

# Cultural differences in the workplace matters to international managers essay exa...

[Business](#), [Management](#)



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## **Introduction**

Diverse cultural background in the work place focuses on issues such as religion, race, ethnicity, gender, and social values. Having a diverse workforce or employee in terms of cultural background is requires that the employers take into account the various needs of their employee. For instance, some of the needs that have to be considered include: dressing, religious practices, customs, social value, family obligations, and non verbal behaviors (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). Different cultures have different expressions for these aspects. For example, some cultures require specific dressing code such as wearing turbans at all times, while other cultures may require employees subscribed to that particular culture to set some time during working hours for prayers or other religious practices. Most international managers today would employ people from diverse cultural background because it matters to the organizations (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). There are numerous benefits associated with having a cultural diverse workforce requiring managers to emphasize on employing people from different cultural background. In this paper, the benefits and importance of having a culturally diverse workforce is discussed.

In this globe, there are different colors of people all retain different kinds of culture including language, attitude and lifestyle, etc (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). Based on worldwide demographic, economic, political, technological development and changes many organizations have expanded to other foreign countries (Gröschl et al., 2008). Hotel industry is also becoming more globalized. Nowadays, it is very common with different cultures people working together within the service sector. Problems are always derived from different cultural diversity (Rugman & Collinson, 2009).

According to Fleury(1999), “ Diversity management is a necessary managerial tools or process that helps create a work environment in which employees can achieve their personal goals in line with overall business objectives.” Proper management strategy is needed to implement in order to solve the cultural diversity problems. Failure is easy if managing in a wrong way and maybe amplify the negative impacts that will also directly affect to the profit or loss of the hotel. As Slater et al., (2008) stated, “ Developing diverse workforce and cultivating relationships with a diverse set of stakeholders provides firms with competitive advantages”. A good relationship and teamwork that build up within the team can help to work effectively and make the team more powerful to bit other competitors (Rugman & Collinson, 2009).

Many people from different countries were hired within different international organizations (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). According to different cultures, negative impacts are derived within the workforces. Managers from foreign countries are hired to manage the entire service team. Different countries

have their own working culture or attitude. According to Hofstede (1980), “Power distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.” Several countries have a high power distance index number, and people from these countries accept the society believes that inequalities amongst people are there (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). Hierarchy reflects the existential inequality between high-ups and lower-downs. They are always hesitate on developing a close relationship with the manager and seek for approval or permission from the manager which will decrease the service speed and quality (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). Between manager and employees, negative impacts are derived which will directly affect the customer satisfaction, customers therefore switch to other organizations as providing poor service quality (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). Employees are not happy working with the manager; Employee retention will be decrease and will cost more for hiring new employees and a loss to a company. Management Strategy is needed to address the power distance issues within the workforces (Rugman & Collinson, 2009).

As issues stated above, management strategy are needed to address the issues between the manager and employees. According to different culture backgrounds, cultural diversity training is suggested to provide for the manager and employees. As Westfield &Stahlhut (1999) stated, diversity training is a process that teach the employees about cultural, socio-economic, racial and religious differences among each other and taught how

to embrace those differences so as to create and maintain an effective work environment (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). The purpose of this training is to let a workforce to learn and understand different culture backgrounds, religion and lifestyle and also the importance, value and impacts of managing a diverse workforce. The principles and facts are understood by employees that can help to decrease the distance between the manager and employees in order to improve the service quality to satisfy the customers (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). The cultural diversity training is a four days short time training program monthly, teaching employees to recognize the impact of their own reactions to diversity situations and the learning behaviors. Service practicing will also provide during the training that can encourage the entire team that can promotes the teamwork, innovative and productivity (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). The result of this training is to avoid the power distance issues which the employees will not hesitate anymore to build up a close relationship with the manager and also the manager to the employees because the hierarchy reflects. Moreover, the employees will not seek for approval from the manager every time, thus they can solve by themselves by giving more empowerment to work (Rugman & Collinson, 2009).

According to the power distance, the employees think there is hierarchies reflected the inequalities with the manager. As Larson, C. and

LaFasto, F. (1989) stated, " Individual working is less efficient than the collaboration of several individuals' creativity. In situations that require a combination of multiple skills, experiences and judgments, a team would

achieve better results than would individuals working within confined job roles and responsibilities." Teamwork are important within a team, but the issue stated above, the employees feel there are power distance with the manager, so they are not passively involving to the service, it will directly affected the whole team to deliver a good service quality to the customers causing by the low teamwork (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). A teambuilding program is suggested that can help the whole team to build up the teamwork in order to solve the issue. Recommending a long period teambuilding program once per two weeks and will continuously provide to all employees. Continuously teambuilding activities will help to remind the employees the importance of working as a team and also get used to work as a team (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). Some teambuilding activities will be provided which can help to build up relationship between each other including treasure hunt, sport competition or debate competition. All these can help to build up teamwork and within the team, the employees can discover their own strength and weakness, so in the future they can work as the best team during service same as Conti B. & Kleiner B. H. (1997) stated, " Teamworking improves productivity and builds more flexibility into a business."

Motivation is also an important factor that can help the team to work effectively. According to the power distance issue stated above, employees are expected to be tell what they need to do by the manager, so rewards and recognition are needed. Jack Z. (1998) defines rewards as " something than increases the frequency of an employee action". Rewards and

recognition can be classified as two types: monetary rewards and non-monetary rewards. Monetary rewards means it is money-valued rewards such as cash bonuses or stock awards.

Non-monetary rewards are less tangible, but still very effectively such as opportunities for training or certificate. " Non-monetary recognition can be very motivating, helping to build feelings of confidence and satisfaction"(Keller, 1999). According to the issue stated above, employees always expect the manager to give order. After recognized by the company, employees can be motivating and building up their confidence, so they will work automatically by themselves or independently. " Another important goal is increased employee retention"(Jimenez, 1999). As mentioned above, the employees are not satisfy working with the manager, employee retention will be decrease and cost large expenses for the company to hire new employee and training costs for them. If the company recognizes the employees, they will feel satisfied with their company. It can help to increase the productivity to the company. Therefore, rewards and recognition are suggested to implement as it can help to address the power distance issues.

Within workplaces, international managers must know that there is variation of cultural background of the employees. Employees come from different areas and regions of the world. Therefore international managers have to realize that whatever content the company delivers can be interpreted differently by different employees. Basically, employees give meaning to the content material based on their cultural context.

It is easy for international managers to notice the obvious differences within different ethnic groups. In order to have an impact in their interaction with employees, international managers have to go further and be aware of the diversity that exists within each of the ethnic groups. The importance of cultural diversity in the workplace is that it helps provide equity (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). Employees will be treated equally and be given equal opportunities to succeed. Access to opportunities will also be equal. These are therefore the main reasons why culture has to be taken into serious consideration by international managers (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). The structure of the organization operated by these companies must take into account the individual differences of each employee in the workplace. When international managers address this issue, employees will always see themselves as individuals. Similarly they will see their fellow colleagues as individuals.

The other benefit of cultural diversity in the workplaces is job satisfaction among employees. Job satisfaction is defined as “the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job as achieving or facilitating one’s values” (Rugman & Collinson, 2009). At the same time, he defined job dissatisfaction as “the unpleasant emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job as frustrating or blocking the attainment of one’s values”. The two-factor theory posits that workers have primarily two kinds of needs namely motivation and hygiene. Hygiene factors are those necessities that can be satisfied by particular conditions such as regulation, interpersonal relations, working conditions, remunerations among others.



The theory suggests that job dissatisfaction normally arise in cases where hygienic factors do not exist. On the contrary, the supply of hygiene needs does not necessarily translate to full satisfaction. It's only the level of dissatisfaction that can be minimized (Rugman & Collinson, 2009).

Work commitment and job satisfaction are different variables each having a relationship with cultural diversity. Most researchers have treated work commitment and job satisfaction as an independent variable. According to these researchers, work commitment and job satisfaction can be viewed in different angles. Job satisfaction is a form of reaction to a particular job or work related subject; whereas commitment is more of a universal response. For that reason, commitment should be more consistent compared to job satisfaction in an organization.

Research established that effective commitment differed with individual's satisfaction within facets of the work context. In such cases, the role of the management cannot be overlooked because they are the key people at the highest level responsible for moving the organizations ahead. A research conducted by Maxwell and Steele (2008) among hotel managers identified the principle issue that enhances the level of commitment in organizations. These include high and equitable remuneration, employers' interest on their workers, high level of corporation in the organization, cultural diversity in the places of work, and opportunities to take part in social activities.

Payment strategy and recognition are extrinsic job satisfaction variable; whereas workers interest in terms of autonomy, security, teamwork and trust

in terms of moral values, and opportunities to take part in social activities are intrinsic job satisfaction variable. They argued that employees who are highly committed to an organization may experience high level of satisfaction in their work. Highly committed employees would endeavor to meet organization's goals and interest irrespective of their cultural background. This kind of attitude will influence budgetary planning and goals of the managers. Thus, satisfaction is proposed as an outcome instead of an antecedent. In general, the theory suggests that job satisfaction is a precursor of organizational commitment where the aspect of job satisfaction has an imperative impact on the dimension of organizational commitment.

Within a culturally diverse workforce employees encounter varying level of work commitment and job satisfaction in relation to their perception of work context aspects, for instance, training, promotion, scheduling of work, organizational practices and interpersonal relationships. Satisfaction with employment security has less effect on work commitment than satisfaction with quality of life. In the perspective of nurturing commitment and innovation among hotel workers, the most significant thing is the clarity of employment contract, rather than whether or not the contract offers a level of permanency or job security to the workers. In a number of situations, where the job contract is as specific as possible regarding job requirements, part-timers performed better than full-timers whose psychological contract entailed disseminate expectation, for instance, corporate citizenship.

Organizational commitment is both beneficial to employers and employees. For individual employees, work commitment signifies a positive relationship

with the organization and attaches more meaning to life; whereas, for employers, committed workers have the likelihood of enhancing organizational performance, reduce turnover and cases of absenteeism. Organizational commitment has also been associated with efficiency, productivity, creativity and innovativeness among employees.

Workers who are highly committed are less likely to quit the organization. They relate turnover intention to effective commitment and to a slighter degree, normative commitment. The link between continuous commitment and staff turnover intention is not consistent across studies. The same case is true regarding measurement of actual turnover taking into consideration effective and normative commitment and not continuance commitment.

## **Conclusion**

Culture defines as “ A pattern of basic assumptions - invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external and internal integration - that worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Harris, et al., 2003). People from different countries have their own cultures, learning from each other and finding solution to solve is the main purpose of the cultural diversity management strategy. As mentioned before, cultural diversity training can help the employees to understand more about other cultures in order to solve the power distance issues. Teambuilding activities are recommended to implement as it can help the team to build up a good teamwork and relationship that can help to break the hierarchy down between the manager

and the employees. Lastly, managers and employees are needed to be awarded or recognized by the company, so they will satisfy with it and build up the confidence and stay in the company. By minimizing the negative impacts of the cultural issues and maximizing the competitive advantages that can help to beat other competitors by implement the recommended strategy to international companies.

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