

Interests, motivations and gastronomic experiences in the world heritage site destination of Granada (Spain): satisfaction analysis

Gastronomic experiences in Granada

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Abstract

Purpose – Gastronomy can be a key destination choice factor. As tourists, people will be able to learn more about the culture of the place through its culinary assets. This paper aims to analyse the interest and the gastronomic motivations of tourists to the city of Granada (Spain), where two important UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) are included.

Design/methodology/approach – To achieve the aim of this study, fieldwork was carried out on a representative sample of tourists in Granada (Spain). Specifically, a total of 1,612 valid surveys were filled out in culinary establishments and historical sites. In these surveys, the opinion of tourists regarding gastronomy and their motivations when travelling was assessed.

Findings – The results of this research allow to make a segmentation of tourists into three groups according to their position and their interest in gastronomy based on their destination choice, distinguishing among survivors, enjoyers and experiencers' tourists. Additionally, it is confirmed that gastronomy is shaped as a motivation that influences the level of tourist satisfaction, performing as a differentiating element that can help increase the competitiveness of the destination.

Originality/value – This research contributes to the scarce academic literature on tourism experiences in a city with WHS recognitions. This study confirms the existence of a relationship between gastronomic motivations and the level of satisfaction achieved by tourists who visit the city of Granada, where no similar studies were found. In addition, this work confirms the connection between gastronomy and culture.

Keywords Gastronomic interest, Gastronomic motivations, Gastronomic tourism, Granada (Spain), Tourist satisfaction, World heritage site

Paper type Research paper



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1. Introduction

Gastronomy is progressively gaining consideration in tourist satisfaction, sometimes even being a choice destination factor. These consequently influence positively in the tourism sector, so public institutions and the private sector are increasingly giving importance to gastronomy as an essential part of the tourist offer. Worldwide speaking, it supposes a market of \$2.52bn in 2021, with an estimated growth of 75.79% in seven years forecasting a total value of \$4.55bn in 2028 (Statista, 2022). The relevance of this segment is especially prominent in areas where the tourism sector is highly developed. In Spain, according to National Statistics Institute (NSI) in 2020 restaurant services comprises 3.72% of gross domestic product (GDP), employing 7.2% of the total working population. Andalusia (a region in the south of Spain), where the present research takes place, comprises 4.32% of GDP, employing 7.45% of the total working population (NSI, 2022a, b, c).

The gastronomy of a place can be considered from two different perspectives. Firstly, in a basic view, where gastronomy is presented as a necessary element to satisfy the physiological need to feed oneself. This perspective is far from a broader consideration in which gastronomy is taken into account as a fundamental element for a deep understanding of the culture of a place, as a way of knowing its history, traditions and interpersonal relationships. Thus, it is essential to determine the different kinds of tourists based on their vision or motivation towards the gastronomy of the place visited (Hjalager, 2004; Pesonen *et al.*, 2011). Following this, the gastronomic motivation of the visitor can range from an auxiliary or purely physiological element of the trip to becoming a determining item in the creation of the tourist experience. It could also become a key factor when tourists choose the destination to visit (Basil and Basil, 2009; López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2017; Pérez-Gálvez *et al.*, 2020). From the point of view of supply, gastronomy, in addition to being an element of tourist attraction, can be a factor in the improvement of the economy of the place visited, particularly in developing countries (Mgonje *et al.*, 2016). In this way, gastronomic tourism is a prominent agent in the economic dynamisation of the destination, allowing wealth to remain in the place where it is generated.

The importance that tourists give to gastronomy in their travels is increasing, conditioning their satisfaction with the destination visited on the gastronomic experience they had. Thus, the gastronomy of a tourist destination plays an important role in the analysis and determination of the satisfaction felt by the tourist on their trip. In this sense, Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2016) and López-Guzmán *et al.* (2017) vindicate the interrelation among motivations, experiences and satisfaction. Accordingly, previous research, such as Hjalager (2004), Kivela and Crotts (2005), McKercher *et al.* (2008), Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2016) and Williams *et al.* (2018), point out that visitors with a deep interest in gastronomy generally have higher purchasing power (family income) and with a greater possibility of having a high daily expense in the destination, being, therefore, a more interesting type of tourist for the destinations. This has been confirmed in recent studies, as in Balderas-Cejudo *et al.* (2021) which also remarks on the importance of the senior foodie market (aged 65 years and older) concerning their family disposable income and the expenditure spent on the destinations.

This research tries to fill a research gap, checking the existence of the relationship between the tourist's interest in gastronomy and their gastronomic motivations with the satisfaction and experiences felt by him/her in the destination empirically, in an important heritage and cultural city, where currently there are no similar studies. The present work is developed in a cultural tourism city with two UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) inscriptions, such as the city of Granada, where studies related to cultural heritage have been carried out, but there are no studies on its gastronomy and its importance as a tourist attraction. This study tries to cover this research deficit.

The present work, therefore, aims to analyse the interest of tourists in the destination's gastronomy through its segmentation and to relate these tourists' greater or lesser interest in gastronomy with their gastronomic motivations and with the satisfaction and experience with the

destination's gastronomy. In addition, this research aims to contribute to the tourism sector, public and private, of the city of Granada, pointing out the main motivations of tourists. This can promote gastronomic tourism, adapting it to the demands and needs of tourists. A motivational analysis is essential to understand the gastronomic tourist, owing most tourists turn to restaurants or food stands to satisfy their hunger during their trip. This work assumes that, although all tourists eat to cover their basic physiological needs, their motivation and their interest in gastronomy can be diverse (Hjalager, 2004; Pesonen *et al.*, 2011). Literature studies confirm the existence of tourists called "Foodies" who love to try different foods and frequently follow news and topics related to food (Kim *et al.*, 2019; Santos *et al.*, 2020; Balderas-Cejudo *et al.*, 2021). In this sense, destination stakeholders should realise that some tourists have a deeper interest in local foods and their historical and cultural roots. Therefore, they must supply food and souvenirs that represent local cultural characteristics (Pizzichini *et al.*, 2020; Gómez-Rico *et al.*, 2021).

To reach the aims proposed, this research is structured as follows. Firstly, Section 2 shows in depth the main studies and conclusions published to date in the field of study. Later, the methodology applied in this work is presented in Section 3. This section explains details about the design of the questionnaire, guidelines applied in the fieldwork, as well as for the analysis of the data and the collected sample. Finally, the results obtained are shown in Section 4, followed by carrying out a discussion of them, as well as an explanation of the conclusions in Sections 5 and 6. Implications and limitations of the study are explained in Sections 7 and 8.

2. Literature review

2.1 *Tourist segmentation based on gastronomic interest*

Visitor segmentation is an essential component to act correctly in the administration of the place by both public institutions and companies. Moreover, accurate classification and identification of the type of tourists allow the design of specific tourism products adapted to the type of tourist that a destination receives (Castillo-Canalejo *et al.*, 2020). Thus, in the studies based on the tourists' segmentation, it is common to include variables such as motivations, lifestyles or sociodemographic profiles. In addition, the segmentation of tourists will allow consolidation of the gastronomic image of the destination, consequently obtaining the tourist greater satisfaction with the visit and, therefore, loyalty will be generated towards that gastronomic destination (Toudert and Bringas-Rábago, 2019). Specifically, in the present work, it is essential to identify groups of tourists with common traits (Ko *et al.*, 2018; Levitt *et al.*, 2019) according to their interest in the gastronomy of the place visited (Kivela and Crotts, 2005).

In this line, it is possible to highlight previous research, such as Hjalager (2004), Kivela and Crotts (2005), McKercher *et al.* (2008), Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016) and Williams *et al.* (2018), indicating that visitors with a deep interest in gastronomy generally have higher purchasing power (family income) and with a greater possibility of having a high daily expense in the destination, being, therefore, a more interesting type of tourist for the destinations. This has been confirmed in recent studies, as in Balderas-Cejudo *et al.* (2021), which also highlights the importance of the senior foodie market (aged 65 years and older) concerning their family disposable income and the expenditure made on the destinations.

Hjalager (2004), looking at the culinary experience of tourists, proposes a theoretical model for the classification of gastronomy tourists into four different groups: experimental, existential, diversionary and recreational gastronomy tourists. Existential gastronomy tourists aim to learn how to cook and are not very demanding in terms of the sophistication of their cuisine. Thus, the success of their trip is connected to visiting restaurants that are only attended by locals and whose dishes are prepared according to local traditions. This is in contrast to the experimental gastronomy tourist, who is looking for sophisticated and high-end experiences. For those tourists, quality and new trends are of great value. On the other hand, both diversionary and recreational gastronomy tourists prefer the gastronomy that is

more familiar, avoiding novelty. In this sense, recreational gastronomy tourists are those who are less committed to local gastronomy and do not attach great importance to food and drink during their holidays. Concerning diversionary gastronomy tourists, they will prioritise the accessibility and quantity of food and drink during their holidays over the quality of the latter.

The work by [Kivela and Crotts \(2005\)](#) establishes a typology of tourists according to three fundamental elements: the gastronomic knowledge that tourist has; the interest in gastronomy as a crucial factor in the placement selection; and the gastronomic experience of the tourist during their trip. According to these factors, [Kivela and Crotts \(2005\)](#) identify two tourist segments: firstly, tourists with little awareness of local gastronomy and who are more concerned about the resources of the destination; and secondly, tourists who show a significant interest in learning about and tasting destination's gastronomy.

The model of [McKercher et al. \(2008\)](#) classifies tourists based on three questions: whether the tourist defines himself as a gastronomic tourist, whether the tourist recognises himself as interested in tasting the gastronomic diversity of the place, and if the tourist takes into account the cuisine of a specific place as an elementary incentive for the selection of the place of his/her visit. According to these parameters, the authors identify five groups of tourists: definite culinary tourist, likely culinary tourist, possible culinary tourist, unlikely culinary tourist and non-culinary tourist.

[Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen \(2016\)](#), on the other hand, present a model based on grouping tourists through three questions. Firstly, to identify the extent to which a person's travel decision is influenced by the search for new gastronomic experiences as an incentive; secondly, the impact that gastronomy has on the selection of a destination; and thirdly, the link between the satisfaction and the gastronomy of the tourist in the destination. According to the importance of these issues, [Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen \(2016\)](#) group tourists into three segments. The first group, called "experiencers", are tourists who have gastronomy as an essential aspect of their trip selection. In "enjoyers" (the second group), tourists with a certain interest in gastronomy are grouped, but gastronomy is not an essential aspect for them. The third group, called "survivors", are groups of tourists for whom gastronomy is not an important aspect of their destination selection. This grouping system is largely used in the scientific literature, as in [Pérez-Gálvez et al. \(2020\)](#) in their research on gastronomic tourism in Popayán, Colombia.

Lastly, [Williams et al. \(2018\)](#) study the characteristics and practices of self-identified gastro-tourists. They identify two types of gastro-tourists: deliberate and incidental gastro-tourists. The former is characterised by their choice of destination based on the quality and quantity of activities specifically related to gastronomy. On the other hand, the latter group chooses their travel destination based on other aspects, such as visiting friends or family, attending events or business travel. However, during their stay, they end up spontaneously planning side trips that involve gastronomic experiences that go beyond food. Furthermore, the study by [Williams et al. \(2018\)](#) highlights similarities in the general travel and spending practices of gastro-tourists across generations.

[Table 1](#) shows a summary of the main research that carries out segmentation of tourists based on their gastronomic interest in the place visited. [Hjalager \(2004\)](#) proposes a theoretical model for the classification of gastronomy tourists, and consequently, no data on sample and segment sizes are given in [Table 1](#).

According to previous literature, the hypothesis to be tested states as follows:

H_1 . Tourists show different attitudes towards gastronomy as a determining variable in destination choice.

2.2 Gastronomic motivation on the trip

The gastronomy of a tourist destination can be considered as a stimulus to basic consumption, with the sole objective of covering the physiological need to feed, or, on the

Research	Segments	Characteristics	%	Sample size
Hjalager (2004)	Experimental gastronomy tourist	Tourists who are looking for high-level culinary experiences, prioritising quality and innovation	N/A ^(e)	
	Existential gastronomy tourist	Tourists who aim to learn about the local cuisine. They are undemanding with respect to sophistication		
	Diversionsary gastronomy tourist	Tourists who place more value on accessibility and quantity of food and drink than on quality		
	Recreational gastronomy tourist	Tourists who are uncommitted to local food		
Kivela and Crofts (2005)	Tourists with significant interest in local gastronomy	Tourists who manifest a significant interest in learning and tasting the local gastronomy	20.8	N = 1.067
	Tourists with little interest in local gastronomy	Tourists who pay more attention to other resources of the destination, different to local gastronomy	79.2	
McKercher <i>et al.</i> (2008)	Definite Culinary tourist	<i>From</i> (Definite Culinary tourist)	10.4	N = 769
	Likely culinary tourist	Tourists are very interested in gastronomy, who define themselves as gastronomic tourists	29.8	
	Possible culinary tourist	<i>Until</i> (Non-culinary tourist)	20.7	
	Unlikely culinary tourist	Tourists who have little interest in gastronomy	30.4	
Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016)	Non-culinary tourist Experiencers	Tourists who have gastronomy as an essential aspect in their trip selection	8.7	N = 158
	Enjoyers	Tourists who have gastronomy with a certain interest in gastronomy	37.3	
	Survivors	Tourists for whom gastronomy is not an important aspect of their destination selection	41.8	
Williams <i>et al.</i> (2018)	Deliberate gastro-tourist	Search for authentic culinary experiences when they travel	Survey 1	17.2 N = 116
	Incidental gastro-tourist	Do not necessarily search for authentic culinary experiences when they travel		70.7
	Deliberate gastro-tourist	Search for authentic culinary experiences when they travel	Survey 2	43.6 N = 133
	Incidental gastro-tourist	Do not necessarily search for authentic culinary experiences when they travel		31.6

Note(s): ^(e) N/A: non-available
Source(s): Own elaboration

Table 1.
 Summary of major studies

opposite, a decisive point in selecting a specific place (Kokkranikal and Carabelli, 2021). The first can be described as a type of tourist where the motivation to taste the local gastronomy is auxiliary to other transcendent incentives of the visit, in which case the destination's

gastronomy is not a determinant item in the tourist experience (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2017). This accessory incentive for the cuisine of the place visited leads tourists to consume the same foods and go to the same restaurant chains they used to visit in their place of origin without giving extra importance to the gastronomy of the destination. In any case, Fields (2002) state that these motivations must always be characterised, categorising them in his study within the first group of gastronomic motivations (those that seek to satisfy primary food needs). The second group determines them in the cultural sphere (those that arise from the desire to learn about the visited place and its culture through its gastronomy). The third group of motivations specifies them as interpersonal (those that seek, through gastronomy, to satisfy the individual necessity for social relationships). Finally, the last group contains motivations concerning the wish to reach status and prestige (those that move the tourist to get to know and enjoy the gastronomy of the destination, given the social distinction and recognition that this cultural learning can bring).

On the other hand, Quan and Wang (2014) divide gastronomic tourist motivations at destination into two segments: main and secondary. The main motivations would include the desire to get to know a certain place based on the gastronomic attraction of the place selected for the tourist. The secondary ones include those stimuli that decide the destination based on variables other than the local cuisine, but without decreasing its total importance of it among the decisive factors. In the same line, Babolian Hendijani (2016) and Su *et al.* (2020) study the relevance of culinary motivations at the time of deciding the place to visit, being one of the decisive items in the process of making the decision. The study by Mgonje *et al.* (2016) also concludes that there is a strong relationship between visit motivations and the desire to taste the local gastronomy. Additionally, Chang *et al.* (2021) confirm the positive influence of nostalgia on the hedonic values of tourists. This influences the motivations of tourists for local food consumption. On the other hand, Sharma *et al.* (2022), in their study on transnational gastronomic tourism carried out in Italy and Fiji, point out the existence of a positive relationship between domestic restaurant coolness and tourism ethnocentrism on the attitude towards domestic gastronomic tourism, being stronger in Italy. This could be due to the Italian gastronomy is one of the most popular worldwide, characterised by its cultural richness and respect for tradition.

To summarise, one of the elements that make up the tourist experience is the motivation regarding local cuisine (Berbel-Pineda *et al.*, 2019; Pérez-Priego *et al.*, 2019). In this sense, Anderson *et al.* (2017) classify the gastronomic experiences of tourists into three groups: cultural, sensory and social. For their part, Crespi-Vallbona and Domínguez-Pérez (2016) group the gastronomic motivations of tourists into three blocks: sensory appeal, gastronomic experience at the destination and health concerns. López-Guzmán *et al.* (2017), on gastronomic festivals, analyses the relationship among motivation, tourism and experience, gathering tourist motivations for local cuisine in three scopes: new gastronomic experiences, socialisation and culture. Meanwhile, Kim *et al.* (2013) group the gastronomic dimensions into five: expectations, cultural experience, interpersonal relationships, sensory appeal and health concern.

According to the literature review, the hypothesis to be tested is raised by the following statement:

*H*₂. Culinary motivations are heterogeneous and are conditioned by the tourist's attitude towards gastronomy on their trips.

2.3 Gastronomic tourism, tourist experience and satisfaction

Economic and social globalisation favours the creation of worldwide standards. This affects many sectors, including gastronomic tourism. One example is provided by Fenyvesi *et al.* (2020), who indicate that both religion and culture cause global changes in the needs of

restaurant customers based on different religions. In this line, there is a growing field of research on the importance of control and certifications in the food supply chain in the management of Halal tourism (Secinaro and Calandra, 2021).

Therefore, it is crucial to research to detect these needs and trends in consumers. This will help in shaping an offer of suitable goods and services that will have positive effects on hospitality, which is a transcendental factor in the satisfaction of the tourists (Md Khairi *et al.*, 2021). In this regard, the satisfaction of the tourists with the gastronomy of the destination is led by having had a good experience with local food, and this will have as a direct consequence an increase in loyalty towards the destination and greater possibilities of recommending it (Widjaja *et al.*, 2020).

Over the past few decades, there has been an increase in competitiveness in the gastronomic tourism sector, which is creating a general trend in tourist destinations to achieve differentiating values (Hernández-Rojas *et al.*, 2021). To this end, there is an intense focus on the promotion of variables related to cultural and unique aspects that allow them to differentiate themselves and be competitive compared to other destinations. In this sense, one of the most common examples of activities developed by destinations is the organisation of gastronomic festivals. This is because they favour the promotion of the tourist attractions of the destination so that it can contribute to local development (Pizzichini *et al.*, 2021). Other studies as Arun *et al.* (2021) highlight the importance of carrying out innovative activities in the gastronomic tourism sector, pointing out the key importance of green restaurants in creating a unique and innovative gastronomic experience. On the other hand, Bowen (2021) highlights the opportunity and importance that diaspora tourism represents for many destinations and their stakeholders, in promoting gastronomic tourism.

Thus, a right administration of a destination cannot be based solely on the common aggregate of leisure or natural resources. Today's tourists, who are much more exigent, will achieve total satisfaction with the visit if it allows them to enjoy a singular tourist offer that simultaneously responds to their wishes (Cracolici *et al.*, 2008). In this line, Suna and Alvarez (2021) highlight that the gastronomic elements will have a direct impact on the configuration of the destination brand, establishing themselves as factors of tourist attraction. That is why tourism promotion policies must take into account the fundamental role that gastronomy plays when creating the brand of the place (Suna and Alvarez, 2021). Therefore, tourist satisfaction with the destination's gastronomy emerges as a necessary element given its dual cognitive-affective component. Thus, satisfaction with the dishes at the destination is an important causal variable for the conformation of loyalty to the visited destination, since it enables the achievement of unforgettable and pleasant experiences in the course of the visit (Haven-Tang and Jones, 2005).

In Babolian Hendijani (2016) work, an interesting conclusion is drawn, applicable to the present study, as it states that the tourist's satisfaction, when approaching the destination's gastronomy, is conditioned by the cultural heritage from which he/she comes. Similarly, Martín *et al.* (2020) point the gastronomy as a prominent element of cultural heritage for tourists. For their part, Medina-Viruel *et al.* (2019) indicate that the satisfaction that a tourist obtains at the destination is linked to gastronomy. Moreover, satisfaction with the local cuisine is also determined by taste (Crespi-Vallbona and Domínguez-Pérez, 2016), as its origin is mainly grounded on ancestral recipes that are an essential fragment of the cultural and historical heritage of the destination. This leads to an exclusive experience for the tourist. Thus, gastronomic experiences become a key variable in shaping tourist satisfaction (Babolian Hendijani, 2016; Rodríguez-Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2020). Summarising, the gastronomy of a tourist destination plays an important role in the analysis and determination of the satisfaction felt by the tourist on their trip. In this sense, Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016) and López-Guzmán *et al.* (2017) corroborate the interrelation among motivations, experiences and satisfaction.

According to the analysis of the literature, the hypotheses to be verified are as follows:

- H₃*. The greater or lesser interest in local gastronomy on trips is a factor that conditions the tourist experience and satisfaction.
- H₄*. Culinary motivations towards local gastronomy determine the gastronomic experience of the visitor.

3. Methodology

3.1 Questionnaire design

The methodology that has been used in the present research is based on fieldwork with a representative sample of tourists who visit the city of Granada (Spain), to discover their opinion regarding gastronomy, their motivations, as well as their experience and satisfaction with the gastronomy of the place.

The data necessary for the study were collected in different culinary establishments whose dishes and flavours allow their guests to experience the culinary culture and tradition of the city. Additionally, surveys were distributed in various historical locations in the city (Alhambra, Generalife, city centre and Albaicín town). The main criterion for choosing these locations focused on selecting places that would ensure that the respondent would have had the opportunity to experience the historical, cultural and gastronomic heritage of the city. The survey used is in line with previous studies (Kim *et al.*, 2009; Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2017; Pérez-Gálvez *et al.*, 2017), answering diverse questions about gastronomy and tourism.

For the questionnaire elaboration, a refinement process was followed in three phases: firstly, a researcher specialised in tourism analysed the proposed items; secondly, the resulting questionnaire was reviewed by several people in charge of tourist activity in the city; and thirdly, a pre-test was carried out on 50 tourists. During the debugging phase, it was detected that some questions were not easily understood by the respondents, proceeding to correct them and carry out definitive fieldwork once the questions and the viability of the questionnaire had been evaluated.

In terms of structure, it is separated into three blocks. The first block is devoted to gathering the main features of the visit or the trip (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2017; Pérez-Gálvez *et al.*, 2017; Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016). The second focusses on gastronomic issues (gastronomic motivations: 20 items (Kim *et al.*, 2009); experience and satisfaction with the gastronomy of Granada (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2017), asking directly for its level on a five-point Likert scale). Finally, the last part shows which are the sociodemographic characteristics of the tourists (Kim *et al.*, 2009; López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2017; Pérez-Gálvez *et al.*, 2017). Different types of questions have been used in the survey: open and closed questions, yes/no questions and questions using a Likert scale of five points (1 = very little importance; 5 = very important).

3.2 Fieldwork

The surveys were conducted in two languages – Spanish and English – to cover as many tourists as possible. The translation from Spanish to English was carried out by specialists in the field. Special attention was given to the translation of local words and expressions to ensure that their meaning was maintained. These surveys were distributed in person and on print paper by a group of pollsters associated with the University of Córdoba, who were trained for this purpose. Respondents completed the survey with a pen, not using the questionnaire online, and the time used to do so was never greater than 10 min. Once the survey was completed, it was collected in person by the survey team.

A total of 1,683 surveys were collected between April and August 2019, of which 71 were eliminated for being incomplete in the essential questions for the tourist cluster analysis, thus 1,612 were valid. To obtain information from as many people and situations as possible, the surveys were conducted in addition to various catering establishments in Granada, at different times and days. A non-probabilistic technical sampling was used, which is frequently employed in this type of study, which the people surveyed, is accessible to be surveyed in a specific space and time (Finn *et al.*, 2000). In particular, convenience sampling was used. The number of tourists who refused to complete the survey was low, which meant that their consideration of some variables was unimportant. The lack of previous studies that guaranteed stratification by gender, age, nationality, education or any other variable, implied that no stratification was being made in this case.

3.3 Research sample and sampling error

The present research focusses on the visitor to the city of Granada (Spain), regardless of whether or not he stays, or whether or not he visits places near the city. Regarding the number of tourists arriving in the city of Granada, was used the Hotel Occupancy Survey (NSI, 2019), stated a total of 1,873,753 in 2018. Therefore, and for guidance purposes, if simple random sampling had been used in this research, the sampling error for a confidence level of 95% would be $\pm 2.44\%$.

3.4 Data analysis

The SPSS v.24 software was employed for the tabulation and statistical analysis of the data obtained from the surveys. To assess the similarity that exists among the respondents, the multivariate technique of grouping cases (K-means clustering) was used. For this purpose, items that indicate the greater or less interest in gastronomy were taken as reference for the relevant element for travelling, using three representative questions of the tourist's interest in gastronomy on their trips, following Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016) model: "How important is gastronomy in your motivation to travel?", "How important is the search for gastronomic experiences when choosing a destination to visit?" and "How important is the gastronomic experience in the satisfaction of your trip?".

To quantify the reliability and validity of the answers to the questionnaire used, Cronbach's alpha has been employed. To ratify the grouping of cases reached in the cluster analysis, the statistical method of discriminant analysis was used. Once the segments and groups were reached, statistics and association measures were applied. With the information that it brings, it is possible to examine the possible logical grouping order that may exist among the variables from a two-dimensional contingency table. Likewise, to analyse the meaningful dissimilarity among sample groups, non-parametric statistical procedures – Kruskal and Wallis' (1952) H-statistic and Mann and Whitney's (1947) U-statistic – have been used. The use of these non-parametric statistical techniques reduces the importance of the existence of normality and multicollinearity.

4. Results

4.1 Segmentation of the gastronomic tourist

To examine and typify interest in gastronomy, respondents rated the relevance of food in their travels by employing three items. Cronbach's alpha of the final scale shows a value of 0.878, indicative of a prominent internal consistency between the elements of the scale. This coefficient reaches positive values between 0 and 1, with being 0 as the absolute lack of internal consistency and 1 as the total redundancy between the items. Morales Vallejo *et al.* (2003) consider a minimum value of 0.5 in basic research, as in the values reached in the

present work and above 0.85 in the case of diagnostic research. The critical level (p) of the Friedman χ^2 statistic (204.061) of the analysis to contrast the null hypothesis that all the elements of the scale have the same mean is less than 0.05, rejecting the hypothesis that the means of the elements are equal.

In tourism academic literature, the factor-cluster analysis technique is commonly used (Park and Yoon, 2009; Prayag, 2010). Despite this, this perspective has criticisms for loss of original information, various deficiencies, erroneous assumptions and abstract interpretation (Dolnicar, 2008; Dolnicar *et al.*, 2012; Prayag and Hosany, 2014). The segmentation approach recommended by Dolnicar (2008) has been employed in the present research, which consists of a direct grouping of the original scores. The use of the original scores offers a rigorous and detailed segmentation since it allows us to maintain a greater degree of the original data (Dolnicar, 2002; Prayag and Hosany, 2014).

Recent literature advocates the use of a hierarchical grouping method followed by a non-hierarchical method (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Consequently, two hierarchical algorithms were initially applied, namely, the full bond and Ward's method, using squared Euclidean distances to detect possible clusters in the data. Both methods are predominant in existing tourism studies in the literature on market segmentation (Dolnicar, 2002). The purpose is to detect groups of tourists who have strong similarities in terms of their interest in gastronomy when travelling. An examination of the resulting agglomeration schedules and dendrograms proposed two, three or four cluster solutions. Finally, it was proved that a three-segment solution was the most suitable solution. This conclusion was reached through a more specified examination of group allocation and group size, followed by a study using a non-hierarchical K-means clustering algorithm.

Table 2 shows the results of the average assessment of each segment for each of the questions posed for the analysis of gastronomic interest (measured in the questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale). According to the model of Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016), conglomerates have been divided into survivors, enjoyers and experiencers. The first cluster is composed of 10.8% of the tourists surveyed (Table 2), the group that shows remarkably low scores on the three items. This segment characterised by a low interest in gastronomy has been referred to as survivors' tourists. The second group reaches 34.7% of the sample and it shows intermediate scores on the items. This group, which has been designated as enjoyers tourists, is made up of tourists with a medium gastronomic interest. The third is characterised by a high valuation of the three items and represents 54.5% of the respondents. The tourists of this last segment, which includes those tourists who show the greatest interest in gastronomy, have been designated as experiencers.

Although the H-statistic of Kruskal and Wallis (1952) does not allow for detecting where the differences found are, it allows for verifying that the comparative means will not be the

Gastronomy interest	Food clusters			H-Kruskal Wallis χ^2	Sig.
	Survivors	Enjoyers	Experiencers		
How important is gastronomy in your motivation to travel?	1.68 ^(*)	3.26 ^(*)	4.25 ^(*)	1027.886	<0.000
How important is the search for gastronomic experiences when choosing a destination to visit?	1.56 ^(*)	2.99 ^(*)	4.43 ^(*)	1108.484	<0.000
How important is the gastronomic experience in the satisfaction of your trip?	2.08 ^(*)	3.49 ^(*)	4.58 ^(*)	915.467	<0.000

Table 2. Segmentation of tourists based on their interest in gastronomy

Note(s): (*) Values in italics show significant differences concerning the other two segments. To validate this, the U-Mann-Whitney test was applied
Source(s): Own elaboration

same in different segments. To find out which mean differs from the other, [Mann-Whitney's \(1947\) U-statistic](#) is employed. The resulting data allows accepting one of the hypotheses formulated: tourists show different attitudes towards gastronomy as a variable of interest in choosing the destination (H_1). The three resulting groups are presented in the scientific literature.

To know the percentage of subjects who are properly attributed, the result of the segmentation was validated using discriminant analysis. [Table 3](#) presents a contingency table among the individuals who are members of each segment and those who are properly classified according to this analysis. The most significant fact to highlight is that the three-group segmentation correctly categorises 99.9% of the individuals.

4.2 Sociodemographic characteristics of tourists

From the total number of tourists participating in the study, 40.5% were men and 59.5% were women. The tourists surveyed are mainly young (more than 70% of the sample are under 40 years old), with the segment most interested in gastronomy being more present among the youngest tourist. Furthermore, it can be stated that their academic training is high (76.1% have a university degree). In this sense, there are no significant differences according to the gastronomic segment. Regarding the origin of the tourists, 47.8% are from Spain, compared to 32.1% of tourists from the rest of the European countries. By country, tourists from the USA stand out (6.7%). Regarding the monthly family income, 44.7% of those surveyed declare more than €2,500 (27.6% of the sample declare an income of more than €3,500), with no significant differences between the study segments. On the other hand, the daily expenditure of the average tourist is between €25 and €75.

4.3 Gastronomic motivations for the visit

The behaviour of the visitor is included in the study of gastronomic tourism. A tourist with no particular interest in the gastronomy of the destination or whose main or secondary motivation for their trip is not to experience the gastronomy of the place will behave like a non-resident who only needs to feed him/herself during the time of their trip.

The present research has aimed to assess the causes or reasons for savouring the local gastronomy. The sixth question of the questionnaire will reflect the motivations and interests. Starting from the most frequent causes that promote the consumption of gastronomic products of the destination, extracted from academic literature and after an adaptation and taking into consideration the distinctive elements of the tourist destination and its tourists, a scale was developed to collect these reasons ([Kim et al., 2013](#); [Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016](#); [López-Guzmán et al., 2017](#); [Pérez-Gálvez et al., 2017](#)). Once a

	Survivors	Food clusters Enjoyers	Experiencers	Total
<i>Absolute value</i>				
Survivors	174	0	0	174
Enjoyers	0	557	2	559
Experiencers	0	0	879	879
<i>Percentage</i>				
Survivors	100%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Enjoyers	0.0%	99.6%	0.0%	100%
Experiencers	0.0%	0.0%	100%	100%
Source(s): Own elaboration				

Table 3.
Summary of discriminant analysis

pre-test had been carried out, 20 questions were chosen on a Likert scale of five points – being 1 a little and 5 a lot – to identify the relative importance of a set of reasons in their final decision to consume unique recipes of the destination. Taking as a reference the model of Kim *et al.* (2013), the items were grouped into five different gastronomic dimensions: cultural experience, expectation, interpersonal relationships, health concern and sensory appeal.

Table 4 presents different motivations and/or interests that lead to the consumption of typical food of the destination by the respondents. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the final scale reaches a value of 0.907 and indicates a high internal consistency among the elements of the scale, as the critical level (*p*) associated with the Friedman χ^2 statistic (4,033.292) is less than 0.001, which allows continuing with the hypothesis that the means of the elements are not equal. The ranking developed (Table 4) allows for identifying which dimension is most relevant. In this sense, cultural experience and sensory appeal are highlighted as the most powerful motivations. For their part, the dimensions of personal relationships and health concerns are the least powerful for tourists to consume unique recipes of the destination.

The analysis through gastronomic segments enables us to examine the statistically relevant differences in each of the gastronomic motivational dimensions (Table 5). Experiencers’ respondents are characterised – according to the H-Kruskal Wallis statistic and the Mann–Whitney (*U*-statistic) – for the highest values in each of the five motivational dimensions, with a considerably greater difference regarding the other two segments in all dimension’s motivations. On the contrary, the segment of survivors is characterised by the lowest scores in all dimensions, showing a significant gap compared with the other two

Food motivational dimensions			Mean	Ranking
Expectation	Cronbach's alpha (0.657) Mean (3.54)	I am excited to try the local food where it is from home	4.02	4
		Relax	3.58	11
		Get away from the noise crowd	3.13	19
		It is different from what I normally consume	3.43	13
Cultural experience	Cronbach's alpha (0.838) Mean (4.01)	Discover the taste of local food	4.14	1
		It offers a unique opportunity to understand the local culture	3.89	9
		Discover something new	4.07	3
		Increase my knowledge of different cultures	3.99	6
Personal Relationship	Cronbach's alpha (0.783) Mean (3.38)	An authentic experience	3.97	8
		Being able to pass on my experiences with local food	3.06	20
		Tasting local food increases family ties and friendship	3.14	18
		Advise other tourists on local dining experiences	3.31	16
Health concern	Cronbach's alpha (0.761) Mean (3.40)	It allows me to enjoy pleasant moments with family and/or friends	4.00	5
		The local food is nutritious	3.41	15
		Local food contains a lot of fresh ingredients produced in a local area	3.54	12
		Local food is healthy	3.26	17
Sensory Appeal	Cronbach's alpha (0.743) Mean (3.82)	Local food has a pleasant smell	3.78	10
		Local food tastes good	4.10	2
		Local food is visually appealing	3.99	6
		The taste of the dish is different from what we prepare in my region	3.42	14

Table 4. Motivational dimensions of gastronomic tourism

Source(s): Own elaboration

groups. The results highlight the heterogeneity of the tourists' gastronomic motivations and are subordinated by their posture and/or interest in gastronomy on their trips (H₂). For tourists, gastronomy becomes a tool that allows them to obtain new tourist experiences, meet interpersonal needs with friends and/or family as well as learn more about the culture of the destination.

4.4 Satisfaction in gastronomic tourism

A tourist destination is not reduced to a set of natural, cultural or artistic resources, as it must also embody the experience that the tourist is looking for (Cracolici *et al.*, 2008). This is why gastronomy must be taken into account as an instrument that favours the creation of a unique experience (Haven-Tang and Jones, 2005). To assess the level of gastronomic satisfaction of tourists visiting the city of Granada, the tourists were asked to rate on a Likert scale of five points the following statement "My level of satisfaction with the gastronomy of Granada has been important". The average level of satisfaction declared as a result of this question is 3.96 points. A significant percentage of tourists say they are completely satisfied (35.2% of the tourists indicated 5 points). Is in this group where it can be usually found experiencers tourists (47.9%).

On the other hand, concerning the low importance of not being satisfied at all, 8.2% of those surveyed declared a score of two points or less. The analysis of gastronomic satisfaction by gastronomic segments (Table 6) shows that the three groups of tourists value the gastronomic experience they have lived very positively, with significant differences depending on whether it is more or less related to the motives that lead to the consumption of typical food of the destination. For their part, experiencers' tourists are those who show a higher rating.

The general satisfaction of tourists regarding their visit to the city of Granada was also analysed. To assess this level of satisfaction, the surveyed were asked to rate on a Likert scale of five points the following statement "My level of satisfaction with Granada has been important". The overall level of satisfaction with the visit was very high (4.44 out of 5 points).

Food motivational dimensions	Survivors	Food clusters		H-Kruskal Wallis	
		Enjoyers	Experiencers	χ^2	Sig.
Expectation	2.84 ^(*)	3.42 ^(*)	3.75 ^(*)	172.731	<0.000
Cultural Experience	3.37 ^(*)	3.91 ^(*)	4.20 ^(*)	129.793	<0.000
Interpersonal Relationship	2.56 ^(*)	3.19 ^(*)	3.66 ^(*)	205.365	<0.000
Health Concern	2.81 ^(*)	3.27 ^(*)	3.61 ^(*)	117.509	<0.000
Sensory Appeal	3.22 ^(*)	3.73 ^(*)	4.00 ^(*)	119.856	<0.000

Note(s): (*) Values in italics present significant differences concerning the other two segments. To validate this, the U-Mann-Whitney test was applied

Source(s): Own elaboration

Table 5. Relationship of the segments regarding the motivational dimensions of gastronomic tourism

Survivors	Food clusters		H-Kruskal Wallis	
	Enjoyers	Experiencers	χ^2	Sig.
3.13 ^(*)	3.74 ^(*)	4.26 ^(*)	220.349	<0.000

Note(s): (*) Values in italics present significant differences concerning the other two segments. To validate this, the U-Mann-Whitney test was applied

Source(s): Own elaboration

Table 6. Gastronomic satisfaction based on the gastronomic interest of the tourist

It should also be noted that 57.0% of tourists state that they are fully satisfied (indicating 5 points), highlighting the segment of experiencers tourists (62.8% indicate 5 points). For its part, regarding tourists who leave Granada with low satisfaction, it is necessary to remark their low percentage (2.4% rate their satisfaction with a score less than or equal to 2, out of 5 points).

The analysis of tourist satisfaction with their visit to Granada by gastronomic segment (Table 7) exposes a very positive score of the tourist experience lived by the three groups of tourists, being considerably higher in the case of the tourists with a greater interest in the gastronomy of Granada (experiencers tourists). These results show that the tourist experience and satisfaction are conditioned and favoured by gastronomy (H₃). This statement is also supported by the presence of a direct and significant relationship between gastronomic satisfaction and general tourist satisfaction (gamma coefficient = 0.648; *p* = 0.000).

Having demonstrated that tourists are satisfied with Granada's cuisine and their stay in the city, this relevant topic is explored further, analysing the possible relationship with the causes or reasons that lead to savouring the local gastronomy, which is key to adequate tourism planning and management. Each of the five dimensions discriminates substantially about the degree of perceived gastronomic satisfaction (Table 8). Spearman's correlations corroborate the consonance between the degree of gastronomic satisfaction and the five motivation dimensions. These results show that culinary motivations condition the satisfaction with Granada's gastronomy (H₄).

5. Discussion

The three segments detected in this research, according to the importance of tourists' interest in the selection of the destination are presented in the current literature. Thus, several studies point out the presence of a group with a high interest in gastronomy and another not very interested in it (Hjalager, 2004; Kivela and Crofts, 2005; Mc Kercher *et al.*, 2008; Thompson and Prideaux, 2009; Williams *et al.*, 2018). The group with the greatest interest in gastronomy, named in the present work as experimenters, is called by Hjalager (2004), gastronomy visitors

Table 7.
Overall tourist satisfaction according to gastronomy segments

Survivors	Food cluster Enjoyers	Experiencers	H-Kruskal Wallis χ^2	Sig.
4.20	4.34	4.56 ^(*)	34.743	<0.000

Note(s): (*) Values in italics present significant differences concerning the other two segments. To validate this, the U-Mann-Whitney test was applied
Source(s): Own elaboration

Table 8.
Analysis of gastronomic satisfaction concerning gastronomic motivational dimensions

Food motivational dimensions	χ^2	H-Kruskal Wallis Sig.	Rho spearman
Expectation	270.840	<0.000	0.405 ^(**)
Cultural experience	223.920	<0.000	0.364 ^(**)
Personal Relationship	295.614	<0.000	0.423 ^(**)
Health concern	260.546	<0.000	0.402 ^(**)
Sensory Appeal	262.649	<0.000	0.395 ^(**)

Note(s): (**) The correlation is significant at the 99% confidence level
(*) The correlation is significant at the 95% confidence level
Source(s): Own elaboration

(Kivela and Crotts, 2005), experimental gastronomic tourists by McKercher *et al.* (2008) and deliberate gastro-tourist (Williams *et al.*, 2018) conceptually definite culinary tourists. On the other hand, the group with little interest in gastronomy, referred to as survivors in this research, is also called recreational (Hjalager, 2004), typical leisure visitors (Kivela and Crotts, 2005), non-culinary tourists (McKercher *et al.*, 2008), non-interested group (Thompson and Prideaux, 2009) and incidental gastro-tourist (Williams *et al.*, 2018).

This research results reveal that the gastronomic motivations of tourists are heterogeneous and are conditioned by their attitude and/or interest in local cuisine when they travel. These motivations have been grouped, according to the theoretical model of Kim *et al.* (2013), into five different gastronomic dimensions: sensory appeal, cultural experience, interpersonal relationship, expectation and health concern. Various studies have focused on the analysis of different motivational dimensions, thus Anderson *et al.* (2017) study the motivations regarding experiences and distinguish between: sensory, cultural and social. Similarly, Crespi-Vallbona and Domínguez-Pérez (2016) group the motivational dimensions of gastronomy: sensory appeal, gastronomic experience at the destination and health concerns. In the present study, the dimension of cultural experience stands out, mainly, in the segment most interested in gastronomy, named experimenters.

Concerning tourist satisfaction, this work obtains similar results to the previous literature (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2017). Thus, it is reaffirmed that the gastronomy of a city can contribute to increasing tourist satisfaction and achieving a unique experience. According to Haven-Tang and Jones (2005), tourist destinations should consider the importance of gastronomy as an instrument that contributes to obtaining a unique experience for tourists, especially in cultural destinations (Babolian Hendijani, 2016), such as the case of the city of Granada.

6. Conclusions

Tourists attach increasing importance to the knowledge of the culinary tradition of the places they visit, with the direct consequence that gastronomic tourism has become nowadays in one of the main ways of promoting and reinforcing specific tourist destinations. Indeed, for certain tourists, learning more about the cuisine of a geographical area or going to a particular restaurant becomes the main incentive for their trip. This research analyses the connection between gastronomy and tourism in place with important WHS inscriptions, such as the city of Granada (Spain). The sensory experiences have become one of the requirements of tourists who travel to a cultural destination, moreover, the traditional motivation of discovering its heritage. That is why in the study of tourist destinations, specifically those linked to heritage and culture, the connection between gastronomy and tourism has become a crucial aspect. This link between gastronomy and culture is not shocking insofar as 76.1% of the tourists surveyed have a university education.

The local gastronomy is shaped as a tourist attraction of a destination, being a relevant purpose of the visit to it. This is why this research allows concluding that gastronomy of the destination is a key factor in the progressive increase of tourism, mainly through word of mouth, which also elicits different attitudes among tourists. Taking into account the importance that tourists attribute to the cuisine in their travels, it obtained empirical evidence of the existence of three types of tourists, which are named survivors, enjoyers and experiencers, according to the model of Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016), considering approved and convenient to carry out a segmentation of tourists from a gastronomic perspective. Among the three recognised segments, it is in tourists with high gastronomic interest where the destination's cuisine plays a key role.

The feeling of pleasure that the visitor undergoes and the gastronomic motivation is also influenced by the level of gastronomic interest that tourists have. Based on the gastronomic

incentives of tourists, empirical evidence is reached regarding the existence of five dimensions, categorised taking into account the model of Kim *et al.* (2013), expectation, cultural experience, interpersonal relationships, health concern and sensory appeal.

The most important contribution of the present research is to validate those gastronomic motivations influence the level of satisfaction with the cuisine of the destination. Depending on the interest in gastronomy declared by tourists, satisfaction with their gastronomic experience will be higher or lower. In the same way, the greater interest in the gastronomy of Granada translates into greater satisfaction with the visit to the city, as well as in considerably varied impressions regarding the traits of the local cuisine, with traditional gastronomy, service and hospitality, the quality of the dishes and the atmosphere of the establishments being more highly valued.

In this sense, the greatest motivation of tourists who come to the city of Granada is the contribution of gastronomy to its cultural experience. Thus, the tourist agents of the city must make a greater effort to ease the direct link between the gastronomy of Granada and its culture. Another gastronomic motivation highlighted by tourists is the sensory appeal of the dishes. This last aspect must be taken into consideration by companies in the sector, enhancing the culinary tradition and improving the innovation of dishes.

7. Implications

7.1 Theoretical implications

From a theoretical perspective, the present study has allowed: (1) to develop an integration of the literature that, until now, has attempted to address the study of the link between heritage, culture and gastronomy, and its importance for tourism; (2) carry out an analysis of the motivations of tourists for a destination with two WHS inscriptions, such as the city of Granada, performing a segmentation based on the interest that tourists have shown in the gastronomy of the place; (3) cover a research gap, verifying the existing relationship between the tourist's interest in gastronomy and his gastronomic motivations with the satisfaction and experiences felt by him/her in the destination in an empirical way, in an important patrimonial and cultural city, where no similar studies currently exist.

7.2 Practical implications

From a practical point of view, the results obtained in this research serve as a guide for decision-making from the supply perspective, highlighting the following aspects: (1) a contribution is made to the tourism sector, public and private, of the city of Granada, pointing out the main motivations of tourists. In this way, gastronomic tourism can be promoted, adapting it to the demands and needs of tourists; (2) given the deep interest some tourists have in foods typical in their place of origin and their cultural and historical antecedents and roots, destination agents are encouraged to offer foods and souvenirs that represent local cultural characteristics; (3) point out that gastronomic tourism is a prominent factor in the economic revitalisation of the destination, allowing wealth to stay in the place where it is generated.

8. Limitations and future research direction

The main limitation of this work resides in the data collection time. For this reason, we consider that it would be convenient to carry out an extension of this research by studying gastronomic tourism in the city during the different times of the year and/or repeating the same survey through the years to compare tourists' preferences evolution, avoiding the cross-sectional nature of the present dataset, sharpening the results obtained and reducing possible generalisation issues in them.

The present work is developed from a demand perspective. Therefore, as a future line of research, it can be recommended to reinforce research that addresses the importance of gastronomy from the point of view of supply. This will offer the possibility that the results and conclusions obtained can be effectively transferred to other stakeholder groups.

Another possible future research may focus on the comparison of different variables of national and foreign tourists who visit the city. This would allow increasing knowledge about tourists, especially those who reside in other countries with a different culture, who are the ones that tourism managers should strengthen their efforts on. This is due to the need to reinforce the understanding of the cultural heritage of the city, by those tourists who belong to a different culture.

Finally, it is proposed to extend this research to other tourist destinations in the national and international territories that have important gastronomic and cultural assets. This would offer the possibility of debugging the results obtained by confirming those that are reflected in different destinations. This may further strengthen the conclusions obtained in the present study.

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