

CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

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Annotation: Cultural diversity refers to the presence of individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It is important in the hospitality and tourism industry as it enhances innovation and performance.

Key words: culture, tourism, touris, behavior, recpet.

There has been increasing concern about the fact, that immigrants having cultural backgrounds very different from the host country might cause serious problems leading to conflicts, and the integration of immigrants of different backgrounds might become difficult or impossible. According to a general assumption, if immigrants have an ethnic, religious and cultural background similar to the host country, their integration may be easier, but otherwise the challenge may be too hard to face. If the new, ethnically different immigrant population will not, or cannot become integrated, keeping strictly to their traditional home culture, customs and marrying within their own subgroup, then ethnic differences may survive long after the arrival of the immigrants to the host country, and cultural diversification is maintained in every levels of life. Ethnic or cultural fractionalisation may bring about difficulties of understanding and cooperation, ethnic conflicts, lower economic performance, less stable economic and social situation and, ultimately a decrease in economic output. On the other hand, ethnic and cultural diversity can be beneficial through diversification of knowledge, traditions, skills, customs, that can become a source of innovative ideas and creativity. Tourism, as one of the major sectors of the world economy, is particularly sensitive to diversity. Tourism attractions are various, including visiting friends and relatives, health, leisure and entertainment, love of nature, and culture. Cultural tourism, as a major tourism motivation, includes visits to tangible and intangible cultural resources, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy the visitors' cultural needs. Cultural traditions are often linked to unique features of the host population, and are related to a national minority or a segment of the population who preserve their traditions. Multiculturality is often an attraction for tourism, offering generally an authentic experience for visitors of different backgrounds.

Cultural diversity affects the hospitality industry from the time a hotel is conceived. When you are creating a hotel in a country that has a distinct culture, it's important to be sensitive to these differences and incorporate elements that are important to each society.

For example, if you are building a hotel in Italy, it is paramount to include a bidet in the bathroom as Italians have the custom of using the bidet on a daily basis, sometimes even in place of a shower. Or in Japan, it is customary to take your shoes off when you go into a room, so if you're building a hotel in Japan, you might consider incorporating a shoes-off policy inside the rooms. It's also ideal to have a property management system in place that will help you better understand who your guest is and adapt to their needs. If you have a lot of guests from a tech-

savvy culture like Japan who are used to using technology in their everyday lives, you can use a self-service kiosk and a virtual assistant who will make them feel more at home and avoid the language barrier of your front desk staff not speaking Japanese.

Having guests and staff from different backgrounds brings diverse perspectives to your hotel, allowing for a convergence of different ideas and a wonderful way to create connections. Differences spark curiosity and represent a great way for both guests and staff to interact and learn new ways of doing things.

By hosting guests from different backgrounds, you make your hotel experience richer and more interesting because at the end of the day, one of the key motivations people travel is to experience different cultures.

Improved customer service

By having a culturally diverse team, you're able to better attend to different types of guests, no matter where they come from. Facilitating cross-cultural communication and fully understanding that each guest's needs and ways of communicating are unique depending on where they come from, you can gain an edge over the competition.

An example of this edge could be in the case of tight-knit religious communities where word-of-mouth is a strong force. When someone from one of these communities has a positive experience at your hotel, they are more likely to recommend it to a friend and to turn into repeat guests.

The chance to innovate

Innovation is driven by different perspectives and by having staff and guests from diverse backgrounds, you're more likely to inspire innovation. That could be by offering products and services that are popular in other countries which haven't yet made it to the country where your hotel is located, or by integrating amenities that for one culture might not be a necessity but are for others.

Better market segmentation

By having a diverse staff, you can also serve a more diverse population. That means you can have a better market segmentation because you can better understand their pain points and address their needs so that you can reach a wider audience, adapting your services and products to the market demands.

Managing a diverse workforce is not easy, but it's key to a more effective operation and providing a high level of service. In order to successfully manage a diverse team, It's important to establish policies that promote inclusivity, setting up regular training, and reinforcing the importance of acceptance in daily staff meetings. You may even consider promoting intercultural awareness by having staff members share their own experiences and traditions. If it's the holiday time, you could even organize a dinner where each staff member brings a traditional holiday dish, which is a great way to celebrate differences. Part of managing a diverse workforce is playing an active role in making sure that not only your staff but also your leadership is aware of the importance of diversity in your organization, knowing that if anyone is disrespected, they have a place to go or someone they can talk to and there is a protocol in place to handle such a situation. Diversity can apply not only to customers, but also to staff, which is why it's so important to incorporate acceptance into your hotel's modus operandi. In fact, it's a key part of managing a successful hotel staff and ensures they are prepared to handle any kind of situation that they are faced with, no matter where the guest comes from.

Managing diversity in a multicultural enterprise should start from the lowest level of an organization management and be reflected up to the top. Furthermore, leaders should constitute

teams that reflect strong gender sensitivity and representation. Most societies from Hofstede's perspective of masculinity versus femininity offer male gender better positions than the female.

It is important to note that due to the current male dominance in most organizations and middle level management, human resources management should facilitate the change of trend by ensuring equity in teams. Use of teams in societal working as Schwartz postulates in his cultural value model gives all members of a workforce a chance to learn and perfect their skills in line with their company's objectives. Teams would further allow all workers irrespective of their race, gender, religion or origin to assert their skills and prove their critiques wrong. With acting as latter source of leaders and managers, Shwartz conclusion that they create the best basis for anchoring diversity and equity is therefore correct. Schwartz dimension above is almost congruent with Hofstede's homonymous dimension. In his power distance dimension, Hofstede points out that the degree of equality in a society should be stressed since it allows upward mobility for citizens. Managing a multicultural enterprise requires balancing power distances between the management and workers to minimize inequalities.

For instance, at Dell Company, emphasis on equity and diversity is reflected at all levels including the top management. The management of the company should be reflected from the top. The top management should be a role model and reflect diversity in itself. Hence, there is need to include disabled people, both genders, and different races in the top decision making teams to create the sense of equity to lower levels of the company. Both to lower level management and the community, a diverse top leadership team would be easy to emulate and ultimately make similar applications easier.

The emerging competitive business environment calls for effective and competent international management skills. The foundation of successful management functions in international markets is dependent on intercultural skills of multinational managers as already discussed.

Similarly, international markets are affected by variety of internal and external factors that are likely to hinder business operations in the foreign country. Proper application of the four management activities is what guarantees success in achieving international and national business goals and objectives. On the same note, the growth and development of tourism industry demands effective management of international tourist platforms and destinations (Bhatia, 2001). Organizations today both in international and home markets are directing most of their efforts towards achieving two important goals; increase profitability and securing their competitiveness for the future. To achieve the above goals effectively, businesses appointed managers who are entrusted to carry out various managerial activities to steer the business towards its goals and objectives are needed. Scholars in management have identified four management concepts that assist international organizations to achieve their set goals and objectives if effectively executed.

The most basic operation of international tourism management is planning. It acts as a foundation upon which all the other functions of management are built upon. The process of planning involves a critical assessment of the organization in terms of its present positioning in the market, and the future threats and opportunities it is likely to encounter. The results of the above evaluation are what determine the course of action that a company will adopt to achieve the set goals and objectives. Additionally, international managers should note that planning activity is a continuous process that should be modified as an organization faces sudden challenges and identifies new opportunities in the course of attaining objectives and goals. Sometimes, external factors that affect a business negatively may compel a multinational enterprise to redesign new action plans to accomplish certain goals especially when operating in unfamiliar regions. For

example, a new brand of soap in the market might force the companies dealing with similar products to rethink of new marketing strategies to maximize their positioning in the market. Research has shown that business environments are evolving continuously, therefore, it had become extremely difficult to predict what changes might be present in the future.

Conclusion. In this article we've looked at what cultural diversity is, why it's important in the hospitality industry and how to manage a diverse team. Because the hotel industry is by nature multicultural, it's key to have staff that's trained in how to best manage these differences and to promote an environment that nurtures this multiculturalism. When handled right, these differences can be one of the greatest strengths in the hospitality industry, and creates an environment where diversity can be celebrated. It also unlocks the key to a unique experience, the chance to innovate, and to differentiate your hotel from the competition.

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