Doctoral Dissertation

INTERCULTURAL WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: AN INVESTIGATION OF THEIR IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Chrystalla Vassou

Limassol, April 2018
Doctoral Dissertation

INTERCULTURAL WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: AN INVESTIGATION OF THEIR IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Chrystalla Vassou

Limassol, April 2018
Approval Form

Doctoral Dissertation

INTERCULTURAL WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: AN INVESTIGATION OF THEIR IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Presented by

Chrystalla Vassou

Supervisor: Anastasios Zopiatis, Associate Professor, Cyprus University of Technology
Signature

Member of the committee: Tom Baum, Professor, University of Strathclyde
Signature

Member of the committee: Marion Joppe, Professor, University of Guelph
Signature

Cyprus University of Technology
Limassol, April 2018
Copyrights
Copyright © 2018 Chrystalla Vassou

All rights reserved.

The approval of the dissertation by the Department of Hotel and Tourism Management does not imply necessarily the approval by the Department of the views of the writer.
Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the members of my thesis committee, who provided me with valuable advice throughout the planning and development of this research work. I am especially indebted to my supervisors, Dr. Anastasios Zopiatis and Dr. Antonis Theocharous, for their patient guidance and constructive feedback. They have taught me more than I could give them credit for here.

I would also like to express my great appreciation to my research participants – this thesis would not have been possible without their help and contribution.

Last, but not least, I wish to thank my family – my parents, my brothers and my fiancé. Their unconditional support and encouragement throughout this study has been paramount.
ABSTRACT

Workforce management issues appear to be the hardest to tackle in the hospitality industry. Staff shortage, the reliance on foreign labour, and the inability of the industry to attract and retain local talent are interrelated challenges. This thesis argues that one of the greatest gaps in human resource literature stems from the assumption that the integration of foreign employees in a society or an organisation can be studied by looking only at the latter’s experience. Viewing integration through the lens of inclusive organisations, it becomes clear that diversity management refers to the mindset of the whole workforce – not just minority groups.

Employing a mixed-methods design, this thesis investigates the impact of intercultural workplace relationships on affective commitment and on wider attitudes towards the “other”. The study takes place in Cyprus, a small island economy which is dependent on tourism. The findings touch upon the root cause of prejudice and confirm the reciprocal nature of integration, suggesting that workforce management challenges mainly stem from insecurity at the material and the symbolic levels. Human resource implications are derived, which are presented analytically and diagrammatically as a framework for inclusive organisations which can inform hospitality stakeholders.

Keywords: human resource management, diversity management, hospitality industry, inclusive organisations, intercultural relationships