

# Tourism and Intercultural Communication: A Theoretical Study

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<p><b>Article History:</b> Received July 25<sup>th</sup> 2023</p> <p>Revised August 23<sup>th</sup> 2023</p> <p>Accepted August 28<sup>th</sup> 2023</p>	<p><b>ABSTRACT</b></p> <p>All aspects of social life are involved in communication, which is an important component in the formation and process of culture. In modern society characterized by globalization, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are highly discussed topics. One of the main topics in the study of intercultural communication is cultural differences. Having an understanding of another person's culture is essential to recognize the nature of these differences and to relate to others through an attitude of understanding and tolerance, which is the basis for true intercultural discussions, especially in the field of tourism. The aim of this research is to examine tourism and cultural communication from a literature perspective. The method used in this research is a systematic literature review. A literature review involves searching for research data or information by reviewing scientific journals, reference books, and library sources. In the process of collecting data for a literature review, there are three important steps: editing, organizing, and analysis. The results of this research show that, communication is an act of human relations, but culture drives it. In tourism, the quality of communication is related to culture and the means used. Intercultural communication experiences not only help tourists to learn and appreciate other cultures, but also help them understand their own culture better.</p> <p>Keywords: tourism; intercultural communication; culture</p> <p><b>ABSTRAK</b></p> <p>Semua aspek kehidupan sosial terlibat dalam komunikasi, yang merupakan komponen penting dalam pembentukan dan proses budaya. Dalam masyarakat modern yang ditandai dengan globalisasi, keragaman budaya dan dialog antarbudaya adalah topik yang sangat dibahas. Salah satu topik utama dalam studi tentang komunikasi antar budaya adalah perbedaan budaya. Memiliki pemahaman tentang budaya orang lain sangat penting untuk mengenali sifat perbedaan ini dan untuk berhubungan dengan orang lain melalui sikap pemahaman dan toleransi, yang merupakan dasar untuk diskusi antarbudaya yang sebenarnya, terutama dalam bidang pariwisata. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji pariwisata dan komunikasi budaya dalam prespektif literatur. Metode yang digunakan pada penelitian ini yaitu sistematic literatur review. Tinjauan literatur melibatkan pencarian data atau informasi penelitian dengan cara mereview jurnal ilmiah, buku referensi, dan sumber perpustakaan. Dalam proses pengumpulan data untuk tinjauan literatur, ada tiga langkah penting: pengeditan, pengorganisasian, dan analisis. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa, komunikasi adalah tindakan hubungan manusia, tetapi budaya yang mendorongnya. Dalam pariwisata, kualitas komunikasi terkait dengan budaya dan sarana yang digunakan. Pengalaman komunikasi antarbudaya tidak hanya membantu wisatawan untuk belajar dan menghargai budaya lain, tetapi juga membantu mereka memahami budaya mereka sendiri dengan lebih baik.</p> <p>Kata Kunci: pariwisata; komunikasi antar budaya; budaya</p>
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## INTRODUCTION

Ionescu (Ionescu, 2000) states that tourism is currently on the rise because of the growing demand for environmental rejuvenation, recuperation of health, and a growing appreciation for natural beauty. People are constantly seeking to expand their understanding of life through both spatial and temporal experiences. Travel serves as a significant method for reaching various destinations (Ferenț, 2007). Communication occurs in various forms, such as interactions between tourism service providers and tourists, among tourists from diverse backgrounds, and between employees of travel agencies from different nations, which can significantly impact the travel experience. Effective communication involves not only the exchange of information but also a genuine understanding of each other's needs and desires. When one party holds power and refuses to engage in dialogue with others, communication can become challenging, with adverse effects on the tourism experiences in certain locations. In certain scenarios, negative aspects of communication can emerge, including the rejection of dialogue or the use of aggression to assert one's position. Such incidents often occur in the tourism industry when tourists interact with locals who perceive them as intruders in their own culture.

The interplay of culture, context, knowledge, and emotions significantly influences an individual's communication behavior. How our culture communicates is molded by the distinct attitudes, values, customs, and expectations of an ethnic group. These attitudes evolve and spread throughout the communication process. Intercultural communication occurs when individuals from different cultures engage in conversation. During intercultural communication, travelers from diverse cultural backgrounds "negotiate their cultural identity, rules of interpretation, perceptions, and potential outcomes (Șerbănescu, 2007).

Within the tourism industry, obstacles to intercultural communication may manifest between tourists and personnel in various tourism-related establishments, including hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies. These obstacles often stem from misunderstandings arising from differences in behavior, perception, or interpretation among tourists from different cultural backgrounds. Intercultural communication encompasses a range of challenges, such as misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and gaps in communication. Engaging in intercultural communication enriches people's understanding of other cultures.

Effective communication extends beyond the mere exchange of information; it involves comprehending each other's desires and needs. When one party assumes dominance and refuses intercultural dialogue, communication can become problematic, exerting a negative influence on the types of tourism experienced in particular destinations. On occasion, adverse facets of communication may surface, from the rejection of the concept of dialogue to more extreme forms of conflict. In the realm of tourism, these issues are particularly likely to arise when tourists interact with local communities.

In intercultural communication situations within the tourism sector, communication barriers can emerge, as well as misunderstandings resulting from differences in behavior, perception, or interpretation among tourists hailing from diverse cultural backgrounds. Negative stereotypes may also be activated. Communication hurdles may exist between tourists and the staff of various tourism enterprises, such as hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies. Misunderstandings,

misinterpretations, and communication gaps are inherent to the study of intercultural communication. Engaging in intercultural communication helps individuals gain insight into and appreciate other cultures while also enhancing their understanding of their own

## METHODS

A literature review is a method used to address issues by examining previously written sources. In simpler terms, literature review is a widely recognized term for this process. When conducting a study, researchers must possess a broad understanding of the subject under investigation. Literature review, also known as literature study, is a data gathering technique involving an extensive review of books, literary works, notes, and reports relevant to the problem being addressed.

According to Danial and Warsiah (Danial, E dan Warsiah, 2009) a literature review is a research approach in which researchers collect various books, magazines, and publications related to the issues and research objectives. Additionally, as per J. Supranto, as cited by Ruslan in his book on Public Relations and Communication Research methods, literature reviews involve seeking research data or information by reviewing scientific journals, reference books, and library resources (Ruslan, 2008). In the process of collecting data for literature reviews, three crucial steps are essential: editing, organizing, and analysis.

Editing involves a careful re-evaluation of the obtained data, focusing on completeness, clarity, and coherence of meaning. Organizing entails structuring the acquired data within a relevant framework. Lastly, the finding stage involves conducting in-depth analysis of the organized data using predetermined rules, theories, and methodologies to derive conclusions that answer the research questions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Culture

As per Hofstede's perspective, culture encompasses a realm of mental frameworks that influence thought processes and human behavior. Collectively, these mental frameworks within a group of people in a country are referred to as national cultures. (Hofstede, 1984). Geert Hofstede characterizes anthropological culture as the "software of the mind," serving as the foundation for intercultural communication. Imagine culture as the software; if you were to lose your memory and all the knowledge you've acquired, this software embodies your cultural identity.

Culture plays a pivotal role in shaping communication. The study of intercultural communication delves beyond mere language usage. It explores how culture defines our identity, behaviors, thoughts, and language (Dodd, 1991). Acknowledging and respecting these cultural imprints accounts for the variations in how individuals communicate, think, and act. Historical experts often erroneously attribute these cultural differences to heredity, underestimating the influence of intergenerational learning and knowledge transmission. Ethnic conflicts are frequently grounded in unsubstantiated claims of "cultural superiority or inferiority" (Hofstede et al., 2012).

Different cultures manifest in distinct ways, and the following four categories capture the essence of this concept: symbols, heroes, rituals, values, and practices. (1) *Symbols*: These are words, gestures, images, or objects with specific meanings understood only by those within the culture. This includes language, clothing, hairstyles, flags, and symbols denoting social status; (2) *Heroes*: These are individuals, real or fictional, past or present, embodying qualities esteemed in a culture, thus serving as behavioral models. (3) *Rituals*: These are collective activities, valued within a culture, despite not necessarily yielding practical benefits. Their fulfillment holds intrinsic significance. (4) *Values*: The core of culture comprises values, representing general preferences for certain situations over others, encompassing both positive and negative dimensions. (5) *Practices*: This category encompasses symbols, heroes, and rituals. Their cultural significance may remain concealed to outsiders and is contingent on interpretations within the cultural group.

Culture enables tourists to connect with the history, traditions, and customs of other cultures, fostering personal development and facilitating an understanding of the lifestyle of residents in a particular tourist destination.

### **Stereotypes: part of culture**

Stereotypes are rigid and simplified notions about a specific group or social category that significantly impact our anticipations and actions (McFarlane, 2014). Stereotypes are cognitive generalizations about a particular social group that unite group members through certain attributes. These cognitive associations can arise at any time and need not be "based on a particular culture" They represent cognitive generalizations concerning a particular social group that unify group members through distinct attributes. These cognitive associations can form at any time and are not necessarily tied to a particular culture (Miller et al., 2012). " In the context of tourism, stereotypes are employed to characterize both tourists and locals. They can shape the way tourists and hosts perceive each other. Positive stereotypes can attract tourists, while negative stereotypes can deter them (Reisinger, 2009)

From a social standpoint, the formation of stereotypes depends on various factors, including (1) the status of the observed group, with high-status groups often being perceived as efficient and competent; (2) the nature of intergroup relations, as groups in conflict with one another are frequently seen as unfriendly and immoral (Cernat, 2005) Social roles play a significant role in shaping stereotypes, with communal stereotypes often associated with female roles and agent stereotypes with masculine roles. Conversational fluency and communication patterns also contribute to the development of stereotypes.

Stereotypes are universal, meaning they exist across all communities, societies, and cultures. This universality highlights their social significance and reflects something about human traits and character (Gibson et al., 2012). Stereotypes have always been part of human society and may stem from our attempts to describe and understand the behaviors, values, language, appearance, cultural practices and ideals of others who are different from ours. Stereotypes arise from cultural patterns and our socialization and interactions with family, friends, peers, and they exist within the social institutions in which we live, work, and play Stereotypes have always been a part of human society and may emerge from our efforts to describe and understand the behaviors, values, language, appearance, cultural practices, and ideals

of those who are different from us. Stereotypes are rooted in cultural patterns and are shaped by our socialization and interactions with family, friends, and peers. They persist within the social institutions in which we live, work, and engage in recreational activities (Thompson & Hickey, 2002). Our ability to acknowledge and construct social institutions and values based on differences establishes a social order where stereotypes and ingrained stereotypes persist. They are perpetuated not only to maintain the status quo but also to preserve values, ideals, norms, human behaviors, and other identities that we perceive as distinct and superior to others. However, stereotypes and ingrained stereotypes serve a broader purpose than just identity preservation or reactionary functions. They also serve to mask our inadequacies and limitations in understanding others. In this way, they perform a progressive function by providing us with preconceived notions upon which we can attempt to uncover the truth or factual knowledge about others, including people from different cultures. This process aims to dispel these stereotypes or at least reduce them until self-knowledge becomes more attainable.

### **Culture Shock**

Intercultural encounters often involve similar psychological and social processes. A common scenario in the tourism industry is when foreigners encounter a new cultural environment. Typically, these foreigners undergo some form of culture shock (Hofstede et al., 2012). Uninformed newcomers may struggle to grasp new environmental symbols and rituals, such as appropriate words to use, how to greet others, and when to offer gifts. Understanding the deeper layers of cultural values is often even more challenging. In essence, a visitor in a foreign country finds themselves back at a novice stage where they must relearn even the most basic things. This situation commonly gives rise to feelings of confusion, helplessness, and, at times, hostility toward the unfamiliar environment.

People who spend an extended period in a foreign cultural environment tend to experience mood swings that follow a more or less consistent acculturation curve. On this curve, positive or negative feelings are plotted on the vertical axis, and time on the horizontal axis: (1) Phase One: This is a typically brief period of euphoria, often referred to as the "honeymoon phase," characterized by the excitement of traveling and exploring new lands ; (2) Phase Two: This is the culture shock phase when tourists first confront their new surroundings; (3) Phase Three: Known as acculturation, this phase occurs as visitors gradually adapt to their new conditions, embrace some local values, gain confidence, and start integrating into the new social environment; (4) Phase Four: This marks the point when a stable mood is finally achieved. It can remain negative compared to the mood at home (4c), as the visitor may still feel like an outsider and face discrimination. Alternatively, it can return to being as good as before (4B), suggesting successful adaptation to a bicultural environment, or even better (4A), indicating that the visitor has become a part of the local community (Hofstede et al., 2012).

In the tourism industry, this culture shock occurs especially when tourists choose as a vacation destination a completely different country from. For example, a tourist from a western country will be very surprised if he travels to an Arab country where the majority of the population is Muslim. For western tourists, Muslim clothing that covers the entire body will be seen as a restriction on women's freedom, giving rise to cultural characteristics. Workers who spend a lot of time longer in a

new environment, take longer to adapt. In time, what seems unacceptable, can fall into the normal category. There is also the opposite situation, when the tourist cannot accept the lifestyle of the resident in a particular tourist destination, the tourist can shorten his stay.

### **Cultural Learning**

The term "cultural learning" has gained increasing usage over the past two decades to encompass a broadly defined set of psychological processes. These processes include reading, social learning, imitation, teaching, social motivation, and theory of mind, and they are collectively referred to as cultural learning or cultural cognition (Tomasello, 1993). The overarching idea is that these processes facilitate cumulative cultural evolution, allowing for the non-genetic transmission of information in a way that helps individuals and groups better adapt to the demands of their social and physical environments (Lewis & Laland, 2012)

Humans are not solely biological beings but, primarily, sociocultural beings, as evidenced by their ability to acquire skills, express interests, and promote social values. Enculturation and acculturation are two well-known processes of cultural learning. Enculturation, experienced by reasoning and intelligent beings, involves learning to understand and adapt to the mindset, knowledge, and culture of the community or society in which individuals live (Koentjaraningrat, 1974). Essentially, enculturation encompasses everything acquired throughout a lifetime, as it guides individuals, born with significant behavioral potential, to develop behavior in accordance with the standards of the groups to which they belong. It is the process by which "cultural groups incorporate valuable elements into their descendants for optimal integration into society."

In contrast to enculturation, acculturation refers to "the process by which a dominant culture imposes its defining patterns on representatives of a less dominant culture through the agent of socialization." Acculturation, born from the interaction of two cultures, leads to profound and lasting changes in individual and collective identities (Rudmin, 2008). The assimilation of dominant cultural patterns can occur either voluntarily or involuntarily and can take different forms, including integration and assimilation. The nature of acculturation depends on how interactions between communities are organized, whether through the manipulation of cultural and social realities. It can be spontaneous, imposed, or forced. (Abou, 2009). (1) Spontaneous acculturation takes place when there is ongoing contact between populations, often seen in tourist destinations where foreign tourists frequently visit. The change primarily results from these encounters. (2) Imposed acculturation occurs when social and political forces dictate it, but the method of acculturation is tacitly negotiated by the involved groups. This is often observed when a particular tourist destination is promoted by the government to tourists from a specific country, leading to a gradual loss of local traditions. (3) Forced acculturation is associated with colonization, where the pace and method of cultural assimilation are enforced. This can occur in heavily promoted tourist destinations where locals disapprove of the presence of foreign tourists, resulting in a hostile local response. The impact of acculturation varies based on the degree of flexibility and the cultural distance between the interacting groups, as well as the historical context of their relations and the homogeneity of their cultures. These factors play a crucial role in how acculturation phenomena can significantly transform tourism in particular destinations.

## Intercultural Communication

According to Charley H. Dood (Dodd, 1991), intercultural communication involves individuals, interpersonal relationships, or groups representing different cultural backgrounds, and these differences influence the communication behaviors of the participants. Culture and communication share a complex, interdependent relationship, with each being integral to the understanding of the other. The two phenomena are closely intertwined, and they cannot be neatly separated or placed into isolated realms of thought (Caune & Bălăşescu, 2000)

Edward T. Hall, on the other hand, posits that communication is encompassed within the definition of culture, and culture is integral to the understanding of communication. They partially contain one another due to their common element, which is symbolic language, considered the shared root of both communication and culture (Schiller, 2013)

Communication is described as the process by which an idea is transferred from a source to one or more recipients with the intention of influencing their behavior (Mulyana & Phd, 2022). A group of communication scholars specializing in the study of human communication defines communication as a transactional, symbolic process that involves people in regulating their environment through (1) building relationships, (2) exchanging information, (3) reinforcing the attitudes and behavior of others, and (4) attempting to change those attitudes and behaviors (Cangara, 2011)

Communication serves as the means through which individuals or groups seek to influence one another, bringing the influenced party closer to the influencing one, though not necessarily to the same degree. This cooperative process involves both the influential agents and the influenced parties taking active roles in giving and receiving. Disruption of this cooperation can lead to a breakdown in the communication process, rendering the transfer of information ineffective (Oprea, 2008).

The concept of intercultural communication was first introduced by American ethnologist and semiotician Edward T. Hall in his work "The Silent Language" in 1959. He highlighted that communication goes beyond language, encompassing non-verbal expressions like tone, facial expressions, and gestures. In every culture, specific gestures, facial expressions, and tones accompany negations, affirmations, permissions, prohibitions, astonishments, and more. Misinterpretation of these non-verbal cues can lead to communication failures and misunderstandings, presenting a primary challenge in intercultural communication. Intercultural communication refers to interpersonal, direct communication between individuals who are aware of their cultural differences. It emerged from the intersection of several related notions, including cross-cultural communication, international communication, and intercultural relations (Jandt, 2017)

In the context of tourism, intercultural communication involves interactions between tourists from different countries, interactions between tourists and local residents at their travel destination, as well as interactions between tourists and the personnel they encounter. This includes employees from different countries or cultures working in various tourism-related establishments such as hotels, restaurants, recreational facilities, and travel agencies. To prevent misunderstandings, staff working in the tourism industry must ensure that information is conveyed accurately

to tourists, and travelers should clearly express their preferences to avoid confusion or doubt regarding the services they request.

### **Tourists: Key recipients in tourism communication**

Participants in tourist communication can be categorized into the following groups: *Institutional actors*, which include government organizations involved in the tourism industry. *Associative actors*, who act as intermediaries connecting tourism associations with public authorities. *Individual actors*, which encompass both companies and private individuals.

These diverse actors engage in information exchange at various levels and times, with the aim of fostering mutual understanding, establishing business relationships, competitive interactions, and cooperation in the development of plans, strategies, and projects. All these efforts are united by a common objective: "the expansion of the tourism phenomenon, which is a significant driver of economic, social, and cultural development" (Rotar et al., 2006).

For the sustainable growth of the tourism industry, communication, at all its levels and in various forms, has become a fundamental element. In the realm of tourism, communication extends beyond the conventional relationship between professionals and tourists. In addition to tourism service providers and intermediaries such as hotels, transportation companies, and travel agencies, there are multiple stakeholders to consider. This entire network of communicators within the tourism industry centers around a primary recipient-tourists. The various actors in this complex mechanism play roles closely related to the tourists' experiences.

When it comes to tourism, the criteria that distinguish potential tourists encompass socio-demographic factors (age, gender, socio-professional category, household income, family composition, and family cycle), geographical factors (place of origin, proximity to the destination, and place of residence), and psychographic factors (personality, lifestyle, motivation). These criteria help profile tourists based on their psychological traits, cultural and ideological values, lifestyle, interests, opinions, and motivations. By considering these segmentation criteria, companies operating in the tourism sector can create tailored and individualized offers, adjust their approach to handling tourists, and achieve high-quality intercultural communication.

## **CONCLUSION**

Effective communication goes beyond the mere transmission of information; it involves a shared understanding of each other's needs and desires. Within the tourism industry, specialized staff bear the responsibility of consistently ensuring that the information provided is accurate and is perceived correctly amidst the various stimuli received from the external environment. Travelers, on the other hand, must express their preferences clearly to prevent any confusion or ambiguity when receiving the requested services. Engaging in intercultural communication provides travelers with the opportunity to comprehend and value other cultures while simultaneously gaining a deeper understanding of their own. During intercultural communication, individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds express their cultural



identity and perceptions, which surface through their interactions. In such situations, communication barriers can emerge, stemming from disparities in behavior or perception, as well as the activation of negative stereotypes. Interacting with other cultures alters a traveler's perceptions and contributes to their cultural and spiritual growth.

Cultures exhibit both similarities and differences, with mutual influences occurring as well. Similarities are rooted in the objective reality of the world, the existence of universal truths, the inherent commonalities among people, the activities universally undertaken, and the responses to environmental stimuli. Cultural differences are not arbitrary but rather result from various factors, including the geographical, social, cultural, economic, political, religious, and historical contexts from which travelers originate. Moreover, these distinctions emerge from the subjective interpretations made by travelers regarding external elements and relationships, shaping their thoughts and actions, manifested as attitudes, values, and a set of guiding principles that steer their life choices.

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