

Hotel handbook

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Foreign Languages and Cultural **Awareness**

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Executive Summary

This report investigates the cultural differences between Bangladesh and Spain in order to provide a guide for hotel employees in providing excellent hospitality services. It emphasises the significance of understanding and accommodating cultural differences in order to improve the guest experience. Understanding culture is critical for a successful hotel operation and a positive guest experience because it allows personnel to adjust their services to fit the distinct demands and preferences of guests from various nations. This report helps in understanding that hotels may provide personalised attention, establish a welcome atmosphere and foster strong relationships with guests by recognising cultural differences.

The report uses the Hofstede's model of cultural insights and recognises that Bangladesh and Spain have distinct cultural traits. Bangladesh has a higher power distance, emphasising respect for authority, whereas Spain has a lesser power gap, emphasising egalitarian connections. Bangladesh also apparently encourages collectivism and prioritises group needs, whereas Spain emphasises individuality and personal achievement. The two countries also differ in their taste for regulations and procedures, with Spain favouring regulations and procedures and Bangladesh favouring ambiguity and uncertainty. Bangladesh also tends to lean towards a moderately masculine culture while Spain has a slightly lesser focus on traditional masculine characteristics. When it comes to hospitality, Spanish visitors place a high importance on personalised service and demand a collaborative, relationship-oriented approach. Given these distinct differences, it is critical for hotel employees to be fluent in Spanish and understand cultural subtleties in order to properly connect with and provide a welcome environment for Spanish visitors.

The given handbook in this report aims to advise the hotel workers to greet their Spanish customers cordially, acknowledge personal links, provide personalised attention, foster social interactions, communicate in Spanish, offer local experiences and be culturally aware in order to achieve good hotel service delivery. Hotels that adhere to these standards can provide a memorable and rewarding experience for Spanish guests, thereby increasing guest satisfaction and loyalty.

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Introduction

It is essential for hospitality companies dealing with foreign guests and visitors to have a thorough understanding of the cultural variances and take steps to ensure customer satisfaction. This report examines the case study of a Bangladeshi hotel in Dhaka hosting Spanish guests and looks at how the hotel can take steps to ensure customer retention and satisfaction. This report includes a training booklet for the hotel personnel that covers instructions on how to greet the visitors appropriately and make them feel involved with the new culture, with the application of the Hofstede's model of culture comparison. The report also highlights the importance of the hotel personnel to speak the native language of the guests to foster a stronger relationship.

Bangladesh

The accommodating hotel is located in a popular travel destination in Dhaka, Bangladesh and is entirely managed by a Bangladeshi workforce. The hotel regularly welcomes international visitors, especially from the Western countries. The Bangladeshis are generally renowned for their hospitality and amicable behaviour towards their guests (Akhter and Sumi, 2014).

Spain

The importance of family, community and socialising is well acknowledged in Spanish society. Spaniards are generally affable and cherish interpersonal relationships. They value food, music, and art and have a strong sense of national pride and identity (Brandes, 2013). Guests from Spain can expect personalised attention and service. They may value a personalised approach that takes into account their own requirements and preferences. They may also like socialising with other guests and partaking in group activities or events.

Country Analysis

The 'Hofstede Country Comparison' tool provides useful information about the cultural differences between Bangladesh and Spain. These distinctions can have serious consequences for hotel personnel and their dealings with customers from both nations:

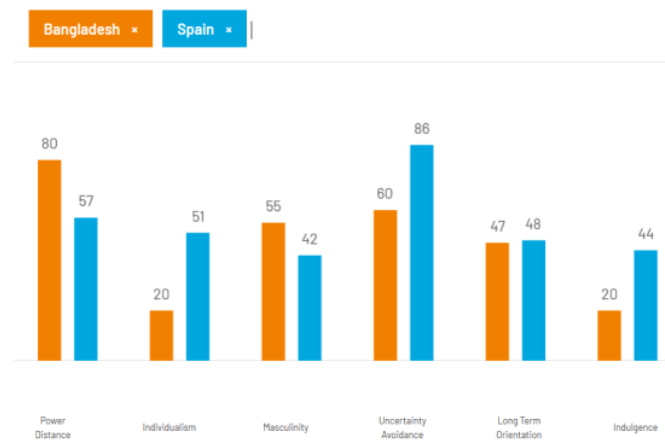


Figure 1: Comparison of Cultural Dimensions of Bangladesh and Spain

(Source: Created by the Author)

The high power distance score of Bangladesh indicates a considerable power gap between those in authority and those who are not. This means that hotel staff from Bangladesh may be more courteous to visitors and expect the same in return (Peterson and Barreto, 2018). Spain, on the other hand, has a lower power distance score, implying that there is less power disparity between those in authority and those who are not. This means that hotel employees from Spain may be more egalitarian in their relationships with clients and demand the same from them. The low individualism score of Bangladesh shows that collectivism and community cohesion are valued more highly by their culture, meaning that hotel staff from Bangladesh may prioritise the needs of the group over the needs of individual customers (Minkov and Kaasa, 2021). Spain, on the other hand, has a higher individuality score, indicating a greater emphasis on individuals and personal achievement. This means that hotel staff from Spain may prioritise the needs of individual customers over the needs of the group.

The higher uncertainty avoidance score recorded by Spain indicates their stronger dislike of uncertainty and ambiguity compared to that of the Bangladeshis. This score suggests that hotel employees in Spain may be more risk-averse and prefer specific regulations and procedures (Ganescu *et al.*, 2014). Bangladesh, on the other hand, has a lower uncertainty avoidance score, indicating a higher tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. In the Hofstede model, masculinity is the degree to which a society values assertiveness, competitiveness and achievement (Erdman, 2018). Bangladesh receives a score of 55, suggesting a culture that is moderately masculine, whereas Spain receives a score of 42, showing a slightly lesser focus on traditional

masculine characteristics. When interacting with visitors, the hotel staff in Bangladesh should remember that guests from Spain may prefer a more collaborative and relationship-oriented approach during their stay.

Given how the Spaniards place a high value on interpersonal relationships and their history and culture, the hotel personnel in Bangladesh should be able to provide personalised service to guests from Spain that considers their individual needs and preferences. Employees in the Bangladeshi hotel should also be able to communicate effectively with guests from Spain in their native language. This means hotel personnel should be able to speak Spanish fluently and understand the cultural nuances of the language. While some Spanish speakers may understand English, speaking in their original language will demonstrate respect and foster a greater and stronger relationship with guests (De Carlos *et al.*, 2019). Hotel staff can bridge the language divide and deliver a more personalised and pleasant experience for Spanish customers by conversing in Spanish. It enables smoother interactions, assures correct awareness of visitor preferences and contributes to the creation of a welcome environment that increases guest satisfaction.

Hotel Handbook

Dos and Don'ts

DOs	DON'Ts
Greet guests with a warm and friendly smile	Assume that Spanish guests prefer a hierarchical approach
Acknowledge the importance of personal ties and connections in the Spanish culture and strive to build a personal rapport with Spanish guests	Neglect the individual needs and preferences of the Spanish guests, as they value individuality and personal achievements
Do provide personalised attention and service, taking into account the individual needs and preferences	Be overly rigid or rule-bound in the service approach
Create opportunities for socialising and interaction among guests	Disregard the importance of building relationships and fostering a welcoming atmosphere.
Communicate in Spanish whenever possible, as it demonstrates respect and helps foster stronger relationships	Rely solely on English for communication and attempt to communicate in Spanish, whenever possible
Offer the Spanish guests with opportunities to experience the local culture, food, music and art	Overlook the opportunity to provide the guests with a personalised experiences that

	give them a taste of the Bangladeshi art and culture
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Training Handbook

Aspects	Activities
Handshake	In Spain, a handshake is a common greeting gesture
	Offer a firm handshake while maintaining eye contact with the guest
	It is customary to shake hands with both men and women in Spain
	However, it is important to note that some Spanish individuals may greet with a kiss on the cheek, especially between acquaintances and friends
Verbal Greetings	Use a friendly and warm tone when greeting Spanish guests
	Common Spanish greetings include “Hola” (Hello) and “Buenos días/tardes/noches” (Good morning/afternoon/evening).
	Address guests with the appropriate title (e.g., “Señor” for men and “Señora” for married women), unless instructed otherwise
Personal Space	Spaniards generally appreciate closer proximity during conversations, if they are comfortable
	Maintain a comfortable personal distance while interacting with Spanish guests, respecting their personal space
Cultural Sensitivity	Spaniards value personal ties and connections. Take the time to build rapport and establish a friendly relationship with guests
	Be attentive to the needs and preferences of the guests, as personalised attention is highly valued in the Spanish culture
	Allow for socialising and group activities
Language	Learn some basic Spanish phrases to greet and communicate effectively with guests.
	Use simple greetings and phrases such as “¡Bienvenidos!” (Welcome) or “¿Cómo puedo ayudarle?” (How can I assist you?).
	Consider offering multilingual staff or translation services to ensure effective communication.

Conclusion

Understanding and adapting Bangladeshi and Spanish cultural differences is critical for the former to provide outstanding hospitality services to Spanish guests. Hotels in Bangladesh may create a welcome environment that exceeds the expectations of Spanish tourists by prioritising personalised care, creating rapport and incorporating Spanish language abilities. Hotels may offer a distinctive and rewarding experience for Spanish guests by adopting cultural sensitivity and establishing interpersonal interactions, resulting to enhanced guest satisfaction and loyalty.

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