Chapter 42
Diversity in Hotel Industry:
Satisfaction, Teamwork

Andri Georgiadou
University of Hertfordshire, UK

Chryso Iasonos
London South Bank University, UK

ABSTRACT

Managing human resources in the hospitality industry is a challenging task. In today's competitive environment, an increasing number of organizations invest in promoting diversity in the workplace. The concept of diversity as a value is based on the recognition, acceptance, and respect. It implies understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing and valuing the individual differences. Therefore, it is very important to understand "how diversity impacts individual and team processes and outcomes in the workplace". This chapter introduces the notion of diversity in hotel industry: its role, its interrelationship with satisfaction and teamwork. Emphasis is given on the fact that the right to difference and diversity should be incorporated not only in the whole range of processes, strategies, and actions of the company but also within the corporate culture.

INTRODUCTION

The prevailing competitive environment stimulates the need for establishing a business strategy in which each stakeholder is involved, not only those who hold leading positions in a company (Brown, Squire & Lewis, 2010). Research indicates that by investing in the development of an effective human resource management mechanism, a significant positive contribution to the performance the organization is generated (Caulkin, 2001; Nicu, 2012). Managing human resources in the hospitality industry is conditioned by specific characteristics, including labor and customer's diversity and formation of dissimilar groups of professionals. These has led researchers to endeavour to fill the gap in existing knowledge, based on the assumption that organizations can only achieve their strategic objectives if they fully utilize the potential of their working groups (Dreachlin, 1999, 2007). However, there is ample evidence supporting

the idea that group members do not realise and perceive teamwork similarly, hence causing effective human resource management to be even more challenging (Doran, 2003).

In light of this, in this chapter we introduce the notion of diversity in hotel industry: its role, its interrelationship with satisfaction and teamwork, whereas we conclude emphasizing that the right to difference and diversity should be incorporated not only in the whole range of processes, strategies, and actions of the company but also within the corporate culture.

DIVERSITY IN HOTEL INDUSTRY

In today's competitive environment, an increasing number of organizations invest in promoting diversity in the workplace. Therefore, it is very important to understand "*how diversity impacts individual and team processes and outcomes in the workplace*" (Harrison & Sin, 2006, pp. 191). The role of diversity in workplaces has been widely discussed in the field of organizational studies. Diversity has been claimed to impact team effectiveness (Harrison & Sin, 2006), whilst diverse work teams were found to attain high value to organizations. Literature highlights that diversity provides benefits that increase success. Given the multicultural and globalised perspective of the hospitality industry (Korjala, 2012), diversity management practices can offer organizations advantages in facilitating transactions with customers (Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000), and by committing to diversity, businesses' reputation and corporate image can be effectively enhanced (Roberson & Park, 2007).

Hospitality plays an important role in the economy of a country– often constitutes its backbone. According to Reisinger (2009), hospitality and tourism organizations operate in a very complex multicultural tourism environment and thus they cannot afford to neglect understanding and capturing individuals' perception on culture nor underestimate the role of the national culture. While most managers recognize the value and importance of culture, they find it difficult, if not impossible, to successfully link culture to diversity so that it becomes viable and leads to the achievement of the strategic objectives. Literature highlights that traditional organisational cultures and systems include factors that create significant barriers and constraints to successful diversity management. In general however, the organizational competitiveness lies significantly on the ability to manage cultural diversity in a workplace and communicate effectively across cultures (Okoro & Washington, 2012, pp.58).

Carbery, Garavan, O'Brien and McDonnell (2003), state that a combination of demographic, human capital and psychological attributes contributes to employees' job satisfaction and retention. Nevertheless, changes in workplace demographics have played a major role on stimulating scholar's interest to investigate diversity within the hotel industry and especially its impact on employees' satisfaction. As Franek and Vecera (2008) state, employees' satisfaction is subject to the diversification of employees' aspirations and needs; it fluctuates when one group of employees starts to desire differently from what another group is seeking.

Individuals and Diversity in the Hotel Industry

Individuals provide organizations with an identity since they maintain and support the company's subsistence. By the same token, the effectiveness of the organization is a function of the knowledge and diverse characteristics of its workforce. When employees are actively engaged in the decision making process, then their sense of belonging is enhanced resulting in a more natural immersion in the corpo-

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