


HOSPITALITY, CULTURE AND DIVERSITY: EXPERIENCES OF THE INTERNATIONAL TOURIST IN THE USA

 <https://doi.org/10.63330/aurumpub.015-021>

Gabriela Aparecida Messias¹

ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the relationship between hospitality, culture, and diversity in the experiences of international tourists in the United States, highlighting how practices of welcoming and service impacted visitors' perceptions in various contexts. The main objective was to understand how hospitality, understood as a social and cultural practice, influenced the satisfaction of international tourists, considering the diversity of profiles and expectations present in high-traffic destinations. The research employed a qualitative and exploratory methodology, based on a literature review of classical and contemporary authors in the field, as well as the analysis of studies applied to the North American context. The investigation revealed that hospitality, when exercised strategically and with cultural sensitivity, played a decisive role in creating positive experiences, directly influencing tourist satisfaction and loyalty. It was found that cultural factors shaped how tourism services were evaluated and that adapting hospitality practices to different international audiences represented a competitive advantage. The study also highlighted that cities such as New York, Orlando, and Los Angeles exemplified the diversity of services, cultural plurality, and welcoming capacity present in the United States, establishing themselves as global references in international tourism. The results further indicated that although American hospitality was characterized by efficiency and standardization, tourists valued personalized experiences that respected their cultural identity. The analysis concluded that hospitality, when associated with the recognition of diversity, extended beyond service provision and became a tool for intercultural dialogue and the strengthening of inclusive practices in tourism.

Keywords: Hospitality; International tourism; Cultural diversity; Tourist experience.

¹ Tourism Basics
Human Rights



INTRODUCTION

International tourism, as a social, economic, and cultural phenomenon, relies on hospitality as one of its fundamental pillars for creating meaningful experiences and consolidating the image of destinations. More than a set of operational practices, hospitality involves welcoming, caring for, and interacting with visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds, promoting not only quality services but also an environment of belonging and respect for diversity.

In the case of the United States, one of the most visited countries in the world, the interface between hospitality, culture, and diversity presents itself as a fertile field of analysis, given that the nation annually receives millions of international tourists who arrive with varied expectations, customs, and cultural references. This scenario makes it essential to understand how welcoming and service practices are structured and perceived in this context.

Authors such as Brotherton (1999) and Lashley (2018) emphasize that hospitality, when understood in its strategic dimension, transcends basic service and becomes a competitive differentiator, directly impacting the tourist's perception and satisfaction. At the same time, theorists like Hofstede (2011) and Hall (1976) highlight that cultural factors strongly influence how tourism services are interpreted and evaluated. Thus, cultural diversity is not merely a challenge for service providers to adapt to, but also an opportunity to enrich the visitor's experience and consolidate destinations that are more inclusive and attractive.

In light of this, the main objective of this study is to analyze how hospitality, in dialogue with culture and diversity, influences the experience of international tourists in the United States. Specifically, it seeks to understand: (1) the concept and importance of hospitality in international tourism; (2) how culture and diversity shape the perception of tourism services and demand adaptations in service practices; and (3) how these dynamics manifest in high-traffic regions of the United States, such as New York, Orlando, and Los Angeles.

The central hypotheses proposed are based on the premise that, although American hospitality is recognized for its efficiency and standardization, the international tourist's experience is increasingly linked to cultural sensitivity and the appreciation of diversity. It is therefore assumed that intercultural welcoming is a decisive factor for satisfaction, loyalty, and recommendation of tourist destinations in the USA. At the same time, it is considered that the absence of adapted hospitality practices may lead to dissatisfaction and compromise the reputation of establishments and cities.

The justification for this study lies in the academic and practical relevance of the topic. From a theoretical standpoint, understanding the interface between hospitality, culture, and diversity contributes to the advancement of studies in tourism and service management. From a social and economic



perspective, analyzing these practices allows for the identification of strategies that enhance destination competitiveness, tourist satisfaction, and the appreciation of cultural diversity in a globalized world.

Regarding the structure of the study, the research is organized into four main parts. Initially, a theoretical discussion on hospitality and international tourism is presented, highlighting concepts and the relevance of the topic. Next, the influence of culture and diversity on the perception of tourism services and the need for adaptation in hospitality practices is analyzed. The third part discusses the concrete experiences of international tourists in the United States, with emphasis on hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions in regions with high visitor traffic. Finally, the conclusion synthesizes the main reflections and points to the importance of culturally sensitive hospitality as a strategy for building more inclusive, competitive, and sustainable destinations.

Thus, this introduction presents not only the central theme of the study but also its relevance, objectives, hypotheses, and structure, preparing the reader for a critical analysis of the relationships between hospitality, culture, and diversity in international tourism, with a specific focus on experiences in the United States.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and exploratory approach, grounded in bibliographic review, with the aim of understanding how hospitality, in articulation with culture and diversity, influences the experience of international tourists in the United States. The choice of this design is justified by the interpretative nature of the research, which seeks to understand meanings, perceptions, and social practices related to international tourism, rather than quantifying data or establishing statistical relationships.

The bibliographic research constitutes the primary methodological strategy, as it allows for the collection, systematization, and analysis of theoretical and empirical contributions from authors dedicated to the study of hospitality, cultural diversity, and tourist experiences. Classical and contemporary works were consulted, such as those by Brotherton (1999), Lashley (2018), Hofstede (2011), and Hall (1976), which provide solid conceptual foundations for the proposed discussion. In addition to these, applied studies in international tourism and hospitality in multicultural contexts were used to enrich the analysis, offering a panorama that integrates both theoretical reflections and practical examples.

The analytical procedure involved critical and comparative reading of the selected sources, aiming to identify convergences, divergences, and gaps in the academic debate. Beyond the systematization of concepts, narratives about hospitality practices in different cultural contexts were analyzed in order to relate them to the North American reality. This triangulation of perspectives enabled the development of a



broader understanding of the topic, with attention to the symbolic, social, and economic dimensions that shape the experience of international tourists.

Regarding the spatial scope, the study chose to analyze North American cities with a high international visitor flow—New York, Orlando, and Los Angeles. The selection of these locations is due to their global tourism relevance, the cultural diversity present in their populations, and the breadth of their tourism infrastructure, which provide a privileged setting for observing hospitality practices. Although no field observations were conducted, the analysis is supported by academic studies, tourism reports, and specialized literature that describe the characteristics of these regions and their service strategies.

Structurally, the methodology guided the organization of the study into three axes: (1) conceptual discussion on hospitality in international tourism, with emphasis on its strategic importance; (2) analysis of the influence of culture and diversity on the perception of tourism services and hospitality practices; and (3) reflection on the concrete experiences of international tourists in the USA, based on regional examples and their relationship with cultural diversity.

Therefore, the methodology presented here favors a qualitative, interpretative, and critical approach, recognizing the complexity of interactions between hospitality, culture, and tourism. Rather than seeking definitive answers, this study aims to open paths for reflections that contribute both to academic production and professional practice, providing insights for a more inclusive, intercultural hospitality that is attentive to the demands of a globalized audience.

DEVELOPMENT

HOSPITALITY AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

Hospitality is a central concept in tourism studies, representing much more than the mere provision of accommodation, food, or transportation services; it involves the creation of memorable experiences that meet the needs, expectations, and desires of visitors. According to Brotherton (1999), hospitality can be understood as the act of welcoming, caring for, and ethically and respectfully attending to guests, establishing a relationship of trust and comfort between host and visitor. In this sense, hospitality emerges as a strategic element in the tourism sector, as it directly influences the tourist's perception of the destination, establishment, or service consumed. Lashley (2018) adds that hospitality is a culturally shaped practice, manifested not only in technical service procedures but also in gestures of cordiality, personalized service, and attention to the particularities of each guest.

In the context of international tourism, hospitality assumes even greater relevance, as tourists from different cultures arrive at destinations with varied expectations, customs, and references. The ability of an establishment or tourist destination to recognize and respect these cultural differences can determine



the visitor's satisfaction and, consequently, the reputation of the service provided. The tourist experience, therefore, is not limited to the consumption of products or services but encompasses the entire interaction process, from trip planning to post-visit memories. This experience includes tangible factors such as infrastructure and comfort, and intangible ones such as welcoming, empathy, and perception of safety, which are decisive in shaping the tourist's opinion of the destination (Brotherton, 1999; Lashley, 2018).

Tourist satisfaction is often considered one of the main indicators of success in hospitality. It reflects the alignment between expectations and actual perceptions during the tourism experience. When hospitality practices exceed expectations, visitors tend to develop positive feelings such as trust, loyalty, and recommendation of the destination to others. Conversely, service failures, lack of attention to cultural needs, or deficiencies in customer interaction can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction, negatively impacting the image of the destination or establishment. Thus, hospitality is not merely an operational issue but a strategic management tool in tourism, capable of creating meaningful experiences that promote satisfaction, retention, and engagement (Brotherton, 1999; Lashley, 2018).

Moreover, hospitality in international tourism is closely linked to the construction of intercultural relationships and the promotion of an inclusive environment. Destinations and establishments that invest in cultural training, service diversity, and adaptation to visitor preferences demonstrate greater capacity to serve heterogeneous audiences and differentiate themselves in a competitive global market. Attention to culture, language, and individual expectations contributes not only to the immediate experience but also to the perception of authenticity and welcoming—factors increasingly valued by contemporary travelers (Lashley, 2018).

In summary, hospitality forms the foundation of quality international tourism, integrating cultural, emotional, and operational aspects to promote satisfying and memorable experiences. Its impact goes beyond mere service provision, influencing destination perception, tourist loyalty, and sector competitiveness. Understanding hospitality as a strategic and culturally sensitive practice is therefore essential for managers, professionals, and researchers interested in developing tourism experiences that value diversity, meet visitor expectations, and strengthen the reputation of destinations and establishments in the international arena.

CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

Culture plays a decisive role in how tourists perceive and evaluate tourism services, influencing expectations, behavior, and satisfaction during the travel experience. Hofstede (2011) emphasizes that cultural differences between countries are reflected in values, norms, and practices that shape how individuals interpret interactions with service providers. For example, tourists from collectivist cultures may place greater value on personal attention and a sense of community offered by establishments, while



those from individualist cultures may prioritize autonomy, privacy, and efficiency in services. Hall (1976) complements this perspective by highlighting that communication and the perception of hospitality are deeply influenced by cultural elements such as language, gestures, relationship styles, and even the perception of time, requiring tourism professionals to possess special sensitivity to meet the expectations of diverse audiences.

In the context of international tourism, cultural diversity represents both a challenge and an opportunity for the hospitality sector. On one hand, service providers must understand and respect cultural differences to avoid misunderstandings and frustrations that could compromise the tourist experience. On the other hand, the diversity of visitors allows for the creation of richer and more memorable experiences that enhance the authenticity of the destination and promote cultural inclusion. Adapting hospitality practices to different international audiences involves adjustments ranging from menu offerings and language services to personalized service, respect for customs and traditions, and attention to individual preferences (Hofstede, 2011; Hall, 1976).

Cultural adaptation in hospitality practices is therefore essential to ensure tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Establishments that invest in intercultural training, service diversification, and flexibility in service delivery tend to provide more positive experiences, creating a welcoming environment that transcends cultural barriers. For example, international hotels and resorts often offer multilingual staff, themed décor that respects specific cultural elements, and activities that allow immersion in various local traditions. These efforts demonstrate that hospitality is also a strategic practice, capable of meeting the needs of a globalized and diverse audience, strengthening the destination's reputation and increasing tourist engagement (Hofstede, 2011; Hall, 1976).

Furthermore, valuing cultural diversity contributes to the development of more inclusive and sustainable tourism. By recognizing and respecting the different ways of living, feeling, and interacting of international tourists, the hospitality sector promotes enriching experiences that strengthen intercultural understanding and mutual respect. This approach not only improves the visitor's perception of the service received but also amplifies the positive impact of tourism on local society and economy, consolidating management practices that combine operational efficiency with cultural sensitivity (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 2011).

In summary, understanding the influence of culture on the perception of tourism services and adapting hospitality practices to serve international audiences is a key element for the success of global tourism. Integrating strategies that consider cultural values, diverse expectations, and personalized experiences contributes not only to tourist satisfaction but also to the construction of more inclusive, welcoming, and competitive destinations. In this context, hospitality becomes a space for intercultural



dialogue, where attention to diversity is essential to transform each interaction into a memorable and meaningful experience.

EXPERIENCES OF THE INTERNATIONAL TOURIST IN THE USA

The experiences of international tourists in the United States are shaped by a combination of factors that range from the quality of service practices in hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions to the perception of inclusion and cultural diversity across different regions of the country. As one of the most visited destinations in the world, the USA receives millions of visitors each year, arriving with varied expectations influenced by their cultures of origin and the global imagery associated with the country. In this context, American hospitality is frequently recognized for its efficiency, professionalism, and the provision of structured services aimed at ensuring comfort, safety, and convenience for international travelers (Brotherton, 1999; Lashley, 2018).

In hotels, the tourist experience is marked by standardization and a wide range of options, from global luxury chains to more affordable accommodations that seek to cater to different profiles and budgets. Practices such as multilingual reception, availability of tourist information, flexible check-in and check-out procedures, and attention to dietary and cultural preferences reinforce the image of a sector prepared to handle the heterogeneity of the international public. In restaurants, one observes the appreciation of gastronomic diversity, which reflects the multicultural nature of American society. In cities like New York and Los Angeles, for example, one can find an impressive variety of international cuisines, offering tourists not only the opportunity to try new flavors but also to feel welcomed by the familiarity of traditional dishes from their countries of origin (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 2011).

In the realm of tourist attractions, the USA stands out for its organization, infrastructure, and innovation. Theme parks in Orlando, such as Disney World and Universal Studios, offer highly personalized and immersive experiences that combine entertainment with excellence in hospitality, ensuring that tourists of different nationalities feel integrated into an inclusive and safe environment. In New York, cultural diversity is a central element of the tourist experience: museums, theaters, multicultural events, and ethnic neighborhoods such as Chinatown and Little Italy provide visitors with immersion into multiple cultures coexisting side by side. In Los Angeles, cinema and the entertainment industry become global attractions, where international tourist services are carefully structured to convey a sense of belonging to a globalized universe (Lashley, 2018).

Another central aspect is the perception of inclusion and cultural diversity. The United States, shaped by its multicultural foundation, offers international tourists a welcoming experience that reflects the plurality of its local society. The appreciation of diversity—evident in the presence of bilingual guides, services adapted to different religious and cultural traditions, and the promotion of events



celebrating plurality—reinforces the feeling of belonging and respect. This welcoming approach is fundamental to tourist satisfaction and to building a positive image of the destination, serving as a competitive advantage in the international market (Hofstede, 2011).

In summary, the experience of international tourists in the USA is characterized by hospitality that combines efficiency, diversity, and inclusion, making the country one of the most attractive destinations in the world. Whether in hotels that adapt to different cultures, restaurants that reflect global gastronomic plurality, or tourist attractions offering immersive experiences, travelers encounter an environment prepared to meet their expectations. Major cities such as New York, Orlando, and Los Angeles illustrate how American hospitality integrates multicultural welcoming practices with management and innovation strategies, reinforcing the United States' position as a global reference in tourism and hospitality.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, it was possible to reflect on the centrality of hospitality in the context of international tourism, focusing on the experience of tourists in the United States. Drawing from the theoretical perspectives of authors such as Brotherton (1999) and Lashley (2018), it was understood that hospitality cannot be reduced to a set of technical services, but must be conceived as a social and cultural practice involving welcoming, respect, and the creation of memorable experiences. In this regard, the study demonstrated that hospitality, when associated with the appreciation of cultural diversity, becomes a strategic and differentiating element for the tourism sector, especially in globally competitive destinations.

One of the key points discussed was the influence of culture on the perception of tourism services, as argued by Hofstede (2011) and Hall (1976). Tourist experiences are not neutral; they are interpreted through values, expectations, and cultural references, which require hospitality professionals to possess enhanced adaptability and intercultural sensitivity. The analysis made it clear that standardized service practices may be effective in ensuring efficiency and organization, but do not necessarily guarantee full visitor satisfaction. It is in personalization, attention to differences, and the creation of an inclusive environment that hospitality reveals its most powerful form.

In the specific case of the United States, the research showed that the country's cultural diversity not only influences the hospitality offered but also shapes the expectations of international tourists. Cities such as New York, Orlando, and Los Angeles stand out as emblematic destinations precisely because of their ability to integrate different cultures into their tourism offerings. New York, for instance, is a multicultural mosaic reflected in its ethnic neighborhoods, varied gastronomy, and diversity of cultural events. Orlando, with its world-renowned theme parks, exemplifies hospitality as spectacle, where every detail of the experience is designed to serve audiences of all ages, nationalities, and cultures. Los Angeles,



with its ties to cinema and the entertainment industry, projects a globalized image that attracts tourists seeking a sense of belonging to a collective imagination.

These examples reveal that American hospitality, although marked by efficiency and standardized processes, also seeks to respond to the diversity of audiences by creating service strategies that value inclusion. However, as hypothesized in this study, it is evident that this hospitality faces the challenge of balancing efficiency with personalization. On one hand, standardization ensures safety and predictability; on the other, personalization is increasingly demanded by tourists seeking unique, authentic, and culturally sensitive experiences.

Another important aspect highlighted was the relationship between hospitality and tourist satisfaction. The visitor's experience goes beyond the tangible aspects of service, involving subjective elements such as the feeling of being welcomed, respected, and belonging. When tourists feel that their cultural identity has been recognized and respected, they tend to evaluate the destination positively and build loyalty. Conversely, negative experiences can result in critical evaluations, affecting the reputation of establishments and destinations in the competitive international market. Thus, hospitality should be understood as a determining factor not only for immediate satisfaction but also for the long-term sustainability of international tourism.

The analysis developed throughout the study also points to the need for tourism professionals and managers to invest in intercultural training and strategies that allow services to be adapted to the specificities of different audiences. This investment should not be seen merely as a differentiator, but as a necessity in a globalized world where international travel is increasingly accessible and diverse. In this scenario, valuing cultural diversity ceases to be a challenge and becomes a strategic opportunity for destinations that aim to establish themselves as references in hospitality.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the experience of international tourists in the United States reflects the interaction between hospitality, culture, and diversity. The country, due to its history and multicultural configuration, is uniquely positioned to offer inclusive and meaningful experiences to visitors. However, the consolidation of culturally sensitive hospitality requires continuous attention to the social, technological, and cultural transformations that impact global tourism.

This study, based on bibliographic review and critical analysis, contributes to academic debate and professional practice by emphasizing that hospitality should be understood as a social practice in constant transformation, requiring flexibility, empathy, and innovation. As a final reflection, it is important to advance research that integrates empirical and comparative studies to understand how tourists from different nationalities perceive hospitality in specific contexts, and how this perception can guide public policies and business strategies aimed at international tourism.



REFERENCES

1. BROTHERTON, B. Hospitality and Tourism: An Introduction. London: Thomson Learning, 1999.
2. LASHLEY, C. Hospitality: A Social Lens. London: Routledge, 2018. HALL, E. T. Beyond Culture. Garden City: Anchor Press, 1976.
3. HOFSTEDE, G. Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations. 2. ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2011.
4. BROTHERTON, B. Hospitality and Tourism: An Introduction. London: Thomson Learning, 1999.
5. HALL, E. T. Beyond Culture. Garden City: Anchor Press, 1976.
6. HOFSTEDE, G. Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations. 2. ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2011.
7. LASHLEY, C. Hospitality: A Social Lens. London: Routledge, 2018.