

A Study on Cultural Diversity and its Impact on International Guests

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Abstract

In today's globalized tourism industry, cultural diversity plays a vital role in shaping international guests' experiences and expectations. This study investigates how cultural interactions, sensitivity, and inclusion influence satisfaction in hospitality settings. A descriptive research design was used to explore the behaviors and preferences of 55 international guests through a structured Google Form with 19 multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire was distributed online across various Indian states to reach a diverse sample. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends in cultural interaction, satisfaction, and service expectations. The results show that most international guests frequently interact with locals but still face cultural and communication challenges, highlighting the need for better intercultural training. Cultural sensitivity was seen as important, with many valuing diversity and recommending the country for its hospitality. The paper concluded that most international guests frequently interact with locals and value cultural sensitivity, many still face communication challenges. Guests strongly support cultural diversity for enhancing tourism and global relations. Despite overall positive views, inconsistent experiences suggest a need for improvement. It is recommended to enhance intercultural training for service providers and promote cultural exchange initiatives.

Keywords: Culture sensitivity, International

guest, Tourism, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)

1.0 Introduction

In today's interconnected world, the hospitality and tourism industries are increasingly shaped by cultural diversity. Globalization has brought people from varied cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds into closer contact, especially within international travel and tourism. For businesses in the hospitality sector, particularly those catering to international guests, understanding and respecting cultural diversity is no longer optional it is essential. Cultural diversity influences guest expectations, communication styles, service preferences, and overall satisfaction (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). This study explores the role of cultural diversity in shaping the experiences of international guests and the implications for hospitality service providers.

This study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10 and 8: Reduced Inequalities, particularly Target 10.2, which calls for empowering and promoting the social, economic, and political inclusion of all people, regardless of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status (United Nations, 2015). Promoting inclusivity in hospitality settings supports this goal by fostering a welcoming environment for guests from diverse backgrounds, enhancing global understanding and social cohesion.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to both academic knowledge and practical applications in the field of hospitality management. In an era where guest experience is a key differentiator in service industries, understanding how cultural diversity affects international guests can help improve service quality, enhance customer satisfaction, and promote cultural sensitivity. According to Hofstede (2011), ignoring cultural dimensions can lead to misunderstandings, guest dissatisfaction, and even conflict. Therefore, this research is valuable for professionals seeking to offer culturally responsive and inclusive services. The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of cultural diversity on the experiences and satisfaction levels of international guests within hospitality settings.

Objectives

1. To examine the frequency and nature of interactions between international guests and locals from different cultural backgrounds, including challenges such as cultural misunderstandings or communication issues.
2. To assess the perceived importance of cultural sensitivity among international guests and its influence on their willingness to recommend the host country as a culturally welcoming tourism destination

2.0 Literature Review

Chen & Kumar (2025) Understanding Tourist Behavior in Post-Pandemic Hospitality Settings. The study revealed that international guests increasingly value hygiene, digital booking systems, and flexible cancellation policies. Most preferred contactless services and personalized travel experiences.

Almeida et al. (2024) Digital Tools in Surveying International Travelers: A Case

of Online Questionnaire Use. The use of Google Forms was found to be effective for reaching diverse international respondents. The study also noted that well-structured multiple-choice questions led to higher completion rates.

Singh (2023) Guest Satisfaction and Service Preferences among Foreign Tourists in Northern India. International guests prioritized safety, multilingual support, and culturally inclusive services. The study emphasized regional variations in guest expectations across Indian states.

Rahman & Zhang (2022) A Descriptive Analysis of International Tourist Preferences in South Asia. The researchers found that most international tourists preferred eco-friendly accommodation and local cultural experiences. Descriptive research design helped in identifying clear behavioral patterns.

Patel (2020) Profiling International Guests: A Descriptive Approach in Indian Hospitality. The study showed that guests from Western countries focused more on digital access and independent travel, while Asian guests valued guided experiences and hospitality services.

3.0 Methodology

A descriptive research design was employed to examine the behavior and characteristics of international guests. (Rahman & Zhang, 2022) This design was appropriate as it allows researchers to systematically describe a situation, problem, or phenomenon without manipulating variables (Kothari, 2004). Data were collected using a structured Google Form questionnaire, which was distributed electronically to participants. (Almeida et al., 2024) The questionnaire consisted of 19 multiple-choice questions, formulated by the researcher based on the study's objectives, aiming to capture demographic information, travel experiences, preferences, and satisfaction levels. A total of 55 international

guests responded to the questionnaire. The study focused exclusively on participants from various countries, ensuring a diverse international sample. Although the research was based in Uttar Pradesh, India, the Google Form was shared across different states in India where international guests were accessible, thus enhancing the geographical coverage of the study.

3.1 Procedures of Conducting the Study:

- i. Designing the Instrument: The researcher developed the questionnaire with 19 close-ended (multiple-choice) items aligned with the research objectives.
- ii. Sampling: Only international guests were selected, using non-probability convenience sampling, due to the accessibility of respondents online.
- iii. Distribution of Questionnaire: The Google Form link was shared through emails, social media, and direct messaging platforms targeting international guests residing or traveling in India.
- iv. Data Collection: Responses were automatically recorded via Google Forms over a set period.
- v. Data Analysis: After collection, the responses were exported and summarized using descriptive statistics to identify trends and patterns in guest behavior and preferences.

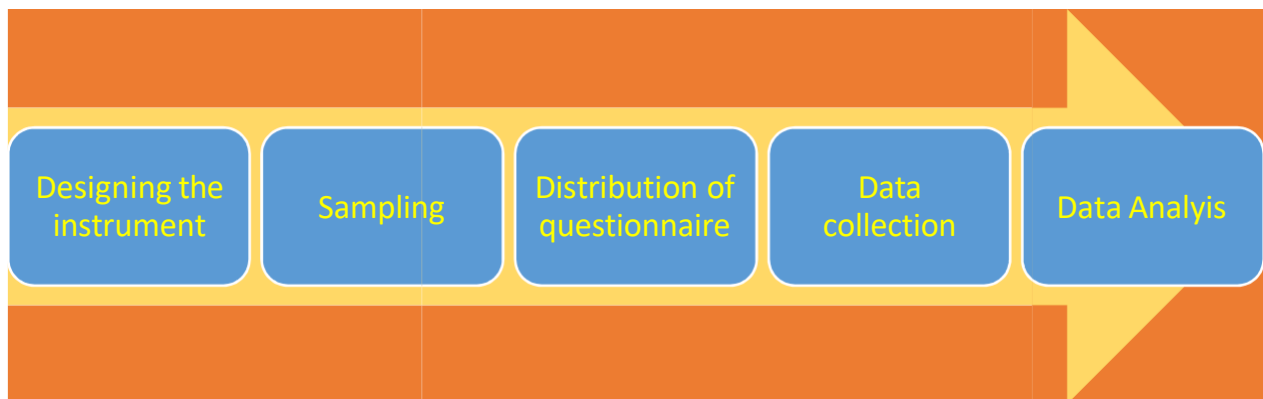


Figure 1. Research process
Source: Designed by researcher (2025)

4.0 Results and Findings

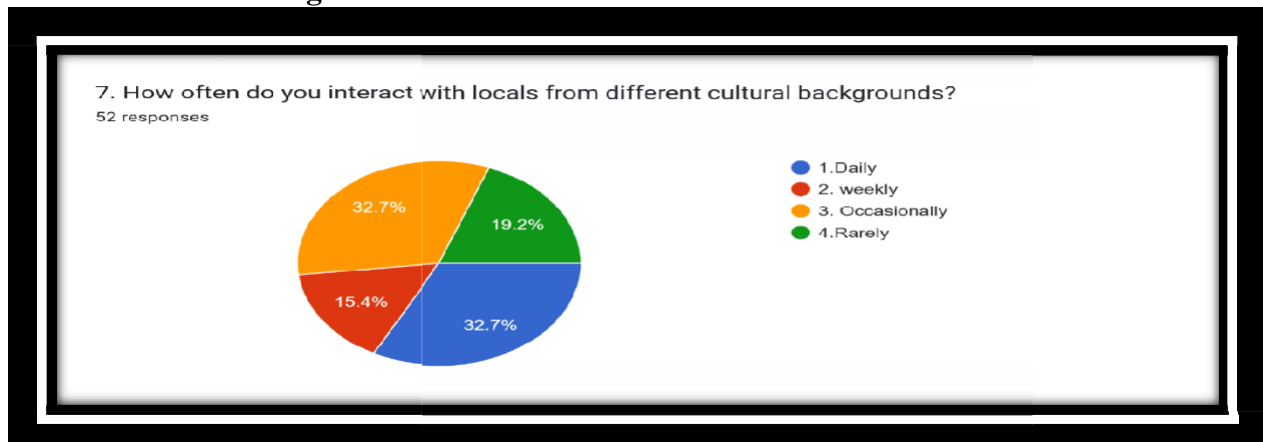


Figure 2. The rate of interaction

Source: Research Field (2025)

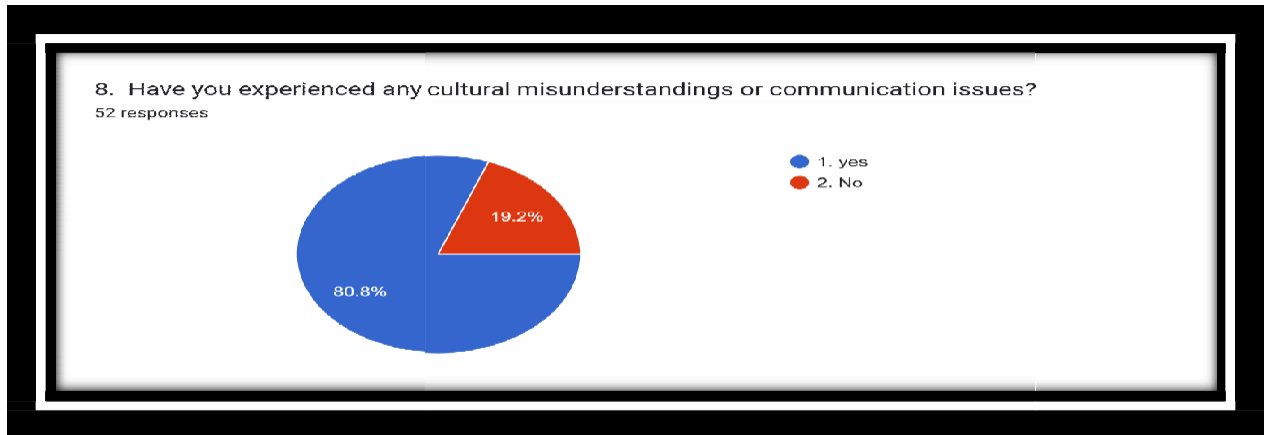


Figure 3. The result of cultural misunderstanding or communication issue
Source: Research Field (2025)

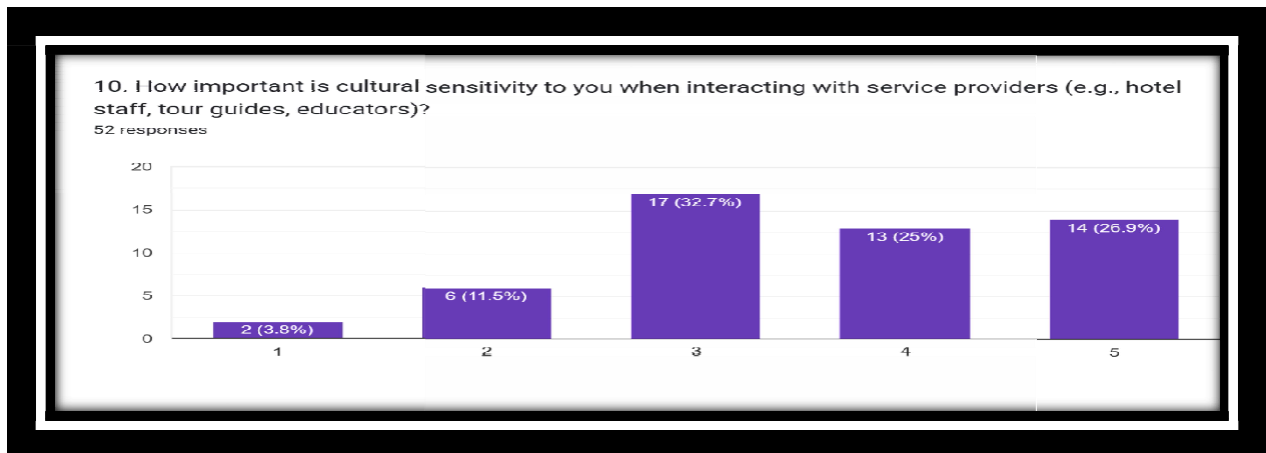


Figure 4. Cultural sensitivity with services providers
Source: Research Field (2025)

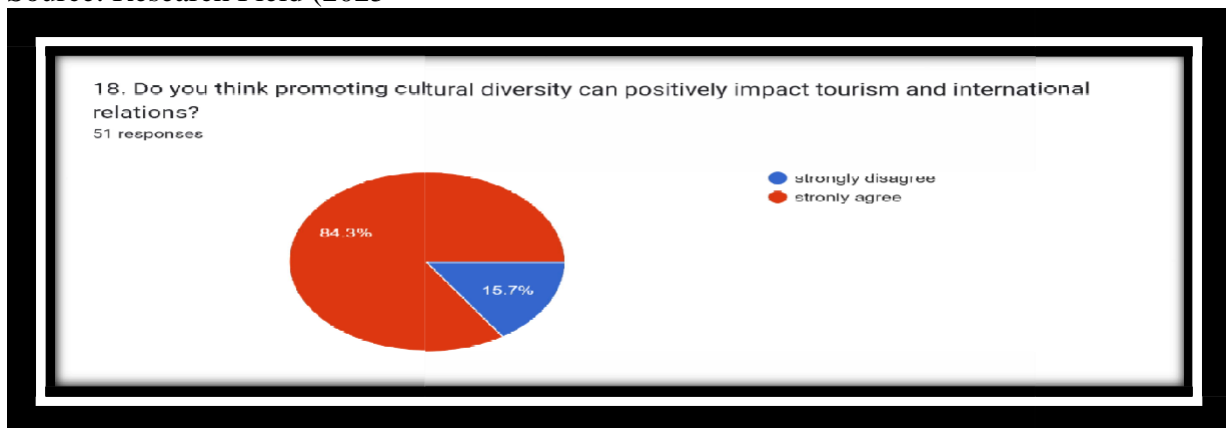


Figure 5. Cultural sensitivity and positive impact
Source: Research Field (2025)

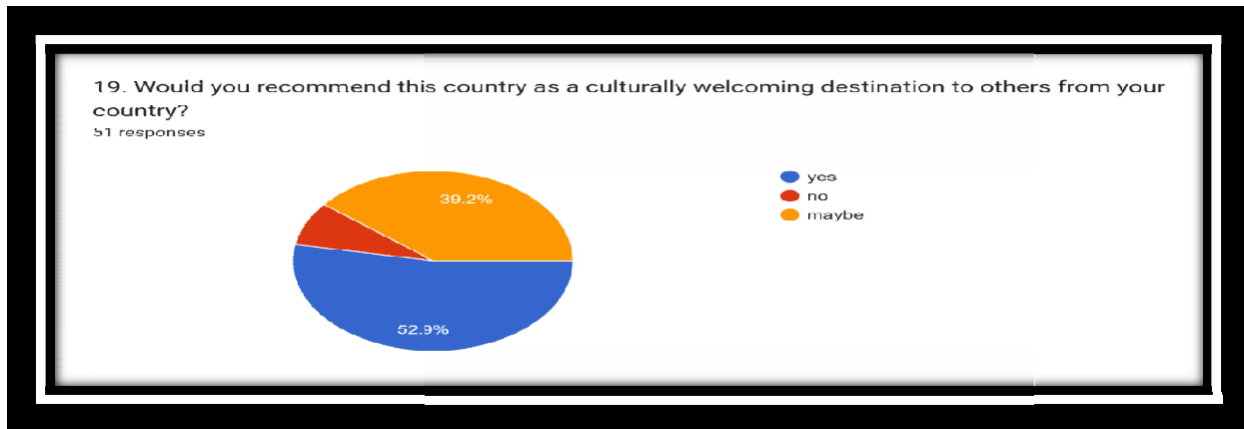


Figure 6. Recommendation as culturally welcoming destination to others
Source: Research Feld (2025)

5.0 Interpretation and Discussion of the results

The Figure 2 indicates that a majority of international guests (65.4% combining “Daily” and “Occasionally”) have frequent intercultural interactions. However, a smaller portion (19.2%) rarely engage with locals from different cultural backgrounds, suggesting that while exposure is generally high, some guests remain culturally isolated. The results also supported by Rahman & Zhang (2022)The researchers found that most international tourists preferred eco-friendly accommodation and local cultural experiences all days according to figure 3 a significant majority of participants (over four-fifths) encountered challenges related to cultural or communication differences. This suggests that cross-cultural barriers remain common experiencefor international guests, emphasizing the need for better cultural orientation, language support, and intercultural communication training in host communities or service industries. Also Singh (2023) in his report of Guest Satisfaction and Service Preferences among Foreign Tourists in Northern India. International guests prioritized safety, multilingual support, and culturally inclusive services. The study emphasized regional variations in guest expectations across Indian states.

Furthermore the figure 4 the results show that 51.9% of respondents rated cultural sensitivity as either important or very important (ratings 4 and 5), indicating a strong expectation for respectful and culturally aware service. Only a small percentage (3.8%) viewed it as not important. A large group (32.7%) remained neutral, suggesting mixed experiences or uncertainty. Overall, the chart highlights the significance of cultural awareness in guest-service provider interactions.

According to Figure 5the vast majority of respondents strongly support the idea that cultural diversity enhances tourism and global relationships. This indicates that international guests value inclusiveness and multicultural experiences, suggesting that cultural diversity is a key factor in attracting and satisfying tourists in global destinations. Moreover the figure 6 showing more than half of the international guests viewed the country positively in terms of cultural hospitality and would recommend it to others. However, a significant portion (39.2%) expressed hesitation, which may point to inconsistent experiences or room for improvement in cultural inclusion. The small percentage of negative responses (7.8%) indicates that while issues exist, the overall perception remains favorable. The results aligned with Hofstede (2011).

According to him ignoring cultural dimensions can lead to misunderstandings, guest dissatisfaction, and even conflict

6.0 Implication of the study

The study reveals that most international guests face communication and cultural challenges, emphasizing the need for intercultural training for service providers. This can improve guest satisfaction and reduce misunderstandings. Hotels, tour guides, and other stakeholders should adopt inclusive practices. Furthermore findings show guests value cultural sensitivity and diversity, aligning with SDG 11 and 8.9, which promotes inclusive and sustainable tourism. Culturally aware tourism supports community engagement, improves visitor experiences, and fosters international harmony. Finally since over half of the respondents would recommend the country for its cultural hospitality, tourism boards can strengthen destination branding. By emphasizing cultural friendliness and positive guest experiences, nations can attract more international tourists and promote cultural diplomacy.

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

This study reveals that while most international guests frequently interact with locals and value cultural sensitivity, many still face communication challenges. Guests strongly support cultural diversity for enhancing tourism and global relations. Despite overall positive views, inconsistent experiences suggest a need for improvement. It is recommended to enhance intercultural training for service providers and promote cultural exchange initiatives.

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