

ACHIEVING BUSINESS EXCELLENCE THROUGH MULTILINGUALISM: THE ROLE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES DRIVING EXCELLENCE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA

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1. Introduction

This study was conducted to investigate the contribution of multilingualism toward achieving business excellence in the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka through a comparative case study approach between two major hotel chains operating in Sri Lanka. Language barriers could present great challenges to effective communication and service provision.

2. Research Methodology

The interpretivist approach underlies this study, and hence, a qualitative method approach is applied in order to capture the rich experiences of hospitality staff concerning multilingualism. A comparative case study design allowed for an in-depth investigation into the language practices of two hotel environments. The data collection is completed through in-depth interviews, observation conducted during the visits at the two selected establishments with the guest interactions, and document reviews to gather insight on the performance excellence during the implemented period. A target sample of 14 was studied for those who directly interact with the guests at the selected organizations. Purposive sampling was used to ensure participants in the study possess relevant insights into the use of multiple languages within their operation.

3. Findings and Discussion

The findings have shown that businesses that practice multilingualism not only improve guest satisfaction but also enhance their operational performance. The ability to communicate across languages creates more inclusiveness, leading to the emergence of loyal customers who are able to deliver competitive advantages. Furthermore, language training programs were found to improve employee motivation, which contributed to operational excellence for the organizations.

4. Conclusion and Implications

The present study, therefore, explored the reasons why these organizations invest heavily in multilingualism practices within hospitality establishments. The contribution of the study is to the body of literature and, more importantly, to the industry-leading hospitality practices to gain a competitive advantage using multilingualism.

Keywords: Business excellence, Hospitality industry, Multilingualism, Skill gap, Tourism