RESEARCH PAPER

Human Resource Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity among Hotel Employees: An Empirical Study in Coimbatore District

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to look into the HR strategies of handling cultural diversity among the employees of hotels in Coimbatore District. A structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data from 87 employees of the hotels. The data were analyzed by descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple regression and reliability test by Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability values for HR Strategies, Cultural Diversity Management and Employee Outcomes were 0.900, 0.727 and 0.825, respectively. The results indicated high positive correlations between the three constructs. Multiple regression revealed that the R^2 of the HR Strategies and Cultural Diversity Management was 0.793 when predicting Employee Outcomes. HR Strategies had the greater impact on Employee Outcomes. The study emphasizes on the significance of inclusive HR practices in handling cultural diversity and enhancing employee outcomes for hotel industry.

Keywords: HR Strategies, Cultural Diversity, Diversity Management, Hotel Employees, Employee Outcomes

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Introduction

Employee cooperation, communication and service quality are paramount for the success of the hotel industry. Cultural diversity is a significant HR issue as a broad cross-section of people from diverse cultural, regional and social backgrounds are employed in hotels. To ensure employees can function well across cultural differences, effective HR strategies like equal opportunities, cultural training, communication support, conflict resolution and workplace practices that are inclusive are required. Hence this study focuses on HR strategies in managing cultural diversity and its correlation with the outcome of the employees in hotel industry in Coimbatore District.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the Human Resource Practices of the hotels related to the management of cultural diversity of employees.
- To evaluate the employees' perceptions of cultural diversity management at hotels.
- To investigate the connection between HR strategies, cultural diversity

management and the outcomes of employees.

- To analyse the contribution of HR strategies and cultural diversity management towards employee outcomes and provide suitable suggestions for effective diversity management.

Statement of the Problem

Working in a hotel can mean that staff from various cultures and backgrounds may have differing approaches to communication, teamwork and working relations. If diversity is not managed properly, it can result in miscommunication, conflict and low employee satisfaction. Therefore, it is important to investigate the effectiveness of HR strategies in supporting cultural diversity management and the effect of cultural diversity management practices on positive employee outcomes. The present study therefore explores these inter-relationships between the hotel employees in Coimbatore District.

Need for the Study

HR practices can contribute to the respect, inclusion, communication and equal opportunities of employees from diverse backgrounds. The study is needed to assess the effectiveness of such practices and understand their relationship with employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, teamwork, relationships and performance. The results can be applied to the hotel management to enhance inclusive HR practices.

Scope of the Study

The study is confined to the employees of the hotel sector in Coimbatore District involving employees of various departments of the hotel and of various hotel categories. It is centered on three key areas: HR Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity, Cultural Diversity Management and Employee Outcomes. Primary data is gathered on the employees using a structured questionnaire to look at the perceptions of the employees and the relationship between these variables.

Review of Literature

Sourouklis and Tsagdis (2013) carried out a study to put a relationship between the diversity of the employment and the performance of the hotels using the international empirical data. The article stressed the influence of management and organisational aspects on workforce diversity. The article further demonstrated that, if appropriate staffing and recruitment practices are adopted, they may have a positive impact on the performance of hotels. The study emphasized the significance of having right human resource strategies in managing workforces that have different backgrounds in the hotels.

This is a study of cross-cultural competency and team performance of employees of multi-national hotel companies by **Sucher & Cheung (2015).** The study comprised of analyzing the 738 valid responses from 6 multinational hotel companies in Thailand. The results of the study revealed that cross-cultural competency positively and directly influenced multicultural team performance. Cultural awareness, sensitivity and relationship-building skills in particular were identified as being important competencies for hotel employees.

García-Rodríguez, Dorta-Afonso and González-de-la-Rosa (2020) conducted a study on diversity management and job satisfaction of employees working in the hospitality sector in the Canary Islands. The results revealed that workers' beliefs about diversity management had a positive and significant direct influence on job satisfaction. In addition, organisational commitment was found to be a key factor in the relationship between diversity management and job satisfaction. Diversity management should be considered as an essential element in developing human resource policies to yield positive employee outcomes.

Madera, Dawson and Neal (2013) explored the relationship between hotel managers' perceived diversity climate and job satisfaction. The study involved surveying 130 hotel and lodging managers in Texas, the USA. It was found that a positive diversity climate lowered the levels of role ambiguity and role conflict and increased job satisfaction. This study is significant in that it provides evidence for the need to create inclusive workplaces in order to increase the satisfaction of employees within the hotel industry.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study is both descriptive and analytical, aimed at analysing HR strategies used for cultural diversity management and its correlation with the outcomes of hotel employees in Coimbatore District.

Source of Data

The study makes use of primary data collected from hotel employees using a standardized questionnaire. The questionnaire was given to the respondents using the survey method.

Sample Size

The study comprised of 87 hotel employees of Coimbatore District. The respondents are of different demographic characteristics, various job positions, various departments, hotel categories and cultural/regional backgrounds.

Research Instrument

Based on the study's goals, a structured questionnaire was created. There are two sections to the questionnaire. Gender, age, educational background, work experience, employment role, department, hotel type, and cultural/regional background are all collected in the first section. This section has three parts, all of which have 10 statements. HR Strategies for managing Cultural Diversity: 10 items, Cultural Diversity Management: 10 items, Employee Outcomes – 10 items and were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Reliability of the Instrument

Cronbach's alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The reliability coefficients were 0.900 for HR Strategies, 0.727 for Cultural Diversity Management and 0.825 for Employee Outcomes. These values were within the acceptable to high limits of internal consistency of the three constructs. There fore, all 10 items were kept for analysis in each construct.

Statistical Tools Used

The following statistical tools were used for analysing the collected data:

1. Simple Percentage Analysis: The demographic profile of respondents was described using frequency and percentage.

2. Descriptive Statistics: The mean and standard deviation were utilized to evaluate the general replies about employee outcomes, cultural diversity management, and HR strategies.

3. Pearson Correlation Analysis: The relationship between HR strategies, cultural diversity management, and employee outcomes was examined using Pearson correlation.

4. Multiple Regression Analysis: To determine how HR strategies and cultural diversity management relate to the prediction of employee outcomes, multiple regression was used.

Data Analysis

Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N = 87)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	52	60
	Female	35	40
Age	Below 25 years	24	28
	25–35 years	31	35
	36–45 years	20	23
	Above 45 years	12	14
Educational Qualification	School level	8	9
	Diploma	18	21
	Undergraduate	37	43
	Postgraduate	19	22
	Other	5	5
Work Experience	Below 2 years	20	23
	2–5 years	30	35
	6–10 years	23	26
	Above 10 years	14	16
Job Position	Managerial	12	14
	Supervisory	18	21
	Executive	25	29
	Operational/ Support Staff	32	36
Department	Front Office	16	18
	Food and Beverage	22	25
	Housekeeping	17	20
	Kitchen	14	16
	Administration/HR	10	12
	Other	8	9
Type of Hotel	Budget/Economy	19	22
	Mid-scale	31	36
	Upscale	24	27
	Luxury	13	15
Cultural/Regional Background	Same as local region	43	49
	Other district in Tamil Nadu	24	28

	Other Indian state	16	18
	Other country	4	5

The demographic profile shows that 40% of the respondents are females and 60% are males. The age group with the highest percentage are those aged 25-35 years while the second highest age group is below 25 years at 28%. The highest number of educational qualifications is undergraduates (43%). For work experience, 35% have 2-5 years of experience, and 23% of them have less than 2 years of experience. Of the jobs, 36% are operational/support and 29% are executive jobs. Food and Beverage also contributes the largest percentage of the departments (25%) followed by Housekeeping (20%). As far as work type of hotel is concerned, 36% of the respondents work with mid-scale hotels and 27% with upscale hotels. From cultural/regional background perspective, 49% of them are from the local region and 28% are from other districts of Tamilnadu. The respondents are from different occupational, educational and cultural background in the hotel industry in general.

Reliability Analysis of the Research Constructs

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability
HR Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity	10	**0.900**	Excellent
Cultural Diversity Management	10	**0.727**	Acceptable
Employee Outcomes	10	**0.825**	Good

The test for reliability of the research instrument was carried out by Cronbach Alpha. Internal consistency of the HR Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity, Cultural Diversity Management and Employee Outcomes constructs were acceptable to high with coefficients of 0.900, 0.727 and 0.825 respectively.

Descriptive Statistics

Study Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
HR Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity	87	1.90	5.00	**3.5805**	0.6350
Cultural Diversity Management	87	2.60	4.30	**3.5253**	0.3515
Employee Outcomes	87	2.50	4.60	**3.6529**	0.4151

Descriptive statistics were used to check the level and variation of the major variables of this study. The results reveal that the mean score for HR Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity was 3.5805 with a standard deviation of 0.6350 which implies that the respondents had a relatively high level of positive perception. The mean score for Cultural Diversity Management was 3.5253 with a standard deviation of 0.3515, signifying a positive perception, and relatively low variability in responses. The outcomes for the employees' measure gave the highest mean score (3.6529) and standard deviation (0.4151), indicating a positive perception of employee outcomes related to cultural diversity management. The results show that overall, the hotel employee sample (87) had positive perceptions on all three constructs.

Pearson Correlation Analysis among HR Strategies, Cultural Diversity Management and Employee Outcomes

H_o1: There is no significant relationship between HR Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity and Cultural Diversity Management among hotel employees.

H_o2: There is no significant relationship between HR Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity and Employee Outcomes among hotel employees.

H_o3: There is no significant relationship between Cultural Diversity Management and Employee Outcomes among hotel employees.

Correlations

		hrstrategies_mean	culturaldiversity_mean	employeeoutcome_mean
hrstrategies_mean	Pearson Correlation	1	.856**	.872**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	87	87	87
culturaldiversity_mean	Pearson Correlation	.856**	1	.840**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	87	87	87
employeeoutcome_mean	Pearson Correlation	.872**	.840**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	87	87	87
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Based on the Pearson correlation analysis, HR Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity is positively correlated with Cultural Diversity Management with a very high value of 0.856 and statistically very significant ($p < 0.001$). The relationship between HR Strategies and Employee Outcomes is also very strong and positive ($r = 0.872$, $p < 0.001$) and statistically significant. In the same manner, Cultural Diversity Management is highly positively related to Employee Outcomes ($r = 0.840$, $p < 0.001$) and is statistically significant. Data was analysed from 87 valid respondents, which means that all three of the study variables are positively and significantly related to each other.

Multiple Regression Analysis of HR Strategies and Cultural Diversity Management on Employee Outcomes

H_0: HR Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity and Cultural Diversity Management do not significantly predict Employee Outcomes among hotel employees.

H_1: HR Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity and Cultural Diversity Management significantly predict Employee Outcomes among hotel employees.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.891[a]	.793	.788	.19097

a. Predictors: (Constant), culturaldiversity_mean, hrstrategies_mean

b. Dependent Variable: employeeoutcome_mean

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.753	2	5.877	161.144	.000[b]
	Residual	3.063	84	.036		
	Total	14.817	86			

a. Dependent Variable: employeeoutcome_mean

b. Predictors: (Constant), culturaldiversity_mean, hrstrategies_mean

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound

1	(Constant)	.851	.238		3.570	.001	.377	1.325
	hrstrategies_mean	.373	.063	.570	5.947	.000	.248	.497
	culturaldiversity_mean	.416	.113	.353	3.679	.000	.191	.642
a. Dependent Variable: employeeoutcome_mean								

Based on Multiple regression analysis, HR Strategies for Managing Cultural Diversity and Cultural Diversity Management is jointly highly associated with Employee Outcomes and statistically significant. The model was found to have an R of 0.891 with a value of 0.793 for the R^2, suggesting that 79.3% of the variation in Employee Outcomes can be accounted for by the two predictor variables. The model also has a high explanatory power with an adjusted R^2 value of 0.788. Overall the ANOVA indicates the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 161.144$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficient results show that HR Strategies has a positive and statistically significant contribution to the Employee Outcomes ($\beta = 0.570$, $t = 5.947$, $p < 0.001$); on the other hand, Cultural Diversity Management also has a positive and statistically significant contribution to the Employee Outcomes ($\beta = 0.353$, $t = 3.679$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, HR Strategies contribute more relatively to the Employee Outcomes. The collinearity statistics display Tolerance = 0.268 and VIF = 3.733 for each of the predictors, suggesting that there is some collinearity among the predictors, but not significant given the measures shown. The overall results suggest that both HR Strategies and CDM plays both major role among hotel employees in HR Outcomes.

Histogram of Regression Standardized Residuals

The histogram showed the distribution of the regression residuals was approximately normal in shape, and the Normal P–P plot shows that the points are more or less near the diagonal reference line, implying that the assumption of normality was reasonably met.

Findings of the study

- The majority (60%) of the respondents were male.
- The majority (35%) of the respondents are in the age group of 25-35 years.
- Majority are undergraduates (43%).
- Majority 35% have 2-5 years' experience.
- Majority are 36% are Operational/Support Staff.
- Majority working in the Food and Beverage department (25%).
- Majority are working in hotels with medium scale (36%).
- The large majority are from the same area within the local region (49%).

Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis indicates that the three constructs have good to high internal consistency. HR Strategies had a Cronbach α of 0.900, Cultural Diversity Management had a Cronbach α of 0.727, and Employee Outcomes had a Cronbach α of 0.825. Therefore, all 30 items were kept and all three scales were found to be reliable.

Descriptive Statistics

The results for HR Strategies, Cultural Diversity Management, and Employee Outcomes were 3.5805, 3.5253, and 3.6529 respectively. The results show that the general attitude of the respondents in all three constructs were positive, and the highest mean was obtained in the construct of Employee Outcomes.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

The results reveal a very strong positive and significant association between HR Strategies and Cultural Diversity Management ($r = 0.856$, $p < 0.001$). HR Strategies also have a very strong positive relationship with Employee Outcomes ($r = 0.872$, $p < 0.001$). The same applies to Cultural Diversity Management, as well – it is strongly and positively correlated with Employee Outcomes ($r = 0.840$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, all three of the correlation hypotheses are confirmed.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The findings show that HR strategies and cultural diversity management are positively and significantly correlated ($r = 0.856$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, there is a high positive correlation ($r = 0.872$, $p < 0.001$) between HR strategies and employee outcomes. Similarly, there is a high and positive correlation ($r = 0.840$, $p < 0.001$) between Cultural Diversity Management and Employee Outcomes. As a result, all three of the correlation theories are supported.

Suggestions

- The HR policies and training programmes of the hotels should be enhanced to better understand various cultural backgrounds and practices among employees.

- Periodic cross-cultural and conflict-management training should be given to foster teamwork and respect among the team members.
- Management ensure that employees are offered equal opportunities of employment and promotion in their careers due to diversity of culture.
- Hotels should establish an environment where they can foster cooperation, employee comfort and positive relationships in the workplace.

Conclusion

The study concludes that effective management and cultural diversity are significant factors in achieving employee outcomes. The results of the research indicate that positive associations exist between HR strategies, cultural diversity management, and employee outcomes. Regression analysis further demonstrates that both HR strategies and cultural diversity management significantly predict employee outcomes. The former was more strongly associated with the latter than the latter. As such, it can be proposed that hotels can improve their employee outcomes through enhanced human resource management and inclusive as well as culturally responsive HR strategies.

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