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Web Presence and Multilingual Management in the Tourism Sector: An Analysis of Active Tourism and Ecotourism Corporate Websites from Southern Spain

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Abstract. The abstract should summarize the contents of the paper in short terms, i.e. 150-250 words.

Keywords: First Keyword, Second Keyword, Third Keyword.

1 Introduction

Nowadays, it is essential for companies operating in the tourism sector to reach international clients. To meet this aim, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play a key role, given that, thanks to globalization, they allow to spread messages and reach people in nearly any corner of the globe at a very reduced cost, which is especially relevant for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). As a result, the use of ICTs is an appropriate indicator of the ability of companies for competing in international environments, including those with strong tourism flows, which is the case of Spain [1, 2]. More specifically, according to the official reports, the region of Andalusia, located in the south, is among the third main tourist destinations in Spain for international visitors [3, 4]. Consequently, tourism is one of the main sources of income of the Andalusian economy [5]. In addition, the current health situation, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, has meant a change of paradigm in tourism. Consequently, the demand for safe and uncrowded destinations that allow for activities in

the nature of open-spaces has considerably increased [6]. In this sense, rural and active tourism, as well as ecotourism are emerging as growth sectors [7].

Nevertheless, companies – particularly SMEs – face frequent challenges when accessing new international markets [8–10], many of them caused by cultural and language barriers. To overcome these obstacles, the effective dissemination of corporate information is of paramount importance. Thus, the availability of communication channels, such a corporate website, becomes essential to reach international target audiences, as it not subject to geographical limitations and, in addition, it allows companies to generate a friendly environment, foster engagement and develop branding strategy [8, 11, 12]. Therefore, the availability of a translated website contributes to the internationalization process of SMEs and helps them to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers of users from diverse linguistic and socio-cultural contexts [13–15].

On another note, SMEs, which accounts for 99.8% of enterprises in the European Union –save for the financial sector – are key players in the global economy. According to the last official data, around 74% of European SMEs have a corporate website [16]. The figures are similar for Spain given that 99.9% of its business fabric is made of SMEs and 81.9% of them belong to the service sector, in which tourism is included. In addition, around 78% of the Spanish SMEs have a corporate website [17]. Focusing on Andalusia, this region is the third region with the largest number of SMEs, as it accounts for 15.6% of them. In Andalusia, 82% of the SMEs operate in the service sector [18]. Finally, according to the official data, this autonomous region follows the European and national trend given that around 70% of the Andalusian SMEs have a corporate website [17]

In the light of the previously described scenario, the focus of this paper is on Andalusia, which is the most populated region in Spain [19]. Moreover, Andalusia has a very rich and diverse linguistic and cultural context due to tourism and migration [3, 20]. The aim of this paper is to analyze the web presence and the multilingual dissemination of corporate information of Andalusian SMEs from two emerging tourism sectors –active tourism and ecotourism–. To meet this aim, the two sectors will be analyzed both together and separately, in order to stablish comparisons among them.

2 Methodology

2.1 Sample description

The sample of study was selected using the information from the Tourism Establishments and Services Search Engine (Buscador de Establecimientos y Servicios Turísticos) offered by the government of the autonomous region of Andalusia (Junta de Andalucía). The data were collected between the months of December 2021 and March 2022. The sample comprised 343 companies included in the sectors corresponding to ecotourism and active tourism, according to the Tourism Establishments and Services Search Engine. In the case of ecotourism, 165 companies were initially included in the sector. However, these companies were reviewed in order to discard those which were not real companies, such as nonprofit organizations or companies which had

ceased their business activity. These companies were discarded and, thus, the final sample for the ecotourism sector was formed by 160 companies. With regard to ecotourism, the search engine retrieved 1270 companies, nevertheless, in order to have samples similar in size in order to allow for comparisons, the sample for this sector was limited to the 183 companies having the “Andalucía Segura” (Safe Andalusia) quality label, given by the Andalusian government. Thus, the final sample was comprised of 343 companies, of which the active tourism sector accounted for 53,4% (183) of them and the ecotourism sector accounted for the remaining 46,6% (160 companies)

The companies were located throughout Andalusia and all the Andalusian provinces were represented, as it is shown in Fig. 1. Jaen was the province with most representation (17,8% of the companies), followed by Sevilla (14,3%), Cadiz (13,7%), Malaga (13,4%), Almería (12,2%), Granada (11,7%), Huelva (9,6%) and Cordoba (7,3%)

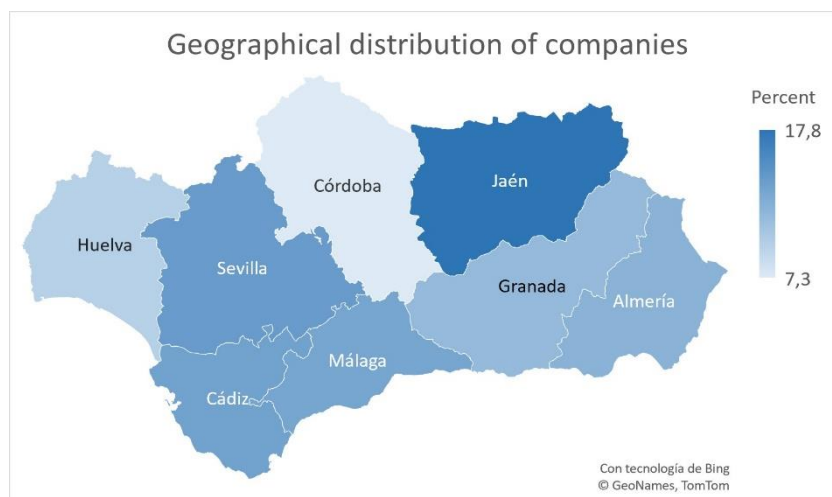


Fig. 1. Geographical distribution of the sample

The geographical distribution of the companies according to the sector they belonged is shown in Table 1 and Fig. 2. It can be observed that most companies from the active tourism sector were located in Malaga and Cadiz, whereas, in the case of ecotourism Jaen and Sevilla were the provinces with the largest number of companies.

Table 1. Geographical distribution of the sample according to the sector of the companies

Sector	Province	Frequency	Percent	Sector	Province	Frequency	Percent
	Almeria	19	10,4		Almeria	23	14,4
	Cadiz	34	18,6	Ecotourism	Cadiz	13	8,1
	Cordoba	11	6,0		Cordoba	14	8,8

Active tourism	Granada	24	13,1	Granada	16	10,0
	Huelva	21	11,5	Huelva	12	7,5
	Jaen	14	7,7	Jaen	47	29,4
	Malaga	37	20,2	Malaga	9	5,6
	Sevilla	23	12,6	Sevilla	26	16,3
	Total	183	100,0	Total	160	100,0

Geographical distribution of companies - Active tourism



Geographical distribution of companies - Ecotourism



Fig. 2. Geographical distribution of the sample according to the sector of activity of the companies

2.2 Analysis criteria and instruments

Once the sample was selected, the following data were collected: name of the company, location, website availability (yes or no), website URL (if available) and translation languages (if applicable). These data were collected according to the information provided by the Tourism Establishments and Services Search Engine and all the corporate website both using the data available in the search engine or via Internet

searches using the companies' names. In some cases, it was not possible to locate the corporate website, or it could not be effectively verified the belonging of a website to a given company, in those cases, it was determined that the company did not have – or it was impossible to locate – a corporate website. In addition, broken links and websites under construction were also omitted.

The data were analyzed using SPSS statistical package via the analysis of frequencies and descriptive statistics. In addition, CHAID decision trees were performed in order to determine any possible relation between the analyzed variables. Finally, MS Excel was used for chart creation.

3 Results

3.1 Corporate websites

Concerning the availability of a corporate website, Table 2 and Fig. 3 show the results of the frequency analysis. In total, 79.3% of the analyzed companies had a corporate website, whereas the remaining 20.7% did not have it. The analysis of each of the sectors show that those companies belonging to the active tourism industry were more likely to have a corporate website, as 86.9% of the analyzed companies had one. On the other hand, the figures of the ecotourism sector are somewhat lower – 70.6% of the analyzed companies had a corporate website.

Table 2. Availability of a corporate website

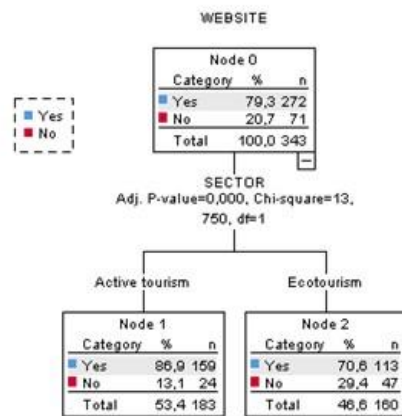
	Active tourism	Ecotourism	Total
Yes	159 (86.9%)	113 (70.6%)	272 (79.3%)
No	24 (13.1%)	47 (29.4%)	71 (20.7%)



Fig. 3. Availability of a corporate website

The CHAID algorithm was then used in order to identify if any of the variables – sector or location of the companies– influenced the fact of a company having or not a

website. The summary of the model (Fig. 4) shows that the sector of the companies – active tourism or ecotourism – had predictive validity ($p=0.000$, Chi-square= 13.750, $df=1$). On the contrary, the location did not have statistical significance. As a result, and in line with the results of the frequency analysis, the CHAID analysis also proves that companies belonging to the active tourism sector were more likely to have a cor-



porate website.

Fig. 4. Decision tree using the CHAID method for the variable website

3.2 Translated website

Concerning the availability of translated versions of the corporate websites, the results of the frequency analysis are shown in Table 3 and Fig. 5. It can be observed that less than a half (41.9%) of the companies that had a corporate website translated its content. As in the previous case, the active tourism sector comprises more companies translating their websites (44%) than the ecotourism sector (38.9%).

Table 3. Availability of a translated website

	Active tourism	Ecotourism	Total
Yes	70 (44%)	44 (38.9%)	114 (41.9%)
No	89 (56%)	69 (61.1%)	158 (58.1%)

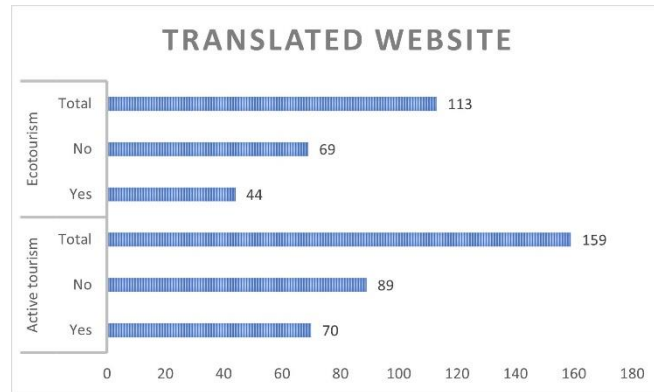


Fig. 5. Availability of a translated website

CHAID algorithm was the again used to determine if the sector or the location of the companies influenced the fact of offering a translated version of their corporate websites. In this case, the summary of the model (Fig. 6) shows that the location of the companies had predictive validity ($p=0.003$, Chi-square= 18.012, $df=1$), whereas the sector of the company did not have statistical significance. Consequently, those companies locate on the provinces of Cadiz, Granada, Jaen, Malaga and Sevilla were more likely to translate their websites than those located on Almeria, Cordoba or Huelva.

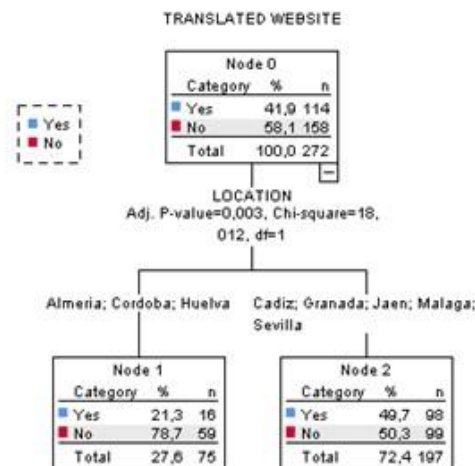


Fig. 6. Decision tree using the CHAID method for the variable translated website

Concerning the languages available in the analyzed websites – identified according to the ISO 639-4:2010 standard [21] –, as it is shown in Fig 7. and Fig 8. the prevalent language was Spanish in 97.7% of the cases. It is worth mentioning the fact that, despite being all the analyzed companies Spanish, 6 companies did not offer the content of their websites in Spanish but in English (4 websites), German (1 website) or in both, English and German (1 website). English is the second most common language, accounting for 43.7% of the analyzed websites, followed by French (12.5%) and German (8.1%). The rest of the languages – Portuguese, Italian, Dutch, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Japanese, Catalan, Polish and Norwegian – are minoritarian languages, present in less than 10 websites each.

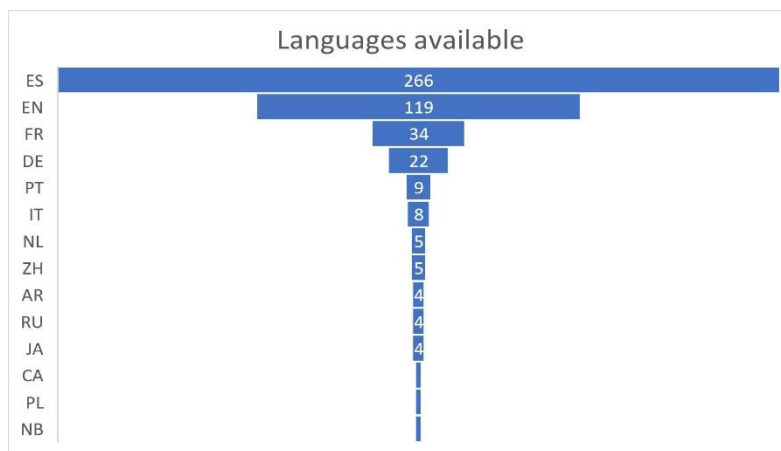


Fig. 7. Languages available in the analyzed websites

It is also remarkable the fact that the active tourism sector offers a wider diversity of languages than the ecotourism sector (Fig.8). For instance, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Polish and Norwegian are only offered in websites from the active tourism sector.

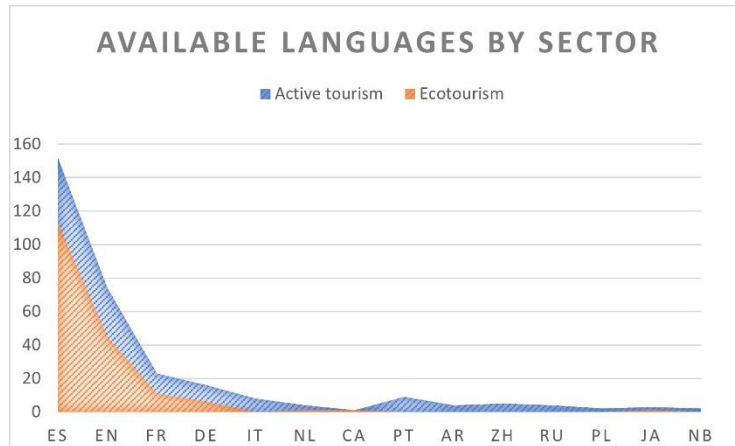


Fig. 8. Available languages in the analyzed websites by sector

After determining if the companies translated or not their websites, an analysis of the number of languages available in each website was carried out including the 114 companies which offered their websites translated to, at least, two languages. On average, companies offered their websites translated to 2.82 languages ($\sigma=1.654$). Companies from the active tourism sector offered their websites in 3.07 languages, on average ($\sigma=1.98$), whereas those dedicated to ecotourism had an average of 2.41 languages ($\sigma=0.787$). In Fig. 9 is shown a hierarchical representation of the number of languages available in the websites of the sample. As previously mentioned, the ecotourism sector presents lower rates as the maximum number of languages was 5, while for active tourism the maximum is 10 languages.

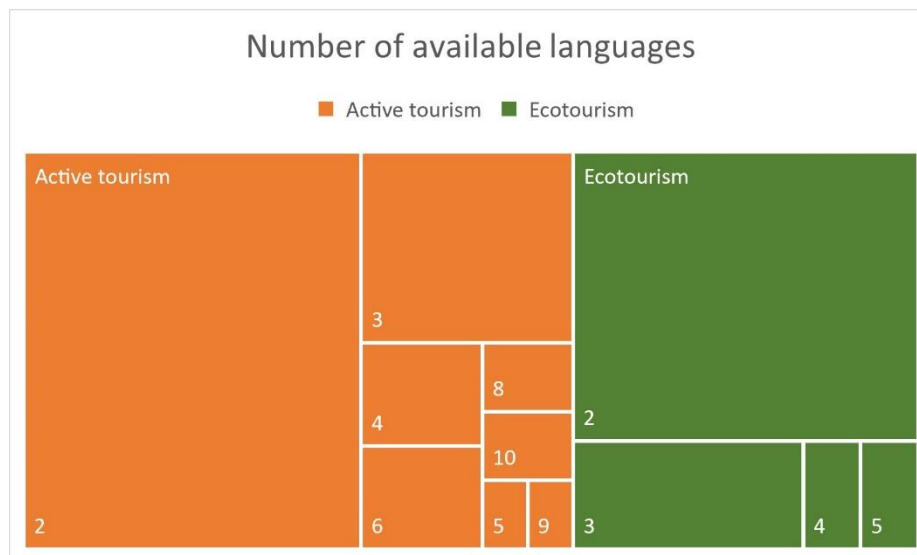


Fig. 9. Number of available languages in the translated websites of each sector

Finally, in Table 4 the exact figures for each of the sector, both individually and jointly can be observed. It is worth noting that the percentages are calculated for the total amount of companies of each sector – 70 for active tourism, 44 for ecotourism and 114 for both sectors jointly.

Table 4. Number of available languages in the translated websites

	Active tourism	Ecotourism	Total
2	43 (61.4%)	32 (72.7%)	75 (65.8%)
3	13 (18.6%)	8 (18.2%)	21 (18.4%)
4	4 (5.7%)	2 (4.5%)	6 (5.3%)
5	1 (1.4%)	2 (4.5%)	3 (2.6%)
6	4 (5.7%)	-	4 (3.5%)
7	-	-	-
8	2 (2.9%)	-	2 (1.8%)
9	1 (1.4%)	-	1 (0.9%)
10	2 (2.9%)	-	2 (1.8%)

4 Conclusions

This study aimed to study the web presence and the multilingual management of corporate website of Andalusian SMEs from the active tourism and ecotourism sector, as well as to identify key drivers influencing the fact of having or not a website and translating its content.

Firstly, the results obtained show a remarkable web presence among the analyzed companies, given that nearly 80% of them had a corporate website. These results offer figures slightly higher than those offered by official reports focused on Europe and Spain [16, 17]. If compared with other business areas, such as health or horticulture, the data from the tourism industry is remarkable higher, as those studies showed that only around half of the analyzed companies had a corporate website [22–24]. More specifically, the results of the frequency analysis along with the CHAID algorithm indicate that those companies belonging to the active tourism sector were more likely to have a corporate website than those from the ecotourism field. In addition, it was found that the location of the SMEs did not seem to influence the fact of having or not a website.

Secondly, when it comes to the multilingual management of corporate website, less than a half of the analyzed websites – 41.9% – were translated. These results are surprising, given the dependance of the tourism sector on international customers and the competitive advantages provided from the multilingual dissemination of corporate information [8, 11, 12]. As in the previous case, the figures of the active tourism sector – 44% – are slightly superior to those of the ecotourism sector – 38.9%. Moreo-

ver, CHAID algorithm showed that, concerning the translation of corporate website, the location of the companies did have an impact on it, thus, those companies based on Cadiz, Granada, Jaen, Malaga, or Seville were more likely to translate their websites than those located in the rest of the Andalusian provinces.

Thirdly, Spanish language was found in 97.7% of the websites, which was surprising given that all the analyzed companies were Spanish. Apart from Spanish, the most common languages were English, French, and German. As in the previous analysis, the active tourism sector offered a wider diversity of languages than the ecotourism sector. In addition, it was found that, on average, if companies translated their websites, they normally did it only to one language, besides Spanish. Nevertheless, this figure increased to three languages on average in the case of active tourism.

This study has shown that, despite the web presence of Andalusian tourism companies being strong, most of them are lacking the competitive advantages of offering a translated website when it comes to reach international audiences and potential customer and clients. In this sense, future research lines could include other touristic sectors, as well as, exploring the perception of both, companies and users regarding digitalization and internationalization process. Finally, it would be advisable to conduct more research on other aspects such as the cultural adaptation of multilingual corporate websites.

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