

Module: Foreign Languages and Cultural Awareness

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1.0 Introduction

The following assignment presents an Aide Memoire for the hotel staff of Hotel International based on the West Midlands to effectively manage its experience of the customers. The memoire consists of key ways and recommendations by reflecting upon which the hotel staff and the administration will be able to satisfy and thus procure its customers on the longer run.

2.0 Key steps towards progress

The goal of management of effective guest experience can be obtained when effective customer relationship management is being reflected upon through the operations of Hotel International. As opined by Hwang and Seo (2016) customer relationship management (CEM) are process through which hotel and hospitality industries will be able manage the entire experience of a customer with a company and a service. According to Walter, Regmi, and Khanal (2018) effective experience of the customers can only be attained and managed when the needs and wants of the customers are fulfilled that leads of satisfaction. Satisfaction of customer acts as a measurement tool that concerns fulfilling the gap between expectations of the customers and the actual experience of the customers.

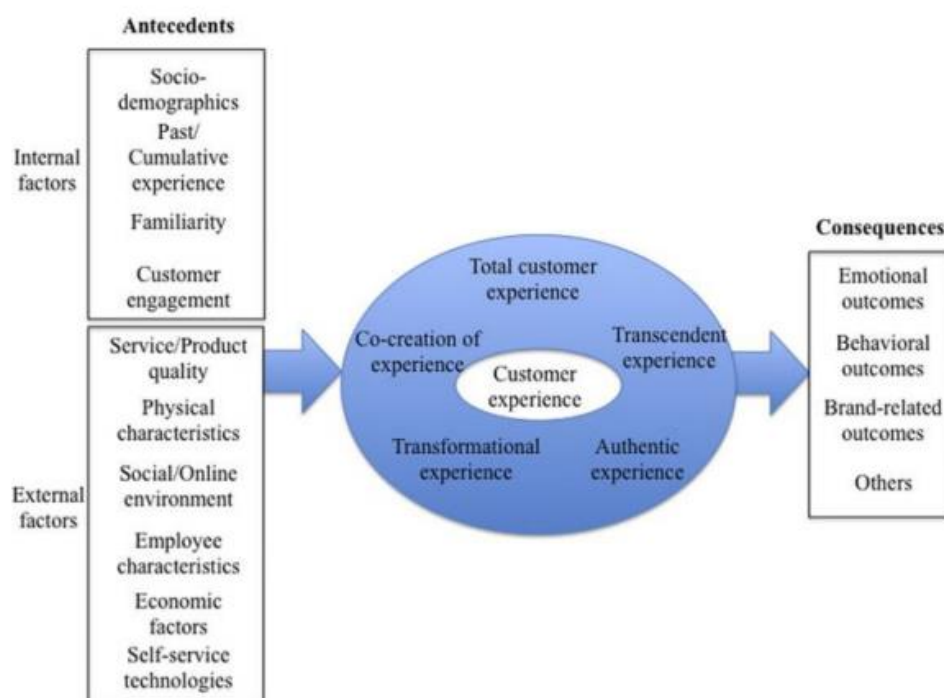


Figure 1: Framework for making progress in the management of experience of the customers

(Source: Hwang and Seo 2016)

It has been argued by Hwang and Seo (2016) that modern day contemporary companies have been involving themselves to achieve competitive supremacy with the help of effectively managing the experience of the customers thus providing evidences on the efficiency of suitably designed CEM. It has been highlighted by Goncalves (2014) that an organization like Hotel International will be successful in managing in experiences of its customers by focusing

upon the following that will help in transforming experience and thus promote positive emotional and behavioural outcomes of satisfaction demonstrated in Figure 1. Thus, the key steps that should be considered by Hotel International to attain progress in the management of experience of the customers have been highlighted below:

2.1 Understanding national stereotypes and cultural dimensions

2.1.1 Culture and experience of the customers

There have been several researchers which highlight that fulfilling national stereotypes and cultural dimensions can have a role in managing the experiences obtained by the customers. Literature related to consumer behaviour as opined by Ayeh, Au and Law (2016) highlight that the differences existing in cultures have a significant impact upon the consumers to an extent where the same service or product may be differently perceived by customers belonging to different cultural origins. Culture is considered as a term which defines the collective programming of an individual's mind differentiating the members of one group from other.

Home region	%	Language	%	Religion	%
Asia	58.4	Mandarin	14.4	Christianity, including:	33
Africa	12.4	Hindi	6.0	Catholics	20
Europe	9.5	English	5.6	Protestants	9
Latin America	8.4	Spanish	5.6	Orthodox	4
Former Soviet bloc	5.5	Bengali	3.4	Islam	22
North America	5.2	Russian	2.8	Hinduism	15
Australia and New Zealand	0.6	Portuguese	2.6	Non-religious	14
		Japanese	2.0	Buddhism	6
		German	1.6	Chinese traditional	4
		Korean	1.3	Primal-indigenous	3
		French	1.3	Other	3
		Other	54.4		
		(approx. 200)			

Figure 2: Percentage of home population in terms of home region, language and religion

(Source: Unice, 2020)

It has been highlighted by Unice (2020) that the crucial elements of culture include religion, language, attitudes, values, norms of group, customs. The population of the world is divided in terms of language, geography and religion which have been highlighted in the Figure 2. Thus, Hotel International can take significant progress in managing experience of the customers by focusing towards understanding the different cultures of international visitors.

2.1.2 Cross-culture contexts of hotel and hospitality businesses

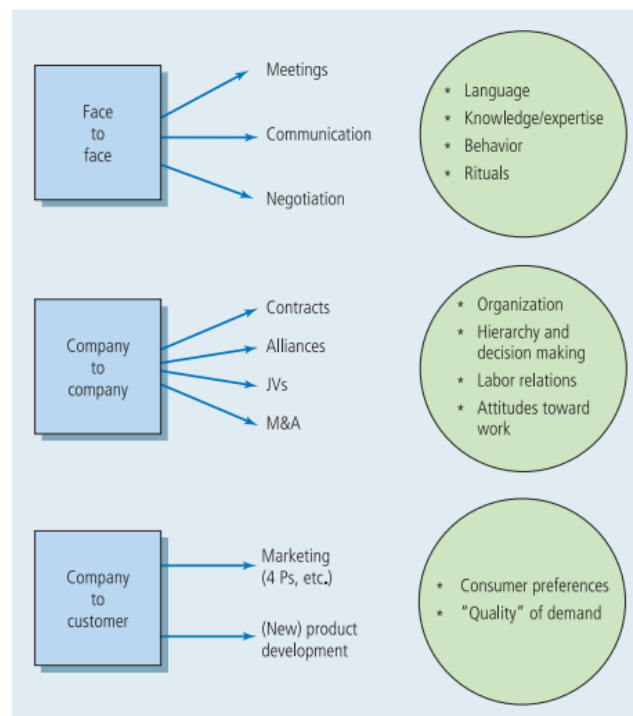


Figure 3: Business context of cross cultures

(Source: Unice, 2020)

Culture has been identified to have a crucial importance in hotel and hospitality businesses presently. It has been highlighted in Figure 3 that how different business contexts links and forms the characteristics of group and individuals belonging to different cultural and social norms. The business contexts show that language, behaviour, consumer preferences play an important role for a company for interacting with different international customers at different platforms and operations. As opined by Ayeh, Au and Law (2016) effective cross culture contexts require mutual understanding between the employees and the customers so that effective communication between the two groups can be facilitated.

Goncalves (2014) stresses upon developing intercultural competencies by the Hotel International, to facilitate suitable communication with the customers. The researcher state that through intercultural competencies suitable management of interaction between different groups constituting divergent, behavioural, and cognitive orientations can be obtained. Intercultural competencies that are important to be developed among the staff or employees of Hotel International include the attitude, interaction, and discovery, relating, and interpretation skills along with critical awareness of culture. As opined by Belita et al., (2020) competencies

of intercultural factors can be distinguished into content and process competence. Content competence is associated with the knowledge regarding customs, history, language, and traditions whereas process competence is associated with a dynamic character that can be divided into inter and intrapersonal competencies (Gonclaves, 2014).

Intercultural competence is considered important in hotel and hospitality businesses as it brings forth the ideas of adoption of paralanguage (pitch, intonation, rate, fluency and register) and verbal communication in the hotel staff that becomes the form of communication and also present ideas to non verbal communication that include body language, facial expressions attitude etc (Korez-Vide, Tansek and Milfelner, 2016). Thus, it has been argued by Goncalves (2014) that since hotel and tourism is a business which is highly intercultural and international in nature, it requires professionals or the hotel staff to possess language and communication skills, that would allow a hotel establishment to effectively to maintain versatility and operate in multicultural and socio-cultural environment.

2.1.3 Understanding cultural dimension using Hofstede model

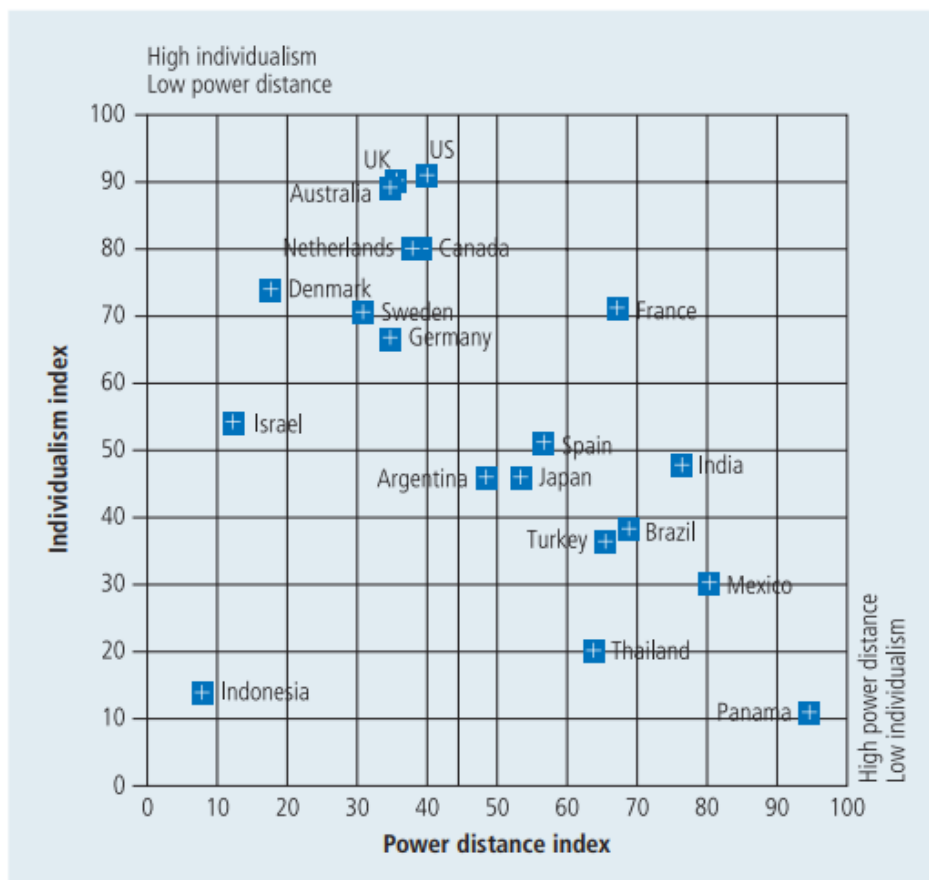


Figure 4: Cultural characteristics of 20 countries using Hofstede's power index and individualism

(Source: Unice, 2020)

The key difference existing within different cultures, behaviour and customs can be identified through studying the model presented by Hofstede. The model highlights that the different cultures, customs and behaviours can be understood by the help of four value dimensions that prevails in each international country and which forms a level of differentiation between the people belonging to these countries. These four value dimensions constitute power distance that discusses an extent through which a country accepts the power that is distributed unequally (Unice, 2020). Again the value dimension presented by Hofstede also mentions high uncertainty avoidance largely prevailing in countries like Japan, France and Argentina and low uncertainty avoidance in UK, Denmark, India and UK. Uncertainty avoidance as observed by Huang and Crotts (2019) is the extent through which people of a culture or country tend to feel threats by the existence of ambiguous situation. Individualism has been considered as the value dimension which discusses the emotional interdependence of people of a culture (Kyriacou, 2016). Individualism in cultures of UK, US and Australia has been considered high. The last value dimension consists of masculine that exhibit the attributes of assertiveness, achievement and materials things within a culture (Huang and Crotts, 2019). Japan, Germany and Mexico have been observed to demonstrate low masculinity whereas Sweden, Denmark and Netherlands have been studied to view less masculinity in their cultures (Unice, 2020). Cultural characteristics prevailing in 20 countries have been highlighted in Figure 4 that describes cultural characteristics of each country in terms of individualism and the index of power distance

Thus, from the above evidences it can be understood in order to make progress towards managing experience of the customers it is thus important for Hotel International to develop strategies by which individual needs of customers belongs to different cultures are acknowledged and fulfilled.

2.2 Tourism and creativity

According to Ali, Ryu and Hussain (2016) that the everyday life of tourists exhibits a connection between the experience of tourism and creativity. The researcher highlights that creative tourism can be categorised into five categories that constitute interpersonal activity, sophisticated media consumption, self- expressive creativity, crafting and cultural refinement.

These activities have the ability to make the customers actively involve with the destinations and thus foster satisfaction and increased experience within the travellers.

Various scholars have tried to identify the ways creativity fit into experience of the customers. As opined by Ali, Ryu and Hussain (2016) fulfilment of three types of needs namely basic, intellectual and social that is important for connecting experience with creativity in tourism. Intellectual experiences constitute adding excitement, novelty and challenges. It has been postulated by the researcher that service providers like Hotel International should make use of creativity to integrate value to the experience of the travellers. Some of the examples presented by Chou and Liu (2019) include incorporating ideas related to relaxation, peace, enhanced involvement, fulfilling hedonic perceptions, knowledge gaining, escape and recognition. Ali, Ryu and Hussain (2016) argue by saying that travellers seeking relaxation and recognition actively involve themselves in procuring knowledge regarding the surrounding and utilizing them to achieve new skills. Thus, it is utmost important for Hotel International to add value to its services through which it is able to link creativity with its customers experience.

2.3 Antecedents for the development of platforms associated to customer generated reviews

Continuous change and exploration of new tourism future prospects helps a hotel and hospitality business to develop suitable change in attitude within customers. From the motivation theory, it can be said that people will engage effectively with a business when they experience both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. It has been opined by Ayeh, Au and Law (2016) that perceived enjoyment have the ability to provide intrinsic motivation to customers. According to Wan and Law (2017) with the rapid development of internet and online platforms, experience of the customers can be managed and enhanced through the use of online platforms.

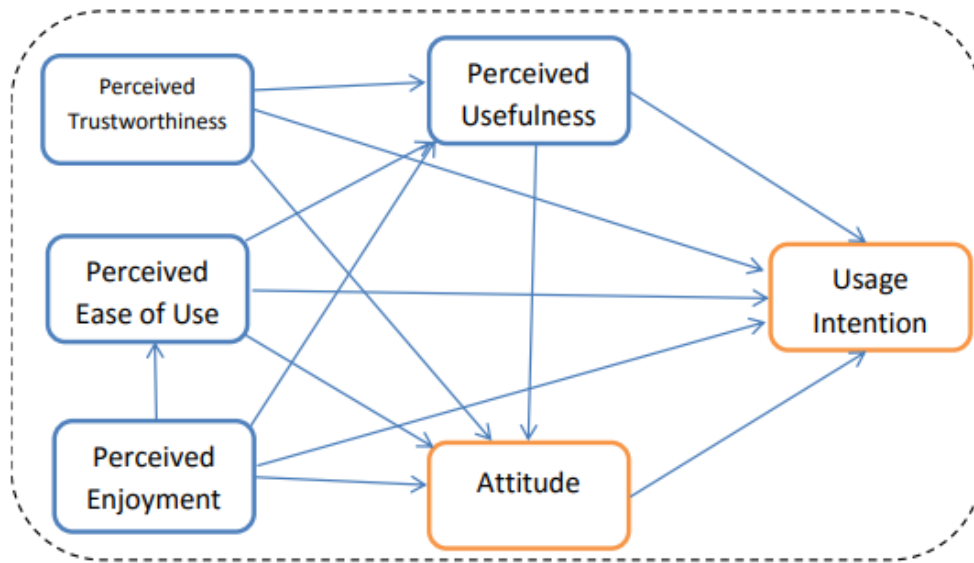


Figure 5: The Casual Model

(Source: Ayeh, Au and Law, 2016)

Wan and Law (2017) by highlighting the importance of undergoing change towards developing an online platform has studied that around 50% of travellers will not choose hotels that do not possess online reviews. Thus the researcher strongly stresses upon development of online platforms for influencing customers experience in the hotel industry. Further, Ayeh, Au and Law (2016) opines that the development of customer generated platforms for review can contribute towards system of complex hedonic perceptions that can further promote enjoyment. Thus as presented in the casual model in Figure 5 is necessary for Hotel International to develop platforms for promoting customers generated reviews that can promote towards the development of positive and negative feelings regarding the hotel. As opined by Richard (2017) development of such feelings can act as a conative response for generating perceptions and thus experiences regarding the hotel

3.0 Do's and Don'ts

The table below represents the Do's and Don'ts that should be considered by the hotel staff of Hotel International for its effective functioning:

Do's	Don'ts
Respect different cultures	Never mock or demean any culture

Accept mistakes	Never try to complain and ignore mistakes
Provide value added services	Listen to and never ignore any request of the customers
Engage with the customers	Never interfere in private matters
Maintain hygiene	Never compromise with cleanliness
Always keep a smiling face	Behave rudely
Practice effective communication with all departments	Make chaos

4.0 Key Recommendations

- Hotel International should involve its staff to learn foreign languages and customs so that they are able to identify the interests and expectations of customers belonging to different cultures and customs.
- Effective and mandated training should be provided to each staff of the hotel so that both suitable verbal and non-verbal communication can be practiced by the employees
- Creative value added services should be provided to the customers in form of discounts, educational information, modes of relaxation so that creative forms of tourism and hospitality are experienced by the travellers.
- Online platforms for sharing experiences and reviews should be developed so that customers are able to reflect upon their hedonic motives associated to user generated customer reviews
- Social media pages should also be created and used to actively engage with the customers.

5.0 Conclusion

Thus, to conclude it can be said that it is utmost important for Hotel International to reflect upon its actions in such a manner so that they are able to satisfy the hedonic motives of the

consumers. Through evidences the aide memoire presented for the hotel staff clearly state that it is important for hotel establishments to satisfy the hedonic motives in order to effective meet and manage the expectations of the international guests.

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