



Article

Strategic Management of Multiculturalism for Social Sustainability in Hospitality Services: The Case of Hotels in Athens

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Abstract: This study seeks to determine how multicultural management affects the promotion of a healthy and efficient working climate in hotels in Athens. Specifically, it explores employees' attitudes toward diversity and multiculturalism, the effects of multicultural communication on cooperation and interpersonal dynamics, as well as the overall effects on organizational outcomes. This study uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods through structured questionnaires on 242 employees from the units of the hotel. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and regression analysis were used to analyze the relationship between multicultural management practices and workplace efficiency. The findings show that positive employee experiences and attitudes toward multiculturalism improve the working environment. Multicultural communication enhances collaborative and conflict-solving skills, and efficient multicultural management enhances teamwork and organizational outcomes. Personal experiences and observations of multiculturalism also provide a lot of input to a positive work climate. Multicultural people management practices are imperative for enhancing productive organizational relations in the hospitality industry. Therefore, the issues of appreciating cultural differences, the ongoing diversity training, and helping the workers to overcome language barriers should be emphasized. Hotels should also ensure that diversity training, dialog, and policies are ongoing and clear. Further research should investigate the time-dependency of multicultural management on employee turnover and guest satisfaction, cultural differences in various regions and industries, and the impact of technology and remote work on multicultural team dynamics.

Keywords: multiculturalism; diversity management; workplace collaboration; hotel management; organizational performance



Citation: Skordoulis, M.; Patsatzi, O.; Kalogiannidis, S.; Patitsa, C.; Papagrigoriou, A. Strategic Management of Multiculturalism for Social Sustainability in Hospitality Services: The Case of Hotels in Athens. *Tour. Hosp.* **2024**, *5*, 977–995. <https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp5040055>

Academic Editor: Brian Garrod

Received: 13 September 2024

Revised: 3 October 2024

Accepted: 8 October 2024

Published: 10 October 2024



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1. Introduction

With the fast globalization of the economy and increased cross-border movements, the workforce has registered significant cultural diversification, especially in the hospitality industry [1,2]. In fact, the workforce needs an important reflection, especially in the running of a hotel as a place of cultural exchanges [3]. While multicultural management focuses specifically on managing cultural differences related to ethnicity, nationality, and cultural norms, diversity management encompasses a broader range of differences, including race, gender, age, and other demographic factors. Both approaches are crucial for creating inclusive environments, but multicultural management emphasizes the understanding and application of cultural differences in global work environments [4]. It is a management that recognizes, understands, and applies differences and similarities associated with the multiple cultures of the organization. Such management does not only help in overcoming communication barriers but also creates an inclusive environment that can drastically increase employees' satisfaction and loyalty toward the organization, hence increasing the overall organizational effectiveness as well [5,6]. The focus of multicultural management

in the hospitality industry is twofold: first, to enhance the internal work environment by fostering better communication, collaboration, and satisfaction among a culturally diverse workforce; second, to improve the external customer experience by providing personalized and culturally sensitive services to customers all over the world. Both aspects are critical for overall organizational effectiveness in the hospitality sector.

One of the key strategies for achieving an inclusive environment is the use of training and development programs that focus on enhancing multicultural competence among employees. Such training empowers staff with the skills required to communicate, collaborate, and resolve conflicts effectively in a culturally diverse workplace. Developing these competencies is crucial for improving employee satisfaction and performance, as well as reducing turnover, especially in high-pressure environments like hotel management [7,8]. Multicultural management plays a critical role in addressing these challenges by focusing on cultural agility and fluency across diverse cultures, while diversity management extends beyond cultural aspects to ensure an inclusive environment for employees of all backgrounds. Both approaches complement each other in creating a holistic diversity strategy [4]. Cultural diversity is also presented as a challenge in the workplace that on one end may be a source of confusion and conflict if not well managed by differences in cultural norms and communication styles [9].

On the contrary, diversity in terms of management can drive an organization that is more creative, flexible, and can succeed since diverse teams can bring a variety of views and solutions to a problem, factors that work well with the hospitality industry, which bases its core business on the provision of services to customers [10,11]. Business practices can be seen to be gradually recognizing the necessity of multicultural management. Thus, by working toward a culturally diverse workforce, for instance, companies can assure the attraction of the very best talents from the global market, improve customer service by offering a more empathetic and understanding interface to customers from diversified cultures, and increase employee satisfaction and retention by creating a more inclusive workplace environment [12–14]. Such a trend mirrors the research associating the diversity and inclusiveness of a workplace with both overall business performance and innovation, along with direct improvements in profitability [6]. Additionally, the very nature of the hospitality industry involves human resources in direct interactions with an international clientele, so the potential for the management of cultural diversity is vast in this sector.

The multicultural environment in hotels needs a management approach beyond the conventional means [10]. Managers, in this respect, should have the capacity for cultural agility and fluency across divergent cultures by adjusting management style. This capacity demands knowledge and sensitivity to the culture and the application of policies and practices that are just and fair to all employees, regardless of their cultural backgrounds [1]. Moreover, the literature has emphasized the role of training and development programs for the inculcation of multicultural competence among hotel employees. Such programs empower staff members with the skills required to communicate and coordinate with other colleagues and guests of diverse cultures in multicriteria hospitality settings.

Moreover, such practices may also result in better job performance, less employee turnover, and increased job satisfaction, which may prove to be important in the high-pressure job of hotel management [15]. But there is also a flip side to this, as the exercise also contains numerous challenges in managing a multicultural workforce. First and foremost of these problems is, of course, the communication barrier; the presence of such barriers can lead to misunderstandings and conflict [7]. Another issue is that there might exist an attitude from both the employees and the management in the form of resistance to change, wherein there is a possibility that effective multicultural management practices may not be integrated into the system. The hotels need to come up with a clear strategy on how to manage these multicultural issues, whereby policies and procedures must be formulated for the possible conflicts, training programs for the augmentation of cultural competence, and leadership committed to inculcating an inclusive culture [16].

This is not only strategic in terms of how people perceive the hotel but must be integrated into all spheres of hotel operations to ensure efficacy [1,17,18]. The increasing cultural diversity in the hospitality industry calls for the very tactful management of multicultural management. Hotels are on the front line of diverse cultural interactions and, therefore, need to be managed in a way that will mitigate the challenges that come with such diversity and hence be able to use it to a strategic advantage [19,20]. Through the development of an inclusive culture, hotels can build a quality service, enhance employee satisfaction, and hence increase competitiveness in the global marketplace while building up the multicultural competence of the staff [21].

The aim of the present research is to find out how multicultural management is used to create an effective and functioning productive environment within hotels. The specific objectives of this study include the analysis of employees' perceptions of workplace diversity, the reviewing of the impact of multicultural interactions on collaboration and relationships, and the determination of the influence of multicultural management practices on team dynamics and overall organizational performance. This study also discusses the role of training programs in enhancing employees' multicultural competence, which plays a critical role in improving communication, reducing turnover, and fostering an inclusive work environment that supports organizational effectiveness.

This study is important in that it is focused on the area of multicultural management in the hospitality industry, particularly in hotel units, which have lately been facing cultural diversity in terms of both the workforce and the clientele. With the increasing phenomena of globalization, the ability of organizations to effectively manage a culturally diverse workforce is critically determined by success. The major basis of this study is the problems within and benefits to a multicultural management approach with respect to the hospitality sector, which should provide major insights toward management practice within a culturally diverse setting.

This research is of special significance since it fills an existing gap in the literature on the spillover effects of multicultural management practices on teamwork and, ultimately, organizational performance within the hospitality industry. While various studies in the literature exist on diversity management in the corporate world, there is a clear dearth in how the practice impacts hospitality management, a field in which employees serve as the primary interface to globally diverse clients. It was also forwarded by Bouncken et al. [22] that team diversity could even bring about higher levels of creativity and problem-solving by increasing the number of different perspectives and solutions available for the resolution of a wide array of problems. More relevantly, this is regarding hospitality, where problem-solving and creativity are two important competencies in managing the guest experience [23].

The hospitality industry in Greece is a cornerstone of the country's economy, renowned for its exceptional service, picturesque settings, and rich cultural experiences [24]. Moreover, the hospitality industry in Greece thrives on its rich cultural heritage, making multiculturalism essential for its success. While environmental sustainability in tourism is becoming a central focus in Greece, as it is worldwide [25–27], the need for multicultural management is also gaining importance. Greece's diverse guest base requires an inclusive approach that respects and celebrates different cultures. Embracing multiculturalism enhances the guest experience by fostering understanding and personalizing service, which is vital in a sector where satisfaction and engagement are key. By integrating multicultural perspectives, Greek hospitality not only meets the needs of a global clientele but also strengthens its reputation as a destination that values and promotes cultural diversity.

Thus, the present study is significant for both the academic community and the hospitality industry. From an academic perspective, it addresses a gap in the literature regarding the application of multicultural management specifically in the hospitality sector, where there is limited research on how such practices affect both employee dynamics and customer experience [28]. Given the increasing globalization of the workforce, particularly in culturally rich environments like Greece, this study's findings will contribute to a

deeper understanding of how cultural diversity can be effectively managed to enhance organizational performance [29].

From a practical standpoint, this study has the potential to inform hotel managers on the best practices for fostering a culturally inclusive environment. Effective multicultural management has been shown to improve employee satisfaction, reduce turnover, and enhance customer service quality [30]. By focusing on how multicultural management impacts team dynamics and customer interactions, this research offers valuable insights that could help hotels improve their service delivery, which is essential in a sector where customer satisfaction is key to competitiveness in the global marketplace. This is especially relevant in Greece, where cultural diversity among both employees and clients is a critical factor in maintaining service quality and competitiveness [31].

Thus, this study is timely and important for several reasons. First, as hotels are on the front lines of global cultural interactions, managing multicultural workforces is not only a matter of internal employee relations but also crucial to delivering high-quality, culturally sensitive service. Multicultural management plays a vital role in overcoming communication barriers and fostering an inclusive environment, which can lead to improved employee satisfaction, reduced turnover, and better customer service. Second, in contexts like Greece, where tourism is a cornerstone of the economy and where both the workforce and clientele are culturally diverse, the need for an effective multicultural management approach is particularly important [32].

Last, since much of the existing research has focused on multicultural and diversity management in corporate environments rather than addressing the unique challenges faced by the hospitality sector, the present research deals with this gap in the literature [33].

2. Literature Review and Research Hypotheses' Development

2.1. Theoretical Foundations of Multiculturalism in the Workplace

Multiculturalism in the workplace combines all dimensions from sociological insights and organizational behavior theories, especially when global dynamics in the workplace continue to shift and reshape the workforce demographics. In this context, training programs aimed at fostering multicultural competence are essential. These programs align with theoretical foundations such as cultural intelligence, which refers to an individual's ability to function effectively in culturally diverse environments, and diversity management, which focuses on creating a unified workforce where differences are recognized as a source of competitive advantage [34]. In scholarly practice, much attention has been paid in the past decade to trying to understand how diverse workforces can be managed and integrated into organizational cultures. This is attributed, in no small part, to increasing interest because of globalization and the international mobility of employees that have fundamentally altered workplace populations and engendered much call for a rethink of management practices and theories [10].

Fundamental theories that could be used in discussing multiculturalism in the workplace include cultural intelligence, diversity management, and inclusive leadership. Cultural intelligence refers to the capability of an individual to work effectively in a culturally diverse environment. In the context of multicultural management, cultural intelligence is essential because it enables employees and managers to adapt their behaviors and communication styles to accommodate cultural differences, thus enhancing collaboration and minimizing conflict within diverse teams [35]. Diversity management, on the other hand, is an organizational strategy aimed at realizing a unified workforce where differences are valued and recognized as a source of competitive advantage. In terms of multicultural management, diversity management policies and programs help organizations establish inclusive cultures that support and leverage cultural diversity to drive innovation and performance [36]. Inclusive leadership is crucial because it ensures that leaders are proactive in recognizing and addressing their biases, creating environments where all team members, regardless of cultural background, feel valued and included. This form of leadership is vital for fostering a positive multicultural work environment and encouraging

employee participation and engagement [37]. Based on the above, the following hypothesis is developed:

H1. *Multicultural management practices are positively related to employee satisfaction and contribute to creating a healthy and efficient working environment.*

Over time, the theoretical frameworks used to understand workplace diversity have witnessed an evolutionary growth, with two predominant perspectives emerging, according to Ely and Thomas [38]: the integration-and-learning perspective and the access-and-legitimacy perspective. These perspectives build on the foundations provided by cultural intelligence, diversity management, and inclusive leadership. The integration-and-learning perspective highlights how organizations can leverage diversity by integrating employees' diverse cultural backgrounds into their core learning processes. This perspective emphasizes that diversity can be a source of innovation and creativity as it brings different viewpoints and problem-solving approaches into the organization, leading to enhanced learning and performance. For example, the integration-and-learning perspective emphasizes how cultural differences can contribute to organizational learning and creativity, aligning with cultural intelligence and inclusive leadership, which stress the importance of understanding and leveraging cultural differences to enhance performance. The access-and-legitimacy perspective, which argues that diversity can improve an organization's legitimacy and access to specific markets, is closely related to diversity management theories that emphasize the strategic value of a culturally diverse workforce [39].

According to the "access-and-legitimacy" or environmental fit perspective, diversity is needed for an organization to gain organizational legitimacy and hence ensures that an organization is able to continuously gain access to some selective market segments [40]. This means that an organization may best resemble the sociodemographic makeup of its clientele or the communities in which it operates. While this view holds potential for diversity, it may instrumentalize difference rather than genuinely value and infuse such cultural diversities into organization culture.

2.2. Globalization's Impact on Workplace Diversity

Globalization has managed to reshape the landscape of the workforce into being diversified, hence making multicultural work environments. If nothing else, the extent of reform here is more extensive, and it is perhaps nowhere more extensive than in the hospitality industry, a worldwide sector with a global clientele, hence representing a microcosm of the manner that globalization is reshaping the workplace across virtually all cultural societies.

Certainly, these demographic shifts, through influences of globalization, come with the addition of percentages of many diversified ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritages that are increasingly becoming the fraction of the workforce. It is a worldwide motion of labor, stimulated by migration among other causes, by worldwide labor markets, and the movements of workers for opportunities of employment across borders. It is this difference that makes hospitality usually hire its employees from diverse backgrounds, who will introduce these businesses to diverse cultures, languages, and work-related norms and expectations. In a business environment, diversity means creativity, innovation, and improving service delivery by bringing in a varied array of perspectives and solutions to business challenges [41].

Still, there are some severe challenges brought about by managing a diverse workforce, among them including communication barriers, where there can be misunderstandings and lowered efficiency and direct impacts on the operation for the purpose of team building. Other key problems that might arise among cultural diversities include work ethics, perception of time, conflict resolution styles, and many others preventing teamwork in general operation processes [29]. Considering further that the industry of hospitality relies a lot on customer satisfaction, this then introduces another complication because employees are

then dealing not only with internal cultural differences but also attempting to satisfy the diverse needs and expectations within international clientele [42].

2.3. *Communication in Multicultural Teams*

In the globalizing workspace environment, multicultural teams are largely the norm, not the exception. These teams pool varied perspectives and skills into a resource that is rich and a bundle of chances for innovation and finding solutions to problems. The most evident and immediate challenge regarding multicultural teams is that of language barriers. In some situations where team members will not share a common language or an apparent difference in language proficiency, communication may become difficult, which gives way to frustration as each member feels alienated [43]. For example, misunderstandings can easily arise from nuances, idioms, and even cultural references. Thus, the following hypothesis arises:

H2. *Cultural diversity and multiculturalism within teams improve problem-solving abilities and collaboration.*

Cultural communication styles add an extra wrinkle into the picture. Hofstede [44] was the first to publish research on cultural dimensions that, in summary, illustrate the impact of culture on communication practices. Many suggest that people who speak different languages do not always understand each other. Therefore, strategies on how to improve interpersonal communication within a multicultural team are indispensable. Training team members to acquire skills in intercultural communication will teach the team members how to navigate challenges that come with cultural diversification while involved in multicultural interactions. For that matter, the training should largely consist of sessions on cultural awareness, active listening, interpretation of non-verbal cues, among others, to heighten empathy and aid understanding among the members of the team [45]. High-context communication can help members from certain cultures, for example, in a retail outlet, in the process of learning this and how to read between the lines of the message so that there are fewer misunderstandings.

2.4. *Cultural Intelligence and Its Importance in Hospitality*

Cultural intelligence has proved to be a central capability within the hospitality business, given the complex interlocking of it within an international business environment [10]. The complex construct of cultural intelligence incorporates knowledge, abilities, and skills to adapt to new cultural contexts; to put it very straightforwardly, it gives people the abilities to experience completely new things with people from completely different backgrounds. The significance of cultural intelligence is not supplementary but rather much relevant to the overall development of cultural sensitivity and awareness in the hospitality industry, where everyday encounters with international guests and multicultural workforces give birth to increased impacts on employee performance and thereby affect guest satisfaction [46].

The development of cultural sensitivity and awareness means that we gain an ability to understand and appreciate the differences brought on by culture to recognize these differences as necessary in the effort of giving value to the hospitality experience. This means that one is ready and willing to learn and adapt to new cultural norms and practices, an underlying attitude of cultural intelligence. Earley and Ang [47], from a review of the literature, define cultural intelligence with four inter-related elements: cognitive cultural intelligence, motivational cultural intelligence, behavioral cultural intelligence, and metacognitive cultural intelligence. These will form the key influences, the attributes, one is born with: being able to recognize and understand cultural sensitivities and interest in relating to others who may have such variations in their lives, the ability to adjust behavior appropriately to the variation in culture, and self-reflection of one's and others' cultural preferences in interactions. Others with high cultural intelligence working in a

hospitality setup mainly help in the provision of an individualized and sensitive delivery of services in anticipation of the needs and wants by guests coming from various cultural backgrounds [1].

Cultural intelligence holds and has a significant impact on the performance of employees within the hospitality industry [48]. Employees with a high degree of cultural intelligence are characterized by the dazzling ability to fix problems and show further adaptability in a multicultural environment, which are necessary qualities to work within the hospitality industry, where one often works under diverse and high-pressure settings. Generally, these employees are able to be in a proper position to report to the rest of the workers and the guests from diverse cultures, thus reducing the level of misunderstanding and conflicts among them at work, enhancing teamwork, cooperativeness, and effectiveness [49]. Of course, such adaptability relates to the bettering of service quality and impacts the work climate, in which cultural diversity is not seen as a problem but as an asset [50]. The following hypothesis is developed:

H3. *Employee perceptions of multiculturalism and personal experiences with cultural diversity positively influence organizational health and productivity.*

2.5. Challenges in Implementing Diversity Management Programs

Invariably, the change in management intervention—that is, the overall implementation process of diversity management programs into an organization—is beset by severe resistance to organizational change and cultural inertia [48]. In addition, as other challenges arise due to global settings, the propensity of ethnocentric and legal standards complicates guaranteeing the accomplishment of diversity goals. These highlight the subtleties behind the creation of an inclusive workplace that capitalizes and respects diversity dimensions [42].

Resistance is a common obstacle that may be met in the implementation of change and its components. This resistance might be due to a lack of understanding or appreciation of the benefits associated with diversity, general fear of change, or fear that the changes may threaten power structures or threaten one's stand in the organization [42]. Most workers and managers who are already used to ensure homogeneous working conditions approach any such efforts with skepticism and even hostility: the very idea of an alien population, which could possibly mess up the well-established workflows and cultures, is terrible [51]. These could come in the form of chronic passive resistance, active lobbying against any diversity initiatives, or even lobbing open accusations at representatives from these groups. Based on the above, the following hypothesis arises:

H4. *Effective management of multicultural diversity reduces conflicts arising from cultural misunderstandings and enhances team collaboration.*

An additional challenge that emanates from institutional forces pertains to cultural inertia, which refers to organizational cultures that are resistant to changes or the introduction of new values, behaviors, and practices. Cultural inertia becomes easily challenging in an organizational setting whose history spans a long period of workforce homogeneity in composition, or where diversity and inclusion were never at the core of institutional occurrences. In such an environment, new and different values, norms, and behaviors are not allowed to move in and foster diversity to grow toward an inclusive culture. The task of creating new values and norms that differ from those that are currently available will not provide many opportunities and is long and hard, resulting in a lot of cultural inertia. Such complications result in the tougher implementation of workplace diversity management programs under global settings. Workforce diversity under legal frameworks is sharply different among countries; it is in this regard that it becomes tough to implement workplace diversity programs in globalized multinational corporations since the state of the programs

must be harmonized, something that is difficult to do in this case because of the different countries with different legislations concerning diversity [28].

Moreover, when diversity management programs are being established among cultures as diversities, there are ethical implications to consider. What is believed as decent and ethical in one culture may not necessarily be said to be alike in the other [48]. For example, affirmative action policies meant to increase diversity in workplaces will be viewed positively and necessary in certain contexts but may be construed to be discriminatory or unfair in others. The above raises complex organizational ethics issues that may lead to encouraging diversity whilst respecting local cultural norms and values [38].

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research and Sampling Strategy

The present research adopts a positivism and interpretivism paradigm, since each has advantages and limitations. Positivism originating from the natural sciences entails the quantification and predictability of occurrences based on measurable variables [52,53]. Nevertheless, this method is sometimes insufficient for analyzing human behavior and social processes because it disregards social context and the experience of subjects [53]. On the other hand, the interpretivist paradigm was developed in response to quantitative research methods, focusing on understanding people and their roles in their social environment using qualitative data and comprehensive analysis. As a research design, this study employs a mixed-methods approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative research techniques to systematically analyze the management of diversity with reference to multiculturalism in workplaces.

The sampling strategy is important as it affects the survey outcomes. Because of limitations like inadequate lists of employees, convenience sampling was selected over random sampling. Convenience sampling was employed, but it has some drawbacks when it comes to data generalizability. The participants comprise members from different organizations and industries to ensure that a wide range of job roles and organizational settings are represented in the sample. In this case, 242 employees from various hotels operating in Athens agreed to participate, which provided the researchers with a diverse sample regarding the management of diversity practices.

3.2. Research Tool Design and Reliability

The primary research tool was a questionnaire divided into two parts: basic demographic data and six sections covering the main areas of diversity management. Every section consisted of statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The measurement items for the study variables were adapted from established scales in previous research on diversity management and multiculturalism [33,43]. Each variable was measured using multiple statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), ensuring comprehensive coverage of employee perceptions.

Cronbach's alpha reliability test showed that most of the variables were highly reliable, for instance Multicultural Management Practices, Personal Experiences and Observation, and the Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Diversity Management. Moreover, to address the potential of common method bias in this study, several preventive measures were taken, including anonymity and reverse-coded items. Furthermore, the independent and dependent variables were presented in separate sections of the questionnaire to reduce the risk that participants might infer relationships between a fact that could lead to common method bias.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

Participants completed anonymous self-administered online questionnaires using Google Forms. Only the current employees in the known hotels were contacted to participate in the survey, and the survey link was only provided to them. The survey was conducted between 1st and 15th April 2024. This method ensured that the participants

remained anonymous, thus making them come up with genuine responses, making the data more valid.

It is also important to note that ethical standards were upheld to the letter. To ensure participants' anonymity, questionnaires were anonymous, and the data collected were stored and used only for this study. All the participants signed a consent form; hence, they understood their rights and the aim of this study. Harm to the participants was limited by excluding sensitive questions from the questionnaire [54].

3.4. Data Analysis Methods

The descriptive and inductive analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 24.0 version. Frequency tables and figures were used to provide a descriptive overview of the sample demographics and characteristics, such as the distribution of cultural backgrounds and experiences with multiculturalism among the respondents. This information is crucial for understanding the context in which the study was conducted and offering insights into the composition of the sample. To test the research hypotheses, inferential statistics were used. The regression model used to assess the impact of various factors on diversity management effectiveness is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Diversity Management Effectiveness} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \text{Experiences of Multiculturalism} \\ & + \beta_2 \times \text{Effects of Multiculturalism on Collaboration} \\ & + \beta_3 \times \text{Multicultural Management Practices} \\ & + \beta_4 \times \text{Personal Experiences and Observations} + \varepsilon \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

where

- β_0 is the constant;
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3,$ and β_4 are the coefficients for each independent variable;
- ε is the error term.

3.5. Research Variables

Based on the above analysis, the variables in this study are defined as follows:

- **Dependent variable:**
- **Diversity Management Effectiveness:** This variable refers to the perceived success of diversity management strategies in creating an inclusive, collaborative, and productive working environment.
- **Independent variables:**
- **Experiences of Multiculturalism:** This variable refers to employees' overall understanding and experiences of working within a culturally diverse workplace.
- **Effects of Multiculturalism on Collaboration:** This variable measures how employees perceive the impact of multiculturalism on teamwork and collaboration.
- **Multicultural Management Practices:** This variable refers to the policies and strategies implemented by management to foster an inclusive workplace.
- **Personal Experiences and Observations:** This variable reflects individual employee experiences with multiculturalism.

4. Results

4.1. Sample Demographics

Based on the demographic results (Table 1), gender distribution shows that more females (62%) are involved in this study compared to male participants. Regarding age distribution, most of the employees are aged between 30 and 40 (60%), indicating that it is a young and dynamic workforce that is most likely to be innovative and productive. Education distribution is mainly university-level (70%), which presents a relatively well-educated population. This high level of education is important when it comes to the application and understanding of multicultural management practices.

Table 1. Sample demographics.

		% Percent
Gender	Male	38.0
	Female	62.0
Age	Below 30 years	16.0
	30–40 years	60.0
	41–50 years	16.0
	50 years and above	8.0
Education level	High School	10.0
	University Graduate	70.0
	Postgraduate	20.0
Origin	Greek	54.0
	Other	46.0

Most of the participants were of Greek origin (54%), thereby raising the recognition that 46% of the employees in organizations in the hospitality industry in Athens were non-Greeks. Referring to this question, it should be noted that we intended to differentiate between local and non-local employees. To address this possible limitation in assessing multiculturalism, cultural diversity was measured through other sections of the survey that focused on employees’ experiences with multiculturalism, team collaboration in diverse environments, and their interaction with multicultural management practices.

4.2. Employees’ Perceptions and Experiences of Multiculturalism

As provided in Table 2, regarding cultural sensitivity, most of the participants (66%) strongly agree that they have adequate knowledge regarding the cultural makeup of their organizations, while 34% only partly agreed with the same implication that there is adequate knowledge regarding the cultural makeup of organizations.

Table 2. Employees’ perceptions and experiences of multiculturalism.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand cultural diversity present in my workplace	0%	0%	0%	34%	66%
My workplace respects cultural differences and values them	0%	0%	6%	8%	86%
Regular diversity and inclusion training is provided and open to all employees	18%	14%	30%	38%	0%
I feel at ease to discuss my cultural background with my colleagues	0%	0%	14%	30%	56%
In this workplace, cultural diversity is seen as an asset	8%	6%	6%	22%	58%

Furthermore, 86% of respondents strongly agree with the statement that cultural diversity is valued in their workplace. Diversity and inclusion training happen frequently, and 38% of participants feel that it is adequate. Again, most of the participants (56%) are fine with sharing their cultural identity in the workplace, which seems quite liberal.

4.3. Multiculturalism on Collaboration and Relations

Based on Table 3, out of all the respondents, only 30% of the employees disagreed with the statement that multicultural working has enriched their experience. Moreover, 42% of them strongly support the statement that with multicultural teams, problems are solved much better, and 28% of them support this statement. This re-affirms the importance of diversity in improving problem-solving capacities. A big percentage of 34% seriously

oppose cultural conflicts as a cause of confrontations at work, thus depicting the good handling of cultural diversity. Also, almost all the respondents strongly agree that the company assists them in mitigating language diversity challenges, enhancing a favorable multicultural workplace.

Table 3. Multiculturalism on collaboration and relations.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Working in a multicultural team has enabled me to contribute positively and added value to my work	0%	6%	24%	70%	0%
Multicultural teams can solve complex problems better than homogeneous teams	0%	6%	24%	28%	42%
I have seen or been involved in some confrontation at work arising from cultural misunderstandings	34%	4%	18%	22%	22%
The company supports employees in overcoming language barriers among the employees	0%	6%	8%	32%	54%
Cultural diversity in my workplace fuels an increased satisfaction level among customers	0%	6%	12%	52%	30%

4.4. Multicultural Management Practices

Based on Table 4, most employees (52%) indicate that they strongly agree with the statement that management is committed to creating an inclusive workplace, while 22% of them agree with this statement.

Table 4. Multicultural management practices.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The management actively promotes a working environment inclusive of all	6%	0%	20%	22%	52%
Policies are clear in handling discrimination and promoting equality	0%	0%	18%	44%	38%
Diversity management practices are often reviewed and updated if necessary	0%	6%	58%	22%	14%
Managers receive training on leading culturally diverse teams	0%	14%	54%	28%	4%
Feedback on diversity practices is regularly sought from employees and acted upon	6%	26%	44%	24%	0%

Anti-discrimination and equality policies are perceived as clear by 44% of participants, while 18% were neutral. While 22% of respondents mention that diversity management practices are frequently revised, there is a clearly seen dissatisfaction with the way these practices are communicated as 58% of the respondents stay neutral.

Last, it is considered that training for managers on how to lead diverse teams is essential, and 54% of the respondents are non-committal about it, which indicates that this issue deserves more focus.

4.5. Multicultural Management Practices and Performance of Hotels

Figure 1 shows that most participants reported that multicultural management practices very significantly affect the performance of their hotel. A total of 22% of them reported that multicultural management practices have an extremely significant impact on their hotel's performance, and 10% of them reported that multicultural management practices have a moderately significant impact on their hotel's performance.

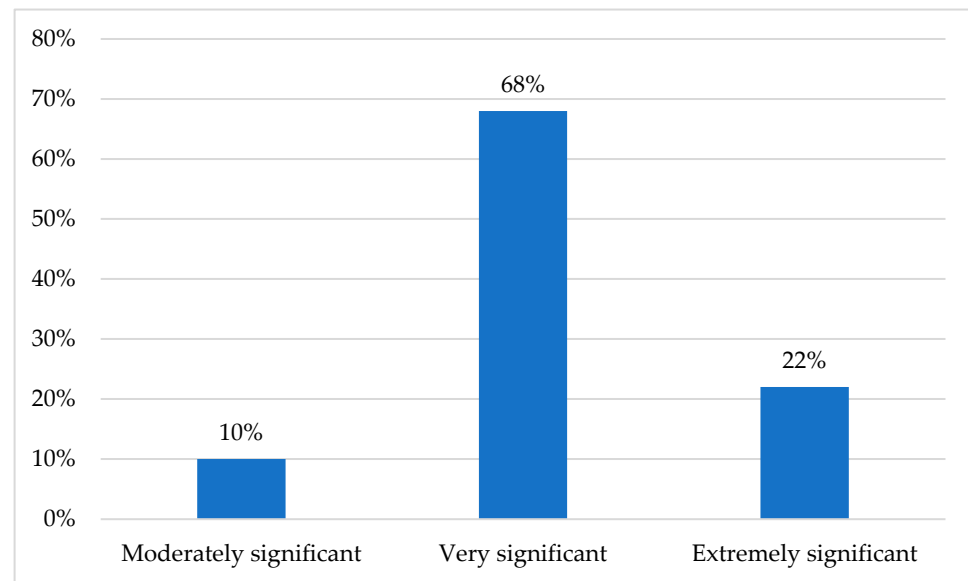


Figure 1. Degree of influence of multicultural management practices on the hotel's overall performance.

4.6. Alignment of Managing Cultural Diversity in the Workplace with the Hotel's Goals and Values

Figure 2 shows that most participants (72%) consider it very likely that they would recommend working in this hotel to someone with a different cultural background based on the effectiveness of diversity management. A total of 12% of participants are moderately likely to recommend someone with a different cultural background to work at this hotel, and 8% of them are moderately likely to recommend working at this hotel.

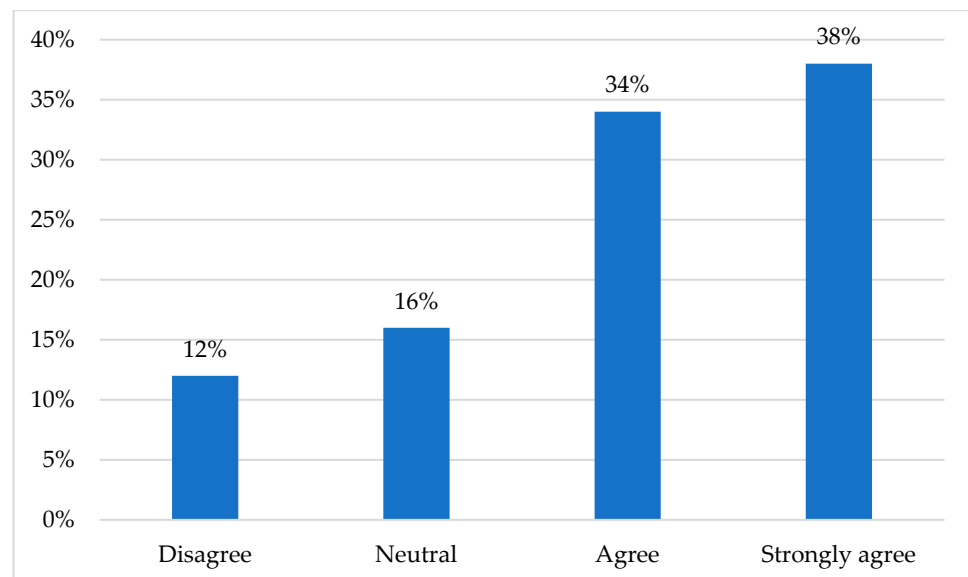


Figure 2. Degree of agreement the approach to managing cultural diversity in the workplace is aligned with the hotel's goals and values.

4.7. Regression Analysis

To investigate the relationship between multiculturalism and business communication in hotels in Athens, a multiple linear regression analysis was employed.

However, before carrying out the regression analysis, a principal components analysis (PCA) was carried out. Carrying out a PCA before performing a linear regression with ordinal variables is needed to meet the criterion of linearity in linear regression, and to

deal with potential multicollinearity between the ordinal variables. While ordinal variables were transformed to approximate continuous variables for PCA, this approach allowed us to retain the ordinal structure of the data while simplifying the regression model. The final regression used some of the principal components as predictors, offering a more interpretable and statistically sound model.

Before conducting the PCA, it is essential to assess the suitability of the data. Based on the findings in Table 5, the data are deemed adequate and appropriate for this analysis. This conclusion is supported by the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value of 0.916, indicating a high degree of sampling adequacy, and the p -value from Bartlett’s test of sphericity, which is reported as 0, confirming the data’s suitability for factor analysis.

Table 5. Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin and Bartlett’s test of sphericity results.

Statistical Test		Values
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin		0.916
Bartlett’ test of sphericity	Chi-Square p -value	12,461.223 0.000

Based on the results of the PCA, the following components are used:

1. Employee perceptions of multiculturalism;
2. Effects of multiculturalism on collaboration;
3. Multicultural management practices;
4. Personal experiences and observations;
5. Healthy and efficient working environment.

To develop the multiple linear regression model of Table 6 which is based on the aim of the present research, the first four of the above components were considered to be the predictors, while the last one was considered to be the dependent variable.

Table 6. Multiple linear regression model results.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Beta	Std. Error		
(Constant)	1.234		0.478	2.582	0.582
Employee perceptions of multiculturalism	0.152	0.174	0.076	2.000	0.005
Effects of multiculturalism on collaboration	0.286	0.306	0.102	2.804	0.008
Multicultural management practices	0.174	0.199	0.081	2.148	0.037
Personal experiences and observations	0.261	0.294	0.087	3.000	0.000
ANOVA	F	14.913			
	Sig.	0.000			
R-squared coefficients	R ²	0.454			
	Adjusted R ²	0.432			

The regression coefficients provide insight into the impact of various aspects of multiculturalism on creating a healthy and efficient working environment. The unstandardized coefficients indicate the amount of change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the predictor variable, holding all other variables constant.

The coefficient (B) of employee perceptions and experiences of multiculturalism is 0.152, indicating a positive relationship. The standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.174, with a t -value of 2.000 and a significance level of 0.005, suggesting a significant positive impact on a healthy and efficient working environment. The coefficient (B) of effects of multiculturalism on collaboration and relationships is 0.286, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.306. The t -value is 2.804, with a significance level of 0.008, indicating a strong positive impact. The coefficient (B) of multicultural management practices is 0.174, and the standardized

coefficient (Beta) is 0.199. The t-value is 2.148, with a significance level of 0.037, suggesting a significant positive effect. The coefficient (B) of personal experiences and observations is 0.261, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.294. The t-value is 3.000, with a significance level of 0.004, showing a significant positive impact.

The above results can be summarized as follows:

- There is a positive relationship between perception and experience of multiculturalism by the employees and overall organizational health and productivity;
- The benefits of multiculturalism on cooperation and interpersonal relations enhance the health and productivity of the working climate;
- Improved multicultural management practices can make the working environment healthier and more productive;
- Personal experiences and observations on multiculturalism play a major role in the development of a healthy working environment for employees.

The adjusted R^2 value of 0.432 suggests that 43.2% of the variability in a healthy and efficient working environment is accounted for by the model considering the number of predictors.

The ANOVA table shows that there is a significant linear relationship between the dependent variable (healthy and efficient working environment) and the independent variables (p -value < 0.05). The F-statistic of 14.913 and the significance level of 0.000 indicate that the model is statistically significant.

5. Discussion

This study focused on analyzing the impact of multicultural management in the development of a healthy organizational climate in the hotel units in Athens. Hence, the research results affirm the role of multiculturalism in enhancing unity, collaboration, and organizational productivity.

The findings of this study also show the significance of multicultural management practices in fostering an effective and diverse workplace. A considerable portion of respondents confirmed that management supports employees' diversity, and there are well-defined rules and regulations concerning discrimination and equality. This supports Hypothesis H_1 , which posited that multicultural management practices are positively related to employee satisfaction and contribute to creating a healthy and efficient working environment. This result is in concordance with the relevant literature [3], where it is suggested that the best practices of diversity management must be embraced to attract the best talent in the organization as well as increase employee satisfaction. Moreover, this result is in line with Cox [55], who argues that effective diversity management is crucial for building inclusive organizations and attracting top talent. Similarly, Luring [56] suggests that fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace through well-defined policies can significantly increase employee satisfaction and engagement, which supports our finding that diversity management practices positively influence the organizational climate.

Also, 75% of the employees mentioned that they are comfortable to discuss their cultural identity with co-workers, and this increases assurance among workers [57]. The work also revealed that multiculturalism has a positive impact on people's interaction and relations within the working context. Most of them indicated that working in a multicultural team has had a positive impact on their career development and the way they approach problems. This result confirms Hypothesis H_2 , which proposed that cultural diversity and multiculturalism within teams improve problem-solving abilities and collaboration. This is in accordance with the integration-and-learning view that cultural diversity brings about efficient and effective solutions to problems and enhanced performance [38]. Moreover, the kind of support offered by the company in tackling language barriers goes a long way in underlining the role of communication in a global context [43,58]. Bearing this in mind, the results derived from this study indicate that multiculturalism, when well managed, can promote a cohesive working environment.

This study also shows that most of the employees have a positive attitude toward multiculturalism in their workplace. About 95% of the respondents said that they either somewhat agree or strongly agree with the statement “I have a good understanding and respect for culture in the workplace”, which proves the importance of multiculturalism and the need to respect cultural differences while in the workplace. Thus, Hypothesis H₃, which posited that employee perceptions of multiculturalism and personal experiences with cultural diversity positively influence organizational health and productivity, is confirmed. This is in concordance with studies indicating that cultural intelligence assists in managing diversity within a workplace [1,35]. Specifically, Early and Ang [47] highlight the role of cultural intelligence in improving employees’ ability to work effectively across diverse cultural environments, which aligns with our finding that 95% of respondents agree they have a good understanding and respect for cultural diversity in the workplace. Furthermore, the integration-and-learning perspective proposed by Ely and Thomas [38] supports the idea that cultural diversity enhances problem-solving and collaboration, as seen in our results, where most employees acknowledged the positive impact of multiculturalism on their career development.

However, the attitudes toward the frequency and efficacy of diversity management training indicate that there is significant scope for further enhancement here [6]. Ongoing evaluation and enhancement of these policies and practices, coupled with the effective training of managers, are required to sustain a positive and diverse workplace climate [28]. The regression results supported the notion that multiculturalism has a positive effect on promoting a healthy and productive organizational climate. The high *t* statistics for employee perceptions and experiences of multiculturalism, effects of multiculturalism on collaboration, multicultural management practices, and personal experiences and observation suggest that the variables increase the positive climate in the workplace. These findings support Hypothesis H₄, which proposed that the effective management of multicultural diversity reduces conflicts arising from cultural misunderstandings and enhances team collaboration. This study has important managerial implications for hotel management. First, promoting cultural diversity in the workplace would improve employee engagement and retention, thus improving the general performance of the organization [5,15]. Second, training employees and managers to practice diversity and inclusion on a periodic basis is crucial to helping them acquire the competencies required to function in multicultural organizations [59]. Shen et al. [28] stress that comprehensive training programs aimed at enhancing cultural competence are essential for reducing conflicts, improving team dynamics, and fostering a collaborative working environment. Based on our findings, it is recommended that such training programs be implemented regularly to reinforce the importance of diversity and inclusion, ultimately leading to improved organizational performance and employee retention.

Finally, the matters of discrimination and equality must be clearly formulated and addressed, including constant monitoring and enhancement of the diversity management systems [42,60]. As it is found, organizations that consistently evaluate and improve their diversity management practices are more likely to create inclusive environments where employees feel valued and respected [33]. Based on our findings, hotel managers should implement regular assessments of diversity policies to ensure that they align with the evolving needs of their workforce and continue to promote inclusivity.

The results of this study were interpreted using both positivist and interpretivist paradigms, providing a holistic view of the impact of multicultural management on employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Through the positivist lens, it was enabled to quantify relationships between variables. Statistical methods such as regression analysis helped identify measurable relationships, such as the positive association between multicultural management practices and employee satisfaction. These findings offer a generalizable understanding of how specific management practices influence organizational outcomes. In contrast, the interpretivist paradigm allowed for the exploration of the social and cultural context behind these quantitative results. By focusing on the

qualitative experiences of employees, a deeper understanding of how multiculturalism affects day-to-day interactions, problem-solving, and collaboration within diverse teams was obtained. This interpretive approach was crucial for capturing the nuances of how employees perceive cultural diversity and how it shapes their work experiences. The integration of these two paradigms was essential for providing a comprehensive interpretation of the results. While the positivist analysis quantified the effectiveness of multicultural management, the interpretivist insights added depth by uncovering the lived experiences and cultural nuances that are not easily captured by statistical data alone. By using both paradigms, it was ensured that this study's findings are not only statistically significant but also socially meaningful, reflecting the complexity of managing cultural diversity in a real-world context.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this research was to investigate the role of multicultural management in developing a health-promoting and effective working environment for the hotel units in Athens. The findings underscore the importance of multiculturalism as a driver of workplace unity, cross-employee cooperation, as well as organizational productivity. The findings reaffirm that positive employee impressions and experiences with multiculturalism are instrumental in creating a healthy and productive organizational climate. When employees embrace cultural diversity, they will feel like they are at home in their workplaces and, therefore, create a friendly environment and support. This supports the theoretical frameworks that postulate on the importance of cultural quotient and diversity in managing employees in organizations.

Further, it was revealed that multiculturalism significantly impacts collaboration and relationships. Multicultural teams provide a range of ideas and problem-solving skills that enrich the overall performance of the team. This supports the integration-and-learning view, where diversity at the team level leads to improved solutions and enhanced creativity. Also, the help of companies in the elimination of language barriers contributes to the enhancement of the positive effects of multiculturalism on cooperation and interpersonal relations.

In this way, multiculturalism also contributes to the goals of social sustainability. By fostering inclusive and equitable workplaces where diverse cultural perspectives are valued, multicultural management practices help create long-term social cohesion and employee well-being [61]. Multicultural management practices also play an important role in maintaining good physical and psychological health at work. This research indicated that sound policies addressing discrimination and equality coupled with constant training in diversity and inclusion help in the development of an inclusive environment. However, the attitudes to the frequency and effectiveness of such practices are not unambiguous, so the continuation of improvement in communication between counterparts is still required.

It is also important to note that employees' perception of multiculturalism at their workplace is influenced by personal experiences and observations. Those staff members who have a positive personal attitude toward multiculturalism are likely to foster a positive and efficient working organization. This stresses the need to encourage intercultural relations and contact in the workplace. Thus, this study contributes to enhancing the understanding of the role of multicultural management in the hospitality industry. Thus, cultural diversity and good management practices will lead to the increased satisfaction of workers, better cooperation, and thus better organizational performance of the hotels. This study adds to the body of work on diversity management and provides recommendations for improving inclusion and performance for hotel managers.

6.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Presumably, this work enriches knowledge about multiculturalism in an organizational context, focusing on the integration-and-learning approach and cultural intelligence

concepts. It provides credence to the fact that diversity in a team improves its creative and problem-solving capacity, hence improving organizational performance and innovation. This study therefore underscores the need for organizations to adopt and practice diversity management and, more importantly, inclusive leadership.

Consequently, this study provides practical implications for hotel managers and the practitioners in the human resource domain. Through offering diversity and inclusion training, establishing effective anti-discrimination policies, and encouraging intercultural communication in the workplace, hotels can improve organizational climate and productivity. Multicultural management practices should, therefore, be reviewed and updated from time to time to reflect their usefulness. Finally, it is recommended that multiculturalism be adopted and practiced, increasing employee satisfaction and organizational success, which is imperative for the hospitality industry.

6.3. Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Research

To improve multicultural management, it is recommended for hotels to provide periodic diversity training, encourage employees to talk about diversity issues, and provide policies against discrimination. It is also vital to promote inclusive leadership and update multicultural practices periodically. Future research should also investigate the long-term effects of such practices on employee turnover and guests' loyalty. Moreover, extending the research to other areas and sectors might shed more light on multicultural management. Exploring the ways in which technology supports multicultural interactions and analyzing how new working models affect multicultural teams are other issues worthy of further research.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, O.P. and M.S.; methodology, O.P. and S.K.; software, M.S. and S.K.; validation, C.P. and A.P.; formal analysis, M.S.; investigation, O.P., C.P. and A.P.; resources, O.P., C.P. and A.P.; data curation, M.S. and S.K.; writing—original draft preparation, O.P.; writing—review and editing, M.S. and S.K.; visualization, A.P.; supervision, M.S.; project administration, C.P. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Ethical review and approval were waived for this study due to the Code of Ethics and Conduct of Research of our University (<https://research-ethics-committee.uniwa.gr/kodikas-deontologias/>).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Data presented in this study are available on reasonable request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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