

# Description of Tourism Status as a Communication Factor between Cultures

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## To Cite this Article

Naser Aminian, "Description of Tourism Status as a Communication Factor between Cultures", *International Journal for Modern Trends in Science and Technology*, Vol. 04, Issue 05, May 2018, pp.-26-31.

## ABSTRACT

Today, a great deal of attention is given to results driven from cultural developments and changes all around the world. The most important concern about moving toward Global Village is Media's activities and cyberspace roles of introducing supper cultures for political, economic and social purpose.

Cultural interactions in societies and in cyber space and the roles of media in introducing these interactions as cross-cultural communications lead to new changes or the new formation of culture in host communities (tourist destination). Nations concerns become more serious when media in cyberspace are affected by powers and leads public opinion toward false information. In this interactive space, inbound tourist's cultures in host community's culture have strong effects.

Tourism industry plays the role of an independent medium and due to creating the most tangible communications and cultural interactions in societies; it causes the best cross-cultural communication types to happen. These communications among cultures are formed by tourists and hosts of tourist destination. So they are potential of protecting host societies culture and making positive interactions between different cultures.

According to this condition, tourism can reduce concerns about changes, interactions or cultural exchanges. By using a comprehensive planning these communications can be controlled. In this paper, the writer tries to study those aspects of tourism which show the effects of cultural interactions in form of cultural communications. By using descriptive and compositional method and applying elites and experts ideas about culture and tourism, this study aims to redefine tourism concept.

**Keywords :** Tourism, culture, cross-culture communications

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Problem statement

By emergence of new media and high speed of information transfer with new technologies we can see all over the world in a moment, so the idea is shaped that in cyberspace human interest in traveling has decreased. Not only this prediction was not true, but also had conversely results, and by advertising on the internet about different places to go and visit people's interest in traveling and visiting new places has increased, because

human needs the real observation of what appears in media. Even in current time, which media has strong effect on people lives, yet the perfect form of communication is face to face. In tourism, in addition to conveying messages, cultural features and interactions are exchanged [1].

Economic advantages resulted from tourism industry is a factor for which most countries are planning. Although the emergence of modern technologies leads to some improvements in tourism industry, it causes some cultural problems in most host countries. When tourists come to one

country they bring some cultural staff with themselves which sometimes is consistent with what exist in new country, but sometimes are not approved by the culture of host country [2].

Culture distinguishes the differences and without it all places are as the same as each other. Culture is something which simulates people to travel, and it plays an important role in shaping behavior, attitudes, values, norms and lifestyles. It is cultural differences which encourage people to travel. Richard believes that culture is a motivation for tourism and is influenced by that too [3].

Cultural differences and tourism, and also their effects on host and guest culture are subjects related to tourism and those differences are the most important factor and motivation for communicating and understanding culture. Race diversity, exercising habits, people's attitudes (host and guest), gender and religion are important factor in making communication between tourists and indigenous people. Tourist has little information about new cultures, information they may get from internet or elsewhere, when they enter a new country they experience it directly. On the other hand tourist themselves has a culture about which hosts do not have enough information. This fact causes ambiguity, discovery, adoption, acceptance or rejection by two sides (hosts and guests): the evident fact about tourism is that tourists choose their destination, and they want to enjoy cultural differences, so they are interested in adapting new environments and cultures, and instead fighting against that they try to learn host guests. Interaction between cultural are effects which two cultures have on each other. If two cultures have more interactions, they accept and understand symbols much easier. Continuity in tourism leads to cultural changes and developments which are known as Cross-cultural interaction between tourists and host community [4].

Tourists and hosts have different cultures and social patterns and by travelling cultural communications are shaped. Cultural and social influences are so important. McConnell believes that tourism is an important basis to form new kinds of cultures [5].

Thus tourism and culture has inseparable relation with each other. And humans as creators and carriers of cultures can identify the nature and the direction of culture, and this fact should be considered in analyzing and studying tourist industry. In other words tourism is human-oriented, and it seems that tourism and its

relevant issues are becoming a great concern for governments. Tourism is dynamic and is potential of forming and controlling cultures and it is the main subject of cultural development and exchanges. What causes tourism to become an important issue is the influence tourism has on culture. In other words understanding and accepting cultural differences which require knowledge, awareness and education is formed in tourism contexts. Cross culture communications via tourism become more tangible and comprehensive. Current paper tends to study culture as a factor having influences in cross-cultural communication and also its influences on the culture of the host communities.

### *1.2. The importance of research*

Today's world complexities due to quick changes and developments in different realms lead to do some researches about culture and science. Nations have experience changes and problems related to cultural changes and developments. One of the most important issues which governments are worried about is related to tourism that is non-directive and uncontrollable. Government's goals and their attempts to form public opinion based on governor's interest leads to cultural gaps among different countries.

The high speed of changing technologies in age of communication which could decrease these gaps among different cultures, now has become a tool for governors and media, and has left humans in confusedness and the influx of news and information.

What has been steady and stable in human's nature is proper understanding of facts based on experiences and to be in objective environment. In this context tourism finds a new meaning, where humans by the intention of investigating a new culture and forenjoying cultural differences start traveling. Tourists enjoy cultural diversity, because these changes are motivations for them to travel and experience visiting new places. So he or she tries to know new culture better and make some interactions. These interactions with host communities lead to changes in host communities and tourists themselves. In these conditions cross-culture issues in tourism industry are so important. Investigating and studying different aspects of tourism in terms of cross-cultural communications is so important. Current article is looking for the answer of this question of how tourism can be a factor for cross-culture communications.

The model and the theoretical research framework

### 1.3. Definitions and Concepts

Culture is the way of living. It shapes attitudes and behaviors and forms communications and societies and their relevant connections. It shapes cultural capital as a set of regulations accepted by the society and it is supported by general people and elite. Moreover, a society forms its entities, institutes and regulations based on cultural beliefs.

E.B Taylor is the first one who defines culture in terms of sociology and anthropology. He said that "culture is set of knowledge, science, arts, thoughts, beliefs, regulations and customs ". Generally it is all things and habits that one as a member of society receives [6].

If we want to identify culture definitions in terms of cross-culture factors, we can say that it is a general statement for accepted ways and methods of thought and act. In addition we inhabitant culture from past and it is transferred in other societies. Culture is a form of contractual behavior in a society belongs to specific period of time. To the transmission of culture, it is the way of thinking and acting, that is symbolic not heritable. Radcliffe Brown states: "the concept which I call culture is the process of cross-cultural communication, it means the process by which the transition and sharing of language, beliefs, customs, knowledge etc. is done. Definitions were given above about cultures are different, but it seems that the definition of culture from the perspective of UNESCO is more comprehensive, according to that:

We can say that culture is a whole combination of different aspects such as mental, intellectual and emotional features which is the characteristic of a community. Not only culture is art and literature, but also it is lifestyle, human rights, value systems, customs and beliefs. This is culture that allows us to react against ourselves, and give us rational life, critical judgment and ethical commitment. We can identify values and choose them through culture. Humans become aware of their identity and accept their faults by knowing their cultures. A new mindset and attitude is formed through culture. Cultures make new concepts, by which we can overcome our restriction.

### 1.4. Cross cultural communications

Historically, this issue has a long background. But recently it is academically studied. In twenty century, united States that different kinds of cultures and races existed there enter a new period

of social crisis. The most crucial crisis was groups and races living together in America. This problem along with the new role that America had chosen as a ruler of the world encourage researchers to study and categorize different cultures and compare them with American culture, after they add communication sciences to modern science. This branch of knowledge is called cross-culture studies [7].

The subject of cultural communication is in the center of the attention since 1960. Cross-culture communication includes three relevant and independent realms as follow:

- Intercultural sensitivity
- Cross-cultural mentality
- Intercultural training methods

Understanding all above factors is so important in making cross-cultural communications and also they are very important in understanding environments of communications. The increase of intercultural sensitivity can lead to appearance of one of the six forms of human reactions of cross-cultural communications. Denying, defending, underestimating, adapting and also cultural integration can be the result of this communications.

Within these studies, a new scientific discipline is generated that instead having concerns about comparing and categorizing cultures, intends to investigate real interactions between people and different cultures. This scientific system is called cross-culture study. And then by putting more emphasis on communicating aspects, it changed to cross-cultural communications. The large number of books was written in 1972 and after that. Writing books about this subject starts by collaborative work of Samovar and Preens called cross-cultural communication [7].

Edward T. Hall, the American anthropologist believes that cross-cultural communications origins from anthropology and linguistics. He believes communications between cultures can be in form of nonverbal communications that happen in unconscious level of information exchanges [8], where one is present in a new place and experience new culture. In this type of cross culture communications differences are accepted and they are not judged. The emphasis is on dealing with differences [9]. In a structured approach to cross-cultural communication, Haider said that cross-cultural communications are goal-oriented, but recognition element is in the center of that and analyze how communication between people

motivations is related to their entering the communications [10].

Johanna emphasizes on requirements for intercultural understanding via education and also understanding cultural sensitivity of other societies. Penni studies educational problems for intercultural issues in form of picture books, because he believes that these books can help students learn other countries language and culture [11].

In today's world which divided into real and virtual, traveling and emigration go beyond geographic area and develop in virtual world, intercultural issues are more meaningful, because world has two parts and as a result it makes different social identification. In fact, it is human mind that divided in two parts, so human communications and intercultural connections have changed into virtual levels [12].

#### 1.5. The nature of intercultural communication:

Culture as a complex concept has different definition. When it is transferred from a member of a society to people with different culture, cross-culture communications are shaped. Cross-cultural communications are considered as a process of exchanging thoughts, meanings and goods among people with different cultures. And it happens among those whose cultural understanding and symbolic systems are separated. In these kinds of communications, generally there is no cultural tie or there are weak cultural links between them. Cross-cultural communications are shaped in specific conditions and they can be unilateral or bilateral. Intercultural communications which are formed when there are racial differences can be attributed to communicating process and areas of study. In processing, one should consider different cultures and see their relations with each other. In areas of study one should study language, cultural interactions and the other factors in different societies. Finally factors should be categorized.

#### The elements of cross-cultural communications:

1. Perception, it is the process of choosing, evaluating and organizing stimulants from outside world. It is based on the systems of beliefs, values and attitudes.
2. Verbal process, it is the way of thinking and talking and it is one of the most important intercultural communications.
3. Non-verbal process, it includes using gestures for making communications. The meanings of these gestures are different from culture to culture.

4. Culture; it influences the situation of communication events [13].

#### 1.6. The relationship between culture and tourism:

Today, Tourism is a cultural phenomenon and is influenced by postmodernism which has been transformed from mass tourism (modernism) into flexible forms which contain diversity, personal empiricism, etc. [14]. Crouch considers the imaginations of tourist as an important factor to perceive the relationship between tourism and media. In this way, media is not only the reason to create people imaginations and experiences of people, but also it forms tourist's ideas and experiences.

The relationships between tourism and culture are relatively complex and multilateral. Some experts consider tourism as folklore. It is evident that today folklore is an important element of tourism industry. If media are considered as main factors to form culture and tourism, we can say that the best and the real media is tourism per se. It means that when a person is present in destination, he or she directly perceives the cultural identity of destination and purpose of tourism.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This information, with respect to the subject is gathered by using libraries, document reviewing and internet articles of types analytic-descriptive, which its purpose is to deeply evaluate the tourism concept in cultural communications of societies. The data were used in these methods are qualitative data. In some parts of research and study, Delphi method is applied and interviews with elites are performed for redefining cultural realm and tourism (the culture of tourism and cultural tourism). For this purpose two fields of culture and tourism and their relationship is studied by details

#### 2.1. The research hypothesis:

- Tourism is cultural phenomenon
- Tourism is intercultural factor

The number of 20 national and international academic experts in tourism and cultural fields are chosen as sample group (10 Iranian experts and 10 international experts in tourism field).

In the first phase, the first question of research was sent to all audiences and after gathering all experts viewpoints answers were gathered, summarized and were sent to all experts again.

In the second phase, the answers were sent to audiences of the second part questions, and after

the deadline (1month), received answers were gathered and summarized again and were sent to experts.

In the third phase, the answers abstracts of first and second phase were sent to all experts. Some experts modify the contents and send them again to all experts.

By summarizing different points of view following results are obtained (Delphi model)

Analyzing the questions and answers by Delphi model (Elites)

Questions:

Question1. What is your point of view(an expert) about tourism?

Question2. How tourism can develop intercultural communications?

### III. RESULTS

In tourism field, the importance of visual effects is shown in sightseeing, building touristic locations, making myths of places, considering issues related to tourism and visual culture.

Images are very important resources in media and play an important role in shaping tourism experiences. They attract tourism attention and help them to choose their destination easier. They also provide assumptions of visual effects to tourists.

Tourism finds meaning by human and his or her needs to travel and visit new places, it is related with ones motivations, and it leads to different reactions. So these factors prove that tourism is something cultural. When people travel around the world, they expect to experience and see different new things. They want to learn things by contractions they make with new people. These contractions reinforce intercultural communications.

Tourists share their experiences and inspirations with others by using all their sense to perceive what they observe in new places.

In tourism, one tries to enjoy everything in new place, so he aims to make contacts and communicate with others. If media is considered as a communication means for intercultural connections, and if it intends to induce false consciousness or unconventional behavior, so we can say that it is not effective and do not provide suitable meanings.

If cultural management distributes patterns for a suitable behavior in society, we can say that it is effective and helpful. Cultural activities such as writing stories, oral history, theaters, visiting

historical sites are so helpful in defining civilizations.

Tourism is a mechanism that is applied for modifying misperceptions made by media between cultures. Media is capable of showing a culture acceptable or unacceptable in people's points of view. But once a person travels, he or she observes everything directly and no false or biased judgment can be shaped.

### 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Tourism is a key element of culture, and has a bilateral relation with culture. It makes contractions between nations and nations can affect each other.

Intercultural communication is considered as a process of exchanging thoughts. In intercultural communications, perception, verbal and non-verbal process and cultural elements play an important role. Cultural sensitivity in cross-culture interactions and communications can appear in form of: protesting, denying, defending, and underestimating (humiliating cultures), boasting and integrating cultures.

If the ground of these communications is formed elsewhere except tourist spaces, it is likely that some of the four elements of intercultural communications would not be fulfilled. Hence, these communications are likely to be deviated or changed. We can say that tourism has a context that all intercultural communications can be seen there, and there is no cultural orientation exist there.

In cultural realm, the importance of tourism as a communicative issue is an important source for intercultural communications. If it is accepted that cultural differences are motivations for tourism, tourist enjoys cultural differences, and host community knows that the tourist use this purpose to enjoy his or her trip, so we can say that bilateral communication is shaped.

In tourism we can say that all intercultural communications are shaped, and interactions are consistent. Phenomenon such as cultural invasion and cultural interactions do not occur in tourism. Cultural problems originated from intercultural problems can be dissolved by detailed planning and reduce cultural gaps.

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