

Cross-Cultural Behaviour in Tourism: Concepts and Analysis

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Foreword

In recent years the interest in cultural tourism has boomed, emerging as a large and growing segment of the tourism industry. Yet, in spite of its global and local implications, the area has not been adequately explored by tourism researchers, who first studied cultural tourism by measuring visitors to cultural attractions such as museums, festivals, fairs, exhibitions, plays, concerts, dance performances, etc. They reported on attendance, expenditure, demographics, and the economic impact of these events.

In today's global environment, however, the impact of culture must be examined in all its forms and dimensions because it has a significant impact on tourism policy, planning, development, management, and marketing. A country presents itself to visitors through many cultural factors. These can be entertainment, food, drink, work, dress, architecture, handicrafts, media, history, language, religion, education, tradition, humor, art, music, dance, hospitality, and all the other characteristics of a nation's way of life.

The deeper effects of the many aspects of national cultures on tourism need to be researched because for many countries tourism has become an important means of promoting cultural relations, international co-operation, and economic sustainability. Tourism not only promotes knowledge and understanding, but also builds a favourable image among international travellers by providing an enjoyable and comfortable experience so essential for repeat visitation. In short, tourism requires diverse cultures to understand and appreciate each other.

Successful tourism requires more than having good transportation, hotels, and resorts. It thrives on a spirit of hospitality – that particular national flavour that shares traditional ways of life and projects a favourable image to tourists purchasing goods and services.

Today, as globalization continues, diverse cultures are being brought together more and more. The Asian tourist markets are currently major sources of international outbound tourism. These culturally diverse visitors are the fastest growing market.

To date, few scholars have studied the culturally diverse visitor and the role of national cultural characteristics. Cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences seem to be missing in the tourism literature. Consequently, Reisinger and Turner's book *Cross-cultural Behaviour in Tourism* makes a major contribution to understanding cultural differences across nations and the impact of host and guest behaviour. The book provides insight into the concepts, definitions, and measures of cultural components that encourage tourism. It untangles the complex role of cultural behaviour and illustrates statistical tools available to analyse cross-cultural behaviour.

The book needs to find its way into the libraries and hands of government tourism public policy officials, cultural tourism professionals, tourism managers, tourism marketers, tourism scholars, and other interested individuals. Reisinger and Turner's work on this complicated and multi-dimensional subject will be invaluable to those who follow.

Charles R. Goeldner
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Editor, *Journal of Travel Research*

Preface

There is a widespread and urgent need to improve the ability of those working in the tourism industry to understand and appreciate cultural differences and to translate that understanding into effective communication and interaction, and appropriate management and marketing strategies. There is also a need to enhance the ability of students and academics to measure and analyse cultural differences in the tourism context using a scientific research approach.

Some cultural differences that are reflected in food, music, artefacts or social behaviour are visible and easily recognizable during a relatively short visitation to a foreign country. Other cultural differences such as kinship systems, social organizations and many day-to-day practices are hidden deeply in culture and require total immersion in culture, prolonged social contacts with locals and often adaptation. However, not many prospective tourists seek total immersion in a different culture and have a desire to understand the culture of others, and not many host societies seek to adapt to the needs of tourists (Robinson, M. 1999, *Cultural conflicts in tourism: inevitability and inequality*. In Robinson, M. and Boniface, P. (eds), *Tourism and Cultural Conflicts*, London: CABI Publishing). In tourism many of the deep cultural differences are not relevant and are not emphasized. The differences that draw the attention of most tourists are the differences in surface culture. These are often packaged and presented to tourists during their short stay without the need to learn and understand a foreign culture (Robinson, 1999).

Cultural experiences can be either satisfying or rewarding, or they can be unpleasant and generate stress and even conflict. The higher the demand for international tourism, the more opportunities there are for cross-cultural contact and the greater the potential for cultural conflict. A lessening of this potential conflict is the key to tourist satisfaction and repeat visitation. Consequently, there is a need to learn and understand the impact of cultural differences on tourist behaviour.

This book represents a timely contribution to the understanding of tourist behaviour in a cross-cultural context. An important feature of the book is that it represents a theoretical synthesis of the literature findings in the area of the impact of cultural differences on tourist behaviour rather than a critical assessment of specific findings. Evidence shows that cross-cultural differences do exist and can be observed, recorded, measured and statistically tested. The availability of sophisticated analytical techniques to measure cultural differences allows for comparability of these differences and aids in substantive theory testing. Unfortunately, appropriate methodological approaches have not been widely used or understood in tourism, marketing and management studies. The aim of this book is to overcome some of the methodological problems associated with analysing cultural differences, provide an illustration of how such research can be satisfactorily carried out and show how substantive theory can be tested.

This book focuses on quantitative research methods, which involve the collection and analysis of numerical rather than qualitative data. The aim is to present how scientific research methods can be used to identify cultural differences and similarities, confirm or reject prior hypotheses about their existence, logically interpret empirical evidence, and then make inferences and conclusions about the phenomena that may lead to the establishment of general laws for solving decision-making problems. In this way findings can be generalizable and replicable. The use of scientific methods in applied tourism research assures objectivity in gathering facts and also allows for testing creative qualitative ideas.

This book is also written under the assumption that many readers don't use quantitative methods due to their statistical complexity and user non-friendly manuals. It is anticipated that readers will appreciate receiving detailed preparation in the more complex empirical methods of scientific research, in a context of cultural differences analysis. To achieve this purpose, exposure to the material is presented in a well-ordered, logically structured and accessible way, without compromising complete coverage of the major research areas and accuracy of the statistical methods.

This book has been prepared primarily as a research reference book for tourism educators, students and practitioners looking for information relevant to the particular problem they currently face. In addition to this book, an account of Hypothesis Testing, together with a detailed Glossary and a comprehensive reference list of relevant materials which

the reader might like to refer to can be found on the internet at: www.bh.com/companions/0750656689.

Although there is extensive work on tourism conducted in the German, French and Spanish languages, the literature presented in this book is mostly based on work published in English-speaking countries. We hope that readers will find it interesting and useful.