

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE AND CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVES

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Diversity and inclusion are paramount for the well-being and success of both employees and customers within the hospitality and tourism industry. Diversity encompasses the distribution of a workforce in terms of observable dimensions such as race, gender, age, and ethnicity, as well as non-observable dimensions such as beliefs and values. Inclusion, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which employees feel involved and integrated within their organisation. It plays a vital role in managing diversity as it fosters a sense of value, respect, and empowerment among individuals from diverse backgrounds.

This paper aims to provide a critical reflection on diversity and inclusion research from the hospitality and tourism literature. Through conducting a critical reflection, this paper used a thematic analysis focused on integrating the scholarly literature that has developed separately: one focusing on the human resources perspective and another concentrating on customer behaviour. This critical reflection bridges the gap between these two perspectives.

Future research in human resources within the hospitality and tourism sector could delve into the impact of diversity and inclusion policies on employee retention and engagement. Investigating the relationship between workplace diversity, employee engagement, and organisational performance is crucial, identifying key drivers and barriers. Another avenue is exploring the experiences of older employees, addressing recruitment, retention, career development, and ageism. Research should also examine attitudes of younger employees and managers toward older colleagues, promoting intergenerational collaboration. Additionally, understanding the challenges faced by employees with disabilities in job opportunities, accommodation needs, and workplace integration is vital. A multi-stakeholder approach could unveil perceptions and attitudes toward employees with disabilities, enhancing their inclusion.





Future studies on customer behaviour should explore the correlation between diversity and inclusion initiatives and customer loyalty, satisfaction, and willingness to pay. Investigating the impact of brand activism on consumers with different values is crucial. Additionally, amid technological advancements, research is needed on how innovative service processes, such as mobile check-ins and chatbots, can enhance inclusivity for diverse customer segments. Understanding the nuanced needs of various consumer groups, such as LGBT consumers in hospitality, is essential for fostering inclusive product development and innovation.

Examining the issues will help drive this literature forward and close the research-practitioner gap to provide potential solutions for empowering underprivileged groups in the hospitality and tourism industry and promoting greater inclusivity in this field.

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