



## **FACULTAD DE TURISMO Y FINANZAS**

### **GRADO EN TURISMO**

#### **La imagen de Andalucía como destino turístico por parte de los países centroeuropeos.**

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TÍTULO:

**THE IMAGE OF ANDALUSIA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION BY CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

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SUMMARY:

The image of a tourist destination is a key factor in the tourists' decision to choose a place to visit. This dissertation contains exploratory-descriptive research in which the image of the region of Andalusia as a tourist destination has been analysed. Through a review of the literature, general information has been collected on the concept of image along with its characteristics, followed by the review of other relevant elements that must be taken into account when it comes to the image of a tourist destination, such as the formation of the image or the factors associated with it. Besides, empirical research has been carried out, which includes a study of the image of the selected destination through a questionnaire aimed only at tourists who have previously visited the region and who come from Central European countries, consisting of a sample of 102 respondents.

KEY WORDS:

Andalusia; Image; Tourist destination; Central European countries.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 JUSTIFICATION

There is no doubt that tourism is one of the sectors that currently contributes most to the economic development of the countries and regions that comprise them, thus becoming a highly crucial sector (Kandampully, 2000). As a consequence, this has led to the increased development and promotion of cities, regions and countries as if they were tourism products (Ashworth and Goodall, 1990).

Tourism promotion plays an important role, reinforcing the competitive level of a tourist destination over others. Possessing excellent tourist resources is not enough, by itself, to attract an optimal number of tourists to a particular destination. The image that tourists have of a destination and the attitude towards that destination seem to be two of the most relevant factors in the selection process (Ahmed, 1996).

It is the visitors themselves who shape the image of the destination, and, on the basis of that image, they will decide whether or not to visit the destination. Therefore, it is not enough to configure a good tourism package to sell the destination, but it must be known, for each moment, what is the process of image formation of our target, both the scope of factors that influence it and their intensity, as well as other factors. Moreover, it can be stated that the image fulfils an essential function, since it contributes positively to the growth and tourist development of a destination.

This document exposes the dissertation in which the role played by the image of tourist destinations in the destination choices of tourists is analysed. Specifically, the image of the region of Andalusia will be evaluated through various methods from which we will try to draw clarifying conclusions.

Andalusia has traditionally been a very appealing region from the tourist point of view, being one of the most tourist-rich destination in Spain, with a geographical location that makes it a strategic place. Despite having quite high temperatures in summer, the eight provinces that make up this community offer an infinite variety of options, from magnificent beaches to unique inland and mountain areas. Furthermore, there is also a prominent historical-artistic and cultural heritage, making it a destination with a wide range of tourist options.

In 2019, tourism revenues were estimated at 22.6 billion euros, representing a contribution of 13.1% to Andalusia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). (Consejería de Consejería de Turismo, Regeneración, Justicia y Administración Local, 2020). In addition to forming a substantial part of Andalusia's GDP, tourism also accounts for a high percentage of job creation, with an average of 424.5 thousand people employed in tourism activities in Andalusia in 2019. (Consejería de Consejería de Turismo, Regeneración, Justicia y Administración Local, 2020). Precisely because of the importance of this sector in the Andalusian region, the image of the destination is very important for its favourable development, which will have an impact on tourist arrivals.

As a remarkable and justifiable aspect of the chosen subject, I have had the privilege of studying for a whole academic year in Austria, thanks to the Erasmus+ 2021/22 programme, the year in which I have carried out this dissertation. For this reason, I felt the need to investigate and research on tourism and the image projected to all people from Austria and neighbouring countries, that is, countries that make up Central Europe, who have visited Andalusia, the region I come from.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the present research is to analyse and understand the nature of the image of the region of Andalusia as a tourist destination, by tourists from the countries of Central Europe. It also aims to improve our knowledge about the concept of destination image by learning how the image is formed and identifying the factors associated with it, as well as getting to know how the image of a tourist destination is measured.

Additionally, this research pursues a number of specific objectives, broken down below:

- Investigate the data obtained from the survey, trying to obtain a representative sample that will allow us to better understand the profile of tourists from Central Europe who come to know the Andalusian region and their main motivations to visit it.
- Find out features that might bring about a negative or positive appreciation by Central European tourists visiting Andalusia.
- Get to know which Andalusia region/s is preferred by Central European tourists.
- Assess what the tourist thinks about the tourist destination of Andalusia, and for this it would be necessary to achieve the following sub-objectives:
  - Assess the information received on the perceived quality of the tourist services offered and evaluate the perceived image.
  - Get to know the level of loyalty as a predisposition to the revisit and the recommendation.
  - Determine the level of satisfaction with the service provided and with the visit, taking into account their expectations prior to the visit.
  - Get to know the global image of Andalusia as a tourist destination.

In order to respond to the above goals, two phases of work were proposed: the first phase includes the bibliographic review of previous works on image-destination. This methodological review allowed us to design a questionnaire. The second phase comprises the quantitative analysis of the data, the obtaining of the results and the conclusions.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 IMAGE OF A TOURIST DESTINATION AND IMPORTANCE

Before studying more exhaustively the main subject of this paper, that is, the image of a tourist destination and the reason for its relevance in the tourism sector, we must also have a brief understanding about the primary idea of what a tourist destination is.

According to World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2019:14), it is defined as *a physical space with or without administrative and/or analytical boundaries in which a visitor can spend an overnight. It is the cluster (co-location) of products and services, and of activities and experiences along the tourism value chain and a basic unit of analysis of tourism. A destination incorporates various stakeholders and can network to form larger destinations. It is also intangible with its image and identity which may influence its market competitiveness.*

Once this concept is known, we understand that the image of a tourist destination plays a crucial role in the elaboration of marketing strategies for the empowerment and development of these destinations, being therefore considered in numerous studies (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993, and Jenkins, 1999). Along the same lines, Baloglu (1997) conducted a review of the existing literature on the image as a critical element in the selection process of a tourist destination. Furthermore, Dellaert et al., (1998:314) indicate that *most studies concerning travel decisions are based on two main factors: the activities to be undertaken by the subject and the attractions of the place, that is, its image.*

In the same sense, for Macinnis and Price, (1987:479) the image of a tourist destination is strongly associated with the planning and management of tourism products and services, thus composing an integral part of the consumption process:

- Before the purchase or decision, the selection of consumption or destination may originate from previously accumulated images.
- During consumption or visit, images can add value and increase satisfaction.
- After consumption or visit, images can have a reconstructive role by which a person relives the experience via memories, and which acts with a filter to encourage or discourage repeat purchases, while becoming a prescriber of the destination, favourable or unfavourable.

Knowing and understanding, therefore, the images that visitors and non-visitors of a destination possess, as well as the emotions that these provoke, is of fundamental importance, since it allows to determine which are the most outstanding attributes of the image of the tourist destination, anchored in the minds of individuals. At the same time, it is also essential to find out and comprehend what are the key points of our destination that can make tourists feel attracted to it and visit it. This attraction and the level of it that the individual has is very closely related to the previous image that the visitor will have of the destination (Van Riel, 1997).

#### 2.1.1 Conceptual approach to the image of a tourist destination

Studies on the delimitation of the concept of image of tourist destination began in the seventies (Gunn 1972). Since then, there have been several studies that have been carried out in this area. It could be said that the image of a tourist destination is currently one of the most analysed and researched facts in the field of tourism (Gartner and Shen, 1992; Chen and Hsu, 2000; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000). This is due, in part, to the influence of the same on the individual perception and behaviour of visitors, as well as on the process of selecting a destination (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). However, in a first

approach to the concept of tourist destination image, it is necessary to mention the lack of a solid theoretical framework that supports it (Beerli and Martín, 2004a).

Following Baloglu and McCleary (1999), among the main lines of research on the image of tourist destinations, it is worth determining the influence on the image of destinations exerted by different internal variables of the tourist related to socio-demographic characteristics, cultural factors, familiarity with destinations and motivations. In addition, Kotler, Haider, and Rein (1993) propose a series of requirements that the image of a tourist destination must meet in order for it to have a certain impact or effectiveness in its target markets: valid and not based on fantasies, realistic and credible, simple, attractive and, finally, differentiated from other tourist destinations by emphasising the unique characteristics that the place possesses.

The author Chon (1992) conducts research focused on analysing patterns of consumer behaviour, thus studying the behaviours and reactions originated by tourists when they visit a destination and have a real experience in that place. Most of these studies conclude, as does the literature review by Baloglu (1997) aforementioned, that the image of the destination is a decisive determinant in the choice of travel by the individual. Additionally, these papers report also that the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the individual depends largely on the comparison between his expectations before traveling or his preconceived image of the destination and his perception of it when he is there. Likewise, three main findings are differentiated:

- 1) A slightly more favourable evaluation of the destination will occur when the tourist previously has a positive image and later an also positive travel experience.
- 2) When the tourist has a negative prior image and a positive visit experience, in this case a very favourable evaluation of the destination would be generated.
- 3) A positive pre-image and a negative experience would, therefore, result in the most unfavourable possible evaluation of the destination.

After this, it can be assumed that the situation that creates a more favourable and satisfactory response and assessment of the location would be the second one. Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting the complexity that, having a previous negative image, the tourist visits said destination. At the same time, a very positive evaluation results in a greater probability that the visitor will visit the same destination again (Wang and Hsu, 2010).

Kotler, Haider, and Rein (1993) state that, although some tourist destinations enjoy a positive image and others suffer or endure a negative image, most destinations bring together a set of elements or perceptions of both favourable and unfavourable nature. Therefore, the image of a tourist destination, composed of these perceptions, is a key determinant that affects the behaviour of visitors (Um and Crompton, 1992). This image is based mostly on information that the individual knows about the destination, which causes expectations to be generated about the future experience of the tourist visit (Fodnees and Murray, 1999).

On the other hand, the studies that have been carried out to date, as far as the image of the tourist destination is concerned, have encountered some difficulties that come from the characteristics of this concept. The authors Gallarza, Gil and Calderón (2002) understand that the image of a tourist destination is characterised by being complex because it admits more than one interpretation, multiple because it has been analysed from many different points of view due to the number of attributes it possesses, relative because of its subjectivity, and dynamic since it does not remain in time, it varies according to two factors: time and space.

In these studies, we can also find a considerable number of contributions to the concept of image of tourist destination, all of them generally having in common the subjectivity of

this concept (Gallarza, Gil and Calderón, 2002). For this reason, terms such as *perception* (Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000), *impression* (Milman and Pizam, 1995), and/or *representation* of the destination in the mind of the individual (Leisen, 2001) are frequently used for the definition of this concept. Hence, these terms emphasise the need to measure the image of the tourist destination, because the perceived and subjective image can differ markedly from the real and objective image (Gartner, 1993).

In order to provide a conceptual framework for the image of a tourist destination, below is a grouping of different conceptual approaches by multiple authors, briefly exposed in the table 2.1:

<b>Author</b>	<b>Conceptual Approach</b>
Hunt (1975)	Perceptions of potential visitors to a given tourist area
Crompton (1977)	Organized representations of a tourist destination in the cognitive system of the individual
Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977)	Expression of the individual's knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imaginations, and emotional thoughts about a determined place
Crompton (1979)	Sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions of an individual about a tourist destination
Assael (1984)	Global perception of destination formed by the individual through various sources of information over time
Gartner (1986)	Perceptions of tourists and vendors of accessible activities or attractions in a tourist destination
Phelps (1986)	Perceptions or impressions about a place
Gartner and Hunt (1987)	A person's impressions of a state or place in which they do not reside
Moutinho (1987)	Tourist attitude towards a set of destination attributes based on their knowledge and feelings
Calantone et al. (1989)	Perceptions of potential tourist destinations
Embacher and Buttle (1989)	Ideas or conceptions possessed individually or collectively about the tourist destination
Chon (1990)	Result of the interaction of a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings, expectations, and impressions of a place
Echtner and Ritchie (1991)	Perceptions of the individual attributes of the tourist destination along with the holistic impression about the latter
Dadgostar and Isotalo (1992)	Individual's overall attitude or impression of a specific tourist destination
Kotler, Haider and Rein (1994)	Sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions of a person about a certain place
Santos (1994)	Mental representation of the attributes and benefits sought by the tourist
Milman and Pizam (1995)	Mental or visual impression of the general public about a place, product or experience

Parenteau (1995)	Favourable or unfavourable prejudice of the audience and distributors about a tourist destination
MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997)	Global impression composed of various attractions and attributes of the destination that are shown intertwined
Pritchard (1998)	Visual or mental impression about a certain place
Baloglu and McCleary (1999)	Mental representation of beliefs, feelings, and global impression about a tourist destination
Coshall (2000)	Individual's perceptions of the characteristics of the destination
Murphy, Pritchard and Smith (2000)	Sum of associations and pieces of information related to a tourist destination
Tapachai and Waryszak (2000)	Perceptions or impressions of tourists about a destination regarding the expected benefits and its consumption values
Bigné, Sánchez and Sánchez (2001)	Subjective interpretation of the tourist about the reality of the tourist destination
Leisen (2001)	Realistic representation in the tourist's mind of what a region has to offer
Kim and Richardson (2003)	Totality of impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations, and feelings towards a place accumulated over time

**Table 2.1 Conceptual contributions on the image of a tourist destination**

Source: San Martín Gutiérrez, (2005, pp. 9-11)

Among all the definitions, the contribution of Baloglu and McCleary (1999) predominates, considering the image as the *mental representation of beliefs, feelings and the global impression of the individual about a tourist destination*. It is worth noting this definition due to its accuracy, gathering the necessary dimensions that, according to the existing literature, the concept tourist destination image must integrate. Specifically, the study of the dimensions that make up the image of a tourist destination is approached through the exhibition of two great perspectives that we will see below (San Martín Gutiérrez, 2005).

### **2.1.2 Dimensions of the image of a tourist destination**

In the first place, the position that claims the existence of two basic components within the image of a tourist destination is reviewed:

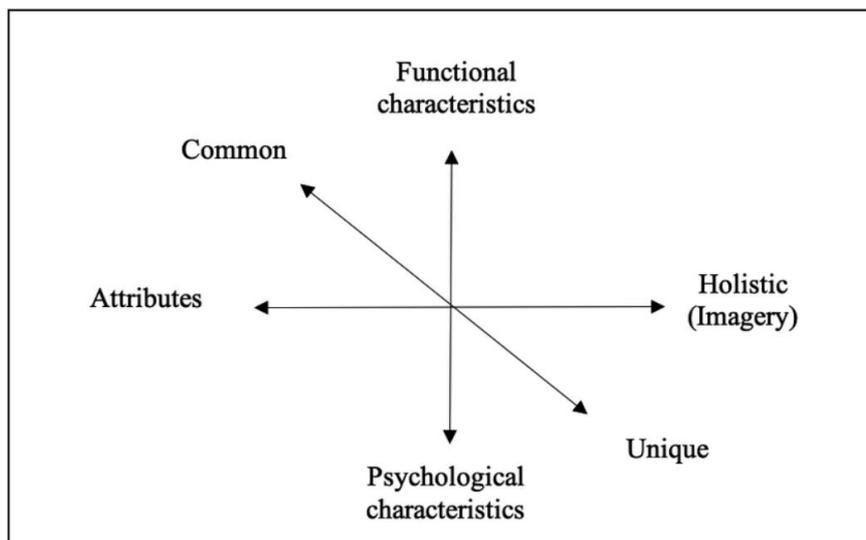
- Cognitive component: from cognitive perception perspective, we can define the image of a tourist destination as the way in which the visitor contemplates the physical characteristics of a tourist area (Beerli and Martín, 2004a). By physical attributes we mean the following: landscapes of the place, nature, its attractions, and the built environment.
- Affective component: in numerous studies, affection has been understood as a feeling on the part of the tourist towards the place (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997). It will be in part this affection that determines the desire to revisit a destination, and, therefore, the image of it.

Likewise, the joint analysis of these two elements of the image constitutes a global or composite image that refers to the positive or negative assessment that can be had of the destination. On the other hand, the coexistence of cognitive and affective

components allows us to have a better understanding of how people value and interpret places, since while the cognitive evaluation reflects the knowledge that individuals have about the characteristics of the place, the affective evaluation is the emotional response of these individuals (Beerli and Martin, 2004b). In this same sense, the interrelation between the cognitive and affective dimensions of the image generates a third so-called conative. Pike and Ryan (2004) consider the conative component as the probability of visiting a destination within a given period of time.

Secondly, a widespread approach is exposed in the literature and that identifies the existence of three bipolar continuums around which the perceived image of the destination can be delimited. A graphical representation in the figure 2.1 can be observed. According to Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993), these continuums are:

- Holistic-attribute: it is proposed that the image is integrated both by the impressions of the different particular attributes of a destination by the individual, such as, for example, the climate or hospitality, as well as by the holistic impressions of the place.
- Functional-psychological: it differentiates between the characteristics of the destination that are tangible and, therefore, observable by the tourist (functional) and the attributes that are abstract and, therefore, imprecise, and complicated to measure (psychological). Gallarza, Gil and Calderón (2002) carry out an extensive review of the attributes where the landscape, cultural attractions, climate, nightlife, price level and shopping facilities stand out as functional attributes, and the hospitality of the residents, relaxation, and safety as psychological characteristics.
- Common-unique: it states that impressions and attributes can be common to all destinations or, conversely, unique to each destination. This attribute in particular stands out for being configured as a true source of differentiation and competitive advantage of the tourist destination.



**Figure 2.1 Components of Echtner and Ritchie's tourist destination image**

*Source: Echtner y Ritchie (1991)*

While the first continuum is based on the nature of information processing by humans, the second and third continuums support the nature of the attribute-holistic impressions around which the image of the tourist destination is created. Consequently, the

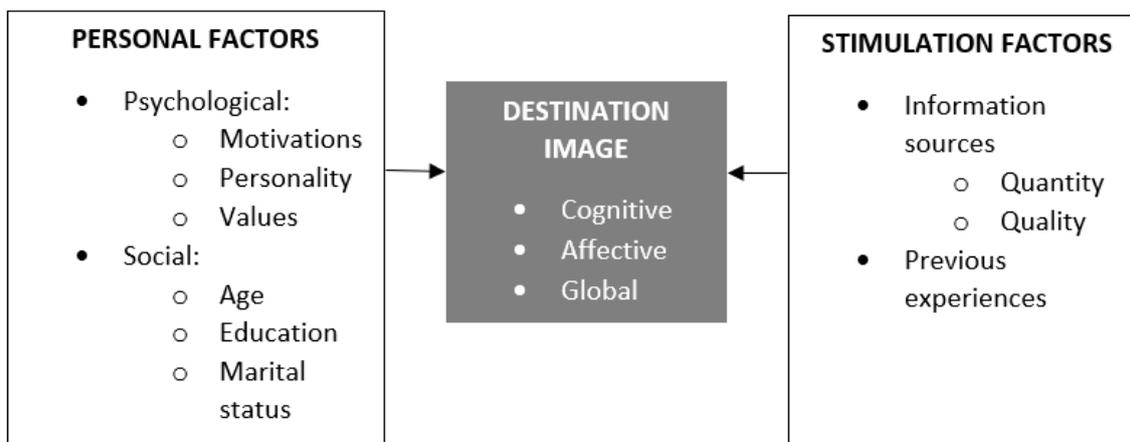
multidimensional character of the concept of a tourist destination image, based on the interaction of the previously mentioned continuums: attribute, holistic, functional, psychological, common, and unique, can be appreciate here.

## 2.2 IMAGE FORMATION OF A DESTINATION

After a first consideration of the subject in question, we must analyse another important factor, which is the process of forming the image of a tourist destination. Understanding the mechanism of action of this process is essential to be able to manage in an appropriate manner the image of a destination (Traverso Cortés, 2007).

It is worth mentioning the existence of several studies that show the complexity and difference between the images held by visitors who have already experienced a destination compared to the image generated by individuals who have not yet visited it (Chon, 1992). There are also demonstrations of how the image of a destination can change over time due to the enhancement or disappearance of certain memories lived during the experience. Likewise, the image can be affected by similar destinations, causing the visitor to confuse memories between destinations or simply compare one destination and another. (Phelps, 1986).

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) justify the existence of variables that participate in the formation of the image of a tourist destination. These variables can be classified into two broad categories: stimulus factors and personal factors. In addition, for these authors the global image of a tourist destination consists of the set of dimensions previously seen, that is, cognitive evaluations and affective evaluations, which, in turn, are influenced by these factors. The figure 2.2 shows a graphical representation of the aforementioned:



**Figure 2.2 Factors in the formation of the tourist destination image.**

*Source: Own elaboration based on Baloglu and McCleary (1999)*

While stimulus factors correspond to a physical object, a previous experience, and external sources of information or stimuli, personal factors refer to the psychological and social characteristics of the individual (Baloglu and McCleary 1999). In the same way, the knowledge of which are the personal and stimulus factors that influence the formation of the image is vital to identify the target markets and, furthermore, to determine the image that wants to be promoted.

The formation of the image of a tourist destination is a process that first takes place in the minds of individuals, and later develops on the basis of a series of perceptions and impressions from different sources of information such as, for example, the opinion of other people or the media. This formation process can reach a certain level of complexity,

since individuals may have their own image of a destination without having previously visited it, or they may have been exposed to commercial sources of information with political, historical, economic factors... about that tourist destination (Pérez Lorente, 2015).

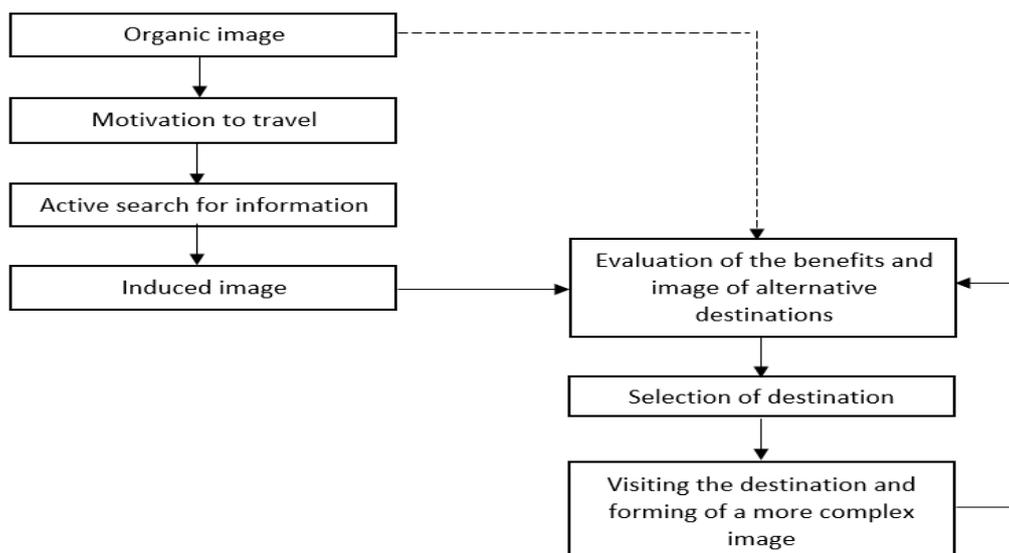
Despite the dynamic nature of the process of the image formation of a tourist destination, several authors agree in highlighting how long and tedious the process of generating a positive image of a destination or modifying a negative image to a favourable one is, because the images tend to be stable over time. Among these authors are Fakeye and Crompton (1991), and Uysal, Chen and Williams (2000).

According to Castaño (2005), the image of a destination is formed according to the following sources of information: (1) promotional literature, that is, travel catalogues, advertising, posters, etc., (2) the opinion of others, be they friends, relatives, salespeople, travel agents, etc., and (3) the media such as specialised magazines, newspapers, travel guides, books, internet, television, among others. Moreover, Crompton (1979a) argues that the source of information that most influences the choice of a destination comes from the social environment, that is, family, friends, and acquaintances.

Gunn (1988) distinguishes between two types of images, depending on the type of sources of information that contribute to the formation of the image of a tourist destination: (1) an organic image, based on non-commercial sources of information, such as the education received or the opinions of friends and family; and (2) an induced image, based on commercial sources of information, such as brochures and travel guides.

The choice of a tourist destination is assessed on the basis of the organic image, the information obtained from personal interactions and motivations, and the induced image, that is, the image projected by those responsible for promoting tourist destinations through various means of communication and media. Besides, once the visit has been made and an experience in the tourist destination has been obtained, an even more complex modified image will be generated, which will influence tourists on the next occasion that they have to select a tourist destination (Gunn, 1988).

As a conclusion of what has been explained above, it can be reiterated that the process of image formation of a tourist destination begins from the organic image, which derives from the accumulation of images in the mind of the individual about the tourist destination, later it goes through an induced image that is generated thanks to the information obtained through several sources of information, and finally, it ends with the modification of the image once the visit to the destination has been made by the tourist, as a consequence of the experience obtained during the trip. This is represented in the figure 2.3.



**Figure 2.3 Tourist destination image formation model**

Source: Own elaboration based on Fakeye and Crompton (1991)

On the other hand, regarding the role of the image in the selection process, one of the major objectives is the creation of value. Zeithaml (1988) defined the concept of value as the global evaluation made by consumers with respect to the usefulness of the product or service, according to their perception of the difference between what is given and what they receive, being the factors that have traditionally been associated with the concept of value the sale price and the quality of the product. This creation of value specifically seeks to differentiate destinations.

As explained in previous sections, the image of the destination is formed before, during and after consumption (Traverso Cortés, 2007) and is a combination of favourable and unfavourable perceptions that represent reality before tourists make the final decision of the chosen destination, in such a way that this tends to take place when the positive image outweighs the negative (Chen and Kerstetter, 1999). Consequently, a positive and strong image favours that the tourist destination has a higher probability of being selected (Bigné *et al.*, 2001).

Therefore, increasingly, the favourable experiences of tourists in the destination pursue not only the repetition of visits to it, but also the loyalty of the tourist and the recommendation of the destination to friends, family, contacts of social networks ... Which means, and at the same time demonstrates, that the image of a destination is a key point to attract tourists, as well as a critical element for the selection of the destination (Crompton, 1992).

### 2.3 FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMAGE OF A DESTINATION

In the field of tourism, it is worth highlighting motivation as a factor that has become fundamental due to being considered the cause of human behaviour and the explanation of almost the vast majority of aspects related to tourism activity. Motivation provides answers to three important questions: the reasons for traveling (*why*), the specific choice (*where*), and the results obtained or satisfaction (Castaño *et al.*, 2003).

On the other hand, for the destination to be seen as an appealing offer, it is essential that the place has a set of qualities and that, above all, people associate it with them. According to the tourist literature, it can be appreciated four factors that are strongly related to the image of a tourist destination. These factors that we will proceed to analyse below are familiarity, reputation, trust and satisfaction (Femenía Millet, 2011).

In the first place, familiarity is defined as the impression that individuals have based on their previous experience and friendships (Luhman, 1998). This aspect is perceived both through the use of products or services, as well as through the search for information that the individual receives through the advertising media. Therefore, the amount of information one has about a certain tourist destination will influence the selection by the tourist. In this way, greater information (clear, specific, ect.) about a tourist destination will generate greater familiarity and likelihood that the individual will choose this tourist destination (Johnson and Russo, 1984).

Regarding the reputation aspect, this is considered an emotional reaction that comprises the overall assessment and perception that tourists have of a certain tourist destination (Carauna and Chircop, 2000). Likewise, reputation is also a quality that lasts over time, whether it is positive or negative, which makes it of utmost importance. Its repercussion, both by means of communication and the internet or word-of-mouth, will influence the individual in his or her selection of the tourist destination.

According to Hart (1988), reputation is the result of the consistency between what an organization or destination guarantees its customers or visitors, and the actual fulfilment of these guarantees. When tourists proceed to visit the selected destination, they have expectations that, if fulfilled, will generate a good reputation that will cause in turn an increase in the number of stays by tourists. Nonetheless, if on the contrary tourists encounter negative elements that were not expected during their visit, this will result in a bad reputation that will negatively influence the image of the tourist destination.

Continuing with trust, it is the positive expectations one has about the behaviour of another in unsafe conditions (Rosseau *et al.*, 1998). According to Artigas (2010), trust would be composed of three elements: honesty, benevolence and the competences of the people who live in the tourist destination, as well as the private and public organisations that operate in it.

And finally, satisfaction is about the state of the brain produced by a greater or lesser optimisation of stimuli, giving the feeling of extreme fulfilment. Additionally, satisfaction depends on the extent to which the service provides value with respect to the expectations of the individual, that is, the visitor will be satisfied as long as the perceived service is equal to the expected benefit (Oliver, 1980).

Considering this, according to Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993), one of the principal purposes of the promoters of a destination must undoubtedly be the greatest possible coincidence between the promoted image and the image perceived by the potential tourist. In that same sense, the tourist would obtain a high level of satisfaction after his visit to the destination and will speak appropriately of the place. Consequently, this satisfaction will allow to measure the success of the destination, and therefore, it must promote a real, true image and capable of being implemented at a valid cost (Lawson and Baud-Bovy, 1977). Otherwise, deceiving or misleading the tourist would mean a bad experience at the destination, causing bad publicity and a worse reputation towards third parties.

## **2.4 MEASUREMENT OF THE IMAGE**

According to the literature and, as Echtner and Richie (1993) emphasize, the complex and diverse character of the tourism product requires the development of specific methodologies that are reliable enough to measure the image of a destination, which, for the most part, is based on the measurement of the image in a general way. At the same time, Dadgostar and Isotalo (1992) support the need to use these methodologies by stating that the tourist image depends both on the specific attributes of each place, and on the subjective interpretation of each researcher. Therefore, there are two types of techniques that are used to measure the image of a tourist destination: structured and unstructured.

In the structured technique, also called multi-attribute approach, the researcher previously establishes a set of attributes more or less common for all tourist destinations (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). The next step would be to measure the perception of the individual for each of the attributes established through a Likert or semantic differential scale, thus capturing the common component of the image of a given destination. These attributes are obtained through a review of the literature and, subsequently, are completed by the results gathered in several in-depth interviews and / or group meetings. Having said this, it should be noted that the quantity and identity of the attributes, as well as the breadth of the measurement scales, may vary from one study to another (Bigné and Sánchez, 2001).

On the other hand, the unstructured technique aims to examine the complex nature that brings together the image of the destination (Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001). This is based on the use of open-ended questions that give the individual the opportunity to make descriptions about the destination (Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000). In this way, this technique makes it possible to measure the holistic impressions of the individual about the place, that is, the holistic component, as well as the characteristics that in his or her opinion are unique or distinctive of the destiny, that is, the unique component of the image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). Consequently, it allows to identify the dimensions that the individual really uses to construct his perceived image of the destination (Reilly, 1990), and not those fixed in advance by the researcher.

	<b>Structured</b>	<b>Unstructured</b>
<b>Description</b>	Assessment of the individual from a list of attributes set by the researcher.	Free description of the impressions and beliefs of an individual about a tourist destination
<b>Techniques</b>	Likert and semantic differential scales	Group meetings, open-ended questions and content analysis
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Measurement of the common component of the image</li> <li>- Simple data coding</li> <li>- Sophisticated statistical analysis</li> <li>- Feasible comparison between several tourist destinations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification of the holistic and unique planes of a destination image</li> <li>- Identification of the relevant dimensions for each individual</li> <li>- Reduction of interviewer influence</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Failure to identify holistic and unique components</li> <li>- Highly subjective</li> <li>- Does not allow finding the attributes that are important for each individual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High variability in the level of detail of responses</li> <li>- Very limited statistical analysis</li> <li>- Impossibility of sophisticated comparative analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Statistical analysis</b>	Descriptive, factorial, variance, regression, cluster and variance analyses	Descriptive analysis

**Table 2.2 Characteristics of structured and unstructured techniques**

*Source: own elaboration based on Jenkins (1999)*

Therefore, image measurement should include not only techniques that capture perceptions of the individual attributes of a tourist destination, but also those that measure the most holistic impressions of the place (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). Above, the table 2.2 collects the details about the main characteristics of both techniques used to measure the image.

Finally, it should be noted that based on the methodology proposed by Echtner and Ritchie (1993), several recent investigations combine both techniques, structured and unstructured, in order to capture all the components of the destination image.



## 3 ANDALUSIA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

### 3.1 GENERAL APPROACH TO THE TOURIST DESTINATION OF ANDALUSIA

Andalusia has a rather privileged position in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, being the southernmost point of Europe. It is composed of the provinces of Almería, Cádiz, Córdoba, Granada, Huelva, Jaén, Málaga and Seville, the latter being its capital. Furthermore, it constitutes a bridge between the European and African continents, being, in this way, a link between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea (Web Oficial de Turismo de Andalucía, 2019).

This region, being one of the largest autonomous communities in Spain, has more than 87,000 km<sup>2</sup> of surface and a coastline of great quality, comprising more than 900 km between beaches and cliffs. Additionally, it is worth noting that this region occupies approximately 17.3% of the Spanish territory and has a larger extension than some of the countries of the European Union such as Austria, Holland or Switzerland (Instituto Geográfico Nacional, 2021).

This extensive area has a very varied topography in which the diversity of landscapes ranges from the valley of the Guadalquivir River, through volcanic landscapes such as the Tabernas desert, to the mountain ranges of Sierra Morena and the Cordillera Bética. In the latter where some of the highest peaks of the country are located, such as, for example, the Mulhacén in Sierra Nevada, being the highest point of the Spanish peninsula. Besides, it should be noted that around 50% of the Andalusian territory is mountainous, and a third of it is above 600 meters above sea level (Petit de Gabriel *et al.*, 2010).

Moreover, Andalusia has a vast network of Natural Spaces that represent approximately 18% of its territory, making this autonomous community stand out for the defence of its environmental heritage (Web Oficial de Turismo de Andalucía, 2019). Among the numerous Natural Parks located in this region, it is worth mentioning the Natural Park of Cazorla y las Villas, located in the province of Jaén, which is the largest protected natural area in Spain. On the other hand, we have the Sierra Nevada National Park, located in the provinces of Granada and Almería, along with the Doñana National Park, in the provinces of Huelva and Seville. Besides, both the Natural Park of Cazorla y Las Villas and the Doñana National Park have been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (Petit de Gabriel *et al.*, 2010).

In terms of accessibility to this region, the geography of Andalusia has conditioned the development of transport infrastructures. On the one hand, positively by allowing access to the region from multiple points (sea, land, air, etc.), while, on the other hand, negatively due to the difficulty of developing railway or road infrastructures in certain areas of the region due to the peculiar relief. Nevertheless, thanks to the development of technology and human advancement, in recent years these infrastructures have improved considerably (Petit de Gabriel *et al.*, 2010).

What is more, in the last year, Andalusia has had a population of approximately 8,472,407 people, being the autonomous community number one in terms of population. It has a moderate population density, with 97 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, which is similar to the Spanish population density. Moreover, while the male population accounts for 49.32% of the total, the female population is the majority with 50.67% (Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía, 2021).

Concerning the climate, Andalusia is one of the warmest regions in Spain, and even, one could say, in all of Europe. This region mostly enjoys a temperate Mediterranean climate. However, due to the great geographical diversity of the territory, in some areas the

mountain climate or the tropical climate predominates. It has an average annual temperature of approximately 18 °C (Junta de Andalucía, 2019).

In addition, the characteristic feature that best identifies the Andalusian environment is its luminosity, thanks to the large number of hours of sunshine per year that the territory receives, having more than 300 days of sunshine per year, a figure that doubles the average of the Central and Nordic European countries. This is one of the things that mark the cheerful and hospitable nature of the Andalusians (Junta de Andalucía, 2019).

Last but not least, the millenary history of Andalusia has left in inheritance an immense artistic legacy with, for example, the Alhambra of Granada, the Mosque of Cordoba or the Giralda and the historic centre of Seville, which are considered monumental milestones of Humanity. Furthermore, the diversity of festivals and traditions in this region is as wide as its geography, highlighting celebrations such as romeria, carnivals, Holy Week and the fair. Additionally, it is worth mentioning the famous bullfighting festival, which has a fundamental importance due to its deep rootedness (Web Oficial de Turismo de Andalucía, 2019).

### **3.2 TOURISM IN ANDALUSIA**

First of all, we must properly delimit the concept of tourism. According to the UNWTO (2015), this is defined as *a social, cultural and economic phenomenon that involves the displacement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal, professional or business reasons. These people are called travellers (who can be either tourists or hikers; residents or non-residents) and tourism encompasses their activities, some of which involve a tourist expense.*

As has been previously anticipated, not only traditionally, but also currently Andalusia is considered a remarkably attractive region from the tourist point of view due to the fact that in few places in Europe you can find its heritage, cultural and landscape wealth, as well as it is also well-known for its peculiar climate and its particular coastline (Buitrago Esquinas, 1997). Its spectacular geography allows, among many things, to ski at 3,000 meters high and sunbathe on the Mediterranean coast just a few hours apart.

Nonetheless, in recent years due to the extraordinary situation in which we have been compromised with the Covid-19 pandemic, the tourism sector has been severely affected, not only in this region, but on a worldwide level. For this reason, in this section we will have a look at tourism in Andalusia from two different perspectives.

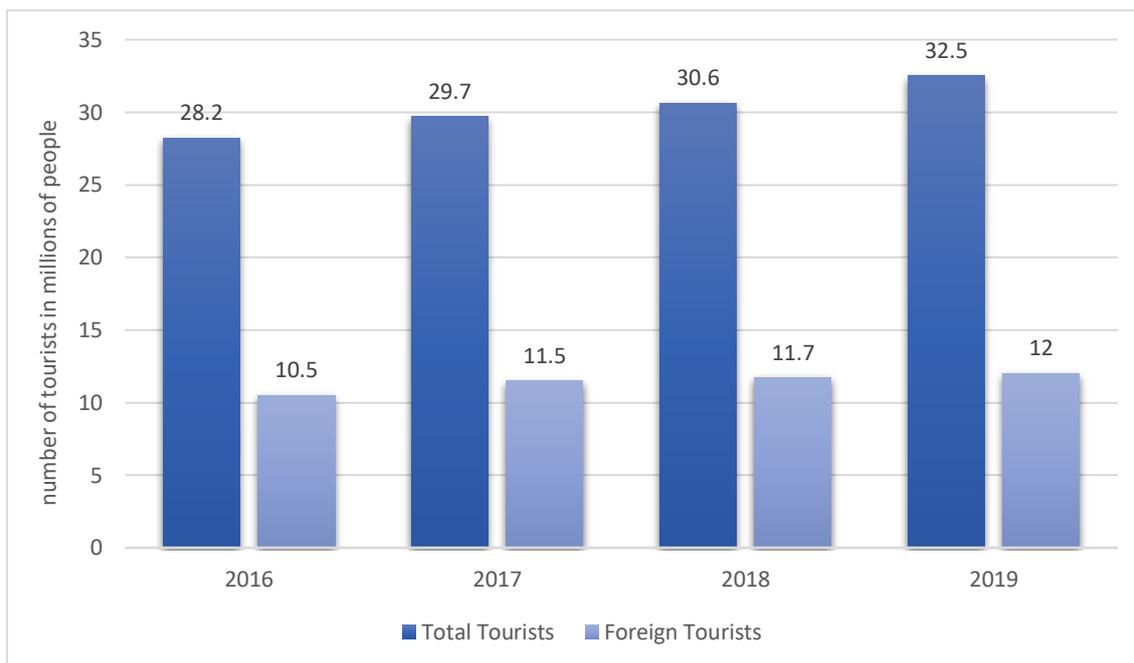
Firstly, statistical data will be provided for 2019, the last year in which tourism could be carried out normally before the pandemic made its way into our lives. Secondly, we will look at the most recent statistical data of the current tourism activity of the year 2021, when the tourism industry has had the opportunity to start its long and tedious road to recovery after the major repercussions that Covid-19 has had on it, and which will be reflected in the data provided.

#### **3.2.1 Tourism in Andalusia before the Covid-19 pandemic – year 2019.**

With the aforementioned arguments about the appealing aspects that Andalusia has as a tourist destination, it is not surprising that a total of 32.5 million tourists decided to visit the destination of Andalusia in 2019, of which around 12 million were foreign tourists. This represented the highest level of demand reached and a growth of 5.9% compared to 2018. Taking these figures into account, Andalusia was placed as the fourth main destination community by number of tourists during 2019, behind the autonomous communities of Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands (Consejería de Turismo, Regeneración, Justicia y Administración Local, 2020).

Next, the figure 3.1 shows how the number of tourists, specified in millions of people, has evolved in recent years during the time period of 2016-2019. While it is true that the

total number of tourists has shown a more pronounced growth, the number of foreign tourists is also increasing at a slower, but steady pace.



**Figure 3.1 Evolution of the number of total and foreign tourists in Andalusia**

*Source: Own elaboration based on 'Instituto Nacional de Estadística' (2016-2019).*

Furthermore, in that same year, the most important foreign issuing markets were the United Kingdom and Germany, followed by other countries such as France, Holland, Belgium and the Nordic Countries. On the other hand, according to the Tourist Expenditure Survey (Egatur), the expenditure of foreign tourists also stood at approximately 12.5 million euros, a figure that represents a slight decrease compared to last year (Consejería de Turismo, Regeneración, Justicia y Administración Local, 2020).

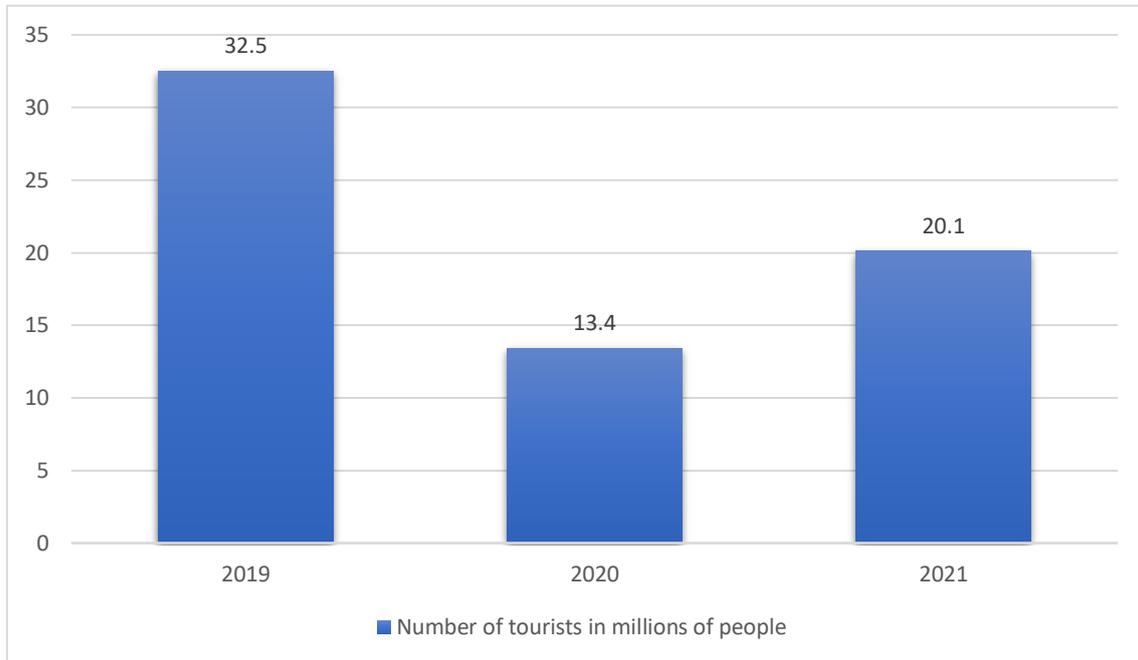
For the aforementioned countries, the most determining factors when choosing Andalusia as a tourist destination, in order of importance, are the climate, the monuments and the beach. This means that both sun and beach tourism and cultural tourism are tourist segments with high prominence in Andalusia. Likewise, with regard to the most popular activities carried out by visitors during their stay in this region, there is a high level of interest in those associated with the use and enjoyment of the coastline or culture, activities related to nature, and, finally, shopping (Consejería de Turismo, Regeneración, Justicia y Administración Local, 2020).

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that so far tourists rate their satisfaction with the Andalusian destination with an average of approximately 8.38 points on a scale of 1 to 10. Regarding the most highly valued concepts, the attention and treatment received, the landscapes, natural parks and Andalusian cultural heritage stand out, as well as citizen security (Consejería de Turismo, Regeneración, Justicia y Administración Local, 2020).

### **3.2.2 Tourism in Andalusia after the Covid-19 pandemic – year 2021.**

In 2021, Andalusia had the luxury of receiving a total of 20 million tourists, which has meant a staggering increase of almost 50% compared to 2020 (Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía, 2022). Below it can be found the figure 3.2, in which it can be seen how the figures dropped dramatically in the year 2020 compared to the

astonishing numbers of visitors in 2019, due to the outbreak and spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, it can be observed how in 2021, although Andalusia is still far from a total and healthy recovery, the situation of the tourism sector is beginning to notice the first signs of improvements.



**Figure 3.2 Evolution of the number of total tourists in Andalusia**

*Source: Own elaboration based on 'Encuesta de Coyuntura Turística de Andalucía' (2019-2021).*

During that year, most of the tourists who visited the Andalusian region came from Andalusia itself with 44.6%, followed by tourists of Spanish nationality with 35.4%. On the other hand, the remaining percentage corresponded to foreign tourists, mostly from countries belonging to the European Union (Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía, 2022).

What is more, it should be noted that the favourite destination among tourists was the province of Malaga, which concentrated 26.3% of them, followed by the provinces of Cadiz, Granada and Seville, which also received a large number of tourists (Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía, 2022).

And, lastly, it should also be mentioned that in this last year 2021 there was an increase in satisfaction with respect to the year prior the pandemic, that is, the year 2019. Regarding the assessment of the experience on a scale of 1 to 10 made to tourists who visited Andalusia during 2021, they granted an 8.5 to their visit and stay in the region. Additionally, the aspects most highly valued by visitors were those related to landscapes and natural parks, attention and treatment received (Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía, 2022).

## 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out the following research, Andalusia has been selected as the tourist destination, which constitutes the scope of application of this empirical research. This is due to the fact that it is a region where tourism has a great economic and social importance, being one of the main engines of development, as well as one of the autonomous communities in Spain that receives more tourists per year.

This study will only consider specifically tourists from Central European countries. The main reason for this is that, in the current research year, my place of residence has been Austria as holder of one of the scholarships of the Erasmus+ programme 2021/22. During this stay I had the privilege of studying at a university composed of international students from neighbouring countries and, hence, my nascent interest to know the opinion of this group of tourists about my region, Andalusia. Taking advantage of the unique opportunity I have been given, I have therefore chosen to limit my target population to members of the Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and Poland) and the Alpine countries (Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein and Switzerland), which make up the nine countries corresponding to Central Europe. For this purpose, personal surveys were carried out on a total of 109 tourists, obtaining a total of 102 surveys completed correctly, using a structured questionnaire as an instrument. The remaining surveys have been discarded because some of the answers in open-ended questions were not coherent.

The elaboration of this study began with an exploratory investigation carrying out an exhaustive documentary review through the existing literature and other research works to know the concepts of image, impacts and success factors of tourist destinations. After this, the questions that were to make up the research were carefully formed, taking as a reference other studies by authors previously mentioned in the theoretical framework. On the other hand, according to the time horizon of the information, the study is cross-sectional, since the collection of information has been carried out at a single moment in time, during February and April 2022. The survey data collection has been conducted both in person and through social media and online survey sites, called "SurveyCircle" and "SurveySwap", specifically designed to collect participants to support the research.

The survey carried out (see Appendix) consists of a total of 29 questions in both English and German, being divided into different sections. With these questions, it will be possible to answer all the objectives set out above. In the questionnaire carried out, we find open-ended, semi-open questions that give the option of "others", and single-answer questions. Questions that have a Likert scale of 1 to 5 can also be found. Besides, a brief explanation of the research is included at the beginning of the questionnaire and participants are informed that their answers will be treated anonymously and confidentially.

The first block consists of six questions that collect data on the sociodemographic profile of the respondent such as gender, age, marital status, occupation, level of studies of the individual and nationality. While in the second block data related to general information of the trip made to Andalusia are acquired, trying to know which province was visited, the main reason for the trip and the duration of the stay. Finally, the following sections are specifically focused on questions related to expectations, perceived quality, perceived value, and satisfaction of the trip on the part of the tourist.

A fact sheet of the methodological process used is presented in table 4.1:

<b>Procedure</b>	Personal surveys carried out through questionnaires
<b>Universe</b>	Tourists between 18 and 55 years old
<b>Contact form</b>	In person and through social networking and online survey sites
<b>Defined sample</b>	109 tourists
<b>Real sample</b>	102 tourists
<b>Type of sampling</b>	Non-probability purposive sampling
<b>Fieldwork</b>	From 18 <sup>th</sup> February to 22 <sup>nd</sup> April, 2022

**Table 4.1 Methodological process fact sheet**

*Source: Own elaboration*

## 5 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### 5.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

In this part, in order to carry out the socio-demographic analysis of the population under study, several questions have been asked that will allow us to classify the respondents according to their answers. Next, these variables are presented in the table 5.1, together with a brief description of the data obtained.

<b>Socio-demographic characteristics</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	61 tourists	59.8%
	Male	41 tourists	40.2%
<b>Age</b>	18-24	71 tourists	69.6%
	25-34	23 tourists	22.5%
	35-44	4 tourists	3.9%
	45-55	4 tourists	3.9%
<b>Level of education</b>	No education	1 tourist	1%
	Primary	-	-
	Secondary	-	-
	High school or vocational training	12 tourists	11.8%
	University studies	89 tourists	87.3%
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	71 tourists	69.6%
	Employee	13 tourists	12.7%
	Both	17 tourists	16.7%
	Neither	1 tourist	1%
<b>Marital status</b>	Single	68 tourists	66.7.%
	Married or in a relationship	34 tourists	33.3%
	Divorced	-	-
	Widowed	-	-
<b>Nationality</b>	Austrian	23 tourists	22.5%
	German	36 tourists	35.3%
	Swiss	13 tourists	12.7%
	Liechtensteiner	-	-
	Czech	5 tourists	4.9%
	Hungarian	10 tourists	9.8%
	Pole	11 tourists	10.8%

	Slovakian	1 tourist	1%
	Slovenian	3 tourists	2.9%

**Table 5.1 Socio-demographic profile of respondents.**

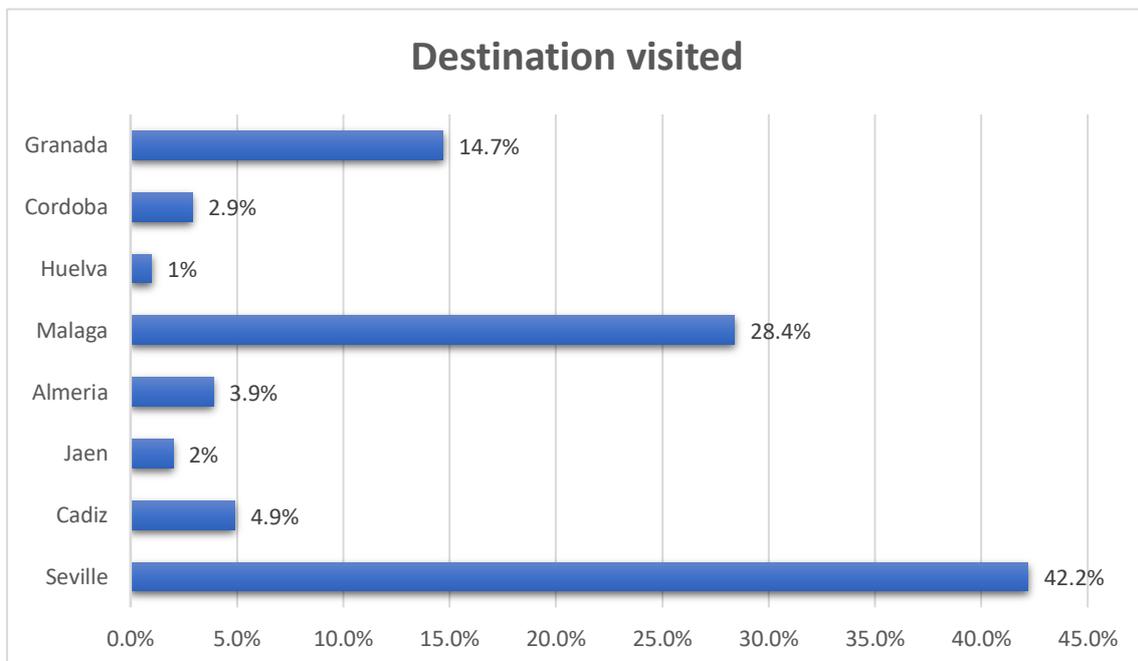
*Source: Own elaboration based on the results.*

As previously mentioned, the sample collected from residents is made up of 102 people. The slight majority of respondents are characterized by being female (59.8%), aged between 18 and 24 years (69.6%), belonging to single marital status (66.7%) and students (69.6%). While the vast majority of respondents have university studies (87.3%), only one person surveyed does not have any type of level of education at all. On the other hand, the nationalities with the most respondents are the following: German (35.3%), Austrian (22.5%), Swiss (12.7%) and Polish (10.8%).

From this sociodemographic profile, it is worth highlighting the small proportion of people over 35 years old, bearing in mind that the survey was carried out in a non-holiday period, this may be due to the fact that it is the group with the greatest responsibilities and where most of the workers are framed. Another curious fact would be the non-obtaining of people with a widowed or divorced marital status, although this data makes sense with the above explained about the lack of some groups. Finally, it is necessary to mention the difficulty, or impossibility in the case of Liechtenstein, of obtaining samples from countries such as Slovakia or Slovenia.

## 5.2 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRIP

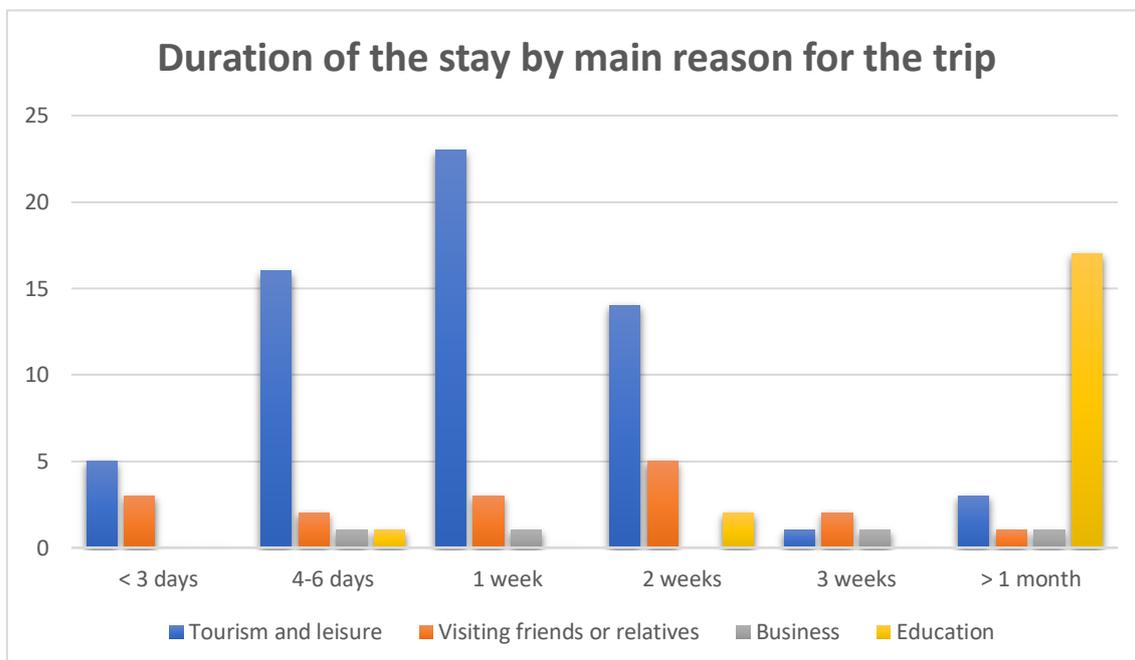
In this section we will proceed to the analysis of various general aspects about the trip made by these tourists to Andalusia, related to the duration of their stay, the destination visited and the main reason for travel.



**Figure 5.1 Distribution of the respondents by the province of Andalusia visited.**

*Source: Own elaboration based on the results.*

As can be seen in the figure 5.1, the main provinces visited within Andalusia by our target population are, in order: Seville, Malaga and Granada. This may be due to the fact that these are the best rated provinces and with the greatest reputation, and therefore, the ones that receive the most tourists. While the least known destination, and, consequently, least visited by tourists from Central Europe, is Huelva.



**Figure 5.2 Distribution of the duration of the stay by the main reason for the trip of the respondents.**

*Source: Own elaboration based on the results.*

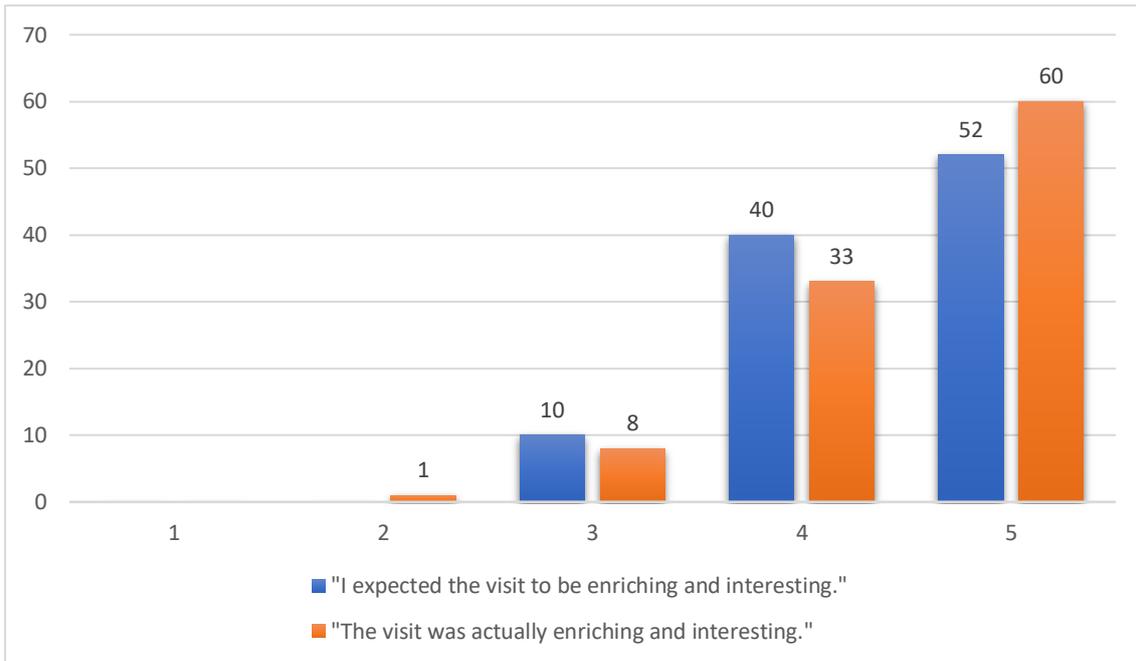
On the other hand, according to the data collected and represented in the figure 5.2, the main reason for the trip by the respondents, with 59.8%, was tourism and leisure; and the duration of stay preferred by tourists to visit the destination, with a more or less equitable distribution, are in order: 1 week (26.5%), more than a month (21.6%), 2 weeks (20.6%) and 4 to 6 days (19.6%).

Performing a slightly more in-depth analysis, it can be found out that tourists who chose to visit the destination for 3 or fewer days, the reason for their trip was mostly for tourism and leisure, as well as it was for those who visited the province for 4 to 6 days, a week and two weeks. Nevertheless, for those people whose duration of stay was 3 weeks or more than a month, the main reasons respectively were to visit friends or relatives and for education purposes.

## 5.3 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

### 5.3.1 Expectations

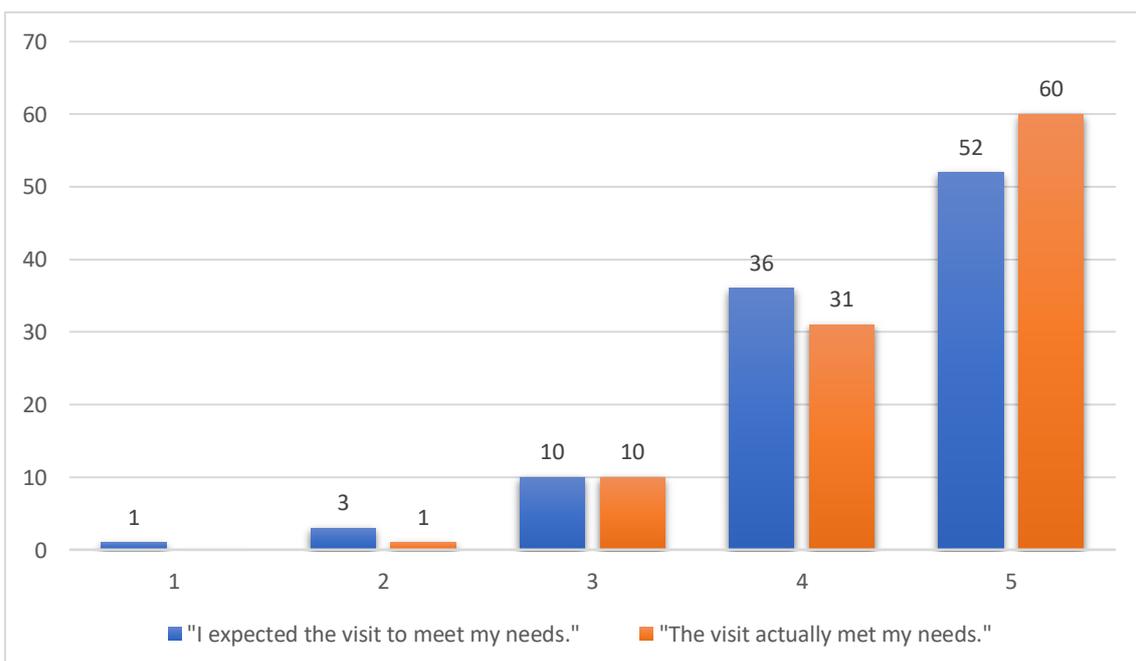
Firstly, we will analyse the data obtained concerning the expectations of the trip, for this we will use a series of comparisons that will help us to better understand the conclusions drawn and whether or not these expectations were met after the visit.



**Figure 5.3 Assessment of expectation: whether the visits was enriching and interesting or not.**

*Source: Own elaboration based on the results.*

As can be seen in the figure 5.3, while the vast majority agreed (4) or strongly agreed (5) with the statement "I expected the visit to be enriching and interesting", we see how this expectation was fulfilled by having a higher number of strongly agreed (5) votes for the statement "The visit was actually enriching and interesting". There are very few tourists who remained neutral (3) in both statements, and only one tourist who did not consider that his visit was really enriching and interesting, providing a vote of disagreement (2), which means that he/she probably had high expectations of the trip that were not achieved.



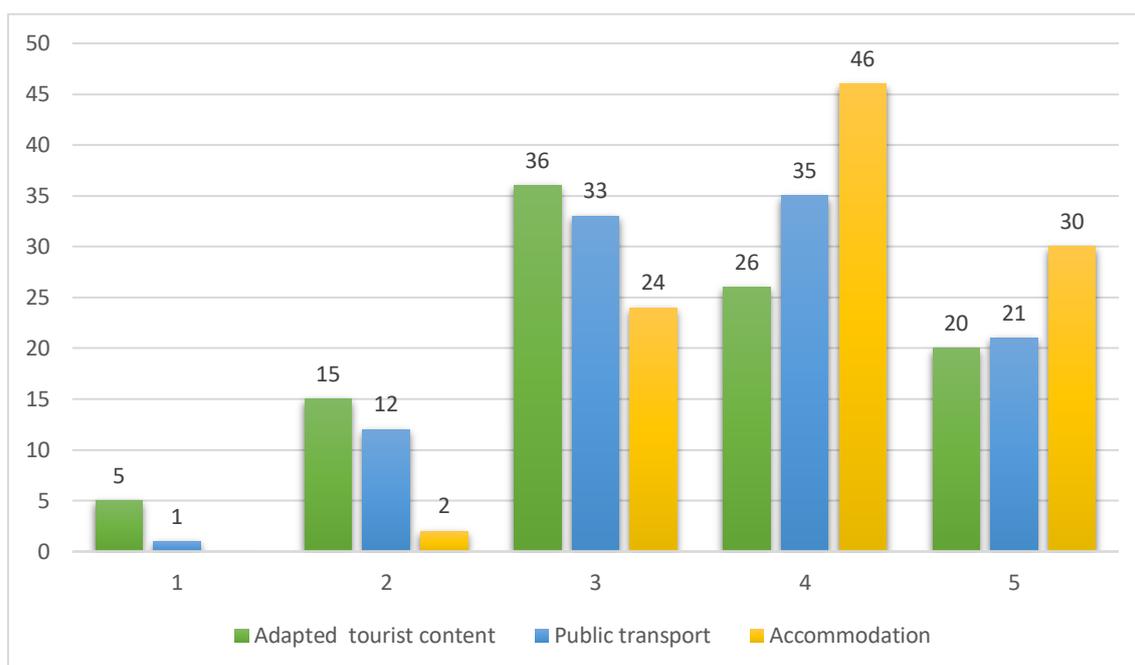
**Figure 5.4 Assessment of expectations: whether needs were met or not.**

*Source: Own elaboration based on the results.*

The figure 5.4 above shows data on tourists' expectations that the trip would meet their needs. As can be observed, in the statement "I expected the visit to meet my needs" is dominated by tourists who agree (4) and strongly agree (5). On the other hand, one can also find tourists, who make up the minority, who did not expect the visit to meet their needs at all, with votes of strongly disagree (1) and disagree (2), thus having low expectations of the trip. For the statement "The visit actually met my needs", again a greater number of people of people strongly agreed (5) and a total of no people strongly disagreed (1). Once again, it can be seen how after the visit, the expectations regarding the satisfaction of the needs of tourists are exceeded.

### 5.3.2 Quality perceived

In this section we move on to analyse several aspects of the destination and the quality perceived by the tourist after the visit. The aspects chosen for this part are nine: tourist content, public transport network, accommodation, gastronomy, treatment by residents, historical and cultural sites and activities, connection and accessibility from other regions, landscapes and surroundings, and, finally, time. In order to interpret the data obtained, we will continue to use graphs in which the aspects will be commented on in parts.



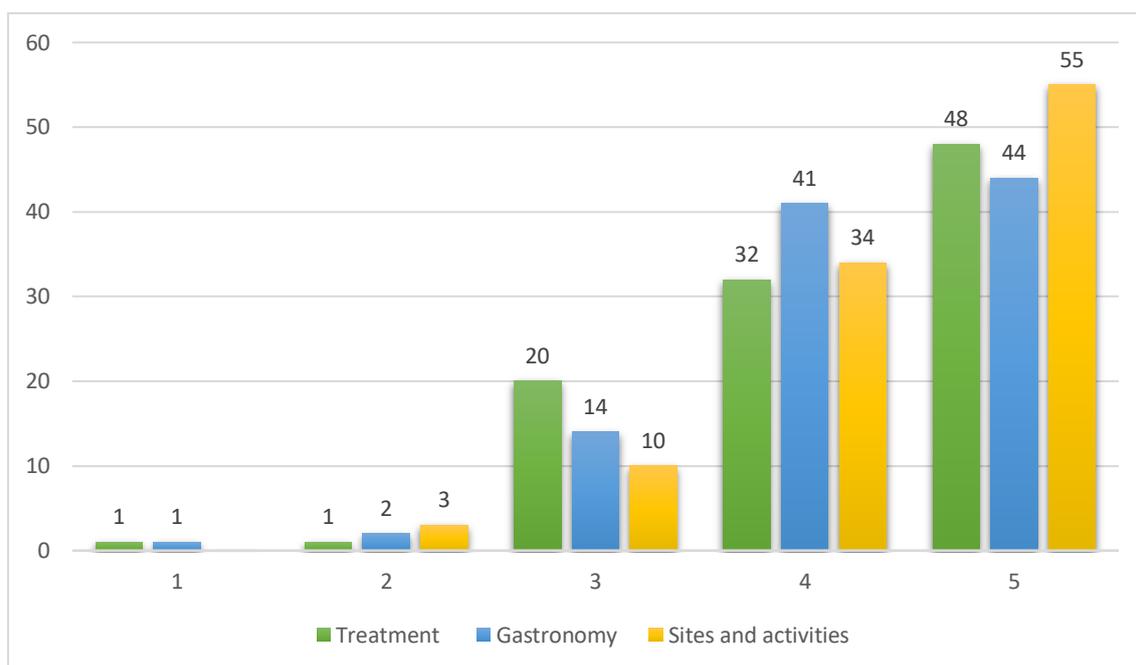
**Figure 5.5 Assessment of quality perceived: tourist content, public transport network and accommodation offer.**

*Source: Own elaboration based on the results.*

In the figure 5.5, the first statement, "Tourist content was appropriately adapted to my language", elicited a wide range of responses. From people in strong disagreement (1) to people who strongly agree (5), nonetheless, most people were neutral (3) to this statement. The next aspect was about the public transport network, and more specifically we wanted to know if they perceived that "The public transport network was easily accessible and in good condition". While it is true that most of the votes are gathered

mainly in the agreement (4) consideration, followed by neutral (3) and strong agreement (5); there are still, although few, votes on the strongly disagreed (1) and disagreed (2) considerations. Finally, this graph also discusses the statement "Wide range and availability of accommodation, which suited my needs", which apparently was more successful than the previous two aspects. In this case, most tourists clearly agreed (4) with the question.

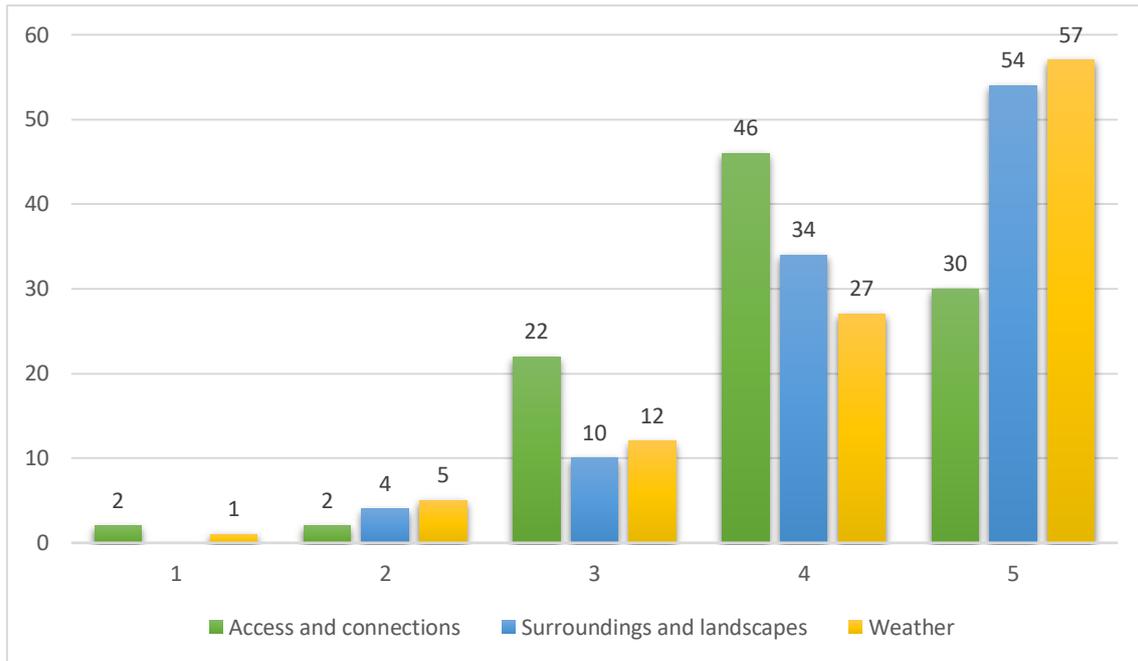
In conclusion, it can be said that while the perceived quality of the adaptation of tourist content was seen from a more neutral point of view by tourists, neither negative or positive, the perceived quality of the public transport network and the accommodation offer show a more positive evaluation, the latter being the one that has obtained the best votes for tourists according to its perceived quality.



**Figure 5.6 Assessment of quality perceived: treatment by the residents, gastronomy, historical and cultural sites and activities.**

*Source: Own elaboration based on the results.*

It can be seen at a glance in the figure 5.6 how the three statements represented "Good treatment and kindness on the part of the residents", "Gastronomy was of high quality and varied", and "Wide variety of historical and cultural sites to visit and activities to do" have a fairly similar and favourable distribution of the rating. These aspects have received a high number of in the agree (4) and strongly agree (5) considerations, therefore, therefore, generally almost all tourists had a positive response, and few are those whose evaluation was unfavourable (1) or (2). This means that the aspects were perceived with a high quality after the visit, especially the last statement regarding the cultural and historical sites and activities.



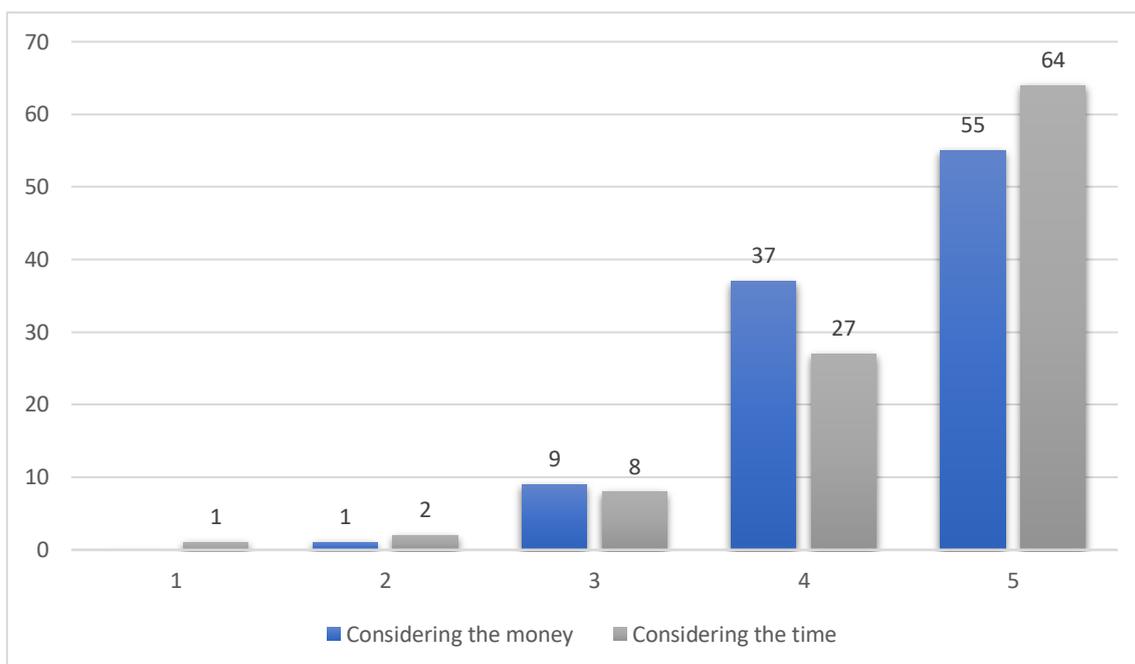
**Figure 5.7 Assessment of quality perceived: access and connections from other regions, surroundings and landscapes, and weather.**

*Source: Own elaboration based on the results.*

Finally, the figure 5.7 shows the last aspects to be interpreted related to the perceived quality after the visit. In the statement "Easy access and good connection from other regions/countries (airports, roads, ports...)", tourists are satisfied, with the majority of votes corresponding to agree (4). While in the *statements* "The surroundings and the landscapes were of great beauty" and "The weather was quite pleasant" a similar quality is observed, both with the highest possible rating (5) by the vast majority of tourists. Again, it can be observed how the evaluation of the aspects is positive, leaving the negative values (1) or (2) as isolated cases and not something with which most of the community agrees.

### 5.3.3 Perceived value

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement according to the following statements: "Considering the money spent on the trip, I believe the visit was well worth it" and "Considering the time spent on the trip, I believe the visit was well worth it". Through these questions it has been tried to determine the perceived value of his visit to Andalusia.



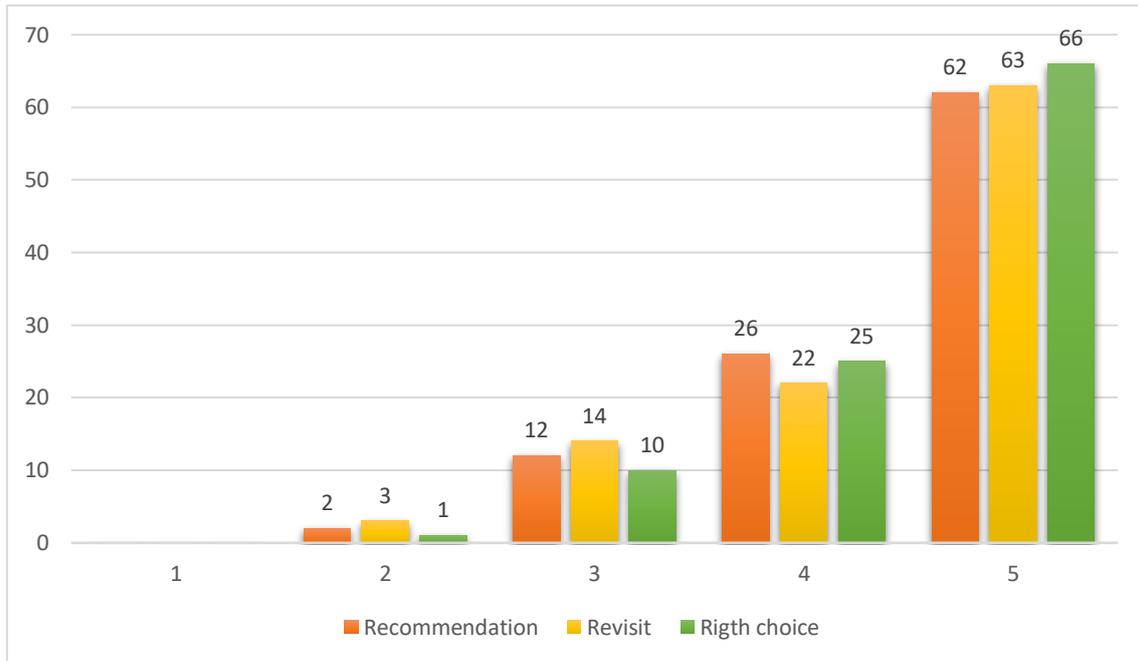
**Figure 5.8 Assessment of perceived value: considering the money and time invested.**

*Source: Own elaboration based on the results.*

After having a look at the figure 5.8, it can be certainly said that it shows a high rate of people who strongly agree (5) and agree (4) with the statements indicated, not being more than few people who disagree, which can be considered irrelevant given the low number. Furthermore, it is slightly noticeable how people perceived the time aspect more favourably than the money spent on the trip. Nonetheless, it can be concluded that most of the tourists rated that both their time and their money were well invested, making the visit to Andalusia worthwhile and therefore perceiving a high value coming from Andalusia and what it has to offer.

### 5.3.4 Satisfaction

Last but not least, in this last section it will be interpreted the satisfaction of the visit and what impression the tourists took away from Andalusia. To do this, the likelihood of tourists recommending the destination of Andalusia to their loved ones and the likelihood of them visiting Andalusia again, whether it is the same province or a new one, will be analysed. Besides, the aim was to find out how successful their stay was by asking whether they thought their decision to choose Andalusia was the right one, or, on the contrary, they should have decided to visit another destination. Finally, tourists were asked to rate how well Andalusia performs as a tourist destination and their overall impression of Andalusia.

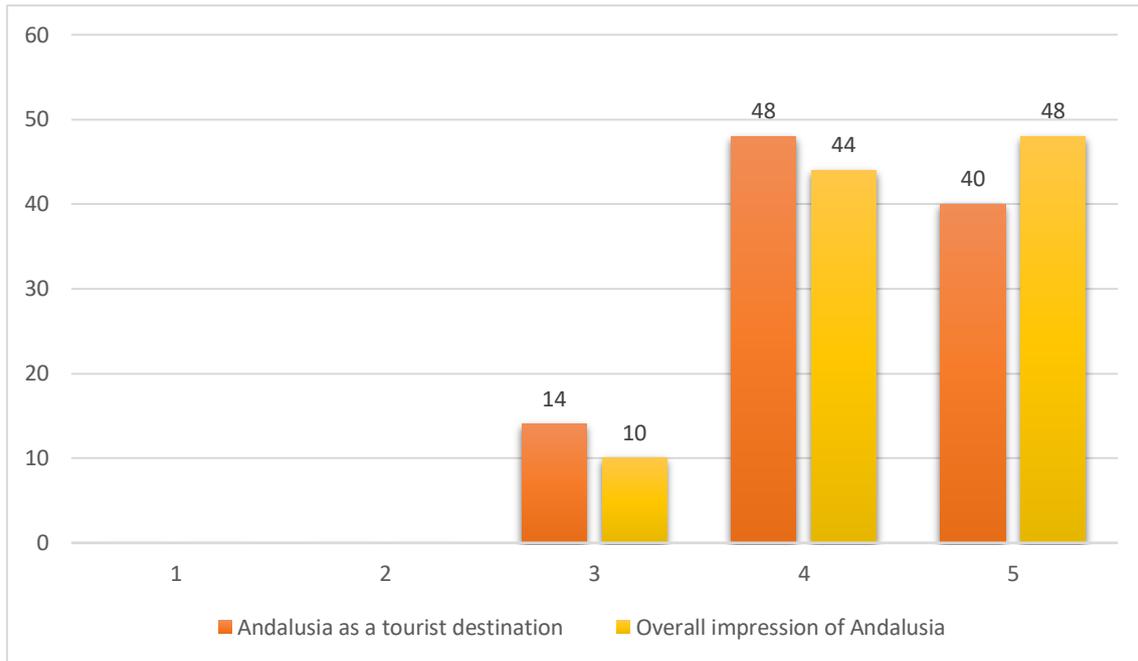


**Figure 5.9 Assessment of satisfaction: recommendation, revisit and right choice.**

*Source: Own elaboration based on the results.*

In this first graph (figure 5.9), the following statements have been represented: "I would recommend Andalusia as a tourist destination to my loved ones", "I would visit Andalusia again, whether it is the same province or another one" and "My choice to visit Andalusia was the right one". What initially strikes us about this graph is the absence of tourists who strongly disagree (1) for all factors, which is a good sign. Inevitably, and as in most of the graphs, we still continue to find tourists, albeit few, who disagree (2) and others who remain neutral (3).

Fortunately, most people strongly agreed (5) with all the statements, which means that tourists from Central Europe would recommend Andalusia to their acquaintances and would visit it again, which positively affects the reputation and repeat rate of this region. Moreover, almost all tourists did not regret choosing the Andalusian destination, this aspect being the one that received slightly a greater number of positive votes.



**Figure 5.10 Assessment of satisfaction: Andalusia as a tourist destination and overall impression.**

*Source: Own elaboration based on the results.*

In this second and last graph (figure 5.10), tourists were asked to rate with 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest, the following statements: "Andalusia as a tourist destination according to the satisfaction of your expectations and needs" and "Overall impression of Andalusia as a tourist destination after your visit". Surprisingly, on this occasion there are no tourists who rated these questions with the worst possible scores (1) and (2). Additionally, in both questions it can be observed how the ratings are evenly distributed in the highest (4) and (5), leaving only a few people whose score is neutral (3).

The main difference that can be highlighted is that while the set of tourists had a fairly positive overall impression (5) of the destination of Andalusia, in the case of the assessment of Andalusia as a tourist destination, it can be seen how the majority satisfaction is good (4), falling just short of being considered very good (5).

## 6 CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE AUTHOR

The results obtained in this research work, as well as the limitations to which they were subject, give rise to a series of proposals for future studies, improvements and recommendations that are detailed below.

First of all, one of the limitations encountered regarding the study of the image, is that only those people who have had a previous experience in the destination have been considered, not including potential tourists, thus being the studied image of the visitors the one after the visit is done. Likewise, the survey was limited to a target population, more specifically tourists from Central European countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Poland, Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein and Switzerland), which means that only people from these countries and who had previously visited Andalusia were included in the survey. This has made it difficult to obtain the sample, resulting also in the low number or absence of respondents from certain countries, such as Slovakia and Liechtenstein.

As a future line of research on the Andalusian destination, a different or larger sample could be used, since the sample in this study is 102 people and it cannot be known exactly its level of representativeness, or if the results are really reliable; continuing with studies related to the same lines of research carried out in this document. Furthermore, the image of Andalusia could also be compared with that of other competing destinations in Spain, such as, for example, the Canary Islands or the Balearic Islands. Another future line of research that could be carried out would be to analyse more deeply the relationship between the image of a tourist destination and other variables, such as loyalty, in order to check whether it really influences the recommendation and repetition of the visit to the destination.

Regarding the improvements, an internal measure would be to improve the perceived aspects valued by tourists from a more neutral point of view, which means that although it is true that they do not have a negative impact, they do not have a positive impact either. These aspects need to be enhanced to ensure that in the near future they do not end up being an unfavourable influence on the image of Andalusia as a destination. This would mean, among other recommendations, improving the infrastructures and conditions of the public transport network and adapting the tourist content to a greater variety of languages so that all tourists have the possibility to enjoy the tourist attractions in Andalusia.

On the other hand, an external measure would be to carry out a more competent tourism marketing strategy with the main focus on foreign countries, so as to help gain visibility and promote a stable and positive image of Andalusia as a tourist destination, in order to attract more visitors. This could be done, for example and among others, through the use of social networks, which are of great relevance today and allow to capture the attention of visitors, as well as the interaction of tourists with the destination before, during and after the experience.



## 7 CONCLUSIONS

As has been observed throughout the present dissertation exposed, it could be confirmed the importance of the image of the destination for its development. Understanding as image the set of ideas or concepts that one has of a destination, both individually and collectively, it must be borne in mind that this element is decisive for tourists to make the choice of the place to visit. Moreover, the image of the tourist destination is assimilated to the concept of perception, being shaped before, during and after the stay of the tourist in the destination. Therefore, it is relevant to know that this image is not definitive, it is a highly variable concept over time that is based on lived experiences and very fragile, it can vary quickly from a favourable image to an unfavourable one after perceiving some negative aspect. In this way, it is necessary to take care of all the elements that can influence tourism to avoid a negative image, since it is very difficult to transform later into a positive one.

According to the literature review carried out, the image of the destination is influenced by external factors, such as the personal factors of each individual, which in turn is composed of psychological and social characteristics, and the stimulus factors formed by perceptual resources in the daily life of each person and in their experiences of the tourist destination. Another noteworthy aspect is the dimensions that compose it: cognitively the attributes corresponding to the existing resources are evaluated, while affectively the sensations and feelings perceived by individuals are assessed. In addition, the image is also affected by associated factors such as familiarity, reputation, trust, and satisfaction.

To measure the image, it is necessary to know that there are in particular two techniques, one structured and one unstructured. The first is responsible for establishing common attributes that are used to analyse the opinions of individuals on a large scale without going into detail, while the second is responsible for analysing more specifically the opinion of the individual in question using open questions that allow us to better know the opinions of each of the people studied. This dissertation has been intended to examine the tourist destination of Andalusia, for this an analysis has been carried out with the intention of measuring the repercussion and the idea that tourists have on the destination studied, using a structural technique such as the questionnaire. This survey aims to know the opinions and what factors tourists consider better and worse rated with respect to elements of the region. The following reflects a summary of the data obtained from the study and analysis carried out.

First, more than half of the total number of people surveyed are women. It can be found large differences in terms of the ages of the population studied, where approximately 70% are under 25 years of age. There is even a greater difference in the level of education, where 87% of the total number of people have university studies, and, continuing with the occupation, where approximately 70% are currently students. Lastly, focusing on the nationalities of the visitors, most of them are from the countries of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, with approximately 35%, 22% and 12% of the sample, respectively.

Looking at the general information of the trip, it is important to note that the provinces that received the highest number of visits by the respondents are Seville (42%) and Malaga (28%). This may be due to the fact that these regions are the best rated and reputed, and, therefore, the ones that receive the most tourists. In addition, the main trip motivation of visitors was undoubtedly to spend a holiday in the Andalusian region, with approximately 60% of the total respondents deciding to go for tourism and leisure.

Having analysed the expectations of the trip, it can be concluded that, despite many people having established very high expectations in whether the trip would meet their needs and whether the visit would be enriching and interesting, for the vast majority of

visitors these expectations were maintained or exceeded after the visit. This means that the visitors were satisfied with their visit and had a stay that was in line with their expectations or even better, which has a positive impact on the image of Andalusia.

As for the perceived quality of the destination, the aspects most highly rated by tourists were the climate and weather, the beauty of the surroundings and landscapes, and the great diversity of cultural and historical sites and activities to do. Likewise, the aspects that received a favourable assessment as well, but were not as successful as the others, were the conditions and accessibility of the public transport network, the adaptation of the tourist content to the language of the tourist, the connection of Andalusia with other regions/countries, and the availability of accommodation in terms of the needs of the visitor.

In terms of the perceived value of the trip, although it is true that for the vast majority of respondents surveyed the time spent was perceived slightly more favourably than the money spent, which may be due to the fact that some people felt that the price was set higher than it should have been at some points during the trip, it can be concluded that for almost the entire sample considered that they have appropriately invested their money and time in the trip. This affects, in this case positively, the satisfaction of the tourist with the trip.

The data obtained regarding the satisfaction of tourists with their trip to Andalusia were extremely favourable, which means that tourists believe that they were right in their decision to visit the Andalusian destination and that they would visit the region again, and, what is more important, practically all visitors would recommend the destination to their loved ones and acquaintances. This translates into a positive transmission of the image to other people, which will create an initial favourable image in their mind and serve as an incentive and motivation to want to visit the destination as well. Furthermore, it positively affects the Andalusian reputation and creates loyalty in tourists, which raises the rate of repeat visits.

Last but not least, although most tourists received a fairly good overall impression of Andalusia, the role that Andalusia plays as a tourist destination has been seen as merely good. This opinion on the part of tourists makes us to think that there are some aspects, such as those aforementioned, which despite not being perceived as negative, have an impact on the image of Andalusia. This shows once again the sensitivity of the image of a tourist destination and should serve as motivation to improve these aspects in order to provide a better experience to tourist by fully satisfying their needs, as well as to maximise the image and reputation of Andalusia as a tourist destination.

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## 9 APPENDIX

### QUESTIONNAIRE: The Image of Andalusia as a tourist destination

*Hello! My name is Paula Torres, I am a student of Tourism at the University of Seville. This questionnaire is for academic purposes, addressed to all those people who have visited the region of Andalusia, in the south of Spain. In order to collect information about the tourist image of this destination, I would appreciate your collaboration. All you have to do is answer the following questions in the questionnaire, which will only take a few minutes. All answers will be treated anonymously and confidentially. Thank you for your help!*

*Hallo! Mein Name ist Paula Torres, ich studiere Tourismus an der Universität von Sevilla. Dieser Fragebogen ist für akademische Zwecke gedacht und richtet sich an alle, die die Region Andalusien im Süden Spaniens besucht haben. Um Informationen über das touristische Image dieses Reiseziels zu sammeln, würde ich mich über Ihre Mitarbeit freuen. Sie müssen lediglich die folgenden Fragen im Fragebogen beantworten, was nur wenige Minuten in Anspruch nehmen wird. Alle Antworten werden anonym und vertraulich behandelt. Vielen Dank für Ihre Hilfe!*

#### Demographic data / Demographische Daten

1. Which gender do you most identify with? / Welchem Geschlecht fühlen Sie sich zugehörig?
  - Female / Weiblich
  - Male / Männlich
  - Others / Divers
  
2. What is your age? / Wie alt sind Sie? \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What is your level of education? / Was ist Ihre höchste abgeschlossene Ausbildung?
  - No education / Kein Pflichtschulabschluss
  - Primary / Volksschule
  - Secondary / Hauptschule
  - High school or vocational training / Allgemein oder berufsbildende höhere Schule (Matura)
  - University studies / Universität oder Fachhochschule
  - Other / andere \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What is your occupation? / Was sind Sie von Beruf?
  - Student / Student oder Studentin
  - Employee / Arbeiter oder Arbeiterin / Angestellte
  - Both / Beides
  - Neither / Nichts zutreffend
  
5. What is your marital status? / Wie ist Ihr Familienstand?
  - Single / Ledig
  - Married or in a relationship / Verheiratet oder in einer Beziehung
  - Divorced / Geschieden
  - Widowed / Verwitwet
  
6. What is your nationality? / Welche Nationalität haben Sie? \_\_\_\_\_

General information about the trip / Allgemeine Informationen über die Reise

7. Please indicate which province of Andalusia you have visited (if you have visited more than one, select the most recent). / Bitte geben Sie an, welche Provinz Andalusiens Sie besucht haben (wenn Sie mehr als eine besucht haben, wählen Sie die Letzte aus).
- Sevilla
  - Cadiz
  - Jaen
  - Almeria
  - Malaga
  - Huelva
  - Cordoba
  - Granada
8. What was the main reason for the trip? / Was war der Hauptgrund für diese Reise?
- Visiting friends or relatives / Besuch bei Freunden oder Verwandten
  - Tourism and leisure / Tourismus und Freizeit
  - Business / Geschäftlich
  - Education / Bildung
  - Others / Andere \_\_\_\_\_
9. Please indicate the duration of your stay. / Bitte geben Sie die Dauer Ihres Aufenthalts an. \_\_\_\_\_

Expectations / Erwartungen

Please answer the following statements by marking your answer from 1 to 5 about your expectations before the visit to Andalusia (5 indicates strongly agree and 1 indicates strongly disagree). / Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Aussagen über Ihre Erwartungen vor dem Besuch in Andalusien, indem Sie Ihre Antwort auf einer Skala von 1 bis 5 ankreuzen (5 bedeutet starke Zustimmung und 1 starke Ablehnung).

10. I expected the visit to be enriching and interesting. / Ich erwartete, dass der Besuch bereichernd und interessant ist.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I expected the visit to meet my needs. / Ich erwartete, dass der Besuch meinen Bedürfnissen entspricht.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The visit was actually enriching and interesting. / Der Besuch war tatsächlich bereichernd und interessant.	1	2	3	4	5
13. The visit actually met my needs. / Der Besuch entsprach tatsächlich meinen Bedürfnissen.	1	2	3	4	5

Quality perceived / Wahrgenommene Qualität

Please answer the following statements by marking your answer from 1 to 5 on the quality perceived after the visit (5 indicates strongly agree and 1 indicates strongly disagree). / Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Aussagen, indem Sie Ihre Antwort auf der Skala von 1 bis 5 für die wahrgenommene Qualität der Reise markieren (5 bedeutet starke Zustimmung und 1 starke Ablehnung).

14. Tourist content was appropriately adapted to my language. / Die touristischen Inhalte wurden entsprechend an meine Sprache angepasst.	1	2	3	4	5
15. The public transport network was easily accessible and in good condition. / Das öffentliche Verkehrsnetz war leicht zugänglich und in gutem Zustand.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Wide range and availability of accommodation, which suited my needs. / Große Auswahl und Verfügbarkeit von Unterkünften, die meinen Bedürfnissen entsprachen.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Gastronomy was of high quality and varied. / Die Gastronomie war von hoher Qualität und abwechslungsreich.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Good treatment and kindness on the part of the residents. / Gute Behandlung und Freundlichkeit von Seiten der Bewohner.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Wide variety of historical and cultural sites to visit and activities to do. / Es gab ein breites Angebot an historischen und kulturellen Sehenswürdigkeiten und Aktivitäten.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Easy access and good connection from other regions/countries (airports, roads, ports...). / Leichte Erreichbarkeit und gute Anbindung an andere Regionen/Länder (Flughäfen, Straßen, Häfen...).	1	2	3	4	5
21. The surroundings and the landscapes were of great beauty. / Die Umgebung und die Landschaften waren von großer Schönheit.	1	2	3	4	5
22. The weather was quite pleasant. / Das Wetter war recht angenehm.	1	2	3	4	5

Perceived value / Wahrgenommener Wert

Please rate from 1 to 5 how much you agree with the following statements about the perceived value of your visit to Andalusia (5 indicates strongly agree and 1 indicates strongly disagree). / Bitte bewerten Sie auf einer Skala von 1 bis 5, wie sehr Sie den folgenden Aussagen über den wahrgenommenen Wert Ihres Besuchs in Andalusien zustimmen (5 bedeutet starke Zustimmung und 1 starke Ablehnung).

23. Considering the money spent on the trip, I believe the visit was well worth it. / In Relation zu dem von mir ausgegebenen Geld halte ich den Besuch für lohnenswert.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Considering the time spent on the trip, I believe the visit was well worth it. / Gemessen an der aufgewendeten Zeit halte ich den Besuch für lohnenswert.	1	2	3	4	5

Satisfaction / Zufriedenheit

Please rate from 1 to 5 how satisfied you are with your visit to Andalusia (5 indicates strongly agree and 1 indicates strongly disagree). / Bitte bewerten Sie von 1 bis 5, wie zufrieden Sie mit Ihrem Besuch in Andalusien sind (5 bedeutet starke Zustimmung und 1 starke Ablehnung).

25. I would recommend Andalusia as a tourist destination to my loved ones. / Ich würde Andalusien als Reiseziel an meine Liebsten weiterempfehlen.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I would visit Andalusia again, whether it is the same province or another one. / Ich würde Andalusien wieder besuchen, egal ob es dieselbe oder eine andere Provinz ist.	1	2	3	4	5
27. My choice to visit Andalusia was the right one. / Meine Entscheidung, Andalusien zu besuchen, war die richtige Entscheidung.	1	2	3	4	5
28. With 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest, please rate Andalusia as a tourist destination according to the satisfaction of your expectations and needs. / Bitte bewerten Sie Andalusien als Reiseziel nach der Erfüllung Ihrer Erwartungen und Bedürfnisse, wobei 1 die niedrigste und 5 die höchste Punktzahl darstellt.	1	2	3	4	5

29. With 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest, please rate your overall impression of Andalusia as a tourist destination after your visit. / Bitte bewerten Sie Ihren Gesamteindruck von Andalusien als Reiseziel, wobei 1 die niedrigste und 5 die höchste Punktzahl ist.	1	2	3	4	5
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