



How to benefit from a multicultural work environment to provide better employee experience

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Abstract

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<p>This research based thesis is commissioned by a hospitality company situated in the heart of Helsinki. Throughout this thesis, the author will be referring to its commissioner as Hotel X to maintain anonymity of the company. The main objective of this thesis is to help the commissioning company to understand their employees better and be able to evaluate their current strategies and possibly consider changes that could benefit the organization. The author has identified research questions that this thesis aims to answer how multicultural working environment works in a hotel. As well as what works in a multicultural working environment and what does diverse workforce bring into the company. The author decided to limit the research from the perspective of employees of the said company. By doing this, it can have more focus and understand the situation further. The thesis process started in September 2022 and lasted until December 2022.</p> <p>In the theoretical framework, key concepts, chosen theories and background information were tackled study the phenomenon. Firstly, defining what culture really means. Culture as a topic is very wide and has a lot of definition from different context. Also, defining the meaning of diversity and inclusion. How does feeling of belongingness to the team motivates an individual. The author also did research in how motivation of thinking affects how a person presents his or herself. Lastly, the author investigated the benefits and challenges of multicultural workforce.</p> <p>To be able to study the phenomenon, the author chose the approach of qualitative method. She opted for a semi-structured interview to gain better dialogue with the interviewees. The author has chosen two interviewees from each department which are kitchen, restaurant – front of the house, and reception, with six interviewees in total. Factors that were considered in choosing the interviewees were their nationality, background, how long they have been working for the company and in which department they work at. Interview rounds took four days in total.</p> <p>The results of the interviews revealed that indeed multicultural working environment works well in Hotels. It has been beneficial not only for the commissioning company but as well as for individual growth, learning from each other. During the interviews, there were suggestions for well-functioning working environment such as engaging with employees through conversations, creating a safe space and trust resulting to a better work relation.</p> <p>In this fast-growing world we live in where diverse workforce is becoming the new norm, it is crucial to pay more attention to multicultural management. Taking into consideration everyone's differences, learning employees' strengths, and building the work from that. Also, by looking into this, we grow as an individual and we learn to deal with situations in an effective way, without compromising relationship between co-workers. By writing this thesis, the author aspires to raise readers' interest in the topic of multiculturalism and how to perceive it as something beneficial and enriching to any workplace.</p>
Keywords Employee experience, culture, multicultural, work environment, diversity, inclusion

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1 Introduction

In this fast-shifting world that we live in, it is becoming more common to move from one country to another. As a result, it is typical for more companies to have diverse populations and have multicultural workforces. This comes with both advantages and drawbacks. In this research, the author will be studying the phenomenon about how diversity among employees could affect their relationships at work. As well as discussing how Hotel X could leverage it for the benefit of the company to provide better employee experiences.

From working in this multicultural work environment for more than six years, the author has gained interest in the topic. As an immigrant, the author has witnessed how it is like being in a multicultural environment. Being in a multicultural environment brings a lot, not only challenges and surprises, but also learnings from each other's experiences and dynamics that come from the diversity of the team or group. It is also interesting to find out how multiculturalism is observed from different departments. How the effect differs from front of the house to the kitchen and to the reception.

The chosen commissioner for this research-based thesis is a hospitality company situated in the heart of Helsinki. Throughout this thesis, the author will be referring to its commissioner as Hotel X to maintain anonymity of the company. Aside from its prime location, Hotel X has been up and running for the longest years and it has been considered as one of the most prestigious hotels in the city. Hotel X has approximately 140 employees whereof over fifteen nationalities work in different departments of the hotel. Some of the countries that are represented within the company are France, Nigeria, Nepal, Lithuania, Latvia, Croatia, Greece, Kenya, Ireland, India, Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, Australia, Netherlands, Russia and of course Finland. Thus, this company is a perfect example of a multicultural working environment therefore it is an ideal company to conduct this research-based thesis about. Main communication languages used in the company are Finnish and English since it caters both local and international guests. Aside from the communication language with guests, internal working communication is also Finnish, and English as was mentioned, Hotel X has very culturally diverse employees. A big portion of employees of this hotel doesn't necessarily speak Finnish as their mother tongue bringing different stir to their company's internal communication. The author is interested to find out more how this affects the working environment and what it brings to the organization. In this thesis, the author aims to paint a better picture for the commissioning company regarding the existing theories about multiculturalism and diversity as well as insights from the employees that will be participating in the interview for the empirical part of the thesis.

In this research, the author will be looking deep into the motivation of thinking of a person. Why someone act a certain way, and from where it lies down deeply in one's personality and upbringing. Along with these topics, the author will also explore examples of benefits and challenges a multicultural working environment brings. By looking into existing theories, studying, and reflecting on the studies, the author will form a hypothesis whether the theory aligns with the real-life experience of the interviewees. Correspondingly, the author will be able to provide an insight and better understanding of the employees for the commissioning company.

Writing this thesis, the author finds the APA referencing style works for her best. Thus, through the thesis the author chose to use APA referencing style. It is a "author-date" referencing style, so the citation intext consist of the author(s) and year of publication given in round brackets. (APA - Referencing Guide, 22)

1.1 Objective and purpose of research

Difference is often seen as something complicated and causes misunderstanding and challenges among peers. The purpose of this research is to find out is it really the case? How can we turn the tables around and see difference as something positive that could bring opportunities, complementing individuals' character and forming synergy among colleagues?

To be able to comprehend the phenomenon, the author formed these following questions to identify the research problem and provide clarity and more information on the said topic:

- ➔ What does diverse workforce bring into the company?
- ➔ What works in a multicultural working environment?
- ➔ How does multicultural working environment work in hotels?

The author aims to dig deeper into the employee's motivation of thinking, why they are acting certain way and how it affects their work environment. Along with these, the author will also investigate different theories about possible effective leadership approaches applied to multicultural working environment. The purpose of this thesis is to provide understanding of the employees, on how they see the effects of multicultural environment in their workplace. In addition to this, the author perceives this as guide as well to better navigate relationship at workplace and learn from differences among each team member.

1.2 Relevance of topic

As globalization is something very timely and will be even more significant in the future. The author sees the topic as a very relevant one specially with the fast-growing world we live in. Not only for that reason, but also because more and more people are willing to pack their whole lives and move thousands of miles away from their home for different reasons whether to provide for their family or start a career. Finland is a good choice to do those things, and so is Hotel X. This can be seen with the very diverse workforce they have from different nationalities to different ages, backgrounds, and experiences in life.

Thus, having that said, it brings us individuals challenge to learn, relearn, unlearn some constant patterns we have. By studying this phenomenon further, the author can help the commissioning company to better understand their employees and be able to evaluate their current strategies and possibly consider changes that could benefit the organization. Along with these reasons, the author finds the topic relevant because understanding employees is vital for a well-functioning work environment, giving employees individual growth reaching their full potential.

The key findings and gained insights from the interviewees, on how they perceive a multicultural workforce as a learning environment will help the commissioning company look on having these differences as something beneficial and enriching. The recommendations for well-functioning working environment that are revealed from the research will be relevant and valuable to the commissioning company.

1.3 Delimitations

To be able to have deeper understanding of the phenomenon the author decided to limit her research from the perspective of employees of the said company. By doing this, it can have more focus and understand the situation further.

Another reason of limiting it into point of view of employees is that the author has read multiple studies about how leaders and managers see this phenomenon, but not seen many studies from employee's perspective. Because of this reason, the author aspires to further study the phenomenon and gain insights from employee's perspective.

Lastly, one of the reasons why this thesis has delimitation, focusing more on the point of view of the employees is that the author herself is part of this organization as an employee and has first-hand experience on how it is like to work in a multicultural working environment. At the same time keeping in mind the possible leadership approaches that could be helpful to achieve a well-functioning dynamic among employees.

2 Theoretical Framework

On the second chapter of this thesis, the focus will be about different theories the author found relevant for this phenomenon. In this chapter the author will write about existing theories to gain better understanding of what it really means in working in a multicultural environment, to define what culture is as it is a very broad topic, as well as why diversity and inclusion always go hand and hand. Another topic in this chapter is how people have different motivation of thinking and how an individual's mind is programmed differently based on their patterns of learnings and how they're social environment were growing up.

2.1 Understanding Culture

Firstly, to have a better understanding about the topic of this research, the picture should be drawn by defining what culture is all about. Culture as a topic is very wide and has a lot of definition from different context. As defined in Meriam-Webster dictionary; culture is the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group and defined as the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization.

To be able to understand the phenomenon, it is needed to study and define what culture is. The concept or the word "culture" comes from Latin word "colere" which means permanent habitation and arrangements associated with permanent living in one place. In this perspective, the word culture came to mean patterned thinking and behavior of a permanent group of people. (Mäkilouko, 2003)

Iceberg is usually used as a metaphor for culture. As shown in Figure 1. Iceberg model of Culture is a good representation for illustrating the tangible and the intangible. Culture is so much more than what we just see in the surface and what lies underneath. Culture both represent the things that we can see, the tangible or the "tip of an iceberg", as well as the intangible things – what lies below the waterline. As Mai Moua described, most of leaders in businesses tend to look and pick up on the things they see – things on top of the iceberg, when addressing intercultural situations. With this, it means that leaders rarely address the cultural issues and conflicts that are lying underneath the surface. Solutions are often temporary, rather than digging deeply to unravel the underlying reason, only covering deeply rooted cultural systems. (Moua, 2010) The true meaning of culture is not what is seen from the surface but the underlying shared ways of groups of people and how they perceive and interpret the world (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012).

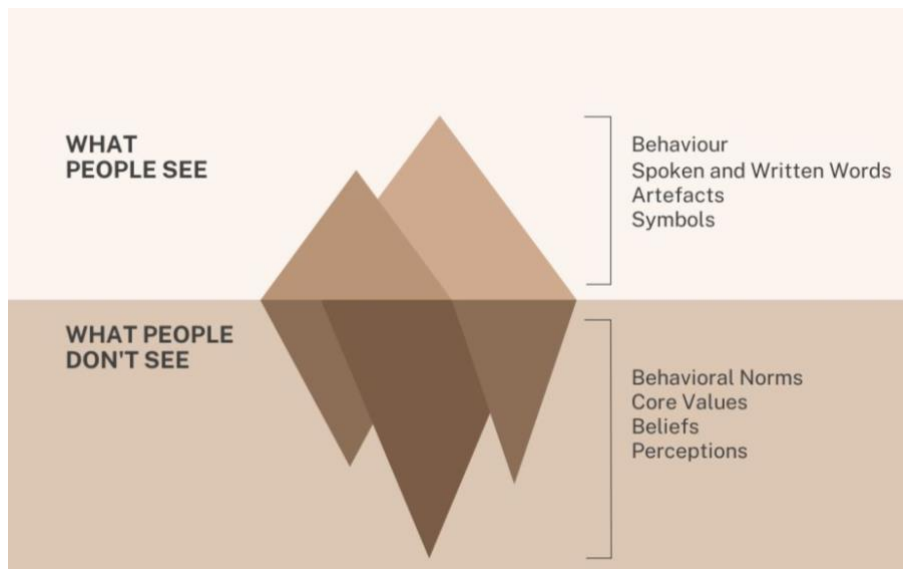


Figure 1. Iceberg Model of Culture (model adapted from Hall, 1976)

Culture is a very complex topic. It is one of those words that may have numerous meanings. As defined by Geert Hofstede, “*The programming of the human mind by which one group of people distinguishes itself from another group.*” (Hofstede Insight, 2020) There are several ways cultural differences are manifested. The following four describe the concept of culture as a total precisely: symbols, heroes, rituals, and values. In Figure 2, different layers of culture are presented as the skins of an onion, with the outermost layer to be the superficial and values as the deepest layer of culture. In between those two are heroes and rituals.

Symbols as mentioned is the superficial layer of culture such as words, pictures, or objects that convey meaning that are only recognized by those who share the same culture. It can be foods, flag, color, as well as dress, hairstyles, and status symbols. Symbols are easily changeable and developed while old symbols disappear. For that reason, symbols are put into the outermost superficial layer of the “onion”. (Hofstede; Hofstede ;& Minkov, 2010)

Heroes are people, either alive or dead, real, or imaginary, that have highly valued characteristics in culture and thus serve as a model for an individual. They are people that have shown certain behavior that showcases for example national spirit that are highly valued in culture. (Hofstede; Hofstede ;& Minkov, 2010)

Rituals are collective activities and recurring events that shape an individual's unconscious mind and are considered within a culture socially essential. Some examples are ways of greeting and paying respect for others, also social and religious ceremonies. It exists both in society and organizations. Like celebrating Independence Day, Christmas,

tipping in restaurants or business and political meeting organized for rational reasons serving ritual purposes to reinforce cohesion in group and allowing leaders to assert themselves. Rituals also include the way language is used written and oral, in day-to-day interactions and communicating beliefs. (Hofstede; Hofstede ;& Minkov, 2010)

Symbols, Heroes, and Rituals are enclosed under *Practices* as seen in Figure 2. As such, these aspects are visible to outside observer, nonetheless, their cultural meaning is not visible and depends only and certainly in the ways these practices are understood by the insiders.

Values is pictured in Figure 2. as the core of culture. Values are wide preferences for certain set of circumstance over others. It deals with feeling indicating positive and negative side. For an instance, evil versus good, dirty versus clean, dangerous versus safe, forbidden versus permitted, irrational versus rational, etc. Values are acquired from the environment someone grew up in. Thus, behavior of role models like parents or teachers implies what is acceptable and what is not. Humans at birth are not entirely equipped for survival unlike most other creatures. Values are shaped at the age of 10-12 years old, a period in which an individual can quickly unconsciously absorb necessary information from our environment including symbols, heroes, rituals and lastly our basic values. (Hofstede; Hofstede ;& Minkov, 2010)

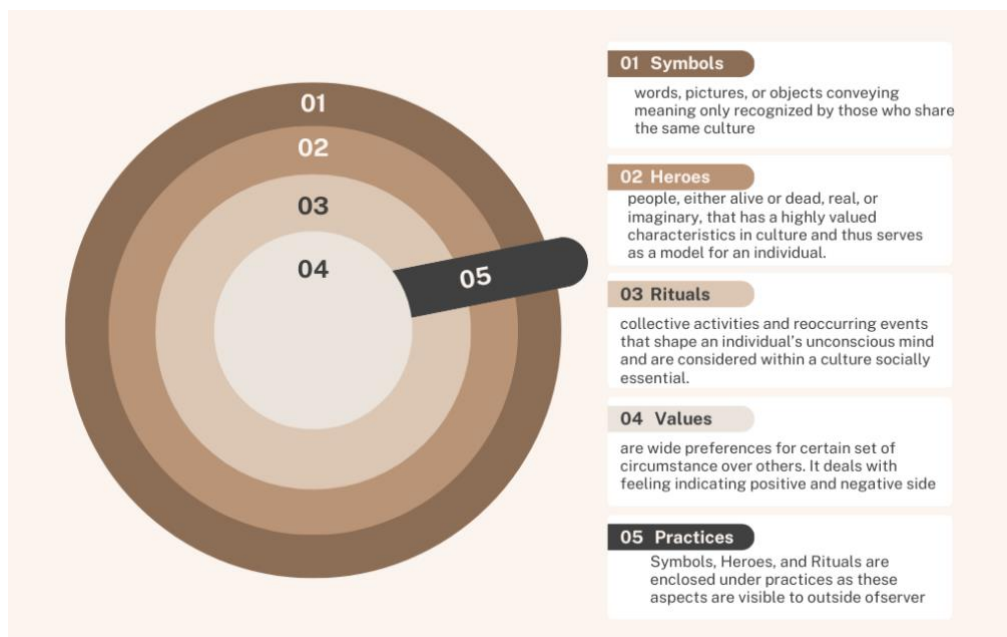


Figure 2. The "Onion": Manifestations of Culture at Different Levels of Depth adapted from (Hofstede; Hofstede ;& Minkov, 2010)

2.2 Diversity and Inclusion

Multicultural working environment also means diverse workforce. Having diversity considered in workplace promotes conflict reduction among employees and as well as with supervisors and suggests finding resolution on a positive atmosphere. Understanding diversity and everyone's differences help gain respect for each other thus reducing the likelihood of conflicts and promotes easier path to resolving any conflicts. (Mayhew, 2019)

There are several reasons why diverse workplace is important nowadays. As it was stated in the Alliant International University webpage, some of these ways are influencing the workforce and workplace by varied perspective, meaning having different personal experiences and background promotes wider variety of perspective. Another way diversity has influenced workplace is in better problem solving, having varied point of view often results to well-rounded work force helping employees work harder, delivering higher quality of work and produces more creatively. Furthermore, having a larger audience, diverse workforce shows the commitment to opportunities giving the company a positive reputation. Lastly it may also result to more job applicant wanting to work with the company which gives larger pool of applicants to choose from. Having a diverse work force that have come from different backgrounds might help boost employee engagement and hence the productivity, beyond the benefits for the company, forming a pleasant working place for diverse group can be extremely valuable for the company in the long run. (Alliant International University, 2020)

Figure 3 below represents the Four layers of diversity that are organizational dimensions, external dimensions, internal dimensions, and personality. It is a model created by Gardenswartz and Rowe that has influenced and widen discussion about diversity. By the use of this model, it helps to characterize inclusion by reflecting on one's reality in the organization. (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2022) To be able to define, one must understand the different factors that can play into the concept. Some of the factors are visible outside and others are just part of how people were born. A way to better understand the types of diversity is to investigate the layers as classifications that each holds list of accurate subsets. (Alliant International University, 2020)

Firstly, the outermost layer represents the organizational dimensions also called functional level or classification are the things organization has influence on like work field, seniority, work location, management status etc. It also relates to differences among people that are assigned to an individual by an organization. Regardless of what position someone have or how much salary someone receives, the work that you contribute to strengthen your belonging to an organization. (Alliant International University, 2020)

On the other hand, the second outer layer are the external dimensions. Term external is used to describe characteristic relating to an individual but are not characteristics someone is born with. Even so external dimensions are massively influenced by someone's surroundings and other people, they are aspects someone can change. Examples of external dimensions are geographical location, income, personal habits, religion, citizenship, educational, appearance, and marital status. (Alliant International University, 2020)

While the internal dimension is characteristics that someone cannot influence on because of the reasoning that these are determined by birth. These characteristics are not chosen by a person nor can be changed by anyone. These examples are age, gender, national origin, assigned sex or sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity. (Alliant International University, 2020) Most of the time, these characteristics are source of judgement, prejudice, and discrimination. (Washington, 2008)

Lastly, the core of the model is personality in which is influenced by the three outer layers. It is described as personal traits and stable characteristics of an individual that effects on one's behavior in any given situation and over time. (Washington, 2008) Personality shows how an individual interacts with others and what his/her characteristics are as a person, all these aspects affect how a person is treated by others. (Launikari, 2016)



Figure 3. Four Layers of Diversity (Gardenswartz;Cherbosque;& Rowe, 2010)

Inclusiveness promotes increased employee satisfaction and efficiency. At the end of the day, everyone likes to feel appreciated for their contribution and feel like their opinion counts. (Schindler, 2019)

Having this model considered helps with understanding an individual and not put into boxes and stereotypes. Which results in providing inclusion for employee in the company and improving motivation and feeling the sense of belonging in company.

2.3 Motivation of thinking

Each individual carry with him/herself patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting that were learned throughout one's lifetime. Much of it are acquired during early childhood, where a person is most susceptible to learning and comprehending. Hofstede used the analogy of the way computers are programmed and identified culture as programming of mind. Person's behavior is only predetermined by their mental programs. An individual has basic ability to deviate from them and react in new, creative, and unexpected way depending on the context. (Hofstede;Hofstede ;& Minkov, 2010)

Culture is not something you are born with, it is not innate, but learned. It is derived and adapted from someone's social environment growing up rather than from ones' genes. Different sources of one's mental programs is based on social environments in which one grew up and gained life experiences. It starts all starts within the family, carry on within one's neighborhood, and in school, with group of friends, at the workplace and in the living environment. (Hofstede;Hofstede ;& Minkov, 2010)

In figure 4, you can see how the three levels of uniqueness in mental programming is illustrated. *Culture* – which are specific to a group or category, should be distinguished from *human nature* - things that are universal to human beings and inherited, and from an individual's *personality* – which is specific to individual and could be inherited or learned. (Moua, 2010)

Human nature is what all human beings have in common, representing the universal level in one's mental software. Human's capability to feel fear, anger, happiness, love, loneliness, sadness, and shame; the ability to observe one's surroundings and environment and the ability to talk about it with other humans all belong to this level of mental programming. However, how an individual expresses these feelings is modified by culture. While on the other hand, *personality* is an individuals' unique personal set of mental programs that doesn't necessarily needs to be shared with other human being. Personality is based on traits that are partly inherited within someone's unique set of genes and partly learned. (Moua, 2010)

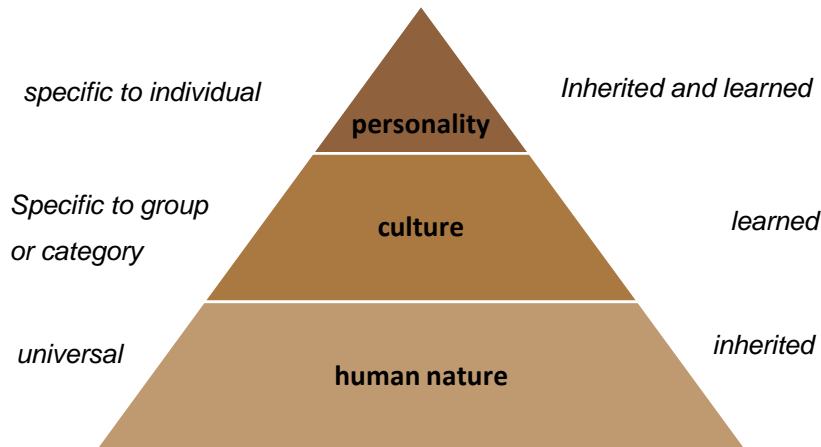


Figure 4. Three Levels of Uniqueness in Mental Programming adapted from (Hofstede; Hofstede ;& Minkov, 2010)

2.4 Benefit and Challenges of Multicultural Workforce

For a business or organization to be successful, they must have an inclusive and global mindset. Therefore, embracing multicultural workforce and cultural diversity in a workplace is vital. Organizations across different industries are embracing the advantages of a diverse workforce. At the same time, along with benefits come challenges of working among various cultures, background, and languages. (Reynolds, 2018) Listed below are examples of benefits and challenges that come along with multicultural workforce:

Table 1. Benefits and Challenges of multicultural workforce (Basco, 2022)

Benefits	Challenges
Diverse cultural perspective promotes and inspire creativity and propel innovation.	Employees from certain cultures may be less likely to have their voices be heard.
Diverse skills base can enable organization to offer wider and more adaptable range of products and services.	Communication among different cultures and languages can be misinterpreted and can be difficult to understand.
Leaning to culturally diverse workforce allows organization to attract and retain best talents.	Having different understanding of professional etiquette.
Diverse team are more productive and tend to perform better.	Conflicting work styles across teams.
Greater opportunity for personal and professional growth.	Diversity without inclusion.

Multiculturalism brings different cultures and backgrounds in the work environment together. Whether employees are from various backgrounds or from different countries, a company should seek a diverse organizational culture as it provides a lot of advantages and benefits. (Leonard, 2019) A multicultural team or culturally diverse team as research shows, can help deliver better outcome in companies. Diverse teams can tend to have potential in providing more creative outcome because of their broad range of information, ideas, and perspective. (Jang, 2018) Furthermore, some examples of benefits of a culturally diverse team are the following.

Firstly, diverse cultural perspective promotes and inspire creativity and propel innovation. One's culture affects how and which way we see the world. Different viewpoints along with wide-ranging personal and professional experience of a multicultural team can offer new outlook that can make colleagues see the workplace differently. Furthermore, diversity has been proven to develop creativity and drive innovation, resulting to better ways of solving problem and meeting customers need in new and exciting ways. (Reynolds, 2018) Organizations may increase their creativity by fostering diverse ideas, opinions, and perspectives. (Macdonald, 2019)

Another benefit is that diverse skills base can enable organization to offer wider and more adaptable range of products and services. By having culturally diverse talent pool, organization benefit from broad range of skills that are not necessarily attainable with hiring locally. Globally oriented companies can add to their service range by taking advantage of the skills and experience their culturally diverse employees can offer. Also, broader skill base and more diverse offering of services can help the company gain edge on adaptability. As in this uncertain world that we live in, organizations that are capable of adapting are the ones that thrive. (Reynolds, 2018)

Leaning to culturally diverse workforce allows organization to attract and retain best talents. By having diversity as a key part of recruiting process will help widen the talent selection of prospective employees. Aside from that, hiring from diverse talent selection makes the organization more attractive to more driven, ambitious, and progressive minded candidates can help retain people on board. Furthermore, diversity including diversity of age, gender, religion, and nationality has shown to improve retention of employees, reducing cost associated with employee turnover. (Reynolds, 2018)

Diverse team are more productive and tend to perform better. The spectrum of diverse knowledge, experience, expertise, working methods a diverse workplace can offer may boost better problem-solving abilities that lead to higher productivity. As a matter of fact, research shows that culturally diverse and inclusive workforce are both happier and more efficient. Even though working in a homogenous team can be easier, it tends to make the

organization settle for the mediocre parameters. While on the other hand, diversity can promote healthy competition among peers, pushing the team in a positive way to achieve their highest potential. (Reynolds, 2018)

Lastly, another benefit of having a diverse workforce enables company to provide greater opportunity for personal and professional growth. Having a culturally diverse team and inclusive organization tend to attract more talented, driven, and international minded professionals who appreciates opportunity for both personal and professional growth. Moreover, being in a multicultural working environment can be truly enriching experience, enabling employees to learn and reflect from different perspectives and traditions around the globe. By observing this, it can help an individual to become more globally minded, casting aside prejudice – which is progressively valuable for a company. Diverse set of colleagues can be enriching for the company too, as it exposes people to new approach on doing work and new set of skills. (Reynolds, 2018)

Contradicting to the benefits diversity can bring, there are also challenges faced in having a diverse workforce. Even though having a multicultural team brings a lot of positive aspects to the company, it comes with disadvantages and challenges as well. There are some things that must be considered in having a diverse workforce, company must create an environment that promotes dignity and respect so that tension can be avoided between team members. (Macdonald, 2019) Some of the challenges multicultural workforce can be the following.

An example of these challenges are employees from certain cultures may be less likely to have their voices be heard. Despite having culturally diverse perspective, that alone isn't enough. It is vital for an organization to create an open and inclusive environment that acknowledges and embraces differences so that team members will feel empowered to contribute and more comfortable to share their ideas. It can be challenging for colleagues that are from more polite or deferential culture. For example, Asian countries such as Vietnam or Japan may feel uncomfortable sharing their ideas and speaking up to the team, specifically when they are new to the job. While on the other hand, more assertive individuals from countries such as U.S. or Western Europe or from Scandinavia that believes and emphasizes flat organizational hierarchy tend to speak up during meetings and share what is on their minds compared to others that don't. (Reynolds, 2018)

Next for the challenges is communication among different cultures and languages can be misinterpreted and can be difficult to understand. (Reynolds, 2018) In a diverse workplace, English might not be the first language of an employee. Thus, communication can be a hurdle to productivity, inclusion, and general morale. (Toll, 2021) Language

barriers are just one challenge. Even in an organization or team that everyone speaks English, it could still be hard to understand ranges of accents. Furthermore, effective cross-culture communication boils down not only to verbal communication. Non-verbal communication plays a subtle and delicate part in multicultural interaction that can cause misunderstanding and can cause offense among colleagues from different origin. For instance, safe level of physical space, maintaining eye contact or gestures can tremendously differ across cultures. (Reynolds, 2018)

Also, having different understanding of professional etiquette can be a challenge in a diverse team. Co-workers coming from different cultures bring variety of professional attitude, behaviors, values, and etiquettes. Although these could enrich and bring benefits to the company, they might also cause misunderstandings between colleagues. Expectation of formality or understanding of hierarchy or even working hours etiquette can cause conflict among team members. In addition to that, punctuality, confrontation and resolving conflict can be an issue. (Reynolds, 2018)

Another challenge are conflicting work styles across teams. Everyone has different working styles and attitude, reflecting on cultural values and differences. If these are just swept under the carpet and are not acknowledged, it could affect and slow down the productivity of the team. Some cultures like many from Asia and Central America values working together as a team towards a goal. Unlike others such as Germany or America prefer working independently. Emphasis on attention to detail, order, and organization in workplace compared to flexibility and spontaneity can reflect on underlying cultural values. (Reynolds, 2018)

Lastly, diversity without inclusion is also a challenge for a multicultural work environment. Diversity and inclusion always go hand by hand. However, often organizations tend to put a lot of effort to increase their diversity but fails to provide feeling of belonging and inclusion to their employees, in a way that employees can be their genuine selves at workplace. Considering diversity more than inclusion can do more harm the good to the company. It is vital to have diversity and then acknowledge and respect those differences. (Toll, 2021)

3 Methodology

For this research type thesis, the author had chosen a company that best represents the multicultural working environment. It is a hospitality company situated in the heart of Helsinki. Author herself is part of this organization and has work in there for over six years. From her first-hand experience, the author got interested in the topic of multiculturalism at workplace and decided to conduct the research from the said company. Hotel X has around 140 employees that are represented by the following countries: France, Nigeria, Nepal, Lithuania, Latvia, Croatia, Greece, Kenya, Ireland, India, Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, Australia, Netherlands, Russia and of course Finland.

To be able to define the focal point and the research problem, the author has drawn several research questions as follows, what does diverse workforce bring to the company? What works in a multicultural working environment? How does multicultural working environment work in hotels?

3.1 Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena. Qualitative data sources include observation and participant observation, interviews and questionnaires, documents and text, and the researcher's impressions and reaction. Qualitative data are mostly a record of what people have said. For example, interviews, which is the most common technique for collecting qualitative data, record what one of your informants said about a particular topic; field notes record what the researcher experience or thought about a particular topic or event; and documents record what the author of the document wrote at that time. In all cases this qualitative data can help us to understand people their motivations and actions, and the broader context within which they work and live. (Myers, 2013)

3.2 Justification of Method choice

The author chose to use the qualitative research method since she wanted to understand the current situation and get insights from the employees on how it is like working in a multicultural working environment is like. By going with this approach, the author can have more dialogue with the interviewees enabling her to gain better understanding from different views and context. By having semi-structured interview, the author and the interviewees can express their selves better and ask follow-up questions that are appropriate to the topic. Resulting to a more open, yet still getting useful data from the interviewees.

3.3 Data collection process

Along with the existing studies and literature about the topic, the author is going to conduct a semi-structured interview among the employees of Hotel X. To be able to study the phenomenon, the author ought to use qualitative research method and conduct a semi-structured interview to gain better dialogue with the interviewees and have understanding to how they see multiculturalism in workplace and how it affects them. The goal of this research is to provide insights to the commissioning company from the perspective of employees from different department regarding how multicultural environment affects the work dynamics among the team.

The participants will be chosen by the author based on their nationality, experience, duty and how long are they working in Hotel X. By doing so, it ensures the varied perspective of employees from different department and results to more holistic picture of the commissioning company. The author will interview 2 employees from each department: Food & Beverage department from front of the house (waiters) and the kitchen, and reception, excluding the housekeeping since it is outsourced and does not represent as population of Hotel X. Which sums up to 6 interviewees. Since the author works for the commissioning company, the participants were approached personally by the author and help from the commissioning company was not necessary.

Participants were approached during last week October to first week of November. One interview took place on the 4th of November and the rest of the interview were held on the 2nd week of November, two interview were held on the 7th of November, another one was held on the 8th of November and the last two interviews were held on the 9th of November. All together it took four days for the author to go through the interview rounds. Two of the participants asked to have the copy of interview questions, as they wanted to prepare and familiarize themselves to the interview questions. The author then sends the interview questions beforehand. One of the interviews was done online through video call on zoom and the rest were done face to face. One of the interviews was held in Haaga-Helia campus. While the rest of the interviews were held in a café where the author and the interviewee agreed to meet. By observing semi-structured interview, the author finds it effective, thus resulting to a more interactive flow of interview, as both interviewer and interviewee had dialogue and was able to ask follow-up questions when needed. It also gave more room for discussion and gaining more insights from the interviewees. The author has observed that with this approach, the interviewee gets more comfortable along the way and able to open and share more insights and thoughts.

All the interviews were held in English and was informed beforehand to the participants. All the conducted interviews took an average of 20 minutes. The first interview that was held online took around 28 minutes, the next interview took less time with 13 minutes and the third interview took around 15 minutes. The fourth one took 16 minutes but was extended longer after the recording was cut. The interviewee found the recording a bit uncomfortable and made him conscious on what he shares. He then was able to share more openly once the author stop the recording and tried to gather data on the same time as they speak. The fifth interview took around 19 minutes and the last one was for 22 minutes. The author has observed that interview time varied on the personality of the interviewees, how comfortable they were and how much they are willing to share.

3.4 Formulation of interview questions

The process of making interview questions was stimulating by reflecting on the experiences as well as considering how an employee might experience things from workplace, at the same time aligning the questions with the theory that the author decided to use. Making sure that the questions made were based on the theory, to conclude whether they apply in real life. Finally, the author narrowed it down to 13 interview questions, of which 3 were questions about the interviewees background. The author designated the questions based on the structure of theoretical framework. Two questions were aligned to each four different sub chapter of the theory part. Along with these, the author also asked two questions about possible suggestions and improvements that could be useful for the commissioning company in the future. See the interview question in Appendix 1.

3.5 Sampling and interviewee's profile

The chosen participants represent the sample of a certain group of people in this is the employees of Hotel X. To maintain the anonymity of the interviews, the author will not correlate from which country they are from, but by which department they work at and length of their working period for the commissioning company. The countries that the interviewees represent are Bangladesh, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia, and Finland.

Table 2. Interviewee Profile (Basco, 2022)

Code	Department	Length of work period in Hotel X
Interviewee A	Kitchen	5 months
Interviewee B	Kitchen	4 years
Interviewee C	Restaurant (Waiter)	5 months
Interviewee D	Restaurant (Waiter)	20 years
Interviewee E	Reception	1 year
Interviewee F	Reception	10 years

4 Data analysis and Results

There were total of 13 questions asked during the interviews. (See Appendix 1.) Three of those are to identify the background of interviewees, where are they originally from, how long have they been working in the company and in which department they work at. Next questions were correlating to first sub chapter of the theoretical part which is defining what culture or multicultural is. After, there were questions regarding diversity and inclusion in a workplace. Next, there were questions regarding motives of thinking of people and how it affects their job and how they cope with having misunderstanding instances. Interviewees were also asked about the positive and negative impacts of multicultural working environment. Lastly, the author wanted to find out some recommendations for well-functioning working environment and suggestions how to improve the employee experience.

All the interviews were recorded, and these were used during the data analysis. It enabled the author to transcribe the results of the interviews into text easier. Having it recorded instead of typing throughout the interview was also observed to be more effective and less distracting for the interviewee. The author then re-read the transcribed data to gain better understanding of the interviewees. The data were analyzed by framework analysis method whereas the author have drawn the main themes from the interviews. As mentioned, the questions were formulated by aligning it with the theory written on the phenomenon. Author then used structured coding and have put phrases that presented those themes. To make it easier to go back and read the data, the author has used color coding for which one color is designated for a theme. One of the simplest and most common way to analyze and sort qualitative data is by coding. Codes can be a words or phrases to summarize a paragraph or whole long text such as interview. (Myers, 2013) After gathering the codes, it will then be grouped and narrowed down with themes that draws the focus of the main topics collected from the research data.

Main themes drawn by the author were understanding culture and what it means to be in a multicultural working environment and how multicultural they consider their current workplace which is Hotel X. Next theme is the role of diversity and inclusion in a workplace and how it effects on someone's level of motivation at work. Does belongingness add value to their job? Another theme is cultural differences and how motives of thinking play a role on the dynamics among the team. Are there instances where differences come to play and how they cope with these instances? Following that, impacts of multicultural working environment, both positive and negative, was also another theme. Last theme defined were recommendations for well-functioning working environment and suggestions for better employee experience.

4.1 Interviewees understanding of multicultural environment

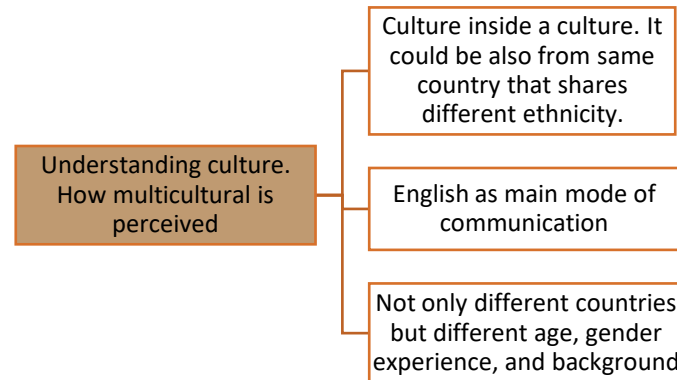


Figure 5. Interviewee's understanding of multicultural working environment

Interviewee A described multicultural as having a culture inside culture. Despite of coming from same country, there could also be a different culture in a specific ethnicity. Having different ethnicities and people from different countries and background. Interviewee B also stated that multicultural means having openness to other cultures. While interviewee F described it by having different ways of talking and expressing oneself, having different manners, being diverse and colorful.

All the six (6) interviewees thinks that they have a very multicultural working environment. Furthermore, three (3) of the interviewees (A, E, and F) mentioned that the mode of communication in the company is English, which shows how multicultural Hotel X is as a working environment. Interviewee D also made a point that not only the colleagues are multicultural, even the clientele of commissioning company is very diverse. Interviewee A has described working in hotel X gives a feeling of working in airport as the work environment is very diverse with culture and backgrounds.

However, interview E and F have confirmed that in their department which is the reception, there is not much multiculturalism compared to other departments such as kitchen and restaurant. Reason behind that is knowledge of Finnish language is required in working in reception specially with the type of clientele the Hotel X has. Interviewee F said that it could be for the better, because they have a good understanding among their peers in their department and that might cause misunderstanding and clash among each other.

4.2 Role of diversity and inclusion in Hotel X

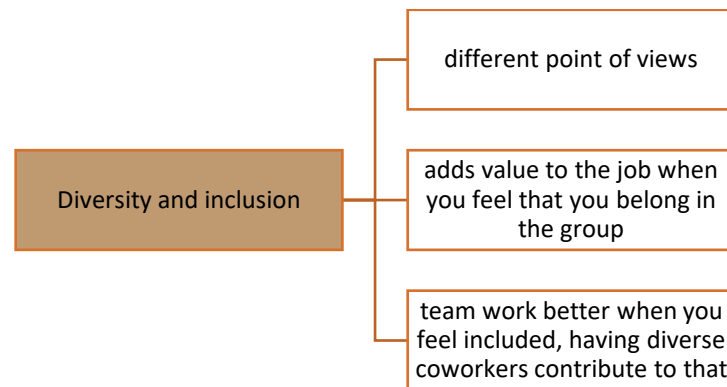


Figure 6. Role of diversity and inclusion in Hotel X

All six (6) interviewees think that having multicultural working environment works well both in their department and in hotel in general. Interviewee A mentioned that having diverse people in the company affects the organization in many good ways. Interviewee A gave an example of economic benefit for the organization whereas foreign workers have not as much expectation compared to a local worker. Foreign workers are motivated earning money since that is one of the main reasons why they worked abroad. Although Interviewee C thinks there is two sides of it, she said that there are situations that working with diverse people helps to bring new ideas and opinions but because of that, people are so different that it causes clashes between colleagues and might not work out sometimes.

For the kitchen department, interviewee A and B thinks that working with diverse people works well in their department. They viewed it so that having different styles of working, different approach on things, and different ways to see everything results to more productive and creative ideas. With everyone's differences, they learn from each other.

While on the other hand, interviewee C and D, both from the restaurant, working as waiters, thinks that having diverse team helps serving multicultural guests. Them having different personalities, background and specialties helps serve their guest in a more personal and effective way.

As per reception, interviewee E and F, thinks that having diverse people works well for a hotel in general. Interviewee F said that having multicultural environment adds fun and diversity to the job and learning a lot from each culture. They said that not necessarily inside their department, but for sure communicating with other departments, they observe multiculturalism.

Feeling of belongingness to the team adds value to their work according to all six (6) interviewees. It helps to feel motivated to go to work when you feel that you are part of the team. Interviewee A mentioned that even though it is challenging at first to be able to get to that point to feel part of the team, it eases go to work with happy mind. Interviewee B also stated that the team have tried to make everyone feel that they belong to the team, especially after corona when the team grow with even more diverse people. Interviewee C said that it is important to be part of the team. Having coworkers being there and supporting you to develop yourself makes working so much better.

Although two (2) if the interviewees E and F stated that multiculturalism is not much observed in reception compared to other departments. Even so, they still observe multiculturalism in sense of different personalities and backgrounds. They made a point that there is always something to learn from each other and getting along with people doesn't matter if you speak Finnish or English. Interviewee F even mentioned that because of feeling of belongingness, she even stays longer and extend spending more time with colleagues because she considers them as second family confirming that sense of belongingness add value to work.

4.3 Culture differences

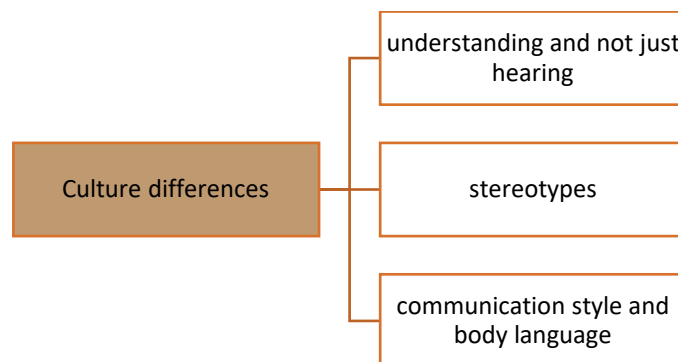


Figure 7. Culture differences

When asked has there been any challenges with communication, all the six (6) interviewees said that there has been some challenge with communication. Interviewee D mentioned that a team cannot avoid communication problems. The challenging part is to have the knowledge how to communicate well, understand and listen not only verbally but also body language and tone of voice. Interviewee D made a very good point when he said how communication plays a big role in work specially between kitchen and front of the house. For example, waiters ask how long for specific order or table takes and from kitchen's point of view, they perceive it as being rushed while waiters only want to know

what to tell the guests. From that occurs clash among the mentioned departments. Thus, there is observed different culture inside different departments.

Two of the interviewees (C and D) think that communication is a 2-way street. It is how someone expresses themselves and how you understand other people. He mentioned that sometimes it is needed to be straight to the point to get across what your message is. Every person has different ways of communicating and it plays a big part on how a team gets along and understands each other. Although, interviewee B doesn't think it has something to do with multiculturalism. She gave an example of having to understand that people from Asia perceive or understand differently, as compared to someone from Finland.

In interviewee C's opinion, there are many stereotypes in certain cultures and races that affect the ways we first introduce someone, giving less opportunity. How someone is perceived from their race affects their performance and can be a hindrance to reach their potential. Furthermore, interviewee C said that challenges arising regarding communication are because messages are being passed around instead of getting dealt with in the first hand with the people involved. She also said that there is a big challenge on relaying messages and dealing with listening and understanding, and not just hearing what the person is saying.

Interviewee E has stated that communication between different departments can be challenging at times, but internal communication in reception, there is less miscommunication, and because of the same language they share, communication is much easier, and clashes are lessened in their department. She also stated that coping with these instances hasn't been hard since people in the hospitality industry in general are very open and outgoing and have good language skills. Interviewee D said that getting to know your colleagues, whether they have high and low context, masculine or feminine approach. Some cultures are more confrontational, also body language plays a big role to somewhat understand your colleague. He also mentioned that what is seen from outside is not the whole picture, it lies on individual's values and upbringing.

Some of the ways how interviewees cope with miscommunication challenges are listening while keeping an open mind said interviewee B. While interviewee C said that by getting to know the person or coworker more, then you can figure out how to communicate to that person and create less problem and miscommunication. It takes time to get to know your colleagues, but eventually it gets easier with time, and you will understand how they work. While interviewee F thinks that it is easier to ask the manager to talk to the person nicely

and explain how things should be done. With that, there is no fighting and less clash between colleagues.

4.4 Impacts of multicultural workforce

Table 3. Impacts of multicultural workforce (Basco, 2022)

Positive	Negative
Getting ideas out of the box	Miscommunication
Healthy competitive environment	Lack of knowledge in law and regulations
Flexibility	Stereotyping that affects individual to reach their full potential.
Harmony in working	Misunderstandings
Brings richness into the workplace	Clashes, some culture being more confrontational
Multilingual team	Having different outcome than how it is supposed to be
Learning environment	Disadvantage from perspective of local guests of Hotel X
Adds positiveness to the team	

Listed above in table 3 are the impacts of multicultural workforce, both positive and negative. All the six (6) interviewees think that multicultural workforce have positive impacts to the workplace while on the other hand, four (4) of the interviewees shared negative impacts. Two (2) of the interviewees think that there mostly positive impacts and not that much of negative impact from having multicultural workforce. Interviewee B stated that there is not much negative, there could be some communication issues sometimes but is solved by talking and listening to each other. Moreover, interviewee F thinks that mainly positive impacts such as learning from colleague about their countries and culture, making it richer and grow as an individual. She also mentioned an advantage whereas multicultural people understand service culture better and tend to be warmer and more welcoming.

Two (2) of the interviewees A and D shared that having multicultural workforce tends to bring ideas out of the box. It also gives positive kind of competitiveness, pushing boundaries according to interviewee A. He also said that having multicultural team brings harmony in work. According to him, it gives advantage to the company as well because foreigners tend to be flexible with work and have unique ideas. But the drawback is that lack of knowledge regarding law and regulations concerning work.

Interviewee D mentioned that multicultural team has given advantage to the commissioning company because of its clientele, with variety of guests coming from

different countries, it is vital to have a diverse team to get different ideas from, different perspective compared only if from one culture. This results to having new perspective on how work could be done. Moreover, interviewee C said that diversity adds new flavor to the team with different personalities that gives a good balance among colleagues.

When interviewees were asked does being a multicultural team brings advantage or drawback to the company, all of them agreed that it brings advantage. Interviewee B shared that because of diversity of people, there are different opinions, backgrounds, and knowledge, learning from each other. Interviewee C sees it as a huge advantage for the company, because it becomes a huge learning environment. It motivates other people to feel like they can come and work for the company, whereas it's not limited, and you have so many diverse opinions, diverse ways of working and learning from each other.

Interviewee E pointed out it is really an advantage to have multicultural team because of the international clientele Hotel X has. Speaking languages the clients speak, it gives more personal service and better understanding of guests wants. Resulting to happy and satisfied guests. Furthermore, interviewee E thinks that another advantages of multicultural working environment are that it gives an opportunity to improve your language skills especially English.

As mentioned above, Interviewee C mentioned that one of negative impacts of having a multicultural team is that there are many stereotypes in certain cultures and races, and it affects the way we perceive someone. It might affect on how much opportunity is given to certain person affecting an individual to reach their full ability.

It has concluded based on the interview from reception department that in their both interviewee E and F stated that they tend to have less conflict among peers in the reception since most of them are Finnish and message can be relayed correctly without having miscommunications but compared to when they interact with other departments occurs miscommunication. While on the other hand it could be disadvantage for a certain extent, as how they have gotten feedbacks from certain client that how they were checked in by non-speaking Finnish person and served at the restaurant by non-Finnish person. Additionally, Interviewee E thinks that one of the disadvantages is communication between departments because of the language barrier that leads to misunderstanding. People doing their job differently and having different outcome than how it supposed to can be a drawback at times. Nonetheless, interviewee E said that it brings advantage to the company, as speaking multiple languages is crucial in working in reception. She mentioned languages spoken in the reception by their colleagues such as Swedish,

German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, English and of course Finnish. Having that in hand results to easier and better communication with guests.

Interviewee D has drawn a very good metaphor for a multicultural team. Comparing it to orchestra, having a good conductor, you create nice music and harmony, but if clear vision and aim is not given, different part with different strength do their own thing and just end up creating noise. Through good communication with management, this can be avoided.

Lastly, multicultural working environment have lot of positive impacts not only as a team but as an individual. You grow a lot from this environment and able deal with situations in an effective way, without compromising the relationship between coworkers.

4.5 Recommendations for well-functioning working environment

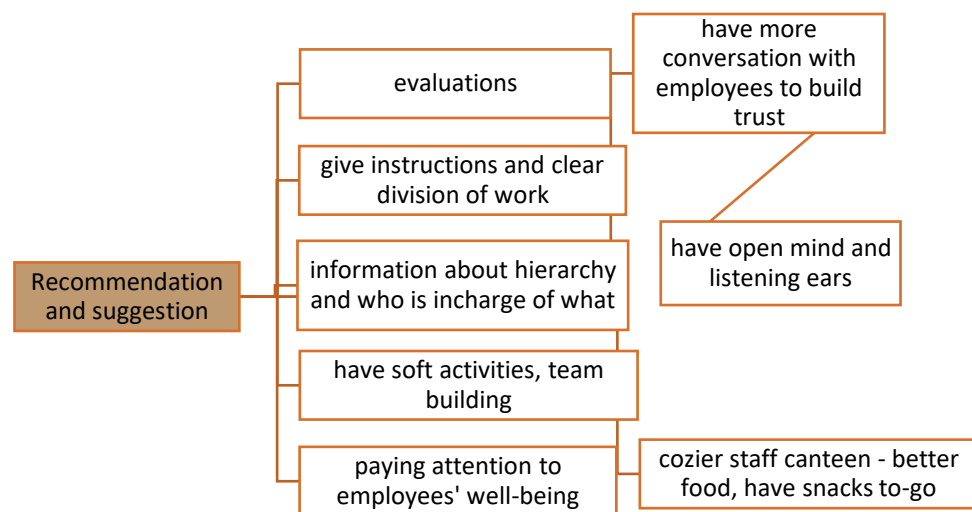


Figure 8. Recommendations for well-functioning working environment

Four (4) of the interviewees agrees that being a multicultural workforce is enough discussed and managed in the commissioning company. They said that it is quite well managed, considering and always keeping in mind the multicultural aspect of the team. Interviewee E said that the company makes sure that everyone understands the message whether that be emails or meetings. Staff meetings are always held in English whenever there are non-Finnish speakers attending and emails are both in Finnish and English, ensuring that everyone understands the message they want to relay. Interviewee F shared that Hotel X have transformed compared to 10 years back then and has taken a

big step on inevitable globalization and having multicultural team. She gave an example that before, she couldn't imagine Hotel X hiring a person of color to work in departments that are seen by guests such as the reception or as a waiter. It shows that commissioning company has taken big step forward and has considered the aspect of multiculturalism.

Two (2) of the interviewees (B and C), thinks that having multicultural workforce is not enough discussed and managed. Interviewee C said that it is not enough looked at and not a priority during training or hiring. Everyone is treated as a general whole when you came to work to the company. She suggested that it should be more focused on because of everyone's differences and their own experiences they have their way of doing thing affecting how they work. To be able to get 100 percent from you employee, they should be trained and have it as a priority to show and make them aware of how they should work. In addition to that, interviewee D mentioned that it is important for everyone to know the company's values and goal, in that way everyone is on the same page and working towards that goal. He also said that giving clear instructions and division of work promotes well-functioning working environment. Management should have a more open mind and provide listening ears to their employees, because to be able to provide a good service to the guests, employees must be in a good place. It is important to listen to the employees as the first encounter of the guests are with them and they represent the company with every interaction with guests.

Interviewee D thinks that management should put more thought into the consideration of multicultural team by creating soft activities to practice social skills and team building. Not only it will help to bond with the colleagues, but it will help to get to know how everyone is as a person outside the pressure of work. Interviewee C said that once you get to know your peers, then it creates less problem and miscommunication.

Furthermore, interviewee A wish to have more feedback on how they are doing with their job. They have made a good point that the evaluation is only one way, whereas how the management can better their ways but not enough talk about how employee is doing their job and are they fulfilling what is expected from them. Two of the interviewees have made a good point on how peakon is just feedback to the management. The management should have mid-way evaluation individually. Interviewee B also made a point that it would be great if the management would talk individually, doesn't even have to be a meeting but having a conversation with your sub coordinate to build trust both ways and have that good work relationship between managers and team members. Interviewee B also thinks that peakon doesn't replace performance appraisal and thinks that Hotel X should conduct performance appraisal more often than before. Especially with foreign employees, these constant evaluation and checkups should be done since they are coping not only with new

work but with new environment and culture. These builds trust and results to better work relation.

Another very good point interviewee D has pointed out that it will be very fruitful if management know how to identify everyone's strengths and where they want to excel and leverage that for the win of both parties. Additionally, interviewee B also thinks that by having conversation with your employees and listening to what they are interested to do and in what certain duties they hope to excel on, also getting to know your employees' strengths, management can get more out of the people, enables to plan the work much better and employee gets a sense of fulfilment in their job. By asking questions and engaging to conversations, it creates safety and trust and the whole work community will be better. That way, employees doesn't have to be afraid to speak their minds and won't be afraid to make mistakes.

Interviewee E shared that the communication in new system of having a meeting every day from different departments helps lessen the miscommunication and enabling everyone to be informed about what is happening in Hotel X. She also mentioned that it would help to know about the organizational chart of other department (referring to kitchen) and who oversees what duties so that they know who they are supposed to talk to.

Two (2) of the interviewees (E and F) suggested to invest in employees' well-being. Interviewee E suggested to improve the staff canteen, making it cozier and more relaxing, better food and maybe some snacks to go that can be grabbed when you are in a quick break. While interviewee F said that it would be good to improve to more ergonomic working stations. Lastly, encourage employee to bring out their own personality and culture, being more open about multiculturalism with colleagues since it adds positivity to everyday work.

5 Discussion

In this chapter, the author ought to discuss about the results of the research. Firstly, forming hypothesis whether the findings of this research align with the selected theory about the phenomenon. Secondly, tackling about the reliability of the research and what does the sample represent. Thirdly, the author will look into possible future studies and suggestions for development. Lastly, the author will then reflect on her learnings and how the whole thesis process has progressed and what were the challenges faced throughout the whole process.

5.1 Consideration of results

The main objective for this research-based thesis is to find out how does multicultural environment works in hotels. Based on the findings from the interviews, it concludes that multicultural working environment works well for hotel and most specifically, for Hotel X. Its very diverse workforce gives richness and positivity to the working environment in different departments of the hotel. Of course, along with that, there are also challenges multicultural workforce bring such as miscommunication and clash of different cultures.

It was crucial to define what culture is. Culture is very complex topic. It is one of those words that may have numbers of meaning. The author finds out by reflecting from the theory that culture is indeed a very wide topic, people perceive culture differently. When asked what it means to be in a multicultural team, interviewees thinks that it is having different culture, coming from different countries, and backgrounds. One of the interviewees also mentioned that it is not only from different cultures but as well different gender, age, and life experiences. What is seen from outside is not a whole picture. It lies in the values and beliefs as well, confirming the iceberg model of culture by Edward Hall (1976). Hall suggested that culture is like an iceberg, the tip of the iceberg represents the tangible things while the intangible are the aspects that lies underneath the waterline. It confirms that individual's culture effects on how people communicate or present themselves.

Some are more used to diverse environment that they don't consider multiculturalism as a factor of having conflicts amongst the team. Lots of the impacts on the theory matches from the data gathered during interviews. It is concluded that multicultural working environment works and even better and advantage not only for the commissioning company but in Hospitality industry in general. These times that we live in, more and more foreigners move and migrated to study and enter this industry for better career. Resulting to a more diverse workforce to be a new norm.

It was interesting to learn about how multiculturalism and diversity affects different departments. An interviewee made a point about how front of the house culture differs from the kitchen culture. By this, culture is observed not only from a certain country but by certain group of people observing same habits and norms.

It is very important for the employee to feel the sense of belonging despite of differences and diverse opinions. According to the interview, it concluded that having the feeling of belongingness to the team adds value to someone's work. As Schindler (2019) suggested, inclusiveness promotes increased employee satisfaction and efficiency. It was mentioned during the interview that it is easier to work knowing that there are team behind you to help with your work and from whom you can learn and get new knowledge from.

One of the main topics that arise during the interviews was communication. According to Reynolds (2018), communication among different cultures and languages can be misinterpreted and can be difficult to understand. Furthermore, an interviewee revealed that communication problems cannot be avoided in multicultural working environment, and it is very important to understand and list not only verbally but also with body language and tone of voice. Confirming that, Reynolds (2018) suggested that effective cross-cultural communication boils down not only to verbal communication, but non-verbal communication plays a subtle and delicate part in multicultural interaction that can cause misunderstanding and can cause offense among colleagues from different origin.

It is vital that everyone in the organization understands company's goal and value. It should be instilled in everyone's mind what are their common goal, in that way everyone is in the same page and work towards that goal. This results to better understanding and less clashes among the team. Communicating does not only mean saying what's on your mind, but it also means listening and understanding your counterpart.

Something that stood to the author is how not only the company benefits from multicultural working environment but as well as individual growth is achieved by learning from others and learning their culture. Based on the findings from the interviews, all of them agreed that multicultural working environment brings a lot of benefit to the workplace. It was only thought that the only party that could benefit from multicultural work force is the commissioning company but found out during the interviews that not only it is beneficial for the company but as well as for the employees as couple of them confirmed that they have grown a lot as an individual and multicultural working environment has been a huge learning environment for them. Also, one of the interviewees said that it motivates other people to feel like they can come and work for the company, whereas it's not limited, and you have so many diverse opinions, diverse ways of working and learning from each

other. This aligns to the theory as Reynolds (2018) suggested that leaning to culturally diverse workforce allows organization to attract and retain best talents. By having diversity as a key part of recruiting process will help widen the talent selection of prospective employees.

Recommendations that were drawn from the interviews is that how management could be more open and have listening ear to their employees. By having conversations and asking employees opinions, it builds trust and creates a safe environment for employees to be able to be themselves and cater a positive atmosphere at work, creating a well-functioning environment. Hearing out your employees, management can get a picture of what their strengths are and where do they want to excel giving them chance to reach their full ability that will benefit not only the company but will give the employee a sense of fulfillment as well, creating a better employee experience.

5.2 Reliability and validity of research

The sample of the research is quite refined and has a focus which are the employees of the commissioning company, Hotel X. Selected interviewee from different departments represents the holistic population of Hotel X. Factors that the author considered are their department, nationality, as well as how long they have been working for the company, this ensures that there is variety of opinion and gains a wide picture of the sample. Despite the author being part of the population, she tried to keep a neutral point of view while conducting the interviews. It might have affected the interview whether in a positive way that interviewees felt safe and easier to share what was on their mind or negatively as it could not be as constructive answers.

The author tried her best to keep the anonymity throughout the whole interview to ensure that the interviewees were comfortable sharing their thoughts which rises the reliability of the research. But also keeping in mind that all the interviewee's answers are depending on their own experience, personality, and individual's backgrounds that the level of validity could have impacted by these factors. Data gathered from this research doesn't necessarily represent the whole picture multicultural work environment in general but from a perspective of an employee of Hotel X.

Another factor they might have affected the reliability of this research is that all the interviews were held in English, and it is not the mother tongue of the interviewees. We should keep in mind that, they might have hard time to express thoughts, therefore

affecting the validity of the data gathered. Also considering that as the topic we are tackling is somewhat sensitive, answers might not entirely reveal the truthful answer.

Even though, some of the answers are a bit general and some of it are off topic, author still wanted to include it in the final thesis since it is part of the goal to gain insights from the employees.

5.3 Future studies and suggestion for development

The author not only thinks that there is always room for improvement, but it is important to improve the work. The approach and mindset about the whole thesis process could be improved. While conducting this research, some topics arise that could be suggestion for future studies. It is intriguing for the author to find out whether multicultural management makes a change when implemented in a workplace. Multiculturalism is a very wide and timely topic that can be studies from different perspectives. It could be interesting to study further different communication styles as well as look into cross-cultural studies.

Questions asked in the interview could be more specific and in depth. Data collection could also improve, by conducting interviews on larger scale and getting more people involve. Maybe it could help improve to send email to the whole population of the commissioning company and giving it more time to be able to reach more people. And get people that are interested on the topic and in participating and sharing their thoughts on the matter. Still the author finds the whole thesis process very beneficial and learn a lot throughout the whole process.

The research conclude that interviewees have a need for a better diversity management and that it should be looked more into and pay attention to. Future studies could be about what is considered as effective multicultural management strategy and leadership strategies. It is interesting to further study the phenomenon from the other perspective as well. Should educational courses and guidelines for a well-functioning working environment be considered?

5.4 Evaluation and self-assessment

The whole thesis process has been very challenging for the author. When the author first started the thesis writing process, COVID was a big factor of why it has been challenging for her. During those times, school was done remotely, and most premises were closed. The author found it very challenging to proceed with the thesis writing. Furthermore, the author found it very challenging to balance an almost full-time job and having the focus to write a bachelor's thesis. Getting promoted at job requires more dedication and calls for

more responsibilities. Above all this the author wanted to do a give justice to this “sensitive” yet very important topic resulting for her being overwhelmed and pushed it back.

Finally, September, fall of 2022, as the author is really interested in the topic, she decided to start again the whole process but continued to work on the same topic for the thesis. The author had to manage her time more efficiently to be able to manage work and studies. She had to be firm and talked with her workplace that she could only work four days a week and the rest of the week is dedicated to working on her thesis. Luckily, they were understanding and gave the author possibility to make it work. Also, with the help and motivation from her thesis supervisor and teacher, she was able to proceed with the thesis writing.

Aside from these challenges, even though that the author is familiar with writing reports and academic writing through her years in studying, but not in this extent. It also surprised the author how data analysis can be overwhelming and challenging. The thesis process might have been the biggest challenge for the author in her whole study. It requires self-discipline, time management, and a lot of work to be able to execute it well. It might have been wise, only, if possible, to take some time off work and have a focus on writing the thesis. Despite that, the author thinks that it is a process that she had to go through and learn from.

The process of thesis writing has been long due than the author would have wanted. The author has realized throughout the whole process of writing this thesis, is that no matter how big of a work it is, you should always start in small steps. Small progress is still a progress. And by that working your way through it.

Along the process, the author has undeniably learned a lot, that for sure will be beneficial for her future. Contacting interviewees and conducting interviews was a good skill acquired from the thesis process as well as analyzing the collected research data is a valuable skill gained. Not only the topic of multiculturalism but the whole thesis process has been eye opening for the author and will have an impact on her future career. All the learnings acquired during this thesis process will be advantageous for the author specially in managing people and handling cultural differences. Also, by looking into this, we grow as an individual and we learn to deal with situations in an effective way, without compromising relationship between co-workers. By writing this thesis, the author aspires to raise readers’ interest in the topic of multiculturalism and how to perceive it as something beneficial and enriching to any workplace.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview questions

1. Where are you originally from?
2. How long have you been working in this company?
3. In which department do you work?
4. When you hear the word multicultural, what comes to your mind?
5. How multicultural is your current working environment?
6. Do you think working with diverse people works in your department or in a hotel? If yes - how, if no – why not?
7. From a perspective of an employee in a multicultural team, how would you describe belongingness? Does it add value to your work? Why or why not?
8. Has there been any challenges with communication and how has it affected your job?
9. How do you handle working with people from different cultures? How do you cope with these situations?
10. How has multiculturalism affected your job? Can you give positive and negative examples?
11. In your opinion, does being a multicultural team brings advantage or drawback to the company? Why?
12. Do you think being a multicultural workforce is enough discussed and managed well in this company? Would you have any recommendations or suggestions to build a well-functioning working environment?
13. Can you suggest how to improve employee experience the company?