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Profiling Intangible Cultural Heritage Visitors through the Multilayer Perceptron model

Definiendo el perfil de visitantes de Patrimonio Inmaterial de la Humanidad a través de un modelo de perceptrón multicapa

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ABSTRACT

UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage elements are perceived as valuable tourist resources by the various governments and local entities responsible for managing destinations. Consequently, from a tourism perspective, this recognition confers a competitive advantage to the destination. This research seeks to determine the variations in the socio-demographic profile (gender, age, educational level and income) of tourists interested in Intangible Cultural Heritage elements. The study is based on the development of an artificial neural network. This approach allows the construction of potential "identikits" or estimated profiles of tourists participating in the Fiesta de los Patios (Cordoba, Spain) based on the answers incorporated into the artificial neural network as customisable inputs. This is especially useful for elaborating products and services adapted to tourists interested in the different elements, customs and traditions registered as Intangible Cultural Heritage. While this methodology has been applied to the tourism sector, it has yet to be applied to tourists interested in Intangible Cultural Heritage. This research aims to address this gap in the literature. It can be deduced that to attract a particular profile with a high income, which would have a more significant effect on the economic development of a destination, it is necessary to promote accessibility and public transport, especially on the days that the event takes place. To address the issue

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of overcrowding, a 'per-entry' fee is proposed for the patios, or a tourist tax to be imposed in the city of Cordoba.

Key words: satisfaction, perceptions, experiences, behaviour, artificial neural networks, multilayer perceptron, Intangible Cultural Heritage.

RESUMEN

Las inscripciones Patrimonio Inmaterial de la Humanidad de la UNESCO se configuran como recursos turísticos significativos para los diferentes gobiernos y entidades locales que se encargan de gestionar los destinos. En consecuencia, y desde la perspectiva turística, esta declaración supone una ventaja competitiva para el destino. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo determinar las variaciones en el perfil sociodemográfico (género, edad, nivel educativo e ingresos) de los turistas interesados en elementos Patrimonio Inmaterial de la Humanidad. El presente trabajo se ha basado en el desarrollo de una red neuronal artificial. Con ello, se pretende la construcción de potenciales "retratos robot" o perfiles estimados de los turistas que participan en la Fiesta de los Patios (Córdoba, España) a partir de las respuestas incorporadas a la red neuronal artificial como valores de entrada configurables, siendo este especialmente útil en la elaboración de productos y servicios adaptados a un turista interesado en los diferentes elementos, costumbres y tradiciones registrados como Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial. Si bien esta metodología se ha aplicado al sector turístico, aún no se ha sido aplicada a los turistas del Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial. Esta investigación pretende cubrir el vacío en este sentido. Se deduce que para atraer un tipo de perfil con altos ingresos que permita un efecto de desarrollo económico más significativo en el destino, es necesario promover la accesibilidad, así como el transporte público, especialmente en los días del evento. Ante la amenaza de masificación, se sugiere implementar pago por entrada a los patios o tal vez considerar la imposición de una tasa turística en la ciudad de Córdoba.

Palabras clave: satisfacción, percepciones, experiencias, comportamiento, redes neuronales artificiales, perceptrón multicapa, Patrimonio Inmaterial de la Humanidad.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) inscriptions by UNESCO are regarded as valuable tourist resources by the various governments and local entities responsible for managing the destinations (Qiu et al., 2022). Consequently, from the tourism perspective, this declaration confers a competitive advantage on the destination (Kim et al., 2019). Thus, as a result of the protection and conservation measures implemented as a consequence of this inscription, the tourist activity is modified to reinforce these, which in turn has the effect of generating significant economic benefits (Esfehani & Albrecht, 2019; Song et al., 2020). In other words, the inscription of ICH will enhance the distinctive and authentic character of the location in question, which will have a bearing on the development of the tourism industry (Alahakoon & Udunuwara, 2022).

A substantial body of research indicates a correlation between ICH and tourism growth in a given destination, particularly in attracting international visitors (Tan et al., 2023). Nevertheless, despite the tourist appeal of these declarations, the extensive commodification of these inscriptions in recent years necessitates a focus on sustainable tourism for their promotion (Kim et al., 2019). The acknowledgement of a specific element as ICH would imply substantial support from a cultural perspective in the destination, consequently resulting in

the attraction of a particular tourist type with a primary interest in culture. Consequently, this would also significantly impact the destination and the enhancement of the tourist product itself.

Cultural tourism can be defined as the immersion of tourists in the art, cultural heritage, and thoughts and institutions of another country, city, or region (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014). Consequently, for those engaged in cultural tourism, the traditions of the destination and the distinctive manifestations of the local culture will inform their motivation for travelling (Leite & Ruiz, 2013).

The inscription of an element or custom as ICH implies the necessity for its protection for future generations. Nevertheless, as with designations such as World Heritage Site (WHS) by UNESCO, it also possesses a quality seal that attracts tourists. It is, therefore, evident that not all ICH can be readily transferred to the tourism domain, given that they are not always situated in a tangible location. Still, instead, it is a custom or an element that is manifested in different places and/or cultures. One example of this is the Mediterranean diet. However, certain elements are recognised as ICH and can attract tourists due to their celebration in a specific physical location. The Fiesta de los Patios is an illustrative example of the element under study in this article. The event comprises a traditional courtyard beauty contest held during the city's blooming period (May), when the courtyards (patios) are decorated with flowers. The Fiesta de los Patios is located in Cordoba, a medium-sized city in Southern Spain.

This research aims to determine the variations in the socio-demographic profile (gender, age, educational level and income) of tourists interested in the ICH elements. The present study is based on developing an artificial neural network (ANN). This allows the construction of potential "identikits" or estimated profiles of the tourists who participate in the Fiesta de los Patios based on the answers incorporated into the ANN as customisable inputs. This is especially useful in elaborating products and services adapted to tourists interested in the different elements, customs and traditions registered as ICH. While this methodology has been applied to users of peer-to-peer (P2P) tourist accommodation (Moral-Cuadra et al., 2021), gastronomic tourists (Moral-Cuadra et al., 2022), attendees of flamenco (García-García et al., 2021), and visitors to WHS (Valverde-Roda et al., 2023), it has yet to be applied to ICH tourists. This research aims to address this gap in the literature.

II. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

2.1 Cultural and heritage tourism

Heritage tourism is defined as a form of tourism that involves visiting a place where experiences are lived through the destination's activities. These activities may be in cultural or natural environments or urban or rural areas (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014). Heritage tourism entails the experience of sensations and emotions in a destination after a visit. In light of this definition, Poria et al. (2006) posit that visits to locations with a rich heritage or those designated as WHS by UNESCO can transcend the boundaries of mere leisure. The historical tapestry of these areas can evoke an emotional response in tourists, prompting a deeper understanding of the significance of the heritage in question for their cultural identity. In other words, the tourist will ascertain the extent to which the destination forms part of their heritage. Consequently, the behaviour exhibited by a tourist in a heritage destination is contingent upon their perception of whether it is part of their heritage (Poria et al., 2003). It

can be posited that tourists who visit a place intending to become emotionally involved are more likely to consider it part of their own heritage. Therefore, the visitors above, whose primary objective is to understand the characteristics of a place with a rich heritage, according to their own perception of heritage, must be considered heritage tourists. It is important to note that this does not include those who visit with the intention of learning or because of a specific heritage element present in the destination. This is in line with the findings of Poria et al. (2013). Thus, the behaviour exhibited by individuals who perceive a connection between the destination they are visiting and their cultural identity differs from that of those who do not establish such a link (Remoaldo et al., 2014).

It is of the utmost importance to be aware of the latest trends and developments in the tourism industry and have a deep understanding of the tourists themselves. This is because it enables the effective management of tourist destinations, as it allows one to gain insight into how tourists behave (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014; Poria et al., 2006), their experiences at such destinations (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021), and the impact on developing countries. Furthermore, the designation can be utilised as a promotional instrument for these countries, given its influence on tourist demand (Hosseini et al., 2021).

In heritage tourism, some scholars have proposed that tourism in WHS can be conceptualised as a distinct typology (Adie, 2017). The primary objective of UNESCO in publishing the WHS and ICH lists is to ensure the conservation and continuity of these places or experiences for future generations. Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, it increases the number of tourists that these areas receive, particularly from international visitors, due to the international promotion and publicity that comes with being included on one of these lists (Bak et al., 2019; Han et al., 2020; Nguyen & Cheung, 2014).

A review of the scientific literature reveals many studies examining the nexus between tourism and heritage. These studies are primarily focused on WHS, given that this designation is inherently linked to a specific place (Vidal González, 2008). Consequently, the undertaking of studies is a relatively straightforward process in comparison to those elements that have been designated as ICH. This is because ICH statements are not required to be linked to a specific place. They can, for example, refer to traditions, oral expressions, rituals, knowledge and uses related to nature or artisanal techniques (UNESCO, 2003). Consequently, studies that relate these two concepts remain scarce despite ICHs' leading role in tourism (Alberca-Sialer & Soto-Cáceda, 2022). Among the existing studies, visitor satisfaction in Cuenca (Ecuador) is particularly noteworthy. It links tourism with an ICH element, namely the making of the toquilla straw hat (Prada-Trigo et al., 2016), as well as the research on the heritage of tango in Buenos Aires and its use as a tourist attraction resource (Gómez Schettini et al., 2011). It is therefore hoped that this study will make a valuable contribution to the existing body of scientific literature on the links between ICH and tourism.

2.2 Destination attributes

The destination attributes are defined as elements representing an attraction for the visitor. These will be taken into account by tourists when deciding on a destination to travel to, with a comparison being made between the attributes offered by the different destinations and the benefits they will obtain from them (Lew, 1987). Consequently, the attributes of a destination, in addition to serving as a source of tourist appeal, will constitute a pivotal element in the formation of tourists' experiences within the destination. Therefore,

it is not the goods themselves that attract tourists but rather the attributes that these goods possess (Ragavan et al., 2014).

Not all tourists perceive attributes similarly (Isa et al., 2018). Consequently, not all attributes possess the same capacity to provide a competitive advantage (Prayag, 2008). A positive assessment of a destination's attributes will guarantee the satisfaction of travellers, which in turn will become an essential element for developing loyalty among travellers and promoting the destination through creating a destination image. (Biswas et al., 2020; Ozdemir et al., 2012).

2.3 Emotions effect on tourist satisfaction and loyalty

Satisfaction can be defined as the individual and global evaluation that a client makes of a product or service, considering its attributes, which leads them to form an experience (Kozak et al., 2005). Alternatively, it can be understood as a mental process in which the customer compares the service received and their expectations (Chi & Qu, 2008; Prayag et al., 2021). This definition encompasses two aspects: the cognitive and the emotional components of satisfaction (Prayag et al., 2021).

Emotions are the feelings experienced by clients in different situations (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). In tourism, emotions are defined as the feelings visitors have during their visit to a destination, which plays a pivotal role in shaping the tourist experience (Chang et al., 2020; Nawijn & Biran, 2019). Consequently, emotions act as a mediator in determining the tourist's overall satisfaction (González-Rodríguez et al., 2020).

Tourist satisfaction and interest in study is found in different aspects. Firstly, it is necessary to ascertain how tourists perceive the attributes of a destination. These characteristics will ultimately shape the image of the destination. Therefore, understanding how tourists perceive these attributes will facilitate the decision-making process regarding their preservation and prioritisation, contingent on their capacity to generate high levels of satisfaction (Oliveira, 2011). This understanding will also inform the identification of those attributes that may require reinforcement or elimination in the future if they generate high levels of dissatisfaction. Secondly, satisfaction can be regarded as a precursor to loyalty and future tourist behaviour. The manifestation of this loyalty can be observed in many ways, including a return visit or a recommendation. Consequently, customers who have had positive experiences are more likely to purchase and retain a product or service (Cong, 2021; Fu et al., 2016; Yuksel et al., 2009).

Satisfaction is likely to be a key factor in the memory of tourists and thus, a significant element influencing the development of their loyalty to a destination. In this way, satisfaction may be considered an indicator of the intention of tourists to revisit a place (Fu et al., 2023; Park et al., 2019; Tiwari et al., 2023). Therefore, tourists' motivations and general satisfaction are the primary factors that predict their behaviour (Bayihy & Singh, 2020). Consequently, the image of the destination that the tourist creates and the affective image that he develops regarding the destination will predict his behavioural intention (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022). It can be reasonably deduced that the provision of experiences for visitors that exceed their expectations by the tourism managers of the place will result in the visitors experiencing positive emotions, thus obtaining high levels of satisfaction and consequently generating loyalty towards the destination (Sato et al., 2018). Furthermore, the management of tourist satisfaction can facilitate the promotion of a destination, as satisfied

tourists are more inclined to recommend it and thereby contribute to its dissemination (Kozinets et al., 2010; Wu & Chang, 2019).

2.4 Socio-demographic profile of the tourist

The study of the socio-demographic profile of heritage tourists represents a prominent area of investigation within the field of tourism. The substantial value of understanding the socio-demographic profile of tourists for both public sector agencies and private companies operating within a destination has led to a vast body of scientific literature in this field. This is because the ability to manage tourist destinations efficiently is contingent upon such knowledge. Generally, these studies are primarily based on analysing the following variables: gender, age, academic and income level. Many studies have sought to establish a general profile of heritage tourists. However, it is notable that this type of tourist's profile has gradually changed across various investigations.

Age is one of the variables, along with gender, for which there is a notable absence of consensus within the scientific literature. In this way, authors such as Chen and Huang (2018) emphasise the relatively young profile of tourists in these heritage destinations, positioning them within the 21-35 age bracket. Similarly, Remoaldo et al. (2014) broaden this range, indicating that the heritage tourists are young, between the ages of 26 and 45. This is consistent with the findings of Antón et al. (2017), who indicate that the heritage tourist is between the ages of 30 and 44. However, other studies point out that heritage tourists are, in fact, older. For example, Correia et al. (2013) and Ramires et al. (2018) present ages between 38 and 47 years and over 45 years, respectively.

Regarding the visitor gender, despite its pivotal role in formulating tourism strategies, the scientific literature fails to yield definitive conclusions on this matter. Some studies indicate that women prefer destinations with significant heritage and cultural assets more than men. These studies also suggest that women are more likely to visit these destinations (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014; Ramires et al., 2018; Remoaldo et al., 2014; Vong & Ung, 2012). Conversely, some investigations have reached the opposite conclusion, namely that there is a greater preference for men (Adie & Hall, 2017; Antón et al., 2017; Chen & Huang, 2018; Correia et al., 2013).

Concerning the variable of educational level, there is a greater degree of consensus, as the majority of studies indicate that visitors to a place with an important artistic and cultural heritage tend to have a high level of academic training. In general, these studies posit that a significant proportion of these visitors possess university-level academic training (Adie & Hall, 2017; Antón et al., 2017; Correia et al., 2013; Huh et al., 2006; Menor-Campos et al., 2020; Ramires et al., 2018; Remoaldo et al., 2014). Nevertheless, other research (Chen & Huang, 2018) also indicates that students represent a notable proportion of visitors to these locations.

There is also a consensus concerning income level. The majority of empirical studies indicate that visitors to destinations with an important cultural and artistic heritage have a medium or medium-high income level (Antón et al., 2017; Bright & Carter, 2016; Chen & Huang, 2018; Correia et al., 2013; Huh et al., 2006; Ramires et al., 2018). Therefore, despite discrepancies about certain socio-demographic variables, the profile of the heritage tourist can be delineated as a middle-aged individual with a high level of education, a medium to medium-high income, and a gender distribution that is relatively balanced. This research will

contribute to the definition of the socio-demographic profile of tourists from places with excellent heritage wealth by analysing the participants in the Fiesta de los Patios in Cordoba.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Survey design

The results obtained from fieldwork were taken as a reference to analyse the socio-demographic profile of those who attended in the Fiesta de los Patios in its 2022 edition. This consisted of a survey completed by a representative sample of Fiesta de los Patios participants, 86% of whom were from Spain, with the remainder hailing from other countries, primarily the United States of America, Italy and the United Kingdom.

In consideration of the various available options for data collection, the decision was made to develop a questionnaire comprising closed-ended questions, thus facilitating self-administration. To ensure the questionnaire and its constituent items are valid, the questions were formulated based on existing research (Correia et al., 2013; Devesa et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2004; McKercher, 2002; Poria et al., 2003; Remoaldo et al., 2014; Yuan & Jang, 2008). Following formulating and classifying the indicators and constructs that would comprise the model and the selection of indicators for each construct, the provisional questionnaire underwent three refinement phases. Initially, the proposed items were analysed by a researcher with expertise in tourism. Subsequently, the questionnaire was reviewed by various managers of the tourist activity in Cordoba. Furthermore, the provisional questionnaire was translated into English, thus facilitating the collection of data from foreign tourists. The third phase was comprised of administering a pilot test to an initial sample of 20 tourists exhibiting characteristics similar to those of the final sample.

These stages aimed to identify potential issues in comprehension of the questions, ensuring that the responses were modified to align with the research objectives. Therefore, these phases are fundamental to avoiding issues in fieldwork and achieving quality results (Moore et al., 2021). Following these phases, the questionnaire was refined by reformulating the questions that had presented more significant comprehension difficulties. Similarly, efforts were made to ensure the survey was as specific as possible, to reduce the time required to complete it, and thus obtain more valid responses. The fieldwork was conducted after the final review and the acquisition of the final questionnaire.

The survey was divided into two distinct sections. The initial section of the survey comprises a series of questions designed to ascertain the perceptions and experiences of tourists concerning a range of aspects associated with the city of Cordoba and their overall assessment of their involvement in the Fiesta de los Patios. All of the questions above are measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale. The second part of the survey comprised queries about the interviewed tourists' socio-demographic profiles

3.2 Fieldwork performance

The data collection was conducted during the Fiesta de los Patios celebrations in May 2022. The questionnaires were administered by members of the Research Group "Economía del Turismo" (Tourism Economics, in English) of the University of Cordoba during the Fiesta de los Patios. The surveys were distributed throughout the Fiesta de los Patios, in all locations designated for this purpose. The data were collected on different days, times, and locations

in order to obtain a sample that was as heterogeneous as possible. Furthermore, one of the fundamental assumptions underpinning this research was that respondents would have visited a minimum of two patios, thus ensuring that their responses were based on informed and well-founded judgments (Correia et al., 2013; Remoaldo et al., 2014).

A total of 438 surveys were collected, of which 423 were deemed valid for analysis. It should be noted that the number of responses obtained varied considerably depending on the day of collection. A greater number of responses were received on weekends than on weekdays, which can be attributed to the higher number of tourists during these periods. On weekdays, the number of responses from the local community is more significant than that from tourists. In this investigation, the responses provided by the local community were not taken into consideration.

Convenience sampling was employed, whereby respondents were accessible at a designated time and location. This methodology is commonly utilised in research of this nature (Finn et al., 2000). No stratification by gender, age, educational level or other variable was conducted due to the absence of supporting studies. The proportion of rejected questionnaires was low and not statistically significant concerning any variable. The survey was designed to be completed in a maximum of ten minutes. The survey was distributed in two languages, namely Spanish and English. The tourists were permitted to select the language in which they would complete the survey. Given that the estimated number of visitors to the Fiesta de los Patios in 2022 was 115,000 and the number of completed questionnaires was 423, the sampling error for a simple random sampling would be 4.75%.

3.3 Data analysis

Rumelhart and McClelland (1986) define an artificial neural network (ANN) as a network comprising multiple process elements (PEs), or nodes, with limited storage capacity. These units are composed of a vector of inputs (x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n), with synaptic weights (w_1, w_2, \dots, w_n) that are applied to these input vectors using a propagation rule (based on the corresponding linear combination). Applying an activation function to the propagation above rule yields the output value of the nodes in question. The nodes are grouped into several layers, namely the input layer, the output layer and one or more intermediate or hidden layers.

An ANN of the multilayer perceptron (MLP) type was developed using SPSS Statistics software version 23. The input values correspond to the responses obtained from the survey, while the output values correspond to the estimates made by the network regarding the different socio-demographic characteristics of the tourist profile. Several networks were tested, and the one that exhibited the highest degree of adjustment in terms of the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the mean absolute percentage error (MAPE) was selected for further analysis. The ANN method is a valuable tool for achieving the research aim, as it enables the effects of inputs to be isolated and quantified, with incremental changes in outputs produced by input variations from their minimum to maximum values. ANNs are known for their lower error rates than other methods, such as linear regressions (Solano-Sánchez et al., 2023). Furthermore, linear regressions are constrained by the inability to consider multiple outputs (dependent variables). In contrast, ANN permits the generation of multiple output variables.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Socio-demographic tourist's profile and question collection

The socio-demographic profile of the sample is presented in Table 1. Concerning gender, the survey revealed a slight majority of female respondents. The age groups are relatively evenly distributed, with a slight predominance of participants between the ages of 31 and 50. Most of the sample reported a monthly household income that falls within the medium-high- and high-income ranges, with two-thirds of respondents indicating an income exceeding €1,500 per month and nearly one in five reporting an income above €3,501. The educational level of the respondents is also notably high, with over 70% having obtained a university degree or higher. Therefore, the typical visitor can be described as a woman between the ages of 30 and 50, with a medium-high or high income and a high level of education.

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

Gender (GEN)		Age (AGE)	
Male	41.61%	13–30 years old	34.99%
Female	58.39%	31–50 years old	40.66%
Monthly household income (MHI)		51– more than 65 years old	24.35%
Less than 700€	4.73%	Educational level (ELV)	
701€ to 1,000€	8.51%	Primary education	1.18%
1,001€ to 1,500€	20.57%	Secondary education	11.35%
1,501€ to 2,500€	31.68%	Vocational education/Professional Course	16.31%
2,501€ to 3,500€	15.84%	University graduate	40.19%
More than 3,501€	18.67%	Masters/PhD	30.97%

Table 2 presents the survey questions on a seven-point Likert scale regarding Cordoba as a tourist destination (Q01–Q15), as well as satisfaction with the Fiesta de los Patios (Q16–Q24), perceptions of the event (Q25–Q27), and the experiences and behaviours of tourists (Q28–Q31). To ascertain the reliability of the scale for these groups, Cronbach's alpha (α) was employed (Cronbach, 1951). All the values obtained are above the figures that confirm this reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The most highly valued aspects pertain to the care and cleanliness (Q19) and conservation (Q18) of the patios, as well as the beauty of the city (Q03) and its historic and monumental quarter (Q01). Conversely, the items that were rated the lowest relate to the waiting time to visit (Q24), the tourist information points (Q22), the perception of relaxation (Q27) and the intention to return to participate in the event (Q31).

Table 2. Cordoba and The Fiesta of the Patios satisfaction, perceptions, experiences and behaviour question set

Code	Question	Mean	Std. Dev.
Cordoba as a tourist destination ($\alpha=0.895$)			
Q01	The historical and monumental quarter	6.48	0.76
Q02	The conservation of monumental and artistic heritage	6.27	0.85
Q03	The beauty of the city	6.54	0.71
Q04	Accessibility to emblematic buildings and monuments	5.75	1.06

Q05	Tourist info	5.61	1.31
Q06	Service and quality of tourist accommodation	5.79	1.16
Q07	Attention and quality of restaurants and taverns	5.96	1.06
Q08	Attention and quality of tour guides	5.92	1.06
Q09	Diversity and quality of local gastronomy	6.13	1.05
Q10	Opportunity to shop for handicrafts and traditional food items	6.07	1.09
Q11	Citizen security	6.13	1.04
Q12	City care and cleanliness	6.13	0.94
Q13	Resident Hospitality	6.37	0.95
Q14	Public transport services	5.63	1.14
Q15	City value for money	5.69	1.22
Satisfaction about the Fiesta de los Patios ($\alpha=0.854$)			
Q16	Accessibility to patios and surrounding spaces	5.67	1.42
Q17	Kindness and hospitality of the residents	6.30	1.00
Q18	State of conservation of the patios visited	6.57	0.74
Q19	Patios care and cleaning	6.65	0.68
Q20	Availability of restaurants and taverns in its surroundings	5.83	1.13
Q21	Diversity and variety of patios that can be visited	6.12	1.04
Q22	Information points and tourist signs	5.48	1.37
Q23	Opportunity to make purchases of interest: handicrafts, etc.	5.81	1.17
Q24	Waiting time to start the visit	4.12	1.84
Perceptions regarding their visit to the Fiesta de los Patios ($\alpha=0.794$)			
Q25	During the visit to the patios I felt part of the cultural and patrimonial heritage of the city of Cordoba	5.72	1.40
Q26	The visit to the Patios has especially moved me	5.73	1.51
Q27	The visit to the Patios has helped me to relax	5.48	1.70
Experience and behaviour regarding attendance at the Fiesta de los Patios ($\alpha=0.847$)			
Q28	I made the right decision to visit the Patios	6.14	1.16
Q29	Cordoba is a quality tourist destination	6.35	0.99
Q30	I will encourage my family and friends to visit the patios	6.22	1.16
Q31	After my experience, I think I will visit the Fiesta de los Patios again in future editions	5.58	1.64

4.2 Artificial neural network performance

The ANN reaches a structure described in Table 3 and illustrated in Figure 1. The input PEs are associated with the distinct Likert-type questions posed in the questionnaire. The values are standardised and multiplied by their synaptic weights (Figure 1). The results are then processed with a hyperbolic tangent activation function and subsequently multiplied by the respective synaptic weights of the PEs of the hidden layer, thus reaching the output PEs corresponding to the different items of the socio-demographic profile. Ultimately, these values undergo a process of inversion to ensure alignment with the specified numerical range for dependent variables (Table 3). Accordingly, when applied to a specific set of input values, the aforementioned arithmetic procedure allows for the estimation of corresponding output values.

Table 3. ANN's architecture

Input Layer	Bias	Value=1
	Covariates	Q01
		Q02
		Q03
		Q04
		Q05
		Q06
		Q07
		Q08
		Q09
		Q10
		Q11
		Q12
		Q13
		Q14
		Q15
		Q16
		Q17
		Q18
		Q19
		Q20
		Q21
		Q22
		Q23
		Q24
		Q25
		Q26
		Q27
		Q28
		Q29
		Q30
	Q31	
	Number of Units (excluding bias)	31
Hidden Layer	Rescaling Method for Covariates	Standardised
	Number of Hidden Layers	1
	Number of Units in Hidden Layer (excluding bias)	5
	Activation Function	Hyperbolic tangent
Output Layer	Dependent Variables	GEN=1 (male)
		GEN=2 (female)
		AGE (from 13 to 75)
		ELV (from 1 to 5)
		MHI (from 1 to 6)
	Number of Units	5
	Rescaling Method for Scale Dependents	Standardised
	Activation Function	Identity
Error Function	Sum of Squares	

Figure 1. ANN's graphic representation

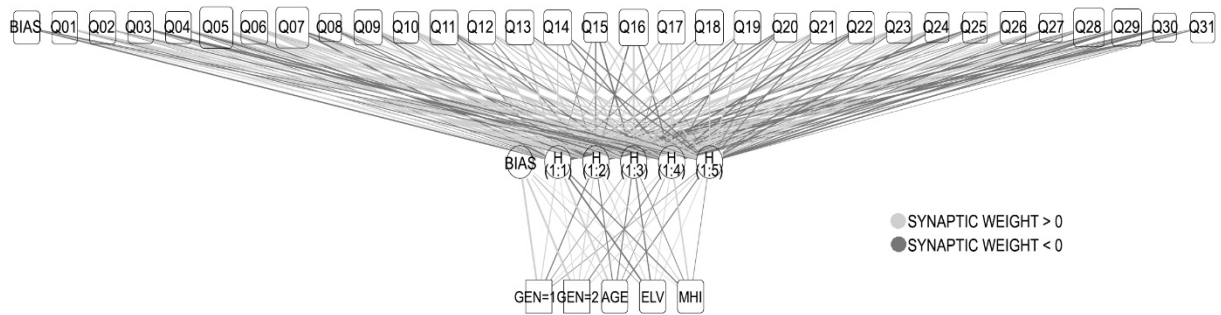


Table 4 shows the errors made during the network development process, the stopping rule employed, and the time required to obtain the results. The sample is divided into two distinct groups: a training group and a test group. The training group accounts for approximately 70% of the total sample, while the test group accounts for approximately 30%. The training group is responsible for developing the values of the synaptic weights, while the test group is tasked with indicating the error, or the difference between the actual and estimated values, that the ANN produces with the modified synaptic weights. Should the test group fail to detect a reduction in the error committed at a given stage, the ANN production will cease (following the stopping rule), and the model will be deemed complete.

Table 4. ANN's development summary

Training (N=298; 70.45%)	Sum of Squares Error		482.661
	Average Overall Relative Error		0.931
	Percent Incorrect Predictions for Categorical Dependents	GEN	37.58%
	Relative Error for Scale Dependents	AGE	0.917
		ELV	0.909
		MHI	0.944
	Stopping Rule Used		1 consecutive step(s) with no decrease in error (based on the testing sample)
Training Time		0:00:00.36	
Testing (N=125; 29.55%)	Sum of Squares Error		200.777
	Average Overall Relative Error		0.940
	Percent Incorrect Predictions for Categorical Dependents	GEN	30.40%
	Relative Error for Scale Dependents	AGE	0.954
		ELV	0.915
MHI		0.947	

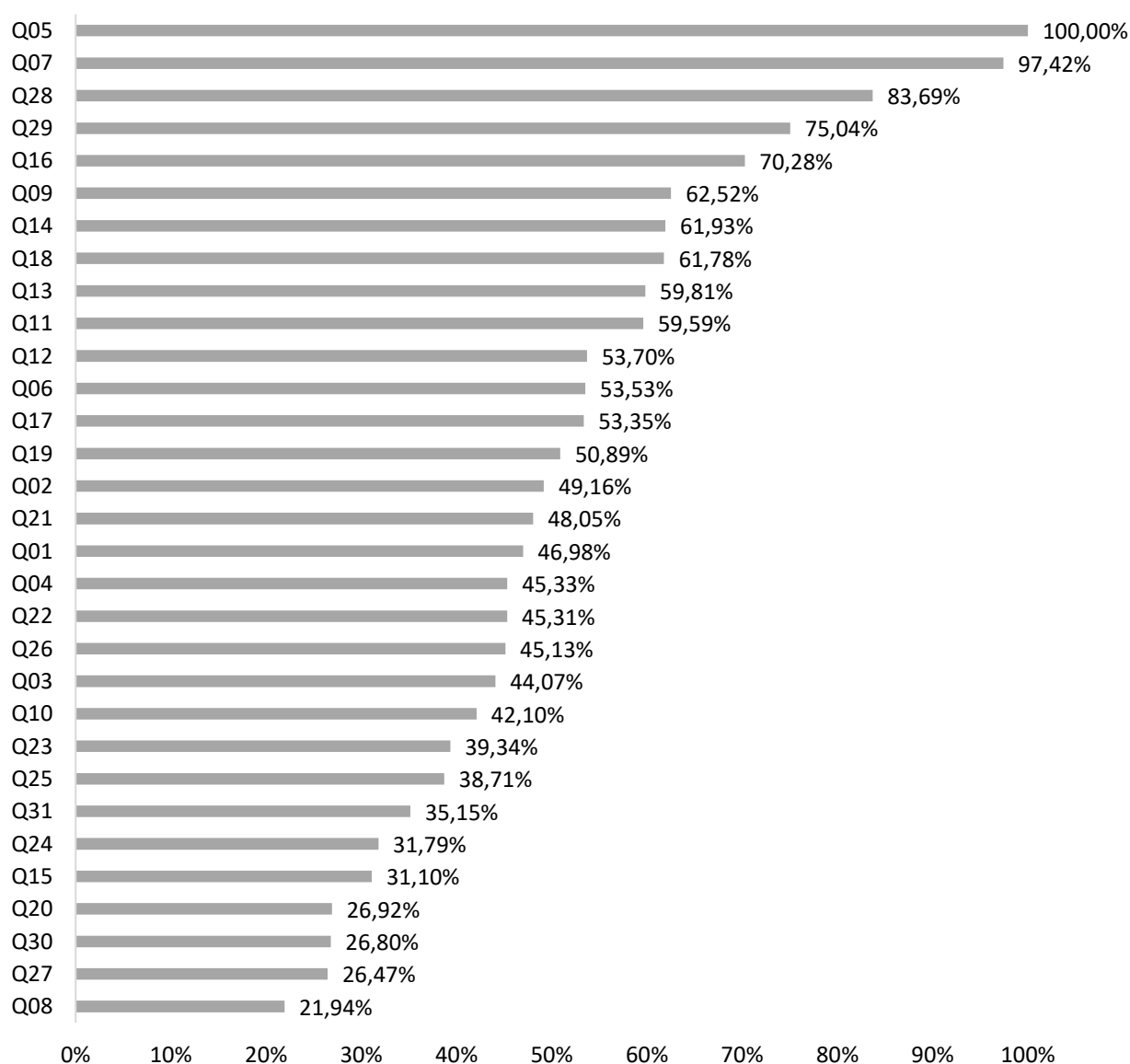
The goodness of fit obtained in the final model is presented in Table 5 for the reader's convenience. Firstly, the MAPE represents the percentage discrepancy between the actual and estimated values, with the absolute value of the difference expressed in percentage terms. Secondly, the coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that the model can explain.

Table 5. ANN’s goodness of fit

	GEN	AGE	ELV	MHI	Overall
MAPE	28.72%	31.77%	25.80%	39.31%	31.40%
R ²	94.12%	9.57%	16.39%	7.14%	31.80%

Furthermore, the ANN enables the relative importance of each input item to be quantified concerning the model. It can, therefore, be concluded that the questions which contributed the most to the model’s relevance were those about tourist attention (Q05), the quality and attention afforded by local restaurants and taverns (Q07), and the respondents’ perception of having made an appropriate decision in participating in the Fiesta de los Patios (Q28). Conversely, the PEs that contributed the least are related to the utilisation of tourist guide services (Q08), the perception that participation in the Fiesta de los Patios facilitated relaxation (Q27), and the intention to recommend participation in this event (Q30).

Figure 2. ANN exogenous variables’ relevance



Additionally, the extent to which each input PE exerts influence over each output PE can be quantified. To achieve this, all the output values are collected while the PE under examination is at its minimum value (1) and maximum (7), with the remaining input PEs maintained at their mean values. Table 6 illustrates the ten questions that exerted the greatest influence on the socio-demographic profile (output PEs), while Table 7 depicts the ten questions that exerted the opposite effect.

Thus, as the decision taken by the tourist to participate in the Fiesta de los Patios (Q28) increases, so do the household income and the academic level of the respondents (Table 6). Furthermore, respondents with a higher level of education are increasingly appreciating aspects such as citizen security (Q11), accessibility to buildings and monuments (Q04), the availability of information points and tourist signage (Q22), the presence of taverns and restaurants (Q20), and the value for money offered by the city (Q15). Nevertheless, older profiles demonstrate a proclivity for other interests, such as tourist information (Q05) or the opportunity to make purchases (Q23).

Table 6. Questions with the most direct influence in profiles' socio-demographic items

Question		Socdem. items	Var.
Q28	I made the right decision to visit the Patios	MHI	22.08%
Q28	I made the right decision to visit the Patios	ELV	15.90%
Q11	Citizen security	ELV	14.36%
Q04	Accessibility to emblematic buildings and monuments	ELV	13.04%
Q05	Tourist info	AGE	11.81%
Q22	Information points and tourist signs	ELV	11.53%
Q18	State of conservation of the patios visited	MHI	11.19%
Q20	Availability of restaurants and taverns in its surroundings	ELV	10.66%
Q23	Opportunity to make purchases of interest: handicrafts, etc.	AGE	9.45%
Q15	City value for money	ELV	8.30%

Table 7 illustrates a decline in the perceived accessibility of patios (Q16) and public transport (Q14) as educational and income levels rise. Furthermore, an increase in the respondent's age is associated with a lower assessment of restaurants and taverns (Q07), the state and conservation of patios (Q18), and Cordoba as a quality destination (Q29). Additionally, as income levels increase, there is a notable decline in the perceived value of patio maintenance and cleaning (Q19) and the diversity and variety of patios offering (Q21).

Table 7. Questions with the most inverse influence to profiles' socio-demographic items

	Question	Socdem. items	Var.
Q07	Attention and quality of restaurants and taverns	AGE	-26.73%
Q18	State of conservation of the patios visited	AGE	-24.80%
Q05	Tourist info	ELV	-20.91%
Q29	Cordoba is a quality tourist destination	AGE	-20.65%
Q16	Accessibility to patios and surrounding spaces	MHI	-17.89%
Q19	Patios care and cleaning	MHI	-17.44%
Q16	Accessibility to patios and surrounding spaces	ELV	-16.82%
Q14	Public transport services	MHI	-16.06%
Q21	Diversity and variety of patios that can be visited	MHI	-15.73%
Q14	Public transport services	ELV	-15.08%

4.3 Discussion

It is erroneous to consider heritage tourists a homogeneous group, given that different motivations drive each individual and feel a unique connection between the place's heritage and their own identity (Poria et al., 2003). The profile of the Fiesta de los Patios de Cordoba visitor, as identified through this research, corresponds to that of a woman between the ages of 30 and 50, with a medium-high or high income and a high level of education. These results are consistent with those previously reported in the scientific literature regarding gender. They align with the findings of Nguyen and Cheung (2014), Remoaldo et al. (2014) and Ramirez et al. (2018), which indicate a higher proportion of women in destinations with significant heritage assets. Nevertheless, as in this study, the difference in terms of gender is not significant (García-García et al., 2021; Moral-Cuadra et al., 2021).

In terms of academic level and income, the findings of this research align with those of previous studies in the scientific literature. These studies have indicated that visitors to places with significant heritage and artistic wealth tend to have a high level of academic achievement and a medium-high to high income (Antón et al., 2017; Correia et al., 2013; Huh et al., 2006; Menor-Campos et al., 2020; Ramirez et al., 2018; Remoaldo et al., 2014). This study's findings indicate a positive correlation between tourists' participation in the Fiesta de los Patios and their income level and academic qualifications. Therefore, the high level of academic achievement and income is linked with the greatest interest in visiting places with a rich heritage.

It is perceived that satisfaction with the tourist experience is positively correlated with an increase in the valuation of the value for money of the city, which is in line with the findings of García-García et al. (2021). Furthermore, the perception of having made an appropriate choice regarding the destination in question is found to increase in tandem with the household income of the tourist (Moral-Cuadra et al., 2022). This is a crucial factor in enhancing the profitability of the tourism sector and companies operating within the analysed area.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The registration of an element or custom as ICH by UNESCO, in addition to implying an obligation to protect and conserve this element for future generations, also results in an increase in tourist flows due to the promotion and dissemination that such registration entails (Bak et al., 2019; Han et al., 2020; Nguyen & Cheung, 2014). In other words, an inscription on one of these lists by UNESCO signifies that the site has become a tourist attraction, thereby substantiating the established correlation between tourism and heritage, as recognised by UNESCO (De Simone et al., 2019; Díaz-Ortega et al., 2023; Lourenço-Gomes et al., 2014).

The theoretical contributions achieved in this study indicate the potential emergence of tourist massification in the Fiesta de los Patios. The process of touristification of the ICH registration can be deduced from the responses to question Q24. This question pertains to the duration of the waiting period before the commencement of the visit. The mean score for the remaining items on the questionnaire was consistently above 5.48 out of 7, with a mean score of 4.12 for the items in question. The declaration of the Fiesta de los Patios as an ICH has resulted in a notable increase in the number of tourists, leading to a significant rise in the average waiting time before the declaration is made. This has increased in the time required to start the visit. As Manjavacas Ruiz (2018) has already observed, the touristification of the Fiesta de los Patios must be considered. The patios have limited dimensions and are located on narrow streets, meaning that the load capacity they support is greater than what they can assume. The high congestion level can also be attributed to the second lowest-scoring question, which pertains to how the visit assisted in relaxation (Q27). The considerable number of visitors results in overcrowding, hindering movement and the patios' tranquil appreciation. Such circumstances may result in feelings of stress and a reduction in opportunities for relaxation.

The motivation to recommend was identified as one of the items with the lowest level of importance within the model. Consequently, this activity cannot be attributed to any particular profile. Conversely, the tourist profiles with high academic attainment and significant economic income represent the majority at the Fiesta de los Patios. These profiles demonstrate a lower value placed on accessibility and public transport. Additionally, an increase in overall satisfaction with the tourism experience is observed as the level of education rises, following the findings of García-García et al. (2021). The age factor presents a differentiated profile in terms of priorities, with a progressive shift in interest. As age increases, there is a notable rise in interest in tourist information and shopping opportunities, accompanied by a decline in interest in restaurants and taverns, the state of conservation of the patios, and Cordoba's status as a quality destination. Ultimately, gender proved to be an insufficiently significant conditioning factor in all cases.

The cleanliness and preservation of the patios, as well as the beauty of the historic centre of Cordoba, are among the aspects most tourists appreciate. These attributes contribute to the high level of satisfaction and the perception of having made an appropriate decision to participate in the Fiesta de los Patios. This allows to conclude that the attributes of a tourist destination play an essential role in shaping the tourist experience and, consequently, the satisfaction of tourists and their loyalty to the destination (Biswas et al., 2020; Ragavan et al., 2014).

This study provides insight into the socio-demographic profile and preferences of cultural and heritage tourism tourists. This understanding enables tourism managers to design personalised strategies for potential customers to maximise visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, understanding the most and least highly rated aspects enables the promotion of the most highly valued attributes, such as cleanliness and conservation, with a view to enhancing the tourist experience and increasing positive word-of-mouth promotion of the destination in question. On the other hand, it enables the identification of areas requiring improvement to ensure a comprehensive tourist experience.

The practical application of this research is that the results can benefit companies dedicated to the sector and public tourism promotion agencies, enabling them to adapt and optimise their offerings. It can, therefore, be deduced from the findings of the study that to attract a profile with a high income that will have a more significant effect on the economic development of the destination, it is necessary to promote accessibility, as well as public transport, especially on the days that the event lasts. To mitigate the issue of overcrowding, it is recommended that a fee be implemented for each entry to the Fiesta de los Patios. This would help to reduce the waiting time and encourage visitors to attend on more than one occasion. However, given the limited number of patios that are included in the contest, it may be challenging to increase the overall offer. Therefore, it is also suggested that Cordoba consider imposing a tourist tax.

The principal limitation of this research is the absence of prior data on this specific type of research, which has precluded the possibility of defining the respondent profiles a priori. Furthermore, using a convenience sample is also considered a limitation. In terms of future research, the following are proposed. Firstly, it would be beneficial to gain a deeper understanding of the profile of the tourists who attend this event in future editions of the festival. This would enable a comparison to be made and a more profound knowledge to be gained about the tourists' motivations for attending and the degree of return visits that this event has. Secondly, it would be interesting to understand the local community's perceptions of this event, given the significant touristification since its designation as an ICH by UNESCO. Ultimately, it would be beneficial to integrate the findings of this study with those of analogous research conducted on comparable events that have also been designated as ICH by UNESCO.

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