

MODULE 3

Tourism and Culture

Learning objectives:

By the end of the discussion, students will be able to:

1. Explain the relationship between tourism and culture and how they influence one another.
2. Describe how cultural factors affect tourist behavior and travel decisions.
3. Discuss the significance of cultural tourism in promoting heritage preservation and community development.
4. Identify key cultural elements that contribute to a destination's attractiveness.
5. Evaluate the positive and negative impacts of tourism on culture and the importance of responsible practices.

A. The Effects of Culture on Travel

What Is Culture?

Culture refers to the *beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions, customs, language, and behaviors* that are shared by people in a society and passed from generation to generation.

Culture shapes how people **perceive the world, interact with others, and experience travel** both as visitors and hosts.

How Culture Affects Travel

Culture influences travel in several important ways:

◆ Destination Choice

Travelers are often attracted to places with cultures that are different from their own. They seek unique experiences such as traditional festivals, historic sites, or indigenous arts.

◆ Traveler Perception & Expectations

A traveler's cultural background affects what they expect from a destination; what is considered polite, exciting, or even comfortable.

◆ Communication & Behavior

Differences in language, social norms, and etiquette can lead to *culture shock* if travelers are not prepared, affecting their overall experience.

◆ Economic & Social Impact

Cultural tourism injects funds into local economies, supports businesses, and creates jobs—especially for small enterprises like craft makers and performers.

◆ Cultural Change

Interactions between tourists and hosts can lead to changes in cultural patterns, such as adopting new ways of communication, fashion, or even values.

B. The Importance of Cultural Tourism

What Is Cultural Tourism?

Cultural tourism is travel where *learning about another culture's way of life* is the primary goal. It includes visits to museums, heritage sites, festivals, traditional performances, food markets, and everyday cultural practices.

Why Cultural Tourism Matters

● Promotes Cross-Cultural Understanding

Cultural tourism encourages respect, tolerance, and mutual understanding between people from different cultures. Travelers often compare their own cultural norms with those they encounter, leading to greater appreciation and cultural sensitivity.

● Supports Cultural Preservation

Economic support from cultural tourism can motivate societies to preserve historical sites, traditional arts, and heritage practices that might otherwise disappear.

● Encourages Education and Identity

Cultural tourism helps visitors learn deeply about traditions, history, art, and the way of life in a community strengthening both visitor *cultural knowledge* and host community *cultural pride*.

● Boosts Economic Development

By attracting visitors to cultural experiences, destinations generate revenue not only for large industries but also for local artisans, performers, guides, and food vendors.

C. Cultural Factors with Tourist Appeal

Certain **cultural features** are especially appealing to tourists because they offer *unique, authentic, and memorable experiences*. Here's a breakdown of these factors with examples:

1. Art

Art includes both *performing* and *visual arts*:

- **Performing:** Dance, theatre, music festivals
- **Visual:** Paintings, sculptures, architecture

These reflect a society's aesthetics and history and often appear in museums, art districts, and cultural shows.

Examples:

- Louvre Museum – attracts millions of tourists who want to see the *Mona Lisa* and other classical artworks.
- Van Gogh Museum – showcases the works of Vincent van Gogh.
- Uffizi Gallery – famous for Renaissance art collections.

2. Music and Dance

Traditional and contemporary performances play a huge role in cultural tourism. Folkloric dance troupes, traditional bands, or music festivals draw tourists who want to experience local rhythm and movement.

Examples:

- Rio Carnival – vibrant samba performances attract global visitors.
- Sinulog Festival – religious and cultural street dancing in the Philippines.
- Flamenco performances in Spain – traditional Andalusian dance.
- Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival – contemporary cultural music event.

3. Handicrafts

Locally made crafts, textiles, and souvenirs carry cultural meaning. These goods attract tourists looking for *authentic keepsakes* and support local artisans.

Examples:

- Moroccan carpets
- Banig weaving in the Philippines
- Indian handcrafted jewelry
- Balinese wood carvings

4. Industry and Business

Tourists are often curious about a destination's unique industries whether it's traditional brewing, weaving, or agriculture like coffee farms.

Examples:

- Colombia: The Coffee Cultural Landscape
- Japan: Sake Brewing & Traditional Crafts
- Peru: Andean Weaving and Textile Arts

5. Food and Drink

Local cuisine is a powerful cultural draw. Tasting traditional dishes provides *direct sensory engagement* with a culture something travelers remember and share.

Examples:

- Street food tours in Bangkok.
- Italian culinary experiences in Rome.
- Sushi culture in Japan.
- Wine tasting in Tuscany.

6. History

Historic sites; temples, fortresses, battlefields, colonial districts, embed stories of past civilizations and attract tourists seeking to *connect with history*.

Examples:

- Temples: Angkor Wat, Cambodia
- Fortresses: The Alhambra, Spain
- Battlefields: Gettysburg, USA

7. Festivals and Celebrations

These are organized, time-specific public events ranging from cultural to religious or artistic that attract tourists, showcase local heritage, and act as key drivers for destination marketing. They serve as, crucial, cultural, tourism, products, that blend community, identity with entertainment to boost local economies and enhance visitor experiences

Examples:

- Oktoberfest – German beer and cultural celebration.
- Chinese New Year celebrations in China.
- La Tomatina – tomato-throwing festival.
- Ati-Atihan Festival – religious and cultural festival in the Philippines.

Other Cultural Dimensions

Other factors include:

- **Education** (universities as cultural hubs)
- **Language & Literature**
- **Religion & Rituals**
- **Government ceremonies**
- **Agricultural traditions**

All these contribute to the cultural identity that tourists find fascinating.

Recent research shows that **a country's culture significantly influences its competitiveness in attracting tourists** by shaping international perceptions and traveler motivation. A 2023 study found that *cultural curiosity* motivates tourists not only to explore culture but also to develop tolerance and respect for different traditions enhancing satisfaction and tolerance during travel. Cultural experiences especially through social interaction with locals strengthen tourist satisfaction and increase the likelihood that visitors will recommend the destination to others.

● Culture is at the **heart of tourism** — it shapes what travelers expect, how they behave, and why they choose certain destinations.

- Cultural tourism goes beyond sightseeing — it fosters understanding, preserves heritage, and supports economic and community development.
- Cultural factors from art and music to food and history create powerful tourist appeal, making travel meaningful and memorable.

REFERENCES:

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Nguyen, M. H., & King, B. (2024). *Cultural influence on travel preferences: A cross-national study*. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 43, 101015.

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ACTIVITY 3: CAVITE: A HAVEN FOR COLORFUL CULTURE (GROUP ACTIVITY)

Students will form a group with 6-7 members. Each group will choose one city destination within Cavite. Identify at least 5 cultural attractions such as:

- Festivals
- Local cuisine
- Traditional arts
- Historical landmarks
- Indigenous practices
- Religious sites

Discuss the effects on culture on travel using the following guide questions:

- What cultural characteristics influence tourists to visit this place?
- What type of tourists are attracted? (local, foreign, religious, heritage-seekers, etc.)
- How does culture shape tourist behavior in the destination?

GRADING CRITERIA:

- Identification of Cultural Attractions – 20pts
- Depth of Cultural Analysis – 20 pts
- Understanding of Target Tourists – 20 pts
- Organization & Clarity of Presentation – 20 pts
- Teamwork, Creativity & Completeness – 20pts