

## Exploring the Growing Importance of Cultural Diversity: Case Studies of the Hospitality Industry

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*In environments characterized by extreme cultural diversity, the ability to understand the cultural makeup of the workforce would equip businesses with knowledge required for innovation and enhancing performance. So, managing culturally diverse employees is a key challenge, especially in the hospitality and tourism industry, where people with diverse cultural backgrounds from all over the world interact with each other. This paper is a conceptual research that outlines the concept of cultural diversity in the hospitality industry. In addition, it outlines the benefits and challenges regarding culturally diverse workplace. Furthermore, it addresses diversity management practices and why cultural intelligence is essential when managing employees.*

**Keywords:** *hospitality sector, multiculturalism, diversity management, cultural intelligence*

### Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry is labor intensive (Marchante et al. 2007) and is considered as one of the most rapidly growing sectors, accounting for more than a third of the total global services trade (Manoharan et al. 2021). This industry has been transformed not only into a global industry but, more importantly, into a highly competitive service and customer-oriented market (Kandampully et al. 2015). The people-centric nature of the industry makes it highly dependent on its employees, who play a critical role in delivering quality service comparable with the needs and expectations of its customers (Bharwani and Butt 2012). The provision of quality service has become a long-term strategy (Yoon and Ekinci 2003). The service-oriented strategy, of course, will lead to enhanced customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive image (Anderson and Narus 1990, Garbarino and Johnson 1999) that results in an overall advancement in company performance (Homburg et al. 2002).

Globalization has provided more opportunities for people to interact with others from different parts of the world (Reisinger 2009). In fact, cultural diversity

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is an important issue that should be taken into consideration especially in the hospitality industry (Christensen-Hughes 1992). It can be defined as a system that recognizes and respects the existence and presence of diverse groups of people within a society. Diversity helps in bringing new perspectives and innovative ideas to execute events and has many advantages if managed successfully (Thomas et al. 2015). Since 1960, the concept of cultural diversity has gained currency in academic research in areas related to organizational behavior and human resources management and currently touches upon research on organizational communication. Reportedly, initial efforts to address cultural diversity have focused mainly on gender and race (Mousa 2018). However, concerning the social, political, educational and economic changes occurring in both local and international environments, the term “cultural diversity” has remarkably expanded to include gender, race, religion, ethnicity, income, work experience, educational background, family status and other differences that may affect the workplace (Heuberger et al. 1999).

However, with people from diverse backgrounds working together, there is an increase in the number of conflicts in the organization, particularly in the hospitality and tourism industry, which has great dimensions with cultural diversity (Reisinger 2009). Consequently, this situation is greatly conducive to the emergence of cultural intelligence concept by Earley and Ang in 2003 which is commonly interpreted as representing an individual’s capability to interact and respond in cross-cultural settings.

Management of hospitality firms is responsible for ensuring that staffing procedures meet the objectives of having a multicultural environment. It is a demanding project to find a group of qualified, culturally diverse applicants for employment that gives a great help to the organization (Kreitz 2008, Saari and Korjala 2013). Furthermore, training programs regarding diversity, launching events that allow multi-cultured people gather will surely foster organizational success.

Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to overview the growing importance of cultural diversity in the hospitality industry. It also outlines the diversity management practices followed by hospitality organizations in order to enhance their performance. In addition, it explores the benefits of building a culturally diverse workforce as well as the related challenges. Furthermore, the paper explains the concept of cultural intelligence and why it is important to be considered when managing people with different backgrounds. This study is a conceptual research that focuses on gathering information about the cultural diversity. Secondary data such as publications, websites, books and journal articles have been used in order to complete the research. General information regarding cultural diversity and workplace diversity management was collected first and then case studies from the hospitality sector was gathered in order to support the study.

## **Cultural Diversity**

Cultural diversity, known as multiculturalism, is a quality of diverse and many different cultures. The term “cultural diversity” doesn’t only pertain to matters

of race or ethnicities. A culturally diverse workplace also means a system where people are recognized and respected for their different interests, talents, and skills (Reisinger 2009). Cultural diversity is defined as “a characteristic of social grouping that reflects the degree to which objective or subjective differences exist between group members” (Van Knippenberg and Schippers 2007). It refers to the co-existence of people with various group identities within the same organization. Malik et al. (2017) indicate that diversity requires the inclusion of all groups of people at all organizational levels.

Cultural diversity can be classified into two main dimensions. The first dimension which is called visible or primary dimension includes age, gender, sexual orientation and physical abilities which can be easily differentiated from one person to another as it can be visible in the first encounter. The second dimension that is also called invisible or secondary dimension refers to the communication style, educational background, ethnicity, nationality and religion which are not easily visible (Malik et al. 2017) and do not receive adequate attention.

Diversity is also derived from the interaction between visible and invisible diversity, which often generates inferences about the person’s internal attributes. Mazur (2010) added a third dimension which is called tertiary dimension. This dimension addresses beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, attitudes, feelings, values. All these aspects are seen as interacting in creating the identity of the individual, generating similarities and differentiations that affect the work environment. This viewpoint is a response to the conception that prevailed in the organizational field, according to which diversity was only associated with multicultural, multiethnic and multiracial aspects (Mazur 2010).

In the hospitality and business context, diversity is considered a subjective occurrence, initiated by group members themselves, by categorizing themselves as similar or different on the basis of their social identities. Originally, based on Tajfel’s (1982) study, the social identity aspect declares that people describe themselves according to their social environment and recognize others based on perceived similarity and dissimilarity. Individuals are clustered into separate groups based on this idea through the process of social categorization. This categorization results in the viewing of individuals through their common characteristics, rather than their unique attributes (Mousa 2018).

The issue of cultural diversity requires a hospitality organizational culture in which each employee can use his or her full capacity to attain career aspirations without being hobbled on the basis of diversity (Mousa 2018). Hence, Cox and Blake (1991) clarified that an effective management for multi-cultured groups should involve the attainment of both individual outcomes (job satisfaction, job mobility, job involvement and fair remuneration) and organizational outcomes (attendance, turnover, performance and consequently profit). Moreover, Pless and Maak (2004) declare the role of diversity management in creating an inclusive organizational climate where employee uniqueness is acknowledged, maintained and valued, in addition to allowing feelings of organizational citizenship and identification with the workplace.

## **Workplace Diversity in the Hospitality Industry**

Globalization has enhanced the diversity experienced in the hospitality and tourism industry because of its multicultural nature. Tourism refers to the movement of people from their usual surroundings to places of interest either within their country or across the world for leisure, business, or adventure. Hospitality, on the other hand, refers to providing services such as travel, accommodation and entertainment to meet the needs of tourists. Both hospitality and tourism industries aim at optimizing the experience of tourists in cultural environments that is different from those of their home countries or regions (Smith 2011, Man 2021).

These industries present a unique opportunity in understanding new cultural experiences for both employees and the travelers. It is important for employees to understand and appreciate different cultures to enhance their interactions with tourists with different cultures, religions, races, creeds, colors, ages, genders and sexual orientations. It is for this reason that businesses working in this industry must endeavor to train their personnel to appreciate and accommodate people from diverse backgrounds around the world. As such, workplace diversity not only facilitates easy understanding of different cultural, social and economic perspectives but also enhances the delivery of satisfactory services through communication and observation.

The workforce composition in the hospitality and tourism establishments is definitely vast and diverse. Indeed, it is necessary to employ people from all walks of life and nationalities so as to nurture workplace diversity that portends positive influence and enhanced productivity in the hospitality and tourism industry. Workplace diversity also enables businesses to nurture and portray a positive image of inclusive equal employment opportunities for all without regard to race, gender or nationality (Smith 2011, Skolnick 2021).

Workplace diversity in the hospitality and tourism industry is enhanced through vision that promotes equal employment opportunity to cater for the different nationalities in the market. The industry gets to appreciate the world's socio-cultural and economic differences through the recruitment of people of diverse backgrounds. As such, businesses in this industry need to establish organizational policies that not only discourage discrimination but also encourage intercultural activities such as cultural education programs and forums. Businesses should also employ organizational structure that is comprised of people from different regions and races and spread key appointments to qualified staff from across the board (Smith 2011).

## **Diversity Management**

According to Reiners (2022), diversity management is leadership's deliberate effort to plan and implement changes to an organization's systems and practices of managing people, so potential benefits from diversity are fully realized and potential disadvantages minimized. Diversity management refers to "utilizing the organizational culture and human resource management (HRM) practices to

increase or maintain the variety of the human capital on some given aspects and ensure that the variety in the human capital on these given aspects does not hinder the achievement of organizational objectives (Olsen and Martins 2012, p. 1161). Research studies on diversity management in the hospitality and tourism field have focused on various aspects related to diversity management including the business case for diversity (Singal 2014), disability inclusion (Gröschl 2007, Kalargyrou and Volis 2014), ethnic minority (Manoharan et al. 2014), gender diversity (Gröschl and Arcot 2014) and language diversity (Dawson et al. 2011). Gröschl and Doherty (1999) presented one of the earliest studies on diversity management focusing specifically on the hospitality and tourism industry. They recommended hospitality enterprises should highlight their commitment to diversity management by including it in their mission statements and supporting it with policies, procedures and management practices at all organizational levels.

To build a diverse workplace, it is crucial to recruit and hire talented employees from a variety of backgrounds. This requires leadership and others who make hiring decisions to overcome bias in interviewing and assessing talent. If organizations can break through bias and hire the most qualified people, those with the right education, credentials, experience and skills, a diverse workplace should be the natural result. Incorporate a diverse interview panel to ensure candidates are chosen solely based on suitability for the position. Managers should be trained on what can and cannot be asked in an interview. For example, questions about an applicant's personal life, such as religious or political beliefs, are off-limits (Man 2021, Skolnick 2021).

To manage a diverse workplace, organizations need to ensure that they effectively communicate with employees. A standard of rules should be set for all groups of employees regardless of their background. Management should ensure that all employment actions follow the standardized criteria to make sure each employee is treated the same. In addition, managers should avoid making assumptions about employees from different backgrounds. Instead, they should look at each employee as an individual and judge successes and failures on the individual's merit rather than attributing actions to their background (Man 2021, Skolnick 2021).

Language is another area that should be taken into consideration. Policies, procedures, and other important information should be designed to overcome language and cultural barriers by translating materials and using pictures and symbols whenever applicable. Focusing on gender diversity, Doherty (2004) attributed the disadvantage and gender inequality for women in the workplace to their dual roles. For example, discrimination and lack of flexible working hours lead to the failure of women to progress to the most senior levels of management, in spite of making significant progress into middle management in the hospitality industry.

Kalargyrou and Volis (2014) focused on diversity management practices related to disability inclusion. These practices include establishing diversity inclusion councils or teams, providing training and education to non-disabled employees about working and interacting with employees with disabilities, appraising employees with disabilities' performance through formal and informal

performance appraisals, and providing various accommodation practices to support employees with disabilities in the workplace.

Manoharan et al. (2014) identified two contrasting strategies to diversity management: identity-blind and identity-conscious. The former does not take into account any differences among employees for human resource decision-making process, while the latter includes the demographic group in the decision-making process (Manoharan et al. 2014). They explored four functions of the human resource management; recruitment, training and development, performance management, and compensation and concluded that the formal diversity management functions were identity-blind in relation to HRM practices but were identity-conscious in regard to equal opportunity employment and anti-discrimination.

Accordingly, the main goal of diversity training should be a change in attitudes leading to a change in behaviors and should rise above simply raising awareness towards cultural diversity (Dawson et al. 2011). In addition, these training programs should teach employees how to better appreciate the views of others, what actions are offensive and why they are perceived as such, the way to calmly communicate that a co-worker has offended them and the way to resolve the conflict properly.

### **Cultural Intelligence (CQ)**

While there is increasing recognition of the business case for culturally inclusive work settings, there is a critical lack of understanding of how to achieve this. A culturally inclusive workplace requires a culturally intelligent workforce and leadership. Cultural intelligence and inclusion training pass on the foundation of knowledge, skills, and mindsets required to work effectively with culturally diverse stakeholders and to foster culturally inclusive work settings.

The term of cultural intelligence was first coined in 2003 by two researchers, Earley and Ang, from the London School of Business (Kamal Abdien and Jacob 2018, Nosratabadi et al. 2020). They defined CQ as the ability of the individual to interact effectively with people who are culturally diverse with the cultural context of the individual (Nosratabadi et al. 2020). Individuals demonstrating higher levels of CQ are more likely to thrive and flourish in culturally diverse situations than individuals who exhibit lower levels of CQ (Lee et al. 2018).

CQ is one of the dimensions of multiple intelligences and is similar in some respects to social intelligence and emotional intelligence, which focuses on a set of skills for effective behavior in different situations (Moon 2010). For instance, CQ is different from emotional intelligence (EQ) that focuses on the ability of an individual to deal with emotions. A person with high EQ in a specific culture may not be emotionally intelligent in another culture. On the one hand, CQ focuses on cross-cultural interactions in settings with different races, ethnicities, and nationalities; and on the other hand, it supports the practicality of globalization that involves intercultural settings (Kamal Abdien and Jacob 2018, Nosratabadi et al. 2020). Cultural intelligence is a multidimensional concept that involves four

competences; cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and behavioral (Kamal Abdien and Jacob 2018, Nosratabadi et al. 2020, Ang et al. 2006, Van Dyne et al. 2012).

Cognitive CQ refers to an individual's knowledge of the norms, practices and customs of other cultures. This knowledge can be acquired through education or personal experience (Kamal Abdien and Jacob 2018, Nosratabadi et al. 2020). According to Van Dyne et al. (2012), this dimension involves two main elements: culture-general knowledge and context-specific knowledge. Culture-general knowledge is defined as the general knowledge about a specific cultural environment in terms of similarities and differences. Context-specific knowledge provides them with more details about the different cultures to interact effectively with persons from these cultures (Ang and Inkpen 2008, Ang et al. 2006, Brislin et al. 2006, Van Dyne et al. 2012). People with high cognitive CQ can distinguish between the similarities and differences across cultures.

Metacognitive CQ represents the mental processes that individuals use to acquire and understand cultural knowledge. This means that an individual is aware of people or situations in cross-cultural interactions (Ljubica and Dulcic 2012). It makes them aware of their cultural preferences before and during communication and helps them to adapt accordingly. Metacognitive CQ involves three elements; planning, awareness and checking. Planning includes the individuals' careful thinking to develop action plans to be followed in specific cultural contexts. Awareness includes individuals' attentiveness to their cultural habits and how they employ their cultural knowledge to interact effectively with those from different cultural backgrounds, while checking refers to individuals evaluating their mental plans and expectations and to what extent they behaved effectively during the cultural interactions, adapting their knowledge structures (Ang and Inkpen 2008, Ang et al. 2006, Brislin et al. 2006, Van Dyne et al. 2012). A high metacognitive CQ enables hotel managers to isolate themselves from their own cultural background and interact effectively with people from other cultures.

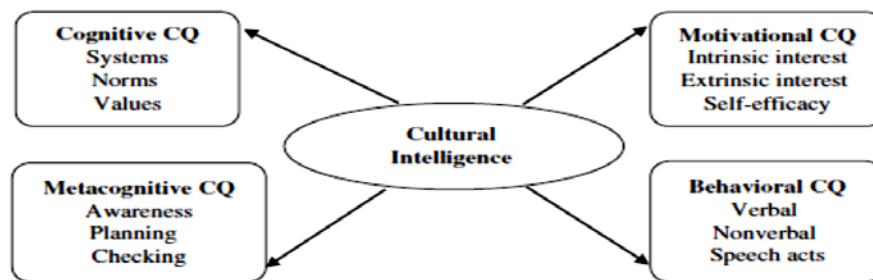
Motivational CQ is the drive one needs to be a part of and succeed in a multicultural environment. It refers to the individuals' concern, confidence and interest to know about different cultures (Ljubica and Dulcic 2012) and their desire to interact with culturally diverse people. It involves three main elements; intrinsic interest, extrinsic interest and self-efficacy (Van Dyne et al. 2012). Intrinsic interest refers to the individuals' real satisfaction from interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds. Extrinsic interest refers to the individuals' tangible returns that can be acquired from cultural interactions or international work assignments such as promotions and rewards. Self-efficacy refers to the confidence to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds and confidence to work in culturally diverse groups (Ang et al. 2006, Brislin et al. 2006, Van Dyne et al. 2012).

Behavioral CQ is the individuals' ability to behave appropriately in different cultural contexts. It involves both verbal and nonverbal actions when communicating with people from different cultures and brings together three main elements; verbal behavior, non-verbal behavior and speech acts (Van Dyne et al. 2012). Verbal behavior includes changing the mode of expression such as the level of warmth, enthusiasm, formality to adapt to the cultural context and flexibility in

using pauses and silence. Non-verbal behavior includes changing gestures, facial expressions and body language to adapt to the cultural context. Speech acts include changing the way to request, invite, apologize, appreciate, disagree and say “no” (Ang and Inkpen 2008, Ang et al. 2006, Brislin et al. 2006, Van Dyne et al. 2012).

To sum up, as mentioned in Figure 1, the cognitive dimension includes systems, norms and values while the metacognitive dimension includes awareness, planning and checking. Furthermore, the motivational dimension refers to the interest and self-efficacy while the behavioral refers to the verbal, non-verbal behaviors and speech acts. According to Ivanova Yordanova and Ivanova Alexandrova-Boshnakova (2011), a high CQ helps individuals to have a broader understanding in multicultural situations and fosters individuals’ abilities to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds (Kamal Abdien and Jacob 2018). In the hospitality industry, CQ is highly significant as hospitality managers interact daily with cultural diversity among their employees and customers. Additionally, hotel managers may be required to perform international assignments where they need to work effectively with other team members from other cultures. Therefore, it is not enough for hotel managers to merely know about business operations such as finance, human resource management or marketing; they also need to have skills and experience in communicating with people from other cultures (Alon and Higgins 2005). Cultural intelligence training programs should be developed for employees in order to be able to interact with culturally different colleagues as well as customers.

**Figure 1.** *Cultural Intelligence Dimensions*



Source: Van Dyne et al. (2012).

### **Benefits of Workplace Diversity**

Kim (2006) introduced a multidimensional structure to diversity management practices with its foundation on the four broad benefits of diversity management. These include the maintenance of a heterogeneous workforce, improvement in firm's growth, alleviation of the firm's image, and adoption of a pool of talented human resources. An organization's success and competitiveness depend upon its ability to embrace diversity and realize its benefits. When organizations proactively assess their handling of workplace diversity issues and develop and implement diversity plans, there are multiple benefits to the organization. Fundamentally,



cultural diversity creates cultural competence for the organization. It has several ways of providing a competitive edge and increased productivity in the hospitality business (Devine et al. 2007).

### *Building Images*

Cultural diversity can help to enhance corporation images. The hospitality industry has been somewhat passive about building a positive industry image for the public (Gong 2008). Hospitality organizations should take some actions to build an image that the industry is willing to recruit more valuable minority employees from diverse cultures. This kind of message can attract more young people to take hospitality as a possible career option. In addition, a culturally diverse workforce can make a company look and feel more like the neighbor communities that it serves. This kind of image can help the companies in the hospitality industry to be better recognized and accepted by diverse communities (Devine et al. 2007).

### *Improved Cultural Awareness and Work Ethics*

Culture and cultural awareness are advantages of employing culturally diverse employees. This is considered to enrich the work environment (Manoharan et al. 2021). When people from different ethnic backgrounds sit together during different activities such as breaks and lunch time, all sitting and talking, they exchange their cultures, traditions and customs that adds benefit to both customers and employees. The number of culturally diverse employees working in hotels reflects the multicultural setting, and can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage, because diversity can bring in a breadth of knowledge and is valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate (Richard 2000). In addition, culturally diverse employees enhance work ethics and broaden the group's perspectives about every culture leading to enhanced performance (Patrick and Kumar 2012, Iguchi 2016).

### *Wide Range of Knowledge*

Cultural diversity enables employees to become more knowledgeable of diverse colleagues and customers of the organization. The quality of ideas and solutions produced by diverse groups is higher than the quality of ideas from homogeneous groups (Manoharan et al. 2021). Culturally diverse employees are unique, bringing broad experience and a wide range of knowledge, which can provide hotel guests with novel, diverse cultural experiences (Guo and Al Ariss 2015, Iguchi 2016). It can help broaden their views and the way they approach problems in the future (Devine et al. 2007). Employees bring experiences and individual skills to the work community as well as more ideas and suggestions that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands.

*Better Customer Service*

Organizations employing a diverse workforce are supplied with a greater variety of solutions to problems, especially in customer service (Devine et al. 2007). When people have different views and backgrounds, they often perceive a problem from distinct perspectives. Diverse members can better understand and ultimately help those customers who are similar to them. From the customer's perspective, they feel more comfortable when dealing with an organization's employees that are like them. They feel an identity with associates like them and are more willing to interact with organizational employees who are culturally knowledgeable (Iguchi 2016). Also, language proficiency of culturally diverse employees often has a positive impact with guests. Having employees with multilingual abilities in hotels can be a substantial source of competitive advantage (Choi et al. 2017, Markova et al. 2013).

*Commitment to the Profession*

According to Manoharan et al. (2021), Cairncross and Kelly (2008) highlighted the fact that employees from some cultures appeared willing to commit to hospitality as a profession, which meant that they brought to their work a difference in attitude featuring a sense of professionalism, and a willingness to learn and to contribute to the team. It is highly probable that when culturally diverse employees display their commitment to the profession by taking hospitality courses, turnover in hotels is reduced (Manoharan et al. 2021). Cultural diversity also results in more effective execution. It increases productivity on complex tasks. These tasks usually require difficult cognitive input which in turn requires knowledge resources, like information, skills, critical analysis and perspectives that diverse members can provide. Companies, who encourage cultural diversity, also encourage and motivate people to perform to their highest ability. Basically, cultural diversity reinforces continuous improvement. It will result in higher profit, productivity and return on investment (Gong 2008).

**Challenges Related to Cultural Diversity**

Despite the fact that there are benefits to cultural diversity, there are also some challenges. Cross-cultural challenges arise from cultural gaps. As the industry grows, opportunities for misinterpretation and misunderstanding of workforce and customer needs can be enhanced (Rosinski 2003). In order to avoid cultural tensions and frustration and successfully deal with multi-cultured employees, people in the hospitality industry must recognize and understand the importance of cultural differences in meeting diverse coworkers' and tourists' needs. Some of the challenges related to cultural diversity are acceptance, communication challenges, discrimination challenges, training challenges and conflicts relating to work attitudes (Gong 2008).

### *Acceptance*

Companies that seek diversification must ensure that their employees accept it. Often people are distrustful and anxious about things they do not understand. This applies to encountering and working with people with backgrounds different from theirs (Embroker 2022).

### *Communication Challenges*

Communication is a major challenge for culturally diverse workplaces due to perceptual, cultural and language barriers (Devine et al. 2007). Miscommunication is very likely to occur among diverse organization members. Different languages and various cultural backgrounds increase the difficulty of communication between employees in the workplaces. Language is always viewed as a crucial aspect among all the cultural features that make up cultural identity. Understanding of other languages is almost necessary. If there are insufficient conditions for the understanding of the phenomenon of culture, language differences will truly result in miscommunication (Powell 2006).

Even if all the people around a table speak the same language, cultural differences can create strong barriers to understanding (Earley and Peterson 2004). In fact, there may be a group of people who purposely use language that excludes people from certain groups. Particularly, when individuals fail to conduct an effective cultural communication, they may feel themselves excluded. At the same time, some feelings may be provoked such as suspicion, lack of confidence, and even hostility (Aytemiz Seymen 2016). Even simple misunderstandings caused by cultural and other differences in behavior, work attitudes, and communication styles disturb the workforce (Gong 2008). Ineffective communication of key objectives results in confusion, lack of teamwork, and low morale.

### *Discrimination Issues*

Today, it cannot be ignored that cultural differences increase the possibility of discrimination issues among workers. Racism, sexism, ageism, and homophobia are great challenging factors in culturally diverse contexts. Direct and indirect discrimination among workers have continually reported in companies with cultural diversity workforce (Baum et al. 2007). In fact, discrimination not only happen among employees. Sometime employers can also easily involve in discrimination issue. For example, there are indications that some employers only focus on recruiting minority but do not provide career progression for them (Baum et al. 2007). Due to some stereotypes, minority employees get jobs in lower-skill level and might encounter difficulty to be promoted to management level (Baum et al. 2007). Beside the discrimination issues between employees, it also happens between employees and customers or between an organization's rules and customers. For instance, restaurants who refuse to seat guests with mental disabilities or treating them in a way that is different from other customers.

Having a culturally diverse environment means that off-color jokes about ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or religion need to be met with zero-tolerance enforcement. Slurs, name-calling and bullying employees for any reason have no place in today's workplace. Policies should be put in place to handle misconduct and communicate to employees that this type of behavior will not be tolerated (Embroke 2022).

#### *Conflicts Due to Different Working Attitudes and Styles*

Colleagues from different cultures can also bring with them different workplace attitudes, values, behaviors, and etiquette. While these can be enriching and even beneficial in a diverse professional environment, they can also cause misunderstandings between team members. For instance, expectation of formality or relative informality, and even working hours can conflict across cultures. Where a Japanese colleague may not feel it appropriate to leave work before their manager, a Swedish professional may be used to a 6-hour working day (Reynolds 2019).

Additionally, working styles and attitudes towards work can be very different. If these are not recognized and accounted, conflicting approaches to work can put the brakes on productivity. For instance, approaches to teamwork and collaboration can vary notably. Some cultures, including many in Asia and Central America, value collective consensus when working towards a goal. Whereas others, such as Germany and America, place emphasis on the independence of the individual (Reynolds 2019).

#### *Training Challenges*

Diversity training aims at building up respect and increasing sensitivity for all of the differences among employees and customers. In order to develop a diverse workforce, it is essential to reduce cultural ethnocentrism and shortsightedness in employees (Gong 2008). Multicultural training plays a major role in order to increase the awareness of cultural diversity in employees and build up a culturally enriched environment in a company (Baum et al. 2007). Training programs need to be held to employees to help them to understand the requirements and benefits of the cultural diversity. In addition, they should be given training to increase their knowledge and skills in dealing with people having different cultural backgrounds (Baum et al. 2007). Language training and cross-culture-gap training are important and helpful to minority employees, especially to immigrant employees and expatriate managers. However, no single course can sufficiently prepare trainees for interaction with every culture in the world. Besides, how to conduct the training and meantime control the training costs are also challenges to the current hospitality companies who devote to develop cultural diversity.

## **Essential Assessment for Cultural Diversity Awareness**

Sometimes people need to assess their own cultural awareness. Also, employers in diverse workplaces may need to assess the cultural awareness of employees before hiring. So, in order to identify their awareness regarding cultural diversity, there are two assessments interrelated to each other: personality tests and cultural diversity awareness tests. They need to assess their personalities first as personality correlates with cultural intelligence. This happens through personality tests which determine how people think, work and act. The second one is the cultural diversity awareness test which is more comprehensive in cultural diversity.

According to Menzies (2015), there are main personality qualities that correlates with cultural intelligence which are: Extroversion (E), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), Neuroticism (N) and Openness to experience (O). These personality traits can be assessed through the Big Five Personality Test. Extroversion (E) is the personality trait of seeking fulfillment from sources in the community. Extroverts seek out and enjoy social interactions, including exchanges with individuals from backgrounds different from their own. Agreeableness (A) reflects how individuals adjust their behavior to suit others. This typically means that the person is polite and likes people. Conscientiousness (C) is the personality trait of being honest and hardworking. Individuals who score high on conscientiousness are known for being determined and having strong wills. Neuroticism (N) is the quality of being emotional. Neuroticism tends to lack emotional stability and are often characterized as nervous and moody. Finally, openness to Experience (O) refers to the trait of seeking new experience and intellectual pursuits. Individuals who are open to new experiences are inquisitive and receptive to cultural variations. They are eager to learn about cultural differences and are willing to try new behaviors and consider alternative perspectives (Menzies 2015)

On the other hand, cultural diversity awareness tests provide an in-depth analysis of people's beliefs and behaviors regarding cultural diversity and inclusion. The cultural diversity awareness assessment includes questions regarding how people act in certain situations related to diversity. These tests help identify their extent to which individuals are aware of and understand their prejudices and biases. Furthermore, they help to understand the potential consequences of their approach to diversity in the workplace (Goldberg 1992).

Both types of assessments include a questionnaire of several items mostly rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from never to always. A higher score on these assessments indicates that the person is acutely aware of cultural diversity, and that he is very aware of the impact of his behavior on others. Individuals who score high relate to others in ways that value diversity. On the other hand, lower scores suggest that the person is unaware of prejudice and bias, and that he is not fully aware of the impact of his biased behavior on others. Individuals who score low communicate with others in ways that do not value diversity.

## **Hotels Diversity and Inclusion Programs**

### *Marriott Hotels*

Marriott International Hotel Chain is committed to providing a world of opportunity for its associates, customers, suppliers, owners and many other key stakeholders with meaningful and impactful programs in place. According to Marriott website, their diversity and inclusion programs include: Women's Leadership Development Initiative, The Emerging Leader Program (ELP), Exchanges Program, The Diversity Ownership Initiative, Culture Days Program, Human Trafficking Awareness Training, and Serve 360 initiative (Marriott 2019).

Many initiatives of Marriott were designed and implemented throughout the last 20 years. For instance, Women's Leadership Development Initiative's goal is to develop a strong pipeline of female leaders. Today, women comprise about 54% of Marriott's total workforce and hold some of the most significant policy-making positions in the chain. Another initiative is The Emerging Leader Program (ELP). A key pillar of their diversity and inclusion strategy to increase the numbers of women and minorities in leading roles. More than 1,300 leaders have completed or are currently enrolled in this program. In addition to these initiatives, there is also a program called The Diversity Ownership Initiative. This program introduces the hotel business to successful business owners who are females or people of color. Today, more than 1,300 hotels are owned by diverse and women entrepreneurs (Marriott 2019).

Moreover, "Exchanges" is a Diverse Supplier Program. Marriott International conducts business with more than 4,000 minority-, women-, and disabled-owned businesses annually and has spent over 5 billion dollars with diverse suppliers over the past decade. Furthermore, "Culture Days" is an immersive training program that is designed to build cultural competence and confidence. This program spans 13 countries and cultures, giving attendees a unique opportunity to experience and appreciate appropriate cultural terms, business and social protocols, traditions, trends, cuisine, and clothing. By 2025, Marriott's Serve 360 plan includes investing at least 5 million dollars to increase and deepen programs and partnerships that develop hospitality skills and opportunity among youth, diverse populations, women, people with disabilities and refugees (Marriott 2019).

### *Accor Hotels*

Accor Hotels International is one of the major hotel chains that encourage diversity and inclusion. Their diversity quote is "Welcoming others, giving recognition, drawing on their differences and valuing them: those principles are rooted in our DNA! We celebrate individuality, encourage creativity and reward agility". Their Diversity ambition is structured around four priorities: gender diversity and equality, multi-generational synergy, the integration of people with disabilities and the breadth of ethnic, social and cultural origins. Since 2017, they make every effort to promote diversity and fight against discrimination, particularly in France 2018, a large part of the action plan defined by the Group had been

implemented: awareness-raising sessions, creation of a practical guide and pocket leaflet on recruitment without discrimination (Accor 2019).

Conscious of gender and diversity challenges, they are committed to actively promoting women and young people to management positions in both headquarters and hotels. In 2018, 35% of their general managers were women (scope subsidiaries, franchisees, managed). In 2015, Accor joined “HeForShe”; a solidarity movement for gender equality initiated by UN Women, to ensure that actions to foster gender equality are driven by both women and men (Accor 2019).

As they are focusing on the integration of people with disabilities, Accor is a pioneering member of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network. Launched in June 2011, this United Nations initiative brings together multinational companies committed to including people with disabilities in the workplace. They particularly mobilize their employees to promote the integration of people with disabilities during two major events each year: The International Day of Persons with Disabilities and the Duoday. For instance, during the DuoDay (May 16th, 2019), volunteer employees have the opportunity to work in pairs with people with disabilities all over the world.

In 2017, Accor Hotels launched a pilot intergenerational program. Digital natives, called “smart digits” who have less than five years’ experience with the company get together to share mindset, culture and leadership approach with a “smart leader”; someone who has lived and breathed the organization for longer (Accor 2019).

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

“Diversity is more diverse than ever”. It is clear that globalization will shrink boundaries and cultural diversity will become more important than ever. Diversity will become an essential factor in the hospitality business, both in the workforce and the marketplace. Expanding international trade and immigration flow will continue to develop and the diversity will exponentially grow in the future at the expense of global markets (PwC 2011).

The issue of cultural diversity is revealed as one of the important aspects within the hospitality industry. The purpose of this study was to illustrate the influences of cultural diversity in the hospitality industry and increase awareness of its importance in today’s globalizing industry. It aimed at incorporating some best practices of cultural diversity. In addition, the research gave an in-depth insight into the understanding of the cultural intelligence and its importance in managing a culturally diverse workplace. Furthermore, it highlighted the main benefits of managing a multi-cultured team as well as the obstacles that organizations may encounter during managing those teams (PwC 2011).

Cultural diversity has both pros and cons but there are great solutions available in order to make hospitality organizations more successful through cultural diversity. The benefits are extensive with cultural diversity, but challenges are big as well. Some solutions can bridge the gap between these benefits and challenges. Accordingly, cultural diversity solutions are extremely important for organizations

(Saari and Korjala 2013). First of all, hospitality organizations need to change and reassess their cultural diversity approach and make an effective cultural diversity management plan as a part of their corporate strategy (Friday and Friday 2003). Additionally, the strategy should be convenient in order to implement it in practice, particularly with diversity training.

An organizational strategy is logical in order to achieve movement into a desired goal. It gives guidelines how jobs and people should be organized (Kossek 2000). For an organization to fully practice the complexity of diversity culture change, it needs to pay attention to three major categories: individual attitudes and behaviors, managerial skills and practices, and organizational values and policies (Saari and Korjala 2013). Individual attitudes and behaviors are really crucial to understand. Individuals should think about their behavior and recognize their approaches and actions towards multiple diversity related topics. For example, how they feel if there are several languages spoken in the workplace. In order to change more towards a diverse understanding of their work environment, individuals at work must acknowledge their own behavior and attitudes towards all the diversity factors and respectively appreciate them. These behaviors will eventually influence organizational culture, openness to coworkers as well as customer service. However, individual changes are not that dominant that it would influence to change the corporate culture (Kreitz 2008).

Furthermore, cultural diversity change requires management professionalism. Managerial skills and practices need to be changed to broaden management styles due to the diverse individuals with different skills and perspectives on tasks. The fusion of a culturally diverse workforce needs to be managed actively by supervising, coordinating and directing (Friday and Friday, 2003). One style of management is not possible for an organization with a wide range of employees in order to contribute to the topmost height of performance. In addition, involvement and feedback from employees is recommended for the management in order to improve the needs and equality. Finally, organizational values and policies are the most demanding tasks of the three cultural diversity changes (Saari and Korjala, 2013).

Based on Clements and Jones (2006), one of the most efficient ways to implement diversity to the employees is diversity training. Educating and training the workforce leads to the development of in-house expertise. Organizational efforts to inform and educate employees about diversity benefits to the organization will assist in greater organizational performance. Long-run reassessments are vital in order to improve and measure business performance. The first of these assessments serves as a great benchmarking tool for future assessments. For example, organizations can launch a customizable cultural diversity employee survey as a reassessment method that provides broad reporting from the entire workforce. Reassessments should answer two types of questions, including the process as well as the results in order to benefit the most from the evaluations (Saari and Korjala 2013). Furthermore, valid and reliable performance measurements, such as benchmarking or comparative analyses of other organizations are great assessment tools. To sum up, both evaluations and assessments are an integral part



of management. They will show the current state of the cultural diversity strategic process.

Beside the diversity training programs, leading by example is an effective tool in managing cultural diversity. Managers are not only responsible to be role models, but additionally, all employees at every department must conduct culture infusion and be committed to its practice. This can happen through culture days and events or daily rehearsal examples. Daily rehearsals educate employees concerning different cultures and culture days of the organization allow multi-cultured workers interact together.

Additionally, the Human Resources Department is responsible for taking care of staffing procedures to meet the objectives of having a multicultural workforce (Kreitz 2008, Saari and Korjala 2013). The department should make sure that managers and executive team members incorporate cultural diversity policies into all departments and functions of the organization. Their primary task is to establish a culture that serves most beneficially the organization's cultural diversity plan. Management needs to create an attitude of honesty and openness that employees' ideas and comments are encouraged to be expressed. It also invents a feeling of equal value. For managers, promoting diversity in leadership positions offers visibility and understanding of the genuine benefits of diversity. Managers are recommended to consider a succession plan for identifying and developing a diverse pool of talent for an organization's potential future leaders as well as the recruitment process, which plays an integral part in strategic cultural diversity leadership. It is a demanding project to find a suitable supply of qualified, diverse applicants for employment. These tools will give great assistance to the organization (Kreitz 2008, Saari and Korjala 2013).

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This work presents some limitations. This research is conceptual that focuses only on gathering data. It depends on theories based on existing literature, rather than experimentation and observation, draw conclusions that are less fact-based and may not necessarily be considered reliable. Future research in this field is better to be quantitative. Surveys and field studies with employees asking about the diversity practices in their workplace and barriers they face when working with culturally diverse teams would contribute to the advancement of knowledge about cultural diversity. Furthermore, more research needs to be conducted on cultural diversity training and the different programs established in hospitality organizations and how to improve those training programs.

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