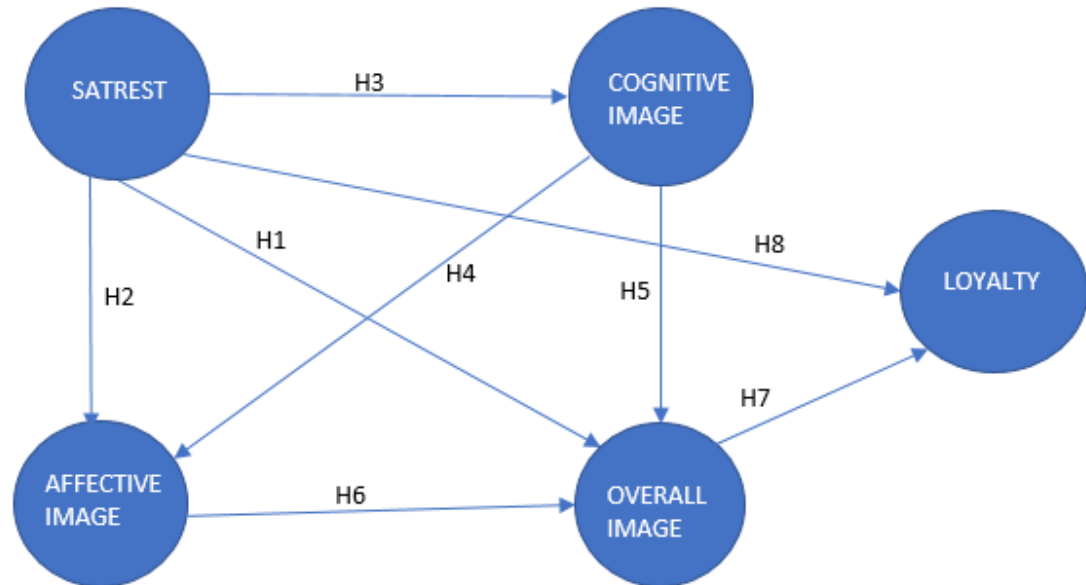
Hypothesis 5 (H5): the cognitive image positively and significantly influences the overall image.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): the affective image positively and significantly influences the overall image.

Hypothesis 7 (H7): the overall image positively and significantly influences loyalty.

Hypothesis 8 (H8): the satisfaction with traditional restaurants positively and significantly influences loyalty.

Figure 1. Proposed research design



3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection and coding procedure

The research is positivist, deductive approach and with the application of quantitative techniques. The fieldwork was conducted in Córdoba, an inland city in southern Spain. In the pre-COVID 19 era, it was the 23rd ranked Spanish city in terms of tourist arrivals (1,215,718) and 32nd in overnight stays (2,055,705). It presents an outstanding heritage offer resulting from the different cultures that have inhabited the city over the years, including Romans, Arabs and Jews. As of 2020, the city currently has four UNESCO listings: the first, and the longest-standing listing in Spain, is the Mosque (1984). The second is the Jewish Quarter of Córdoba (1994). The third is the *Fiesta de los Patios Cordobeses* (the Córdoba Courtyards Festival), which was designated Intangible Cultural Heritage (2012), while the fourth is the archaeological site of Madinat Al-Zahra (2019) (Jimber del Rio et al., 2020). As a result of the different cultures that have passed through the city, it has a traditional gastronomic offer featuring Arab, Roman and Jewish influences. With regard to these cultures, traditional dishes that can be sampled in restaurants serving local cuisine include dishes of Arab origin such as shoulder of lamb with honey, or cinnamon or Mozarabic monkfish; dishes from Roman culture such as Cordoban mazamorra; or Jewish influenced dishes such as lamb kidneys (Hernández-Rojas, 2020).

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the questions were based on previous similar studies (Ozdemir et al., 2012; Farroq et al., 2018). The questionnaire was

divided into five parts: the questions in the first section relate to the affective image of the city; those in the second section relate to the cognitive image of the city; the third section to the overall image of the city; the fourth section to visitors' loyalty to Córdoba as a heritage city and whether they would recommended it to their family, friends and co-workers; and finally, questions about their satisfaction with the gastronomic experience in traditional restaurants of the city. Finally, some questions were asked about their sociodemographic characteristics (age, gender, studies, etc.). Before answering the questionnaire, visitors to traditional restaurants were informed of the academic purposes and anonymity of the study. The questions all used a similar five-point scale, with one indicating "strongly disagree" and five "strongly agree". The questionnaire contained a total of 28 items to measure the variables, as well as data on the characteristics of the tourists. The data were collected at different times of the day, in the month of November 2019. The restaurants where the visitor survey was conducted were located in the historic center of the city. Tourist visits to Cordoba are concentrated in the historic center of the city. The most renowned local cuisine restaurants and recognized the quality of their traditional dishes are located in this area and represent more than 50% of the establishments in the city (Hernández-Rojas and Huete-Alcocer, 2021). The interviews were conducted at the end of the gastronomic experience of local cuisine. The selection criteria of the tourists were to make only those tourists who came motivated to visit any of the heritages of the city, such as the local gastronomy. Monitoring was conducted by the researchers at the time of the survey. In the end, a total of 139 valid surveys were obtained. Research data were tabulated and analysed using PLS-SEM. For this purpose, smart PLS 3.3.3 and SPSS Statistics 27 software was used.

Table 1: Measurement of variables

Factor	Indicator	Items
AFFECTIVE IMAGE		
Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Bigné et al. (2001), Kim and Richardson (2003); Beerli and Martín (2004); Pike and Ryan (2004); Chi and Qu (2008); Chen et al. (2016), Stylos et al. (2016); Stylidis et al. (2017); Afshardoost and Eshaghi (2020)	AFF1	Córdoba is nice
	AFF2	Córdoba is fun
	AFF3	Córdoba is relaxing
	AFF4	Córdoba is exciting
COGNITIVE IMAGE		
Fakey Compton (1991); Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Baloglu and McCleary, (1999); Gallarza et al. (2002); Echtner and Ritchie (2003); Beerli and Martin (2004); Chi and Qu (2008); Beerli and Leon (2012)	COG1	It is easily accessible from other regions and has good infrastructure.
	COG2	Good value for money in accommodation
	COG3	Good value for money in restaurants
	COG4	Local residents are friendly and hospitable.
	COG5	It is a good place to visit with the family
	COG6	It has good, useful tourist information offices
	COG7	It has a pleasant climate
OVERALL IMAGE		
Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Qu et al. (2011); Dolnicar and Grün (2013).	OVER1	The overall image is positive
	OVER2	It was worth coming to Córdoba
	OVER3	It is a good place to visit
	OVER4	It has a good reputation
LOYALTY TO DESTINATION		
Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Qu et al. (2011); Akama and Kieti, 2003); Dolnicar and Grün (2013).	LOY1	I will repeat my visit to this restaurant
	LOY2	I will recommend that family and friends come to this restaurant
	LOY3	I will visit Córdoba again
	LOY4	I will recommend that family and friends visit Córdoba
RESTAURANT SATISFACTION		
Liu, and Tse (2018); Cha and Borchgrevink, (2019); DiPietro and Levitt (2019).	REST1	Renown (known abroad)
	REST2	Tradition and roots in the local community
	REST3	Location
	REST4	Organization

REST5	Power of attraction
REST6	Engagement with tourists and/or visitors
REST7	Opinion on food tasted
REST8	Opinion on the service in the restaurant
REST9	Opinion on the atmosphere in the restaurant

4 Results and discussion

The main findings of the fieldwork are described below. In the first place, the results of the descriptive analysis on the sociodemographic profile of the tourists surveyed in traditional restaurants reveal that they are mostly women (57%), compared to 43% who were men, with university studies (55%) and with a mean age between 40 and 59 years (50%).

4.1. Evaluation of the measurement model: validity and reliability

The measurement model was evaluated with PLS (Barclay, Higgins and Thompson, 1995). The individual reliability of each item, the reliability of the scale, as well as the discriminant convergent validity were analysed (Table 2) using SmartPLS 3.3 software. The significance of the parameters was obtained through bootstrapping (Hair et al., 2011). Thus, the individual reliability of each indicator was calculated and the simple correlations of the measures with their corresponding constructs were analysed. Those items with factor loadings greater than or equal to 0.707 were confirmed, as this value ensures that more than 50% of the variance of the observed variable is shared by the construct (Carmines and Zeller, 1979).

Subsequently, the composite reliability was evaluated to check whether the indicators measure the construct to which they are assigned. Also, Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) was calculated, which must have a value equal to or greater than 0.7. Table 2 shows how all the constructs meet the reliability requirement, since both composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values are greater than 0.7.

In addition, to confirm the convergent validity (Table 2), the average extracted variance (AVE) was calculated for each construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), this measure shows the amount of variance that a construct obtains as a result of its indicators in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error. Its value must be equal to or greater than 0.5, which indicates that each construct explains at least 50% of the variance of the assigned indicators. In this case, the values are higher than said threshold. Another of the most important reliability measures for PLS, rho A (Dijkstra and Henseler, 2015) was also calculated (Table 2), yielding acceptable values.

Table 2. Measurement instrument: individual, composite reliability and convergent validity

Factor	Indicator	Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Rho_A
AFFECTIVE IMAGE	AFF1	0.810	0.833	0.889	0.669	0.851
	AFF2	0.902				
	AFF3	0.739				
	AFF4	0.809				
COGNITIVE IMAGE	COG1	0.712	0.847	0.884	0.522	0.853
	COG2	0.740				
	COG3	0.739				
	COG4	0.721				
	COG5	0.800				
	COG6	0.706				

	COG7	0.629				
OVERALL IMAGE	OVER1	0.776	0.834	0.890	0.670	0.836
	OVER2	0.862				
	OVER3	0.883				
	OVER4	0.747				
LOYALTY TO DESTINATION	LOY1	0.722	0.814	0.878	0.643	0.819
	LOY2	0.827				
	LOY3	0.826				
	LOY4	0.827				
RESTAURANT SATISFACTION	REST1	0.689	0.909	0.925	0.580	0.915
	REST2	0.797				
	REST3	0.785				
	REST4	0.808				
	REST5	0.743				
	REST6	0.643				
	REST7	0.848				
	REST8	0.757				
	REST9	0.767				

Furthermore, discriminant validity was calculated according to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which indicates the extent to which a given construct is different from the others. To meet the requirement of this type of validity, the variance shared by a variable and its indicators must be greater than the variance shared with the other variables in the model (Barclay et al., 1995). To evaluate it, the correlation matrix between the model constructs was calculated. The diagonal of the matrix shows the value of the square root of the AVE of the corresponding construct. As can be seen in Table 3, the correlations between the constructs are less than the square root of the AVE. Therefore, the requirement of discriminant validity is satisfied, since each construct is different from the rest.

Table 3. Measurement instrument: discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

	Affective image	Cognitive image	Overall image	Loyalty of destination	Restaurant Satisfaction
Affective image	0.817				
Cognitive image	0.742 (0.872)	0.723			
Overall image	0.630 (0.738)	0.607 (0.708)	0.819		
Loyalty to destination	0.608 (0.724)	0.661 (0.789)	0.652 (0.779)	0.802	
Restaurant Satisfaction	0.597 (0.676)	0.605 (0.674)	0.630 (0.712)	0.609 (0.703)	0.762

4.2. Evaluation of the structural model

The structural analysis performed with PLS is shown in Table 4, where the path coefficients (β) indicate the relationships between the structures as well as the sign. To examine the stability and significance of the estimated parameters, the non-parametric resampling technique bootstrapping is first applied (Hair et al., 2011).

Table 4. Structural analysis of the hypothesis tests

Hypothesis	Structural relationship	Standardized path (β)	Bootstrap t-value	Support for hypothesis
H1	Restaurant Overall image Satisfaction->	0.348	3.992	SUPPORTED

H2	Restaurant Affective image	Satisfaction->	0.234	2.968	SUPPORTED
H3	Restaurant Cognitive image	Satisfaction->	0.605	10.097	SUPPORTED
H4	Cognitive image -> Affective image		0.601	8.105	SUPPORTED
H5	Cognitive image-> Overall image	Overall	0.186	1.693	SUPPORTED
H6	Affective image-> Overall image	Overall	0.284	2.746	SUPPORTED
H7	Overall image-> Loyalty to destination	Loyalty to destination	0.445	5.502	SUPPORTED
H8	Restaurant Loyalty to destination	Satisfaction->	0.329	4.045	SUPPORTED

n = 5,000 subsamples; * p < .05; ** p < .01; ***p < .001 (based on a one-tailed Student's t(4999) distribution t(0.05; 4999) = 1.645; t(0.01; 4999) = 2.327; t(0.001; 4999) = 3.092.

The eight hypotheses raised in this study are all supported by the value and significance of the coefficients of the associations (Table 4).

Each of the hypotheses is detailed below and the practical meaning of each is shown.

H1: Satisfaction with traditional restaurants positively and significantly influences the overall image. The acceptance of this first hypothesis represents a novel contribution to the academic literature, since previous studies have not explored how satisfaction with the traditional restaurant can influence the perception that a tourist may have of a tourist destination such as a World Heritage City. In practical terms, this confirms the effect that traditional restaurants can have on the image of a World Heritage City. While some such cities may consider that the status itself is reason enough to visit, additional services such as traditional gastronomy are needed for tourists to recommend and revisit the city.

H2: The hypothesis that satisfaction with traditional restaurants positively and significantly influences the affective image is supported. The influence of the restaurant on the affective image is confirmed by authors (Kim and Eves, 2012; Choe and Kim, 2018). In other words, the impact of the gastronomic experience is so significant that the affective image of the destination remains marked in the mind of the tourist. Therefore, the managers of the destination should seek to preserve and support those traditional restaurants that are known to increase tourist satisfaction.

H3: Traditional restaurants positively and significantly influence cognitive image. These results coincide with authors in studies of themed restaurants in Taiwan (Chen et al, 2014) or in Korea restaurants (Phillips et al., 2013). Thus, restaurant satisfaction has an effect on the cognitive image of the destination; that is, it confirms the knowledge and beliefs that a tourist has of a place from a gastronomic perspective.

H4: The cognitive image positively and significantly influences the affective image. This result is in line with most previous findings in the literature, such as those of Baloglu and McCleary (1999) and Beerli and Martin (2004).

H5: The cognitive image positively and significantly influences the overall image. This confirms the findings of many other studies such as Baloglu and McCleary (1999), Beerli and Martin (2004), Qu et al. (2011) and Riera (2013). Interestingly, its effect on the overall image was even greater than that on the affective image. This explains why the cognitive component has received much more attention in the literature than the affective one.

H6: The affective image positively and significantly influences the overall image. This finding is confirmed by the work of other authors, such as Baloglu and McCleary (1999), Beerli and Martin (2004) and Qu et al. (2011). The affective image of the heritage site after the gastronomic experience influences the overall image of the site, but to a lesser extent than the cognitive component.

H7: The overall image positively and significantly influences loyalty. The objective here was to analyse whether the general image that tourists have after dining in traditional restaurants influences their loyalty in both attitudinal and behavioural terms; that is, whether they would return to the city or recommend it as a destination. This finding is confirmed by other authors such as Bigné et al. (2001), Chen and Tsai (2007) and Chi and Qu (2008). It should be noted it represents part of the novelty of this research, making a new contribution to the academic literature. The image of Córdoba plays a relevant role in generating tourists' loyalty to the city, and that image is influenced by their gastronomic experience.

H8: The fact that satisfaction with traditional restaurants is found to positively and significantly influence loyalty confirms the hypothesis that satisfaction with traditional restaurants is positively related to a repeat visit or recommendation of the destination. This coincides with studies by Esti (2014) and Hernández-Rojas and Huete (2021). It can thus be seen that traditional restaurants can play an important role in the case of competing World Heritage Cities, and traditional gastronomy can be a differentiating element between one city and another.

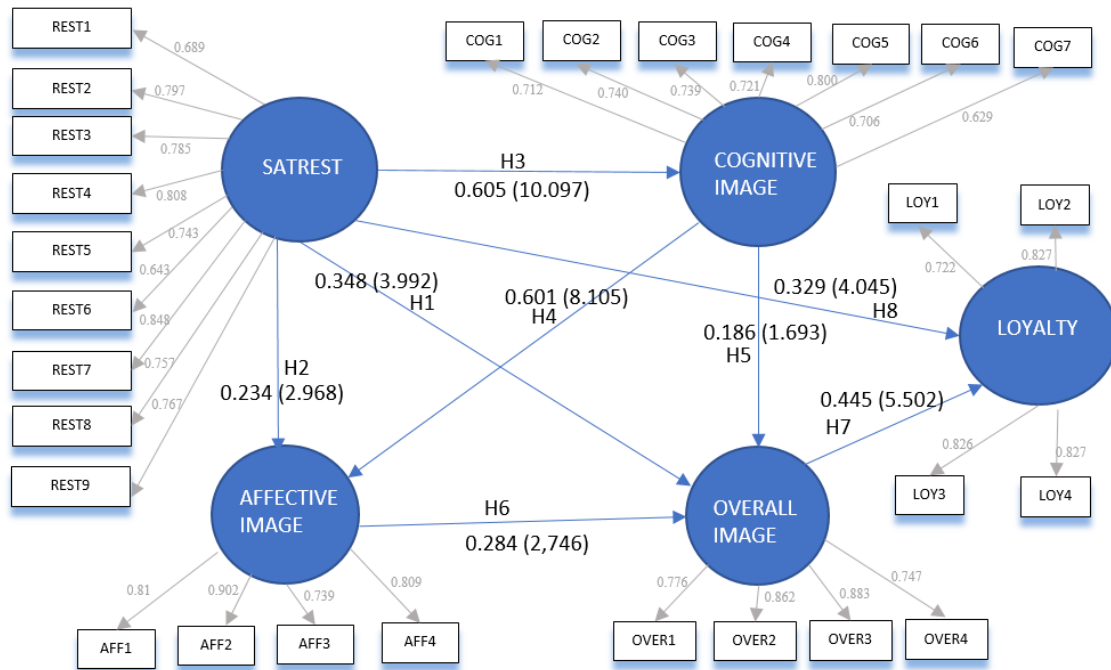
As for the goodness of fit of the structural model, the R^2 values are all greater than 0.1, meeting the Falk and Miller criterion (1992) which suggests that the explained variance of the endogenous variables (R^2) should be greater than or equal to 0.1. The results of R^{2A} also satisfy this requirement.

Table 5. Predictive relevance of the model

Factor	R^2	R^{2A}
Affective image	0.585	0.579
Cognitive image	0.366	0.361
Overall image	0.511	0.501
Loyalty	0.490	0.483

Figure 2 reflects the previous results: the loads of the indicators are those indicated by the dates in gray that come out from each of the variables represented in circles (table 2). The results shown by the blue arrows indicate the structural analysis of the hypothesis tests: on the one hand the Standardized path and on the other, the t-value marked in parentheses (table 4).

Figure 2. Result of the SEM



5 Conclusion

Traditional gastronomy is an essential element for the economic development of some cities and cultural tourism is a key element for the economic and socio-cultural development of some local communities. Gastronomic experiences in the traditional restaurants in a destination can be a differential factor in whether tourists recommend visiting a World Heritage City.

This research, focusing on a World Heritage City, shows how tourists' satisfaction with their gastronomic experience in traditional restaurants influences the image they have of a cultural city, and the subsequent loyalty to this destination. The influence on the image affects both the general image, as well as the cognitive and affective components, albeit to a greater extent in the cognitive component. It should also be noted that the cognitive image has a greater effect on the overall image than on the affective image. Therefore, the cognitive image depends more on the role of destination managers and companies in this sector than on tourists' affective response. As such, they should attempt to improve the gastronomic experience in traditional restaurants to provide a better image of the city.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that in order to maximize tourist satisfaction with their visit to heritage sites, the traditional gastronomy of the

place should be harnessed. Looked at another way, this means that ensuring visitors are satisfied with the city becomes one of the main reasons to showcase, care for and maintain traditional gastronomy.

This study identifies gastronomic experience as one of the most important factors to secure the loyalty of tourists to a city that has been home to various cultures, and where there are different heritage sites that show the cultures that have inhabited the city.

More specifically, the research identifies several elements of the gastronomic experience that visitors to the city consider important when visiting a site with traditional cuisine. The food, service and atmosphere were greatly valued. However, elements of the service also valued, as was the fact that traditional restaurants are located within, or near the historic and tourist centre of the city. In this way, traditional gastronomy unites and links the tourist with the destination, which positively influences loyalty to the city. However, there are factors such as knowledge of traditional restaurants, which visitors to the city were unaware of. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the promotion abroad of traditional gastronomy in a specific way for heritage cities. The scientific literature usually starts out from the cognitive and affective image of the possible destination. This is an appropriate approach when cities are among the top tourist destinations, but not for cities such as Córdoba, which is ranked 23nd in terms of tourist arrivals among the 52 cities of Spain, or many medium-sized heritage cities which do not have the necessary resources to promote themselves abroad.

These findings are important for the managers of public administrations, since the objective is to help improve the future management of the images of the cities declared a World Heritage Site, as well as to carry out projects to increase the loyalty to and competitiveness of these destinations, compared to other similar sites.

The limitations of this study relate to the sample that was used. The data were obtained from gastronomic tourists in the World Heritage City of Córdoba, which means that the data collected correspond to one type of tourist in a single destination. It would be interesting to study another World Heritage City in order to make comparisons in this regard. Another limitation is that the study was conducted in a short space of time; it would be worth doing a longitudinal study to see the evolution of the situation over time. On the other hand, these results should be revisited to see which restaurant services tourists value after the COVID-19 pandemic; that is, in the post-pandemic era it is worth exploring elements such as cleanliness, safety and distance between diners. These are measures that tourist may appreciate when entering a restaurant and it would be interesting to study to see the effect of the pandemic on this sector.

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