

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN CULTURAL TOURISM DESTINATION IMAGE: THE CASE OF MÁLAGA (SPAIN)

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ABSTRACT

Cultural tourism is one of the most sustainable and fastest-growing types of tourism, and so has been widely studied. Despite countless works analysing the possible factors that can condition the choice of the tourist destination, few have addressed how they may differ by gender and within cultural tourism. This paper analyses this phenomenon through the dimensions of cultural offer, services and motivations. PLS-SEM and IPMA analyses were performed for a database of 415 cultural tourists survey responses in Malaga (Spain). The results showed differences between constructs depending on the gender of the tourists. For men, the factor that most affects the choice of destination is motivation, followed by services. Conversely, services are first for women, followed by cultural offer and motivations. The results of this study can be valuable when designing more specific tourism strategies adapted to the profile of tourists.

Keywords: cultural tourism, destination image, gender, motivations, structural equation modelling (SEM)

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Tourism Organisation, Spain is one of the world's leading tourist destinations, being the second-highest country in the number of visits and revenue generators, after France and the United States, respectively (UNWTO, 2021a). Globally, the tourism industry plays a main role in the economy, contributing to global GDP by 10.4% in 2019 (the last year before the COVID-19 pandemic) (WTTC, 2021). As far as Spain is concerned, tourism is a fundamental pillar of its economy, accounting for 12.4 % of its GDP in the same year (INE, 2020).

One of the tourism segments experiencing high growth worldwide is cultural tourism (UNESCO, 2021a). The growing interest in this type of tourism is clearly reflected in Spain. Thus, in 2009, 13.6 % of leisure and recreational trips made by residents and 11.2 % by international tourists were for cultural reasons, while in 2019, these figures rose to 17 % and 19.8 %, respectively (Ministry of Culture and Sport, 2010; Ministry of Culture and Sport, 2020).

Cultural tourism takes a stance as a sustainable kind of tourism through which to achieve economic development and benefit all stakeholders (UNWTO, 2021b). Spain is a country rich in heritage, being the fourth country out of 167 with the most World Heritage Sites (UNESCO, 2021b). Furthermore, according to the Directory of Museums and Collections of Spain, it has more than 1,600 museum institutions (Ministry of Culture and Sport, 2021). In this context, Malaga stands out as one of the Spanish cities with the largest number of museums, with 31 institutions (Ministry of Culture and Sport, 2021).

As tourism has gained importance in the industry, tourism marketing has had to respond to the needs that have arisen (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). Thus, it is essential to achieve a good positioning of the destination in order to differentiate it from the competition. In this respect, the perception and image of the destination play an essential role (Calantone et al., 1989; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). Cultural destinations need to differentiate themselves from the rest, and to this end, the segmentation of their visitors is of great importance (Remoaldo et al., 2014).

An optimal criterion for segmenting the cultural tourism market is gender (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Pérez, 2009; Richards, 2006; Sheng et al., 2008). Previous literature still lacks work that addresses the issue of destination choice by segmenting by gender. Moreover, previous work offers surprisingly contradictory results (McCleary et al., 1994; Crawford-Welch, 2016). This disparity in findings further supports the present study.

Therefore, the fact that Spain is a world reference country in tourism, the great patrimonial value of Malaga and the scarcity of studies concerning the differentiation of tourists by gender in cultural tourism justify this work. Thus, it investigates whether there are

notable differences in the criteria used by men and women when choosing a cultural destination. The results would be of great use in determining gender-segmented tourism marketing strategies. Hence, by analysing this picture, the aim is to answer the following question: What impact does gender have on the choice of destination in cultural tourism? This information will be of great use to tourism managers when designing and implementing marketing strategies adapted to the needs of their tourists.

This paper is structured as follows. After this brief introduction, the second section analyses the theoretical framework and reviews the literature on the subject of the study. Besides, the study hypotheses and the objective pursued are outlined. In the third section, the sample and methodology used are detailed. Next, the fourth section presents the results and, lastly, the conclusions and limitations of the work are drawn.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural tourism is defined by the World Tourism Organisation as "movement of people, essentially for cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural visits, trips to festivals and other events, visits to sites and monuments, trips to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages" (World Tourism Organization, 1985). As part of it, cultural resources are of great relevance to the tourism industry. They bring authenticity to the place and influence the tourist's choice of destination. Its advantages include the generation of economic benefits for all tourism agents involved, the increased demand for accommodation and associated tourism services, among others (UNWTO, 2016). This type of tourism is particularly important in the European continent, considering the greatness of its historical and cultural heritage (Richards and Richards, 1996). This richness is clearly reflected in Spain, whose heritage is recognised worldwide, being the fourth country in the world with the highest number of World Heritage properties declared by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2021b).

Consequently, over time, the importance acquired by cultural tourism has been transferred to the scientific environment, increasing the number of research studies on this type of tourism, which is on the cutting edge of tourism (Weaver, 2011; Ferrari et al., 2014; Prayag et al., 2021). Among these studies, the ones analysing the destination image perceived by tourists in this type of destination (Yankholmes and Akyeampong, 2010; Bové-Sans and Ramírez, 2013; Remoaldo et al., 2014) should be highlighted.

Although the concept of the destination image is frequently used in studies, indeed, a concrete definition is not usually provided (Mazanec and Schweiger, 1981; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). It can be briefly defined as the perception tourists have of a destination (Hunt, 1975; Phelps, 1986). However, other authors offer a broader definition of this concept, stating that destination image is more than just the perception of tourists but is composed, on the one hand, of functional aspects (tangible elements of the place) and on psychological ones (intangible elements) on the other hand. At the same time, it refers to attributes and impressions (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). In previous literature, numerous studies have analysed the relationships between tourists' motivations and the destinations' attractions when choosing it (Dann, 1981; Fraiz et al., 2020).

Another aspect that has aroused the interest of researchers for decades is tourism segmentation, which has been a widely used resource in marketing strategies. This technique is based on the fact that tourists as a whole can be divided into groups according to a series of common characteristics so that their specific needs can be met more effectively (Kastenholz et al., 1999; Kotler et al., 2003).

One way of segmenting the tourism market is by the socio-demographic characteristics of tourists. In this sense, variables such as gender, age or educational level, among others, can influence visitors' perception of the destination (Beerli and Martín, 2004;

Mondéjar-Jiménez et al., 2009; Prayag and Ryan, 2012). In terms of gender segmentation, most of the studies on gender differences in social behaviour in different areas of society are based on two basic pillars: social role theory and evolutionary psychology. These theories argue that people behave differently according to their gender because of the role they play in society and their interests (Archer, 1996; Buss, 1996; Saad and Gill, 2000).

In this sense, numerous studies support the existence of gender differences in their purchasing behaviour (Mostafa, 2007; Audrain-Pontevia and Vanhuele, 2016; Mittal and Kamakura, 2018; Sevilla-Sevilla et al., 2019). Similarly, this type of study is usual in the field of tourism. Thus, according to Kinnaird and Hall (1994), all aspects of the tourism industry are related to gender issues. Within this framework, there are previous research studies with contradictory results. Some of them have confirmed heterogeneous tourism behaviour between men and women (Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993; McCleary et al., 1994; Baloglu, 1997; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Chen and Kerstetter, 1999; Han et al., 2009). Conversely, others have found no significant differences in tourist behaviour according to gender (Jönsson and Devonish, 2010; Crawford-Welch, 2016).

Although it seems that, over time, the differences between men and women in diverse aspects of tourism have diminished considerably, these distinctions are indeed still evident (Collins and Tisdell, 2002). In this regard, studies have found that women tend to have a better image of the destination and, consequently, higher satisfaction compared to men (Assaker et al., 2015). Also, previous literature supports that satisfaction conditions destination choice to a greater extent in the case of women compared to men (Han et al., 2009; Namkung and Jang, 2009). Other authors have found that men prefer historical destinations, while women prefer natural and rural destinations (Wang and Hao, 2018). On the other hand, previous research considers that gender plays a determinant role in tourism motivations (Uysal et al., 1996; Remoaldo et al., 2014). Consequently, tourists' travel motives and gender are deeply linked to destination choice (Collins and Tisdell, 2002).

Thus, previous research has concluded that men have a preference for motivations related to outdoor physical activity and recreation, while women consider rest, relaxation or family bonding to be more important (Freysinger, 1995; Mattila et al., 2001; Andreu et al., 2006; Meng and Uysal, 2008). Similarly, other studies have shown that men tend to have motivations related to action and adventure. However, women's ones are more related to cultural and educational experiences (Mieczkowski, 1990).

Moreover, other authors have found that perceptions of the attributes and services offered by the destination also vary significantly by gender. Thus, in the study conducted by Meng and Uysal (2008), women rated all destination's attributes more positively, including museums or historical sites, while men rated them considerably lower. Furthermore, according to the literature, safety in the tourism destination is the attribute that tends to be

paramount for women, who attach great importance to it (Mieczkowski, 1990; Meng and Uysal, 2008).

In short, although there are indeed more and more studies on tourism from this gender perspective, these can still be considered scarce, specifically in the field of cultural tourism (Meng and Uysal, 2008; Remoaldo et al., 2014; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2020; Prayag et al., 2021). Based on all the above, it can be stated that the perception of the different dimensions related to the tourist destination image (destination valuation, tourist motivations and destination attributes) may vary according to gender, as will be stated in the hypotheses of this paper.

This study aims to determine the most important factors when choosing a cultural tourist destination, differentiating between men and women. In other words, how gender affects the cultural destination choice model will be analysed. To do so, the previous work of Ceballos-Santamaría et al. (2021) is the base for the model in this paper. This research shows that destination choice is significantly conditioned by tourist motivations, services and cultural offerings.

Specifically, this paper analyses the differences by gender in how these same factors affect the choice of the tourist destination. Thus, the sample was divided into men and women to compare and analyse both effects. The hypotheses go as it follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). There is a significant difference in the effect of tourism services on motivations between male and female tourists.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). There is a significant difference in the effect of tourism services on destination choice between male and female tourists.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). There is a significant difference in the effect of cultural offerings on motivations between male and female tourists.

Hypothesis 4 (H4). There is a significant difference in the effect of cultural offer on destination choice between male and female tourists.

Hypothesis 5 (H5). There is a significant difference in the effect of motivations on destination choice between male and female tourists.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data were collected through questionnaires given to randomly selected visitors to Malaga from June to December 2019. Those questionnaires were based on previous studies in the literature (Mondéjar-Jiménez and Gómez-Borja, 2009). It applies a structured methodology in which the different items are rated according to a 1 to 10 Likert scale.

The sample contains 415 subjects, of which 38.55 % were male and 61.45 % female tourists. Two subsamples by gender were extracted, both surpassing the minimum number of cases recommended for using the selected methodology (Hair et al., 2019).

The four dimensions under study were analysed using different indicators (Table 1), many of which were highlighted in previous studies on tourist destination image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991).

Data analysis was conducted using structural equation modelling (SEM). This methodology allows maximising the explained variance of the endogenous constructs, operating similarly to multiple regression analysis and being particularly useful in exploratory research (Fornell and Bookstein, 1982; Hair et al., 2011). Regarding the assessment of the model, it can be divided into two phases. Firstly, the measurement model through the assessment of reliability, convergent and discriminant validity. Secondly, the structural model by the magnitude of the path coefficients, their significance and the coefficient of determination. The same model was run twice, once for each gender subsample. The different values between the relationships of the constructs were observed, as presented in the results section.

Additionally, this study conducts an importance-performance analysis (IPMA) at the indicator level. This analysis identifies those aspects that need to be addressed to improve the objective constructs (Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016) and draws them in a diagram. That diagram is composed of four quadrants, with the vertical axis representing the performance of the antecedent constructs or indicators and the horizontal axis the importance of these. In other words, the objective pursued is to identify those areas that are important in the performance of a given construct but do not perform adequately. Then, improvement measures can be proposed (Höck et al., 2010; Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016; Hair et al., 2019). It is also a useful tool for comparing groups (Rigdon et al., 2010; Schloderer et al., 2014).

4. RESULTS

Before running the proposed model, Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for each indicator used, differentiating by gender. These results show that women have a higher rating for all of them except for the motivations relating to visiting, languages and sports. In particular, both men (8.11 out of 10) and women (8.29) rated Malaga as a tourism destination highly.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the indicators

		Men (N=160)		Women (N =255)	
		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
<i>Tourist Destination</i>	<i>Destination valuation (V1)</i>	8.11	0.997	8.29	0.915
	<i>Comparative valuation (V2)</i>	5.88	1.230	5.98	1.122
<i>Cultural Offer</i>	<i>Kindness (R1)</i>	8.44	1.002	8.58	0.977
	<i>Cultural offer (R2)</i>	7.81	0.802	7.96	0.834
	<i>Heritage (R3)</i>	7.67	0.791	7.83	0.847
<i>City Services</i>	<i>Cleaning (S1)</i>	7.52	1.093	7.75	1.121
	<i>Preservation (S2)</i>	7.61	0.770	7.75	0.789
	<i>Signposts (S3)</i>	7.67	1.452	7.94	1.244
	<i>Safety (S4)</i>	7.65	0.992	7.73	0.905
	<i>Green areas (S5)</i>	7.06	0.979	7.22	1.073
	<i>Access (S6)</i>	8.45	0.917	8.67	0.832
<i>Tourist Motivations</i>	<i>Visiting (M4)</i>	6.63	2.368	6.31	2.466
	<i>Languages (M5)</i>	1.04	2.065	1.04	2.131
	<i>Sport (M6)</i>	1.88	2.908	1.36	2.517
	<i>Nature (M7)</i>	6.86	1.273	6.99	1.112

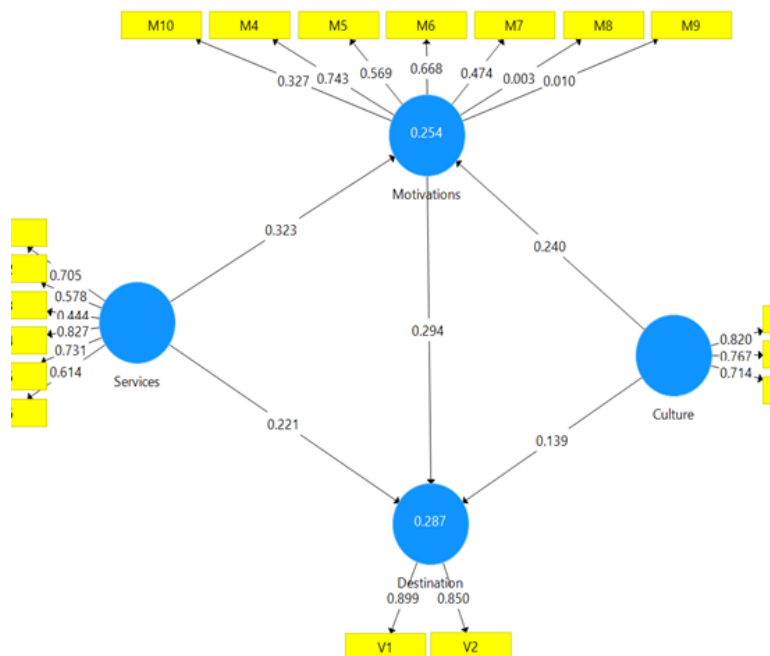
<i>Beach (M8)</i>	6.53	1.496	6.73	1.779
<i>Relax (M9)</i>	7.39	1.781	7.55	1.637
<i>Festivals (10)</i>	6.48	2.077	6.66	2.122

Source: Authors.

Regarding the city's cultural offer, for both segments, the highest-rated indicator was friendliness (8.44 and 8.58). On the contrary, the worst-rated one for both groups was heritage (7.67 and 7.83). For the services dimension, accessibility was the aspect that received the highest scores in both cases (8.45 and 8.67), unlike green areas, which received the lowest (7.06 and 7.22). Finally, in terms of motivations, both groups preferred relaxation (7.39 and 7.55), with languages being the lowest-rated indicator for both men and women (1.04).

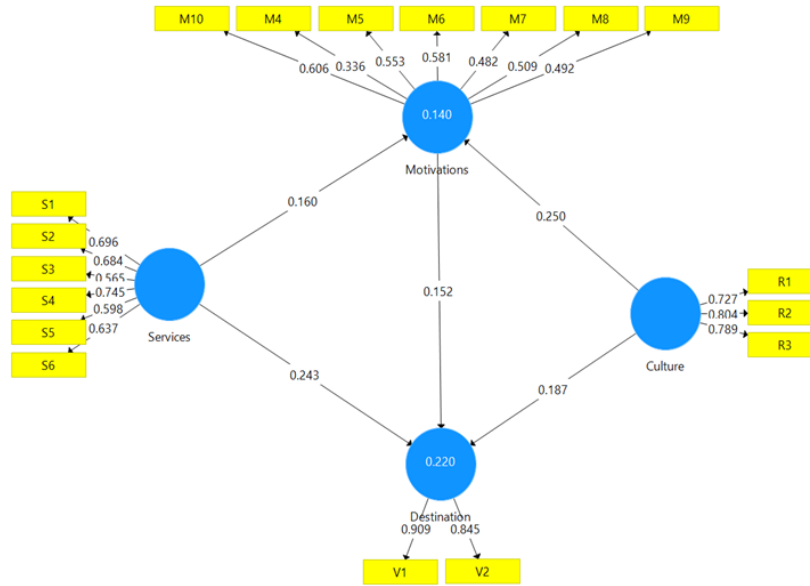
The proposed model was analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), running the calculations with SmartPLS 3 software (Ringle et al., 2015). Figures 1 and 2 show the relationships under study, as well as the results of running the PLS algorithm.

Figure 1. Estimation of the structural equation model for men.



Source: Authors.

Figure 2. Estimation of the structural equation model for women.



Source: Authors.

Straightforward, for assessing the measurement model, the reliability of the constructs and indicators was analysed for both models (Table 2). Cronbach's alpha value for most of the latent variables is above or close to 0.7, which supports the reliability of the constructs (Cronbach, 1951; Hulland, 1999), except for the construct motivations. However, it is kept in the analysis as it does not affect the reliability measures of the other constructs.

Table 2. Reliability and validity measures.

Constructs	Men				Women			
	<i>AVE</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
<i>Culture</i>	0.590	0.812	-	0.664	0.600	0.818	-	0.665
<i>Destination</i>	0.766	0.867	0.287	0.696	0.770	0.870	0.220	0.706
<i>Motivations</i>	0.236	0.593	0.254	0.481	0.265	0.711	0.140	0.548
<i>Services</i>	0.437	0.818	-	0.743	0.432	0.819	-	0.737

Source: Authors.

Furthermore, the discriminant validity is proven according to Fornell and Lacker's criterion, which states that the square root of the AVE of each construct should be higher than its highest correlation with any other construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) (Table 3).

Table 3. Discriminant validity by Fornell and Larcker criterion.

	Men				Women			
	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Destina- -tion</i>	<i>Motiva- -tion</i>	<i>Services</i>	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Destina- -tion</i>	<i>Motiva- -tion</i>	<i>Services</i>
<i>Culture</i>	0.768				0.774			
<i>Destination</i>	0.396	0.875			0.398	0.878		
<i>Motivations</i>	0.431	0.457	0.486		0.353	0.296	0.515	
<i>Services</i>	0.592	0.440	0.465	0.661	0.647	0.413	0.322	0.657

Source: Authors.

Secondly, the analysis of the structural model allows confirming or rejecting the proposed hypotheses. The results of the hypothesis test with a bootstrapping of 10,000 samples are shown in Table 4, which contains the regression coefficients between the constructs and their t-statistic. The results of the hypothesised relationships between constructs in the two subsamples reveal that all of them are significant except H4 in the male subsample.

Regarding the effect of tourism services on motivations, although the pooled sample in the study by Ceballos-Santamaría et al. (2021) did not reach a significant value, it is statistically significant when splitting the sample by gender. The difference between the two study subsamples is striking, with the effect of services on motivations being considerably higher in the group of men than in the group of women, thus confirming H1.

Table 4. Hypothesis test.

	Total (N = 415)		Men (N = 160)		Women (N = 255)	
	<i>Direct Effects</i>	<i>T Statistics</i>	<i>Direct Effects</i>	<i>T Statistics</i>	<i>Direct Effect</i>	<i>T Statistics</i>
H1. Services -> Motivations	0.176	1.947 ^{ns}	0.323	2.572**	0.160	1.650*
H2. Services -> Destination	0.247	3.423**	0.221	2.565**	0.243	2.602***
H3. Culture -> Motivations	0.247	2.838**	0.240	1.908*	0.250	2.580**
H4. Culture -> Destination	0.221	2.706**	0.139	1.421 ^{ns}	0.187	1.970**
H5. Motivations -> Destination	0.207	3.000**	0.294	2.907***	0.152	1.995**

Note: *0.001; **0.01; ***0.1

Source: Authors.

As for the effect of tourism services on destination choice, H2 cannot be accepted as their influence is very similar in the two subsamples. In other words, destination choice is influenced homogeneously by tourism services for both men and women. Similarly, for H3, the regression coefficients reach similar values for the two subsamples, so they are very close to those found in the general case. In other words, the cultural offer has a similar positive effect on motivations for men and women.

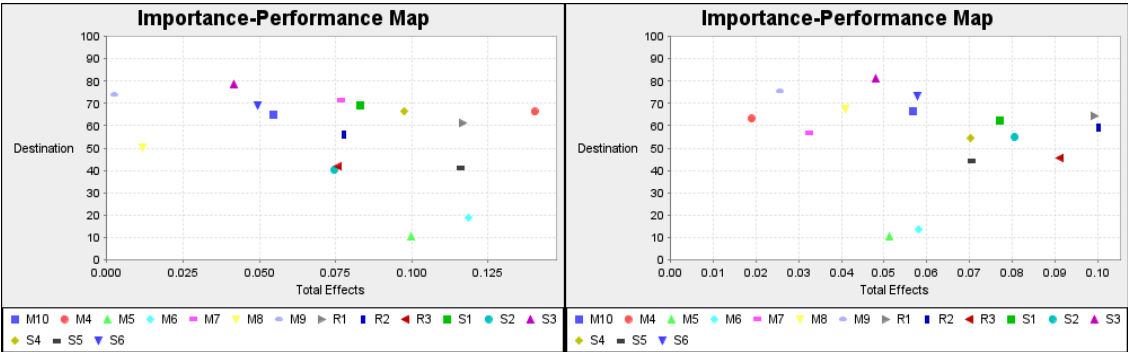
Even though, in the unsegmented sample, the cultural offer conditions the choice of destination (Ceballos-Santamaría et al., 2021). If differentiating by gender, the cultural offer does not influence the choice of destination on men (H4). It is also interesting to note how motivations condition the choice of destination differently according to gender, being a factor that has a higher impact on men than on women, thus accepting H5.

Finally, without differentiating by gender, the factor that has the highest impact on the choice of destination is services, followed by cultural offerings and motivations (Ceballos-Santamaría et al., 2021). This same pattern is repeated for women. However, for men, the choice of the tourism destination is conditioned firstly by motivations and secondly by services, not being affected by the cultural offer. And as far as motivations are concerned,

in the men's sub-sample, motivations are conditioned firstly by services and secondly by the cultural offer. Conversely, in the women's sub-sample, this order is reversed.

Additionally, to reach more accurate conclusions and to complement the hypothesis test, an importance-performance analysis (IPMA) was conducted for both subsamples (Figures 3), which allows identifying the importance of indicators and latent variables for a target construct, as well as their performance (Höck et al., 2010; Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016; Hair et al., 2019). The targeting construct was the destination choice. Figure 3 shows that the indicators for both subsamples are widely scattered.

Figure 3. IPMA diagram for men (left) and women (right).



Source: Authors.

According to the results, the best indicators in terms of importance, as well as performance, differ quite a lot in terms of the gender of the tourists. Thus, in the case of men, the indicators with a strong influence on the destination and which also have a high performance (close to 60 %) are the motivation to visit (M4), the cultural factor of friendliness (R1) and safety (S4). For women, these indicators are friendliness (R1), cleanliness (S1) and cultural offer (R2). In addition, the results of this analysis return that many indicators, which are of great importance when choosing Malaga as a tourist destination, could be improved. In the first place, it is interesting to note that the number of indicators where performance can be improved is virtually the same for both men and women.

The results support that the motivational indicators referring to languages and sport (M5 and M6), green space services (S5), and cultural offer referring to heritage (R3) are aspects with a high margin for improvement for both men and women. These indicators are located in the lower right quadrant, i.e. they have relatively high importance in terms of destination choice and relatively low performance. These are the aspects that need to be further developed since achieving a better performance can improve the destination image. Focusing on each model, the first element with the greater room for improvement in the subgroup of men would be the motivational indicator for sport (M6). Yet, in the case of women, it would be heritage (R3). In short, these results allow the city's tourism agents to

focus on these aspects, which are of great importance for tourists when choosing Malaga as a destination, but which are not well managed yet.

It is particularly striking how the motivational indicator of visiting (M4) is the most important factor for men in terms of destination choice, while in the women's subgroup it is the least important factor. Additionally, men stated that the least important aspects were the tourist motivation related to relaxation (M9) and the beach (M8). In the case of women, it was the motivational indicator of visiting (M4) and relaxation (M9). Despite their relatively low importance, these indicators are high performers.

5. DISCUSSION

The study analyses the effects of gender on the choice of a culturally based tourist destination. To this end, a series of indicators were analysed about four dimensions of tourism in the city of Malaga: tourist services, visitor motivations, tourist offer and valuation of the destination. A sample of 415 randomly selected tourists visiting Malaga rated those indicators.

In general terms, the results reveal significant gender differences in the hypothesised relationships, as shown in the study. According to the results of the performed analyses, the services offered condition the motivations of tourists and their valuation of the destination. The first relationship is stronger in the case of men, while the second is similar for both subsamples, being slightly higher for women. Furthermore, the cultural offer significantly influences motivations in a very similar way for both men and women. Nevertheless, the same is not accurate for the relationship between the tourist offer and destination choice, which is significant only in the case of women. The choice of destination is also significantly conditioned by the tourists' motivations, but with greater intensity in the case of men.

Therefore, for the latter, the tourist offer and motivations are two crucial factors affecting the destination image, with the first sphere having the greatest impact. Then, for the subsample of women, the choice of destination is conditioned firstly by the tourist services, secondly by the cultural offer and finally by the motivations. Concerning the motivations of men, these are affected by the services offered and, to a lesser extent, by the cultural offer. In the case of women, the opposite occurs, having the cultural offer a higher impact.

The results of the IPMA analysis show that there are a series of indicators that would be important for tourism agents to pay attention to in order to improve the image of Malaga as a destination. For men, aspects such as sport, green areas and languages have a determining power in the choice of the city as a destination and, at the same time, are not being sufficiently promoted, while for women, these indicators that need to be improved are heritage, followed

by green areas and, to a lesser extent, sport. This order of relationship is partially in line with previous research, which has concluded that there is a clear differentiation between men and women in terms of their leisure interests, such as sport, which is a more prominent and valued aspect in the case of men (Firestone and Shelton, 1994).

Also, the results of the IPMA analysis reinforce the idea presented by Ceballos-Santamaría et al. (2021) in determining that beach and relaxation motivations are not the aspects considered most important by tourists in Malaga. These results are the same for both men and women. Other aspects similarly behaving are the motivation to visit and nature for women and signage and accessibility services for men. In addition, the results revealed that the most important indicators for tourists to choose Malaga as a tourist destination and which are also performing well are the motivation to visit, followed by friendliness, safety and cleanliness in the case of men. And, for the group of women, it would be the cultural offer, followed by friendliness, preservation, cleanliness, safety, festivals and accessibility. In line with other studies, the higher cultural motivation of women over men and the opposite in the case of the motivation to visit (Uysal et al., 1996; Remoaldo et al., 2014) is highlighted. Moreover, this contrasts with other studies which have concluded that women attach more importance than men to safety when choosing a destination, as in the present study it was men who attached greater importance to this factor (Meng and Uysal, 2008; Remoaldo et al., 2014).

Contrariwise, the fact that in certain aspects of this research the results did not show significant differences may be related to the fact that these gender variations are also strongly affected by the age of the individuals, i.e. gender differences become more noticeable depending on the stage of life, as has been confirmed in previous studies (Carr, 1999).

In line with previous studies, we consider that it is necessary to take into account the different subgroups of tourists to implement more adapted strategies for the optimal development of these heritage destinations (Kerstetter et al., 2001). In this sense, regarding the results of the study, the tourism managers of the city are encouraged to promote those aspects that are of striking importance for tourists and that are not being taken for their best advantage. Specifically, in the case of men, the improvement of green areas and sport is of vital importance, while in the case of women, these improvements should be aimed towards heritage and green areas.

Finally, the results make continuing research in this area possible. In this sense, this study could be improved at the methodological level, in terms of the validity and reliability of the constructs of the proposed models. On the other hand, the analysis could also include more socio-demographic variables to observe how the different socio-demographic strata can influence the destination image. In this sense, in line with previous studies (Kotler et al., 2003), variables such as age, income level or educational level could be included and the

effects studied in an interrelated way along with gender. Lastly, this study is limited to the responses of tourists from the city of Malaga, and to extrapolate these responses to the field of cultural tourism in general, a more in-depth study would be required. Therefore, it would be of high interest to carry out the same study in other culturally-based destinations and analyse how the results may differ.

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