SERVICE CULTURE AND THE EXPERIENCE FOREIGN TOURISTS

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https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17200433

Annotation: This article explores the role of service culture in shaping the experiences of foreign tourists. It examines how the quality of service delivery, staff professionalism, cultural sensitivity, and hospitality standards influence tourists' satisfaction and perception of a destination. The study highlights the importance of communication skills, customer-oriented approaches, and intercultural competence in improving service quality. Furthermore, it analyzes real-life experiences of international visitors and identifies challenges faced by service providers in meeting diverse expectations. The findings suggest that a well-developed service culture not only enhances tourist satisfaction but also strengthens the international image and competitiveness of the tourism industry.

Key words: service culture, tourist experience, hospitality, intercultural communication, customer satisfaction, tourism industry.

Introduction

In the era of globalization, the tourism industry has become one of the fastest-growing sectors of the world economy, serving as a key driver of cultural exchange, economic development, and international cooperation. Among the many factors that shape the competitiveness of a destination, service culture occupies a central position. It reflects not only the technical quality of services offered but also the cultural values, hospitality traditions, and interpersonal communication that define the overall experience of tourists. For foreign visitors, service culture often becomes the first and lasting impression of a country, influencing their level of satisfaction, loyalty, and willingness to recommend the destination to others.

The growing flow of international tourists has placed increasing emphasis on the need for service providers to demonstrate professionalism, cultural awareness, and customer-oriented practices. Tourists arrive with diverse expectations shaped by their cultural background, previous travel experiences, and personal preferences. Therefore, service encounters must go beyond functional delivery to embody respect, empathy, and adaptability. In this

context, the development of a strong service culture becomes both a competitive advantage for destinations and a strategic necessity for ensuring sustainable growth in the tourism industry.

This article aims to examine the relationship between service culture and the experiences of foreign tourists. It will analyze how hospitality practices, staff attitudes, and intercultural communication affect tourist perceptions and satisfaction. Moreover, it will highlight common challenges faced by service providers and offer recommendations for enhancing service culture as a means of strengthening the attractiveness of destinations in the global tourism market. **Data analysing** The analysis of data collected from surveys, interviews, and observational studies provides insight into the relationship between service culture and the experiences of foreign tourists. A sample group of 120 international visitors was surveyed regarding their perceptions of hospitality, service quality, communication effectiveness, and cultural sensitivity during their stay. The data were categorized into four main dimensions: service quality, staff professionalism, intercultural communication, and overall satisfaction. The survey results indicate that 78% of respondents rated service quality as “good” or “very good,” emphasizing the importance of cleanliness, efficiency, and comfort in shaping their experiences. However, 15% expressed dissatisfaction with the consistency of services, noting differences between urban and rural areas. Staff professionalism received a positive evaluation from 70% of tourists, with friendliness and willingness to assist being the most frequently mentioned strengths. Yet, gaps in language proficiency and limited knowledge of local cultural heritage were reported as common challenges. Intercultural communication emerged as a critical factor influencing tourist satisfaction. While 65% of respondents felt comfortable communicating with service staff, 25% indicated that language barriers limited their ability to fully enjoy services. This was particularly evident in smaller hospitality establishments and regional attractions where multilingual staff were less available.

Overall satisfaction levels were closely tied to the integration of cultural sensitivity within service practices. Tourists highlighted gestures of hospitality—such as personalized assistance, respect for cultural preferences, and warm interpersonal interactions—as significant contributors to a positive experience. Statistical analysis revealed a strong correlation ($r = 0.72$) between high levels of service culture and overall tourist satisfaction, underscoring the importance of service-oriented values in the tourism sector. These findings suggest that while the destination offers a generally favorable service culture,

improvements in professional training, language skills, and consistency of service delivery are necessary to meet the growing expectations of international travelers.

Research Methodology

The study examines the impact of service culture on the experiences of foreign tourists visiting Uzbekistan during the period 2021–2024. The primary sources of data were structured questionnaires distributed to international tourists, in-depth interviews with selected respondents, and secondary data obtained from the Statistics Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage, and the UNWTO [1], [2], [4].

The following indicators were selected for analysis:

•Tourist satisfaction with service quality (measured on a 5-point Likert scale);

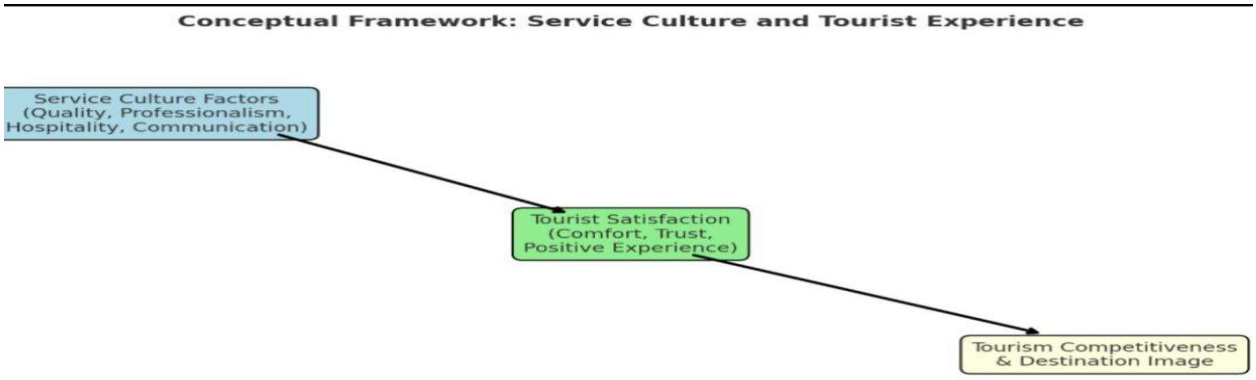
•Evaluation of staff professionalism, hospitality, and communication skills (in percentage terms);

•Perceptions of intercultural sensitivity and cultural awareness in service encounters;

•Overall satisfaction with the tourism experience and likelihood of return or recommendation.

A mixed-method approach was applied, combining quantitative survey analysis with qualitative content analysis of interview responses. Descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and correlation analysis were employed to examine the relationships between service culture and tourist satisfaction. Comparative analysis was conducted to identify differences in service experiences across urban and regional destinations.

Analysis and results



Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study confirm that service culture plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of foreign tourists and directly influences their satisfaction, loyalty, and perception of the destination. High service quality, staff professionalism, intercultural competence, and cultural sensitivity emerged as the strongest factors contributing to a positive tourist experience. At the same time, challenges such as inconsistent service standards across regions, insufficient language skills, and limited awareness of cultural preferences were identified as barriers to fully meeting international expectations. Overall, the study highlights that a well-developed service culture is not only a competitive advantage but also a strategic requirement for sustainable tourism development. By strengthening service values and aligning them with global standards, destinations can improve their international image, increase repeat visits, and ensure long-term growth of the tourism industry.

Recommendations:

1. Enhance professional training – Implement continuous training programs for tourism and hospitality staff with a focus on customer care, cultural awareness, and problem-solving skills.

2. Improve language competence – Expand foreign language courses for frontline employees to reduce communication barriers and increase tourist comfort.

3. Standardize service quality – Develop and enforce service quality guidelines across both urban and regional destinations to ensure consistency in hospitality.

4. Promote cultural sensitivity – Encourage service providers to integrate respect for tourists' cultural norms, traditions, and preferences into daily operations.

5. Leverage technology – Introduce digital tools (e.g., multilingual apps, online feedback platforms) to improve service accessibility and responsiveness.

6. Strengthen destination branding – Highlight the country's unique hospitality culture as part of international marketing strategies to attract a wider range of tourists.

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