

BA International Hotel Management
Foreign Languages & Cultural Awareness
Anglo Cluster Hotel & Spa

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Introduction

As the newly appointed Assistant General Manager at the Inclusivity Hotel & Spa in London, a 5-star hotel called Anglo Cluster, I have visited the chosen hotel branch in Italy to familiarize myself with the hotel chain's operations and brand standards. In preparing this report, I will outline the key cultural differences between England and Italy, analyse and compare the two countries using the GLOBE Project's culture and leadership study, critically discuss the challenges of intercultural leadership in the hospitality industry, and provide three realistic recommendations for overcoming these challenges.

Key Differences between England and Italy

When comparing the culture and customs of England and Italy, several key differences emerge:

Communication Style: Italians tend to have more expressive body language and use animated gestures during conversations, whereas the English generally rely more on verbal communication.

Punctuality: Italians often have a more relaxed approach to time management, while being punctual is highly valued in English culture.

Hierarchy and Respect: Italian society has a stronger hierarchical structure, and respect for authority figures and seniority is emphasized. In England, there is a more egalitarian approach, with respect earned through knowledge and expertise.

Mealtime Customs: Italians consider mealtime as an important social event, with large family gatherings and extended meals being common. In contrast, the English tend to have more structured mealtimes with shorter durations.

Work-Life Balance: Italians often prioritize work-life balance and regularly take longer breaks and vacations. In England, a strong work ethic and longer working hours are more prevalent.

Analysis and Comparison using the GLOBE Project's Culture and Leadership Study
The GLOBE Project's culture and leadership study see Ref 6. (GLOBE project 2020/23) identified six cultural dimensions that are relevant to this scenario:

Uncertainty Avoidance: Italy scores higher in uncertainty avoidance, indicating a preference for structured work processes and clear instructions, while England scores lower, suggesting a greater tolerance for uncertainty and innovation.

Power Distance: Italy has a higher power distance score, reflecting a larger power gap and a greater acceptance of authority. England has a lower score, suggesting a more egalitarian approach.

Collectivism: Italy scores higher in collectivism, emphasizing strong family and social ties. England has a lower score, indicating a greater focus on individualism and self-reliance.

Assertiveness: Italy tends to score higher in assertiveness, reflecting a more direct and forceful communication style. England scores lower, indicating a more restrained communication style.

Gender Egalitarianism: Both countries score relatively high in gender egalitarianism, suggesting an equal distribution of roles and opportunities between genders.

Future Orientation: England scores higher in future orientation, reflecting a greater emphasis on planning, long-term outcomes, and delayed gratification. Italy has a lower score, suggesting a more present-oriented attitude.

Challenges of Intercultural Leadership in the Hospitality Industry

Managing an intercultural team in the hospitality industry can present several challenges:

Communication: Differences in communication styles, such as directness or indirectness, can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. This can affect team collaboration, guest interactions, and overall operational efficiency.

Conflict Resolution: Cultural differences may influence how conflicts are perceived and resolved. Different approaches to conflict resolution can lead to prolonged conflicts or unresolved issues within the team.

Attitudes and Expectations: Diverse cultural backgrounds may shape employees' attitudes towards work, authority, and customer service. Managing diverse expectations and aligning them with the hotel's brand standards can be demanding.

Recommendations for Overcoming Challenges

To overcome the challenges of intercultural leadership, the Hotel Management Team can implement the following recommendations:

Cultural Sensitivity Training: Provide regular training sessions to enhance employees' understanding of diverse cultures, communication styles, and management practices. This will promote cultural sensitivity, mutual respect, and promote effective intercultural teamwork.

Communication Barriers: One of the main challenges of intercultural leadership in the hospitality industry is overcoming communication barriers. Differences in language, communication styles, and cultural norms between team members from Italy and England can lead to misunderstandings, lack of clarity, and ineffective collaboration. As an assistant general manager, it is crucial to implement clear communication strategies, invest in language training for staff, and promote an environment where team members feel comfortable expressing themselves.

Differing Work Ethics and Management Styles: Italian and British cultures may have varying work ethics, management styles, and approaches to decision-making. This can result in conflicts, resistance to change, and differing expectations within the team. As a leader, it is important to understand and respect these differences, introduce multicultural training programs, and adapt management strategies to accommodate diverse perspectives and practices.

Cultural Sensitivity and Adaptation: Intercultural leadership requires an elevated level of cultural sensitivity and adaptation. It is essential to be aware of cultural nuances, customs, and values from both Italy and England to foster a harmonious and inclusive work environment. Recognizing and appreciating cultural diversity, organizing cultural exchange programs, and promoting cross-cultural understanding among team members can help mitigate cultural clashes and promote constructive interaction within the team.

Conflict Resolution and Team Cohesion: Differences in cultural backgrounds can sometimes lead to conflicts and challenges in building cohesive teams. As an assistant general manager, it is important to proactively address conflicts, promote open dialogue, and facilitate team-building activities that celebrate diversity and promote a sense of unity. Investing in conflict resolution training, creating a culture of respect and inclusivity, and encouraging teamwork across cultural boundaries are crucial for nurturing a harmonious work environment.

In conclusion, intercultural leadership in the hospitality industry presents unique challenges that require sensitivity, flexibility, and effective communication strategies. By embracing cultural diversity, promoting cross-cultural understanding, and fostering an inclusive work culture, leaders can overcome these challenges and create a cohesive and high-performing team that thrives in a multicultural environment.

THE GLOBE STATISTICS

Latin Europe

France, Israel, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland

The GLOBE Latin Europe cluster consists of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland (French-speaking), and Israel. The scores of this cluster are noteworthy for their medium scores on most *cultural practices* dimensions with the exception of high scores on Power Distance and relatively low scores on Humane Orientation. Power distance is the degree to which the community accepts and endorses authority, power differentials, status privileges, and social inequality. Members of these societies do not expect power to be distributed evenly among its citizens nor would they reward individuals for being kind and generous to others. The ratings of Gender Egalitarianism obtained the lowest score for this cluster but it is about average for other clusters—all clusters are at least somewhat male-dominated. All the other dimensions fall in the mid-range but Future Orientation and In-Group and Institutional Collectivism are noteworthy for being lower than the average of other clusters. This cluster scored higher on In-Group Collectivism than Institutional Collectivism, indicating significant family and group orientation but not particularly encouraging a collective distribution of resources. In short, the societies in this cluster are somewhat male-dominated, not particularly humane-oriented and experience an unequal distribution of power and status among citizens.

As for societal *values* (what the society believes *should be*), the Latin Europe cluster ranks high on Performance Orientation, In-Group Collectivism, Future Orientation, and Humane Orientation. Thus, they desire to have significant increases in performance and future orientation, to be more humane, and to have more gender equality. The very low scoring Power Distance values, in sharp contrast to its societal cultural practice, are an indication that they prefer to have drastic reductions in power differences, stratification, and status differentiation. Interestingly, there seems to be a relatively small difference between cultural practice and societal values scores on Uncertainty Avoidance and Assertiveness dimensions which indicates that the societies in this cluster find the current structure, rules, norms, and the level of assertiveness about relationships acceptable. On the other hand, these societies desire a modest increase in In-Group and Institutional Collectivism, suggesting that they want more loyalty and cohesiveness in their organizations and families, and desire more practices that reward and give support to the collective distribution of resources and collective action.

Anglo

Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, USA

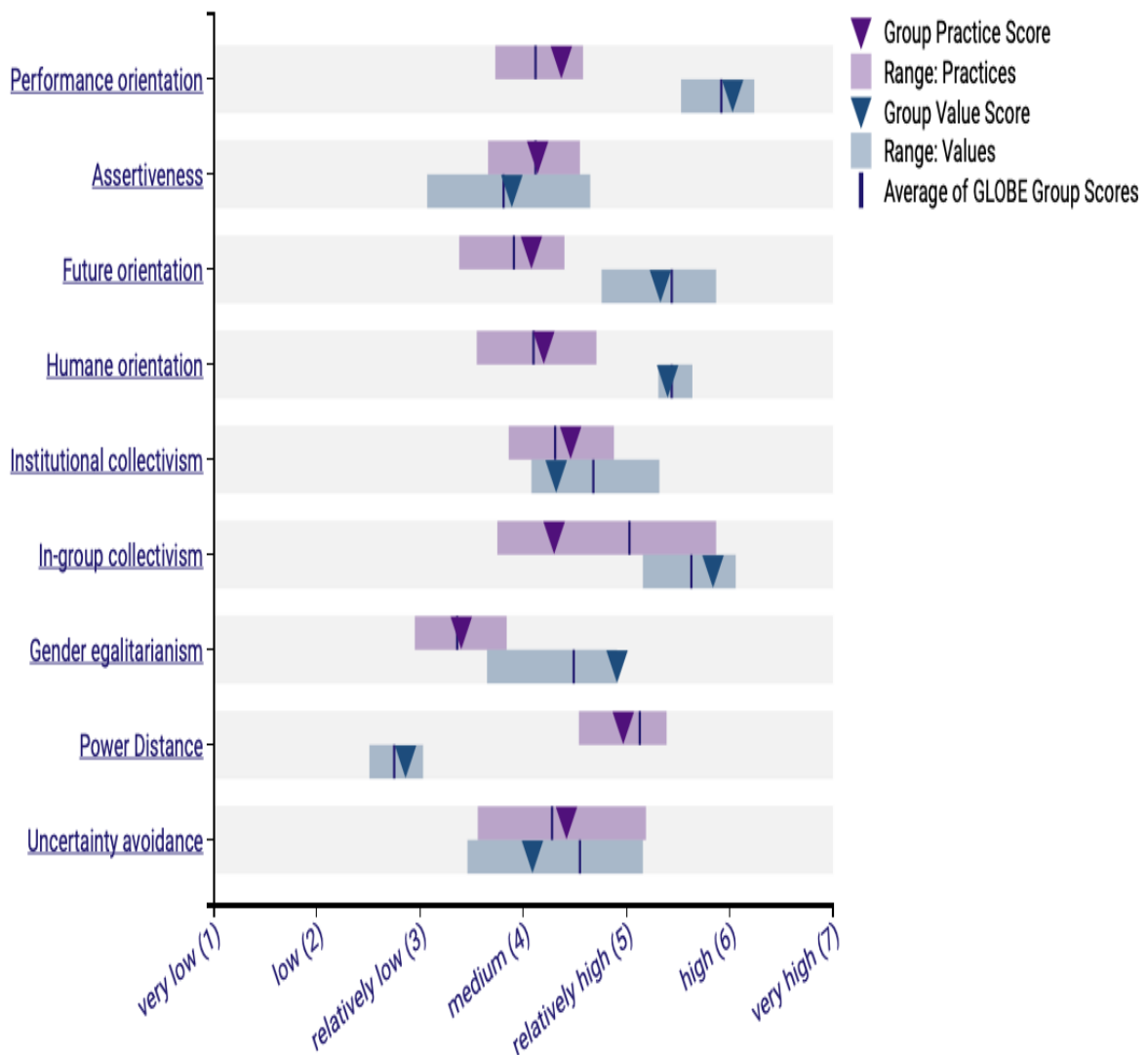
The GLOBE Anglo cluster is comprised of Australia, Canada (English speaking), New Zealand, Ireland, England, South Africa (White sample), and the United States of America. The societies belonging to this cluster reflect relatively high scores of the societal *cultural practices* dimension of Performance Orientation. Countries in this cluster reward high performance and value competitiveness. On the cultural dimension of In-Group Collectivism the cluster is relatively low compared to other clusters, signifying its well-known propensity for individualistic behavior. The Institutional Collectivism score is medium, but it is higher than the average among other clusters. This dimension reflects a society's more collective distribution of resources and the importance of group cohesion. The other societal culture dimensions including Assertiveness, Future Orientation, Uncertainty Avoidance and Humane Orientation are rated in the middle range (for these cultural practices). Power Distance, or the degree to which the community accepts and endorses authority, power differentials, status privileges, and social inequality, is also rated in the middle range, although it is relatively low compared to the average of the country clusters. These results indicate that Anglo societies are traditionally performance oriented with limited cohesiveness within organizations or families. It is male dominated, as are all societies, but average in comparison to the other country clusters. The acceptance of power differences and status privileges is on the low end compared to the average among country clusters.

As for *societal values* (indicating a society's belief as to what *should be*), the Anglo cluster desires much more Performance Orientation, Humane Orientation, Future Orientation, Gender Egalitarianism, and In-Group Collectivism. In fact, in comparison to other culture clusters, it is among the highest cluster desiring more gender equity. While its desire for Institutional Collectivism (i.e., collective efforts and distribution of resources) is on par with what presently exists, it is in the lower range in comparison to other clusters. It also desires less Uncertainty Avoidance indicating a wish for less rules and procedures to reduce uncertainty in events. These results reveal that Anglo societies would ideally like to see a trend toward greater gender equality, less power stratification and more future and higher performance orientation. Countries in this cluster also desire a more humane society.

The leadership dimensions viewed as most contributing to outstanding leadership in this cluster include Charismatic/Value-Based, followed by Team Oriented and Participative Leadership. These scores, however, are about average of all the clusters. The Charismatic attributes that are endorsed include a realistic vision, high performance orientation, integrity, and decisiveness. These societies also value team oriented leaders whose characteristics include developing outstanding teams by using their administrative and interpersonal skills to create cohesive working groups. While participative leadership is valued, its score is about average among the clusters. Among the other leadership dimensions, Humane-Oriented Leadership is viewed as slightly positive but is tied for lowest of all clusters. Autonomous Leadership is viewed as slightly negative and is more negative than most other clusters. Self-Protective Leadership is also viewed negatively indicating that these societies reject leaders who are self-centered and status conscious. Overall, an outstanding leader in the Latin European cluster would be a person who is moderately charismatic, team-oriented and participative but not particularly caring and giving or acting in an independent manner.

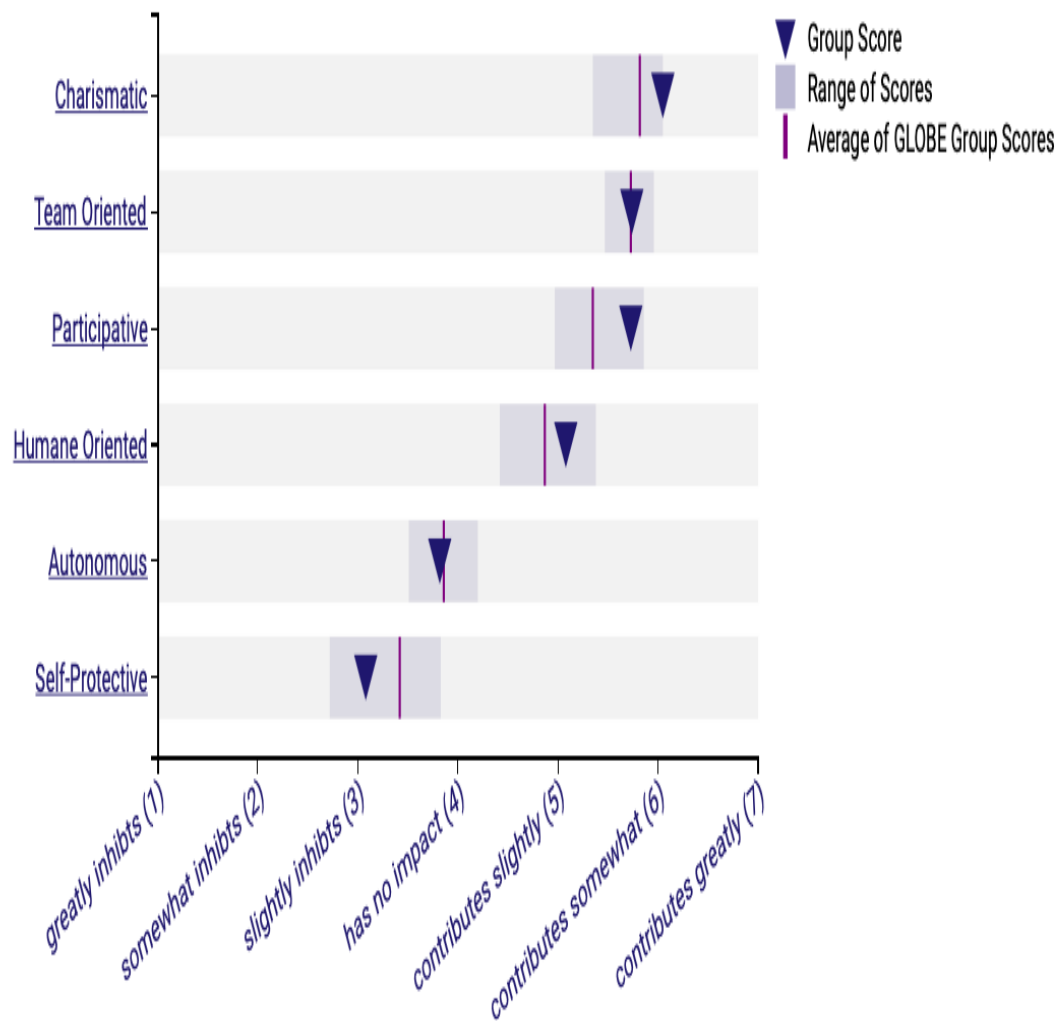
Culture Visualization

Cultural Practices and Values in the Anglo Group



Leadership Visualization

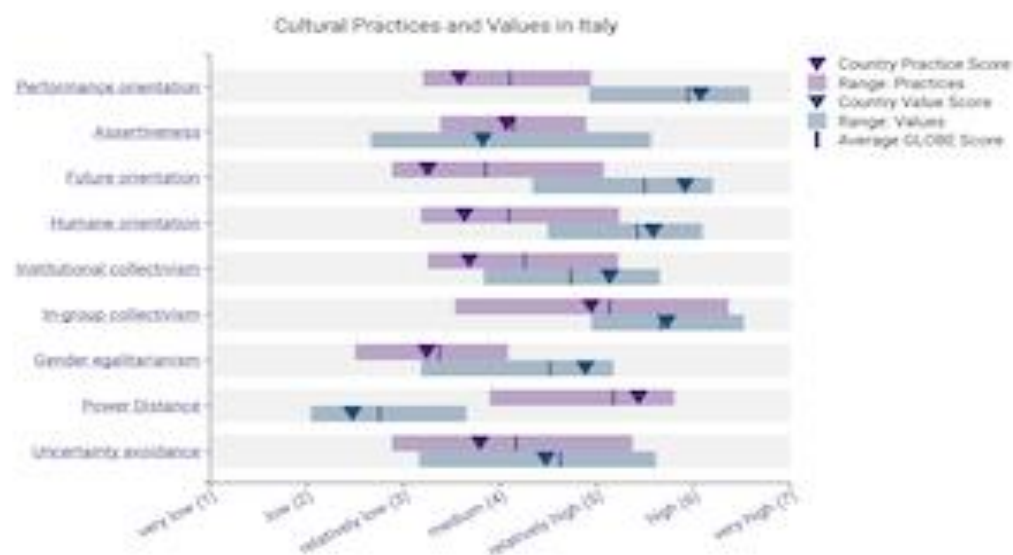
Leadership Scores for Outstanding Leadership in the Anglo Group



Italy

Below are visualizations showing culture and leadership data collected for Italy.

Culture Visualization



Leadership Visualization



Effective Communication Channels: Establish clear and open channels of communication that encourages employees to share their feedback, concerns, and ideas. Foster a supportive environment where employees feel comfortable expressing themselves, facilitating better understanding and collaboration.

Emphasis on Leadership Development: Invest in leadership development programs that focus on cross-cultural management skills. Provide managers with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively lead and motivate diverse teams, resolving conflicts, and leveraging cultural differences for innovation.

Promote Team Building and Cross-Cultural Collaboration: Organize team-building activities and initiatives that encourage cross-cultural collaboration and understanding. For example, organizing regular cultural exchange events, where team members can share their traditions, customs, and cuisines, can help foster strong relationships and build trust among team members. Additionally, assigning diverse teams to work on specific projects or tasks can facilitate cross-cultural learning and provide opportunities for employees to develop empathy and inclusive leadership skills.

By implementing these recommendations, the Hotel Management Team can create an environment that promotes effective intercultural leadership and maximizes the potential of their diverse workforce.

Conclusion

Intercultural leadership challenges can arise when integrating employees from diverse cultural backgrounds into an existing team. By recognizing the challenges in communication, work ethics, and conflict resolution, the Hotel Management Team at Inclusivity Hotel & Spa can navigate these challenges successfully. The implementation of cultural sensitivity training, establishing clear communication channels, and promoting team-building and cross-cultural collaboration will contribute to building a cohesive and high-performing intercultural team. With these strategies in place, the hotel can reap the benefits of a diverse workforce and ensure a seamless integration of employees from the chosen hotel location into the London team.

Recommendations

Cultural Adaptation: The Italian hotel management team should ensure they understand the cultural differences and preferences of guests in London. They can overcome challenges by incorporating local customs, offering English-speaking staff, and providing amenities that cater to the preferences of British guests.

Market Analysis: Conducting thorough market research on the competitive landscape in London is essential. By identifying key competitors, understanding consumer preferences, and assessing market trends, the Italian hotel management team can develop targeted strategies to differentiate their hotel and attract more guests.

Networking and Partnerships: Building strong relationships with local businesses, tour operators, and event organizers can help the hotel tap into new markets and increase their visibility in London. By collaborating with other businesses in the hospitality industry, the Italian hotel management team can leverage each other's resources and reach a broader audience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, understanding the key cultural differences between England and Italy is essential as Inclusivity Hotel & Spa prepares to integrate employees from the chosen hotel location into the London team. By analysing and comparing the two countries using the GLOBE Project's culture and leadership study, potential differences in communication styles, power distance, collectivism, and other dimensions can be better understood. Intercultural leadership challenges, such as communication, conflict resolution, and differing attitudes, require a proactive approach by implementing recommendations like cultural sensitivity training, effective communication channels, and leadership development programs. By embracing these strategies, Inclusivity Hotel & Spa can foster a harmonious and high-performing intercultural team that contributes to the success of the hotel operations in London.

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