

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND TOURIST BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior among tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon. Specifically, it assessed cultural sensitivity in terms of cultural responsiveness, preservation and promotion, and Respect for cultural diversity, and Tourist Behavior in terms of interaction with local communities, Respect for local culture and traditions, and responsible use of social media. The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design and used a researcher-made questionnaire that underwent expert validation and reliability testing. The study collected data from tourists visiting Valencia City and analyzed it using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings showed that tourists demonstrated a high level of cultural sensitivity, particularly in cultural responsiveness. Similarly, the respondents exhibited a high level of Tourist Behavior, with interaction with local communities emerging as the most evident dimension. The results further indicated a significant positive relationship between cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior. This suggests that tourists with greater awareness, appreciation, and Respect for cultural differences are more likely to engage in responsible, respectful, and culturally appropriate Behavior during their travels. The study concludes that cultural sensitivity plays a vital role in promoting Tourist Behavior and fostering sustainable tourism practices. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening cultural awareness and orientation programs to encourage responsible interactions between tourists and host communities. By cultivating cultural sensitivity, tourism stakeholders can help preserve cultural heritage, promote mutual understanding, and develop more sustainable, culturally respectful tourism experiences.

Keywords: cultural sensitivity, Tourist Behavior, cultural responsiveness, sustainable tourism, Valencia City, Bukidnon.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, tourism has become a powerful instrument for cultural exchange, economic development, and promoting mutual understanding among diverse populations. Beyond generating revenue, the global tourism industry bridges cultural divides and fosters connections between communities worldwide. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023), international tourist arrivals surpassed 1.3 billion in 2023, marking a significant rebound after the COVID-19 pandemic and underscoring tourism's profound impact on economies and societies.

As international travel becomes increasingly accessible, the frequency of cross-cultural encounters rises correspondingly. These interactions give travelers opportunities to experience diverse customs, languages, values,

and traditions. However, they also present challenges when tourist behavior conflicts with local cultural expectations. Such clashes can lead to misunderstandings, social tension, and long-term damage to community-tourist relations. Even well-intentioned actions may be perceived as cultural insensitivity when local norms are disregarded (Ortiz et al., 2024). Consequently, promoting respectful and culturally aware travel has become a central priority in sustainable tourism discourse.

A key concept in addressing these challenges is cultural sensitivity, which UNESCO (2021) defines as the capacity to acknowledge and adapt to cultural diversity with Respect and empathy. Cultural sensitivity extends beyond tolerance, requiring emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement. It manifests in actions such as dressing modestly, respecting sacred sites, learning basic local greetings, and supporting

community-based enterprises. Tourists who demonstrate cultural sensitivity are often seen as ethical, responsible, and aligned with host destinations' values (Garcia & Lee et al., 2021).

Empirical research highlights the benefits of culturally sensitive tourism practices, including stronger community relationships, enriched visitor experiences, reduced environmental degradation, and enhanced cultural preservation (Anantamongkolkul & Pattanapokinsakul, 2022; Su et al., 2024). Conversely, cultural insensitivity—whether through ignorance or disregard—can lead to commodification, the erosion of traditions, or resistance from host communities. Instilling cultural awareness among travelers is therefore essential to building respectful, sustainable tourism models, particularly in destinations with high cultural diversity.

Despite increasing scholarly and policy attention to responsible tourism, a notable gap persists in understanding the direct relationship between tourists' cultural sensitivity and their actual behaviors across diverse contexts. Much of the existing literature remains case-specific, limiting generalizability (Ramirez & Cruz, 2023). Moreover, few studies explicitly connect tourists' cultural awareness to their conduct during travel—such as respecting local customs, avoiding offensive actions, and contributing positively to host communities.

To address this gap, the present study examines the correlation between cultural sensitivity and tourist behavior in the Philippines, focusing on Mindanao, particularly Bukidnon and Valencia City. These areas offer rich natural attractions and are home to Indigenous communities such as the Talaandig, Higaonon, and Bukidnon tribes, each with distinct traditions, languages, and belief systems. In such contexts, cultural sensitivity is vital to maintaining harmony between tourists and local populations.

Bukidnon, renowned for its highland landscapes and vibrant festivals, has witnessed growth in eco-tourism and cultural tourism. Valencia City, one of its urban centers, is emerging as a tourism hub because it blends agriculture, culture, and local enterprise. In these settings, tourist behavior directly influences community relationships, social cohesion, and the preservation of intangible heritage. Respectful conduct—such as observing

etiquette during cultural events, dressing appropriately, and engaging with local artisans—enhances tourism experiences while promoting sustainable development.

This study uses a quantitative research design to examine how tourists' cultural sensitivity influences their Behavior at culturally significant sites. Specifically, it seeks to determine whether culturally sensitive tourists are more likely to engage in responsible practices, including avoiding disrespectful photography, supporting local businesses, and participating in appropriate cultural activities. The findings are expected to inform community-based tourism guidelines and cultural orientation strategies that empower both tourists and host communities.

Ultimately, this research underscores the critical importance of cultural sensitivity in shaping ethical and sustainable tourism. By analyzing tourist conduct within the Philippines' culturally rich context—particularly in Mindanao—the study contributes to the global discourse on responsible tourism. The results aim to guide policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and educators in designing programs that foster cultural understanding, strengthen community inclusion, and safeguard the integrity of local traditions. As tourism evolves in a post-pandemic world, cultivating cultural sensitivity among travelers is not merely a matter of etiquette but a foundation for global citizenship and a vital step toward ethical, inclusive, and resilient tourism development.

1.1.Statement of the Problem

Tourism in Valencia City, Bukidnon, has continued to expand, creating opportunities for cultural exchange and community development. The extent to which tourists demonstrate cultural sensitivity, expressed through responsiveness, preservation and promotion, and Respect for diversity, directly influences their Behavior and interactions with local communities. Understanding this relationship is crucial to building sustainable, culturally respectful tourism practices.

This study examined whether higher levels of cultural sensitivity among tourists led to more respectful, responsible, and positive behaviors. It measured cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior in Valencia City and analyzed whether a

significant correlation existed between the two constructs.

The following questions guided the research:

1. What is the level of Cultural Sensitivity of tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon, in terms of:
 - A. Cultural Responsiveness;
 - B. Preservation and Promotion; and
 - C. Respect for Cultural Diversity?
2. What is the level of Tourist Behavior of tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon, in terms of:
 - A. Interaction with Local Communities;
 - B. Respect for Local Culture and Traditions; and
 - C. Responsible Use of Social Media?
3. Is there a significant relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Tourist Behavior?

1.2.Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Tourist Behavior.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship between cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior among tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon. The descriptive aspect determined the levels of cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior, while the correlational aspect examined the significant relationship between the two variables. This research design was appropriate because it enabled the researchers to describe the variables and determine whether a significant association existed between cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior.

2.2. Research Locale

The study was conducted in Valencia City, Bukidnon, a major urban center in Northern Mindanao. The city is known for its natural attractions, cultural festivals, and diverse communities, making it an appropriate setting for examining cultural sensitivity and tourist behavior. Valencia City attracts local and foreign tourists to its eco-tourism sites, cultural

destinations, and recreational attractions. Its growing tourism industry and culturally rich environment provided a relevant context for investigating the relationship between cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior.

2.3. Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The study respondents were 150 tourists who visited Valencia City, Bukidnon, during the research. The researchers selected respondents through purposive-convenience sampling. Purposive sampling ensured that only individuals who met the criteria of being tourists and having experienced Valencia City's cultural and tourism environment were included. The researchers also used convenience sampling to facilitate efficient data collection from respondents who were readily accessible during the data-gathering period. This sampling procedure enabled the researchers to obtain relevant information from tourists who had direct interaction with Valencia City's local culture, traditions, and tourism destinations.

2.4. Research Instrument

The study used a researcher-made structured questionnaire to gather data on respondents' cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections. The first section measured cultural sensitivity in terms of cultural responsiveness, Preservation and Promotion, and Respect for cultural diversity. The second section measured Tourist Behavior in terms of Interaction with Local Communities, Respect for Local Culture and Traditions, and Responsible Use of social media. The questionnaire was designed to align with the study objectives and provide relevant information on the relationship between the variables. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale, where respondents indicated their level of agreement with each statement, with five representing the highest level of agreement and one the lowest.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the quality and credibility of the research instrument, two experts from STI College Valencia conducted content validation of the questionnaire. Their evaluation helped establish the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questionnaire items in relation to the study objectives. After validation, the researchers tested reliability to assess the instrument's internal

consistency. The results showed a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.84 for the Cultural Sensitivity scale and 0.84 for the Tourist Behavior scale, indicating high reliability. These results confirmed that the questionnaire was suitable for gathering accurate, dependable data from respondents.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researchers secured the necessary permission from the appropriate authorities to conduct the study. Upon receiving approval, the researchers personally administered the questionnaires to the identified respondents. The researchers explained the study's purpose to participants and provided clear instructions for completing the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured that all information gathered would be kept strictly confidential. The researchers maintained respondents' anonymity throughout the research process and used all collected data exclusively for academic purposes.

2.6. Scoring Procedure

The study used a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior. For Cultural Sensitivity, the scale ranged from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, while for Tourist Behavior, the scale ranged from Never to Always. Responses were assigned numerical values from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating higher levels of cultural sensitivity and more Tourist Behavior. The study interpreted the resulting mean scores using established descriptive equivalents to determine each variable's level. To determine the significance of the relationship between cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior, the study used a 0.05 significance level. A p-value less than 0.05 indicated a significant relationship, while a p-value greater than 0.05 indicated no significant relationship between the variables.

2.7. Statistical Treatment

The researchers analyzed the gathered data using appropriate statistical tools. The researchers used the Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation to determine the tourists' level of cultural sensitivity and tourist behavior. The Weighted Mean indicated respondents' overall responses, while the Standard Deviation showed the consistency of their responses. Furthermore, the Pearson

Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was used to determine the significance and direction of the relationship between cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior. These statistical tools enabled the researchers to address the research problems and test the study's hypothesis effectively.

3.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. What was the level of Cultural Sensitivity of tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon, in terms of:

- A. Cultural Responsiveness;
- B. Preservation and Promotion; and
- C. Respect for Cultural Diversity?

3.1.1. Cultural Responsiveness

Table 1 presents the level of cultural sensitivity among tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon, in terms of cultural responsiveness.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Cultural Sensitivity in Terms of Cultural Responsiveness

INDICATORS	MEAN	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
I believe cultural responsiveness is essential in building harmonious relationships.	5.0000	.00000	Strongly Agree
I adapt my Behavior when engaging with people from different cultural backgrounds.	4.3000	.80059	Agree
I acknowledge and respect the values of cultures different from my own.	4.5800	.70730	Strongly Agree
I am willing to learn from other cultures to enhance mutual understanding.	4.6400	.67833	Strongly Agree
I recognize cultural responsiveness as an important aspect of social development.	4.4867	.73946	Agree
OVERALL MEAN	4.6013	.49290	STRONGLY AGREE

LEGEND:

Scale/Range	Descriptive Rating
4.51- 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.51- 4.50	Agree
2.51- 3.50	Neutral
1.51- 2.50	Disagree
1.00- 1.50	Strongly Disagree

The results showed an overall mean of 4.6013 (SD = 0.49290), interpreted as Strongly Agree. This finding indicates that tourists demonstrated a very high level of cultural responsiveness, suggesting they recognize the importance of respecting cultural differences, adapting appropriately in intercultural situations, and maintaining positive relationships with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The highest mean was for the statement that cultural responsiveness is essential in building harmonious relationships (M = 5.0000), while the lowest mean was for adapting Behavior when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds (M = 4.3000). Although it was the lowest-rated indicator, it was still described as Agree, indicating generally favorable perceptions across all items.

The findings suggest that tourists visiting Valencia City are strongly aware of the need to behave respectfully and appropriately when encountering cultural differences. Their high level of cultural responsiveness reflects openness to understanding local customs and traditions, which can contribute to more meaningful interactions between tourists and host communities. Such responsiveness may enhance visitor experiences, promote mutual Respect, and minimize cultural misunderstandings.

The results also suggest that visitors in Valencia City support tourism activities that value respectful intercultural engagement. High cultural responsiveness among tourists can support sustainable tourism development by encouraging positive community-tourist relationships, strengthening social harmony, and fostering a welcoming environment for visitors and residents. The findings also highlight the importance of ongoing cultural orientation initiatives to enhance further tourists' ability to adapt to diverse cultural settings.

This result aligns with Naylor et al. (2022), who emphasized that recognizing and respecting cultural differences helps create inclusive environments and strengthen relationships among diverse groups. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (2021) stressed that cultural responsiveness involves actively valuing and sustaining cultural identities, while Haynes et al. (2025) highlighted that culturally responsive attitudes promote empathy, inclusion, and meaningful engagement. These perspectives support the present finding

that tourists demonstrated strong responsiveness toward cultural differences and intercultural interactions.

3.1.2. Preservation and Promotion

Table 2 presents tourists' level of cultural sensitivity in Valencia City, Bukidnon, in terms of preservation and promotion.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Cultural Sensitivity in Terms of Preservation and Promotion

INDICATORS	MEAN	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
I believe preserving cultural heritage is important for future generations.	4.6000	.71419	Strongly Agree
I actively support initiatives that promote cultural traditions.	4.3467	.75072	Agree
I value traditional practices as part of national identity.	4.3867	.78396	Agree
I encourage others to appreciate and preserve their cultural heritage.	4.4333	.76340	Agree
I believe modern and traditional practices should coexist.	4.3067	.81879	Agree
OVERALL MEAN	4.4147	.65502	AGREE

LEGEND:

Scale/Range	Descriptive Rating
4.51- 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.51- 4.50	Agree
2.51- 3.50	Neutral
1.51- 2.50	Disagree
1.00- 1.50	Strongly Disagree

The results obtained an overall mean of 4.4147 (SD = 0.65502), interpreted as Agree. This indicates that tourists generally possess favorable attitudes toward preserving and promoting cultural heritage. The highest-rated indicator was the belief that preserving cultural heritage is important for future generations (M = 4.6000). In contrast, the lowest-rated indicator was the belief that modern practices should coexist with traditional practices (M = 4.3067). Although the latter obtained the lowest rating, it remained within the Agree category, suggesting an overall positive perception toward cultural preservation.

The findings indicate that tourists value maintaining cultural traditions and heritage to preserve community identity and ensure cultural continuity. The generally positive ratings demonstrate that tourists appreciate local customs, traditions, and cultural practices and recognize their significance in enriching tourism experiences. The results also suggest that tourists support efforts that promote cultural identity while acknowledging the challenges of balancing modernization and tradition.

The results imply that Valencia City's cultural heritage resources can be sustained through responsible tourism practices. When tourists appreciate and support preservation efforts, local communities may be more motivated to safeguard traditions, cultural landmarks, and indigenous practices. This positive attitude among tourists can strengthen cultural sustainability and encourage responsible tourism initiatives that protect heritage while allowing communities to benefit from tourism development.

Mattone and Frullo (2022) support this finding, emphasizing that preserving cultural heritage requires institutions and communities to work together to keep it relevant for future generations. Likewise, Bobomurod (2025) argued that tourism can promote and preserve cultural heritage, provided tourism activities are managed responsibly. These findings also align with Deretić and Kukolj (2023) and Innocente et al. (2024), who highlighted the importance of innovative approaches to preserving and promoting cultural heritage while strengthening cultural awareness among visitors and communities.

3.1.3. Respect for Cultural Diversity

Table 3 presents the level of cultural sensitivity among tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon, in terms of Respect for cultural diversity.

The results yielded an overall mean of 4.4160 with a standard deviation of 0.63943, interpreted as Agree. This indicates that tourists generally demonstrate positive attitudes toward cultural diversity and recognize the value of respecting different cultural identities. Among the indicators, respecting differences among various cultural groups had the highest mean ($M = 4.5400$). In contrast, the lowest mean was for the belief that cultural diversity enriches society ($M = 4.2733$). Nevertheless, all indicators received favorable ratings.

The findings show that tourists acknowledge the importance of accepting cultural differences and maintaining tolerance toward individuals from diverse backgrounds. Their positive perceptions toward cultural diversity suggest openness to learning about different cultural traditions, beliefs, and practices. These attitudes support healthy intercultural interactions and help tourists appreciate the uniqueness of the destinations they visit.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Cultural Sensitivity in Terms of Respect for Cultural Diversity

INDICATORS	MEAN	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
I respect the differences among various cultural groups.	4.5400	.72935	Strongly Agree
I believe cultural diversity enriches society.	4.2733	.76760	Agree
I accept that every culture has equal value and importance.	4.4400	.78133	Agree
I encourage cultural dialogue and understanding among diverse groups.	4.2933	.78190	Agree
I believe respecting cultural diversity promotes peace and unity.	4.5333	.73882	Strongly Agree
OVERALL MEAN	4.4160	.63943	AGREE

LEGEND:

Scale/Range	Descriptive Rating
4.51- 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.51- 4.50	Agree
2.51- 3.50	Neutral
1.51- 2.50	Disagree
1.00- 1.50	Strongly Disagree

The results suggest that tourists are likely to behave respectfully toward local communities, thereby supporting harmonious community-tourist relationships. Respect for cultural diversity is critical to responsible tourism because it encourages understanding, reduces prejudice, and promotes peaceful coexistence among people from different cultural backgrounds. Consequently, tourism stakeholders may continue developing programs that promote intercultural

understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity among visitors.

Vohidova (2024) supports these findings, emphasizing that understanding cultural differences is essential for effective communication and meaningful interaction in diverse environments. Similarly, Shamsi Gooshki (2025) highlighted the need to engage more deeply with cultural diversity beyond superficial recognition. This aligns with Mariyono et al. (2025), who emphasized that cultural exchange strengthens mutual understanding, Respect, and cooperation among people from different backgrounds. Furthermore, Akinsuroju (2025) and Muhammad and Liu (2025) underscored the importance of promoting Respect for cultural diversity to foster inclusion, equity, and positive social relationships.

3.1.4. Overall Level of Cultural Sensitivity

Table 4 presents the overall level of cultural sensitivity among tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon, across the three dimensions of cultural responsiveness, preservation and promotion, and Respect for cultural diversity.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Cultural Sensitivity Among Three Factors

Indicators	MEAN	Standard Deviation	Description
Cultural Responsiveness	4.6013	.49290	Strongly Agree
Preservation and Promotion	4.4147	.65502	Agree
Respect for Cultural Diversity	4.4160	.63943	Agree
OVERALL MEAN	4.4773	.54172	AGREE

LEGEND:

Scale/Range	Descriptive Rating
4.51- 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.51- 4.50	Agree
2.51- 3.50	Neutral
1.51- 2.50	Disagree
1.00- 1.50	Strongly Disagree

The results showed an overall mean of 4.4773 (SD = 0.54172), interpreted as Agree. This indicates that tourists generally possess a high level of cultural sensitivity. Among the three dimensions, Cultural Responsiveness obtained the highest mean (M = 4.6013), interpreted as Strongly Agree,

followed by Respect for Cultural Diversity (M = 4.4160) and Preservation and Promotion (M = 4.4147), both interpreted as Agree.

The findings show that tourists generally recognize cultural differences, respect diverse cultural groups, and support preserving local heritage and traditions. The higher rating for cultural responsiveness suggests that tourists place considerable importance on adapting their Behavior and maintaining respectful interactions when engaging with people from different cultural backgrounds. Meanwhile, their positive ratings for preservation and promotion, and Respect for cultural diversity, indicate an appreciation of cultural heritage and a willingness to acknowledge cultural differences.

The results imply that tourists visiting Valencia City contribute favorably to culturally responsible tourism. Their high level of cultural sensitivity can support sustainable tourism development by engaging respectfully with local communities, encouraging cultural preservation efforts, and promoting intercultural understanding. These findings further suggest that tourism stakeholders may strengthen educational and awareness programs to sustain and further enhance culturally sensitive behaviors among visitors.

Thomas and Quinlan (2021) support these findings, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity in fostering Respect, inclusion, and meaningful engagement within diverse societies. Similarly, Chedid et al. (2025) highlighted that recognizing cultural beliefs, values, and differences contributes to more respectful and inclusive interactions. Moreover, Frenette emphasized the value of cultural sensitivity in ethical tourism practices that respect local cultures and encourage responsible traveler behavior. The findings also align with Alexandra (2025) and Burda-Lassen et al. (2025), who underscored the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity in fostering fairness, understanding, and inclusivity across diverse social contexts.

3.2. What is the level of Tourist Behavior of tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon, in terms of:

- A. Interaction with Local Communities;
- B. Respect for Local Culture and Traditions; and

C. Responsible Use of Social Media?

3.2.1. Interaction with Local Communities

Table 5 presents the level of Tourist Behavior among tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon, in terms of interaction with local communities.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Tourist Behavior in Terms of Interaction with Local Communities

INDICATORS	MEAN	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
I engage in meaningful conversations with local community members.	4.2267	.81221	Often
I participate in community events or cultural programs.	4.5200	.65251	Always
I support local livelihoods (e.g., by buying local products).	4.0733	.89815	Often
I listen attentively to stories and experiences shared by community members.	4.7200	.50660	Always
I contribute positively when interacting with local communities.	4.3333	.76559	Often
OVERALL MEAN	4.3747	.50304	OFTEN

LEGEND:

Scale/Range	Descriptive Rating
4.51- 5.00	Always
3.51- 4.50	Often
2.51- 3.50	Sometimes
1.51- 2.50	Rarely
1.00- 1.50	Never

The results showed an overall mean of 4.3747 (SD = 0.50304), interpreted as Often. This indicates that tourists frequently engage in positive and meaningful interactions with residents. Among the indicators, this statement received the highest mean: "I listen attentively to stories and experiences shared by community members" (M = 4.7200), interpreted as Always. In contrast, "I show support for local livelihoods (e.g., buying local products)" had the lowest mean (M = 4.0733), interpreted as Often. Despite score variations, tourists rated all indicators positively,

suggesting they generally engage constructively with local communities.

The findings indicate that tourists value direct engagement with residents and are willing to participate in activities that facilitate cultural exchange. Their frequent interactions, including conversations, participation in community activities, and attentive listening to local stories, suggest a strong appreciation for authentic community experiences. Such behaviors enhance mutual understanding between tourists and residents and contribute to a more meaningful tourism experience.

The results suggest that positive interactions between tourists and local communities can strengthen social connections, improve visitor satisfaction, and support sustainable tourism development. Meaningful engagement helps tourists better understand local culture while enabling communities to benefit socially and economically from tourism activities. However, the relatively lower mean for supporting local livelihoods suggests that tourism stakeholders may need to encourage tourists more to patronize local products and services and contribute directly to community development.

Sutton et al. (2023) support this finding, emphasizing that face-to-face interactions are essential for building trust, exchanging knowledge, and fostering stronger community relationships. Likewise, Leong et al. (2024) highlighted that meaningful interactions and storytelling enhance tourists' cultural experiences and create stronger emotional connections with destinations. Similarly, Li et al. (2025) found that positive resident-tourist interactions increase tourists' immersion and sense of authenticity within a destination. These studies support the present finding that frequent interaction with local communities contributes positively to tourists' overall Behavior and experience.

3.2.2. Respect for Local Culture and Traditions

Table 6 presents the level of Tourist Behavior among tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon, in terms of Respect for local culture and traditions. The results yielded an overall mean of 4.2303 with a standard deviation of 0.63850, interpreted as Often. This indicates that tourists frequently demonstrate behaviors that reflect Respect for local customs, traditions, and cultural practices. The indicator with the highest mean was "I avoid

actions that may offend local traditions" (M = 4.3933). In contrast, the lowest mean was observed in "I show respect when engaging with traditional practices of the community" (M = 4.0000). Nevertheless, all indicators fell within the Often category, indicating generally positive tourist conduct.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Tourist Behavior in Terms of Respect for Local Cultures and Traditions

INDICATORS	MEAN	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
I follow local customs and traditions when visiting cultural sites.	4.1333	.84079	Often
I show Respect when engaging in the community's traditional practices.	4.0000	.93407	Often
I wear or use culturally appropriate clothing/items during cultural events.	4.3333	.86441	Often
I avoid actions that may offend local traditions.	4.3933	.74091	Often
I participate in activities that promote Respect for local culture.	4.2867	.78865	Often
OVERALL MEAN	4.2303	.63850	OFTEN

LEGEND:

Scale/Range	Descriptive Rating
4.51- 5.00	Always
3.51- 4.50	Often
2.51- 3.50	Sometimes
1.51- 2.50	Rarely
1.00- 1.50	Never

The findings suggest that tourists consciously try to respect local customs and avoid culturally inappropriate Behavior. Their willingness to observe cultural norms, wear culturally appropriate attire, and participate in activities that promote Respect for local culture reflects a positive attitude toward cultural preservation and cultural appreciation. However, the relatively lower rating regarding engagement with traditional practices may indicate varying levels of familiarity and understanding of local customs.

The results suggest that tourists recognize the importance of respecting cultural traditions, which helps foster harmonious relationships between visitors and host communities. Such behaviors are essential to preserving cultural integrity and ensuring tourism activities do not harm local traditions. Nevertheless, the findings also suggest the need for cultural orientation programs that give tourists deeper knowledge and understanding of local customs to strengthen culturally appropriate Behavior further.

Baran (2025) supports these findings, emphasizing that cultural sensitivity and Respect are fundamental to sustainable tourism and help build stronger relationships between tourists and host communities. Similarly, Robinson et al. (2021) highlighted that genuine Respect for traditional practices requires meaningful understanding, active listening, and acknowledgment of cultural values. In addition, Tohari (2025) stressed that cultural traditions foster mutual Respect and social harmony, while Suryana and Kurnia (2025) emphasized the importance of preserving cultural values and traditions to ensure cultural continuity. These studies reinforce the present finding that tourists generally demonstrate Respect toward local cultures and traditions.

3.2.3. Responsible Use of Social Media

Table 7 presents tourists' level of Behavior in Valencia City, Bukidnon, in terms of responsible social media use.

The results showed an overall mean of 4.3413 (SD = 0.62414), interpreted as Often. This indicates that tourists frequently practice responsible, culturally sensitive Behavior when sharing information and experiences on social media. Among the indicators, "I avoid posting materials that misrepresent local culture" had the highest mean (M = 4.5133), interpreted as Always. In contrast, "I use social media to promote cultural awareness and appreciation" had the lowest mean (M = 4.0733), interpreted as Often.

The findings suggest that tourists generally recognize social media's influence on cultural representation and are careful not to share misleading or disrespectful content. They appear to recognize the importance of accurate cultural representation and demonstrate responsibility when posting cultural information online. However, the relatively lower rating on actively

promoting cultural awareness indicates that tourists may focus more on avoiding harmful content than on proactively educating others about local culture.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Tourist Behavior in Terms of Responsible Use of Social Media

INDICATORS	MEAN	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
I share cultural content on social media with sensitivity and Respect.	4.1333	.91715	Often
I avoid posting materials that misrepresent local culture.	4.5133	.70222	Always
I use social media to promote cultural awareness and appreciation.	4.0733	.97000	Often
I fact-check cultural information before sharing it online.	4.5067	.75748	Often
I discourage negative or disrespectful comments about culture on social media.	4.4800	.80868	Often
OVERALL MEAN	4.3413	.62414	OFTEN

LEGEND:

Scale/Range	Descriptive Rating
4.51- 5.00	Always
3.51- 4.50	Often
2.51- 3.50	Sometimes
1.51- 2.50	Rarely
1.00- 1.50	Never

The results suggest that tourists can serve as responsible digital ambassadors for destinations by sharing accurate, culturally respectful information online. Responsible social media use helps preserve local communities' reputations, promotes positive destination images, and supports cultural awareness among broader audiences. Nevertheless, tourism organizations may further encourage tourists to use digital platforms as tools for cultural education and appreciation.

Sultan et al. (2020) and Haque et al. (2021) support these findings, emphasizing that social media can influence responsible Behavior by shaping awareness, social norms, and peer engagement. Likewise, Marcial et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of educational interventions in encouraging responsible digital

Behavior. Furthermore, Stawicka and Yavuz (2023) stressed that trust, ethical conduct, and digital literacy are crucial in promoting responsible social media practices. These perspectives affirm the finding that tourists generally use social media in a culturally responsible manner.

3.2.4. Overall Level of Tourist Behavior

Table 8 presents the overall level of Tourist Behavior among tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon across the dimensions of interaction with local communities, respect for local culture and traditions, and responsible use of social media.

Table 8
Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Tourist Behavior Among Three Factors

Indicators	MEAN	Standard Deviation	Description
Interaction with Local Communities	4.3747	.50304	Often
Respect for Local Cultures and Traditions	4.2303	.63850	Often
Responsible Use of Social Media	4.3413	.62414	Often
OVERALL MEAN	4.3154	.46758	OFTEN

LEGEND:

Scale/Range	Descriptive Rating
4.51- 5.00	Always
3.51- 4.50	Often
2.51- 3.50	Sometimes
1.51- 2.50	Rarely
1.00- 1.50	Never

The results showed an overall mean of 4.3154 (SD = 0.46758), interpreted as Often. This indicates that tourists generally demonstrate positive behaviors that reflect responsibility, cultural sensitivity, and Respect while visiting the destination.

Among the three dimensions, Interaction with Local Communities had the highest mean (M = 4.3747), followed by Responsible Use of Social Media (M = 4.3413) and Respect for Local Culture and Traditions (M = 4.2303). These results suggest that tourists actively engage with residents and communities while also demonstrating responsible digital Behavior and Respect for local cultural practices.

The findings suggest that tourists visiting Valencia City generally engage in behaviors that support cultural exchange, community engagement, and sustainable tourism. Their frequent interactions with residents, responsible social media practices, and respectful attitudes toward cultural traditions indicate that they recognize their role in maintaining positive relationships with host communities. However, the comparatively lower rating for Respect for local culture and traditions suggests that additional cultural orientation and educational initiatives may further strengthen culturally informed Behavior among tourists.

The findings are consistent with Alimin et al. (2025), who found that positive relationships with local communities encourage respectful tourist behavior and foster stronger emotional connections with destinations. Similarly, Tang et al. (2025) emphasized that both emotional engagement and a sense of responsibility toward destinations influence responsible tourist behavior. Moreover, Zhao et al. (2025) reported that tourists are more likely to engage in responsible behaviors when they perceive value in their travel experiences, while Sukmana and Kim (2024) emphasized that cultural learning enhances tourists' awareness and behavioral intentions. Collectively, these studies support the conclusion that tourists in Valencia City demonstrate a relatively high level of Tourist Behavior that contributes to culturally respectful and sustainable tourism practices.

3.3. Is there a significant relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Tourist Behavior?

3.3.1. Relationship Between the Dimensions of Cultural Sensitivity and Tourist Behavior

Table 9 presents the relationship between the dimensions of cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior among tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon. Specifically, the table examines correlations between the three dimensions of cultural sensitivity, cultural responsiveness, preservation and promotion, and Respect for cultural diversity, and the three dimensions of Tourist Behavior, interaction with local communities, Respect for local culture and traditions, and responsible use of social media.

The results showed that all correlation coefficients were positive and statistically significant, with p-values ranging from .000 to .028, all below the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that as

tourists' cultural sensitivity increases, their Tourist Behavior also tends to increase. Among the identified relationships, the strongest correlation was observed between Respect for cultural diversity and interaction with local communities ($r = .402$, $p = .000$), followed by preservation and promotion and interaction with local communities ($r = .388$, $p = .000$).

Table 9

Correlation Between the Dimensions of Cultural Sensitivity and Tourist Behavior

	Cultural Responsiveness	Preservation and Promotion	Respect for Cultural Diversity
Interaction with Local Communities	R= .317 P= .000 N= 150	R= .388 P= .000 N= 150	R= .402 P= .000 N= 150
Respect for Local Culture and Traditions	R= .274 P= .001 N= 150	R= .276 P= .001 N= 150	R= .253 P= .002 N= 150
Responsible Use of Social Media	R= .292 P= .000 N= 150	R= .360 P= .000 N= 150	R= .180 P= .028 N= 150

These findings suggest that tourists who recognize and value cultural diversity and cultural preservation are more likely to engage meaningfully with residents and participate in community-related activities. In contrast, the weakest but still significant correlation was between Respect for cultural diversity and responsible use of social media ($r = .180$, $p = .028$), indicating that although the relationship is weaker, higher appreciation of cultural diversity is still associated with more responsible online Behavior.

The findings imply that cultural sensitivity is an important factor influencing how tourists behave within a destination. Culturally responsive tourists who support cultural preservation and Respect cultural diversity tend to display behaviors that contribute positively to the tourism experience of both visitors and host communities. These behaviors include building meaningful interactions with residents, respecting local traditions, and sharing destination-related information responsibly on social media platforms. The results further suggest that strengthening cultural sensitivity among tourists may help promote sustainable tourism practices

and foster harmonious relationships between visitors and local communities.

Tang et al. (2025) support these findings, emphasizing that both emotional engagement and a sense of personal responsibility influence responsible tourist behavior. Their study found that tourists who develop stronger awareness of and connection to a destination are more likely to engage in socially responsible actions. Similarly, Im and Kim (2025) asserted that culturally informed tourists are less likely to engage in disrespectful Behavior because greater cultural awareness reduces stereotype-driven actions and promotes Respect for host communities. Furthermore, Alimin et al. (2025) found that positive relationships with local communities encourage tourists to behave more respectfully and responsibly, thereby strengthening sustainable tourism outcomes. Collectively, these studies support the present findings that increased cultural sensitivity contributes to more Tourist Behavior.

3.3.2. Overall Relationship Between Cultural Sensitivity and Tourist Behavior

Table 10 presents the overall relationship between cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior among tourists in Valencia City, Bukidnon.

Table 10
 Overall Correlation between Cultural Sensitivity and Tourist Behavior

	Cultural Sensitivity	Decision	Interpretation
Tourist Behavior	R= .416 P= .000 N= 150	The Null Hypothesis was Rejected.	There is a significant relationship between cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior in Valencia City, Bukidnon.

The results showed a correlation coefficient of $r = .416$ with a significance value of $p = .000$, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the study rejected the null hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between cultural sensitivity and Tourist Behavior.

The obtained correlation coefficient indicates a moderate positive relationship between cultural

sensitivity and Tourist Behavior. This means that tourists who demonstrate higher levels of cultural sensitivity also tend to exhibit higher levels of Tourist Behavior. Specifically, tourists who respond more positively to cultural differences, support cultural preservation efforts, and respect cultural diversity are more likely to interact positively with local communities, respect local cultures and traditions, and use social media responsibly. The positive relationship further indicates that improvements in cultural sensitivity are associated with corresponding improvements in tourist behavior.

The findings suggest that cultural sensitivity is a crucial foundation for responsible and sustainable tourism. When tourists possess greater awareness and appreciation of local cultures, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that promote mutual Respect, cultural understanding, and positive community-tourist relationships. This suggests that tourism stakeholders, destination managers, and local government units should continue implementing cultural orientation programs, heritage awareness campaigns, and educational initiatives that strengthen tourists' understanding of local culture. These efforts may help develop a more culturally respectful and sustainable tourism environment in Valencia City, Bukidnon.

Alimin et al. (2025) support these findings, finding that positive perceptions of local communities encourage tourists to develop stronger emotional connections with destinations, resulting in more responsible and respectful Behavior. Likewise, Zhao et al. (2025) reported that tourists are more likely to engage in positive and sustainable behaviors when they perceive greater value and meaning in their travel experiences. Moreover, Sukmana and Kim (2024) emphasized that greater cultural understanding contributes to more informed, respectful tourist conduct. These studies reinforce the present findings by showing that cultural awareness and sensitivity significantly drive tourist behavior and sustainable tourism practices.

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