



ABSTRACT

Hospitality graduates must be prepared to lead a diverse employee population. This study helps students gain the perspective of non-local speakers. It identifies barriers that occur in a multi-cultural environment and provides tools to communicate despite language hurdles. This qualitative study found that a combination of gestures and demonstration were the most valuable non-verbal forms of communication. Participants could empathize with non-local speakers even though they believed immigrants should learn enough of the language to be effective. The participants thought that it was difficult to stress the exact

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR LEADING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE IN KADUNA TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRIES

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Introduction

The goal of every hospitality and tourism educator is to adequately prepare their students for the realities that they will face upon graduation. Leader-centered practices in the classroom should be aimed at training students in anticipation of the situations they will face when hired by lodging, restaurant or tourism-related companies and organizations (Casado, 2009). Given that the food service industry employees in Nigeria nearly six thousand immigrants, and this total represents slightly more than 10% of the food service labor force (Mukhtar, 2011), future hospitality management graduates must be ready to lead a diverse work-force.

Organizations must manage people's differences in ways that make workers more productive and compatible team members. Hospitality students must be taught that companies who manage their diverse workforce effectively, have a competitive advantage over organizations that fail to do so (Casado, 2009). The purpose of this study was three-fold; first, the intent was to help students gain the perspective of non-local speaking individuals; second, to identify barriers that may occur when one is not able to speak to one's employees; third, to provide future managers tools to communicate despite language barriers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The changing demographics of the workforce in the Nigeria are well documented. Employees in the food service industry represent multiple nationalities, cultures, religious affiliations, lifestyle preferences, values and beliefs (Yusuf and Adebayo, 2012). In



details when leading non-local speakers, particularly in the area of food safety.

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response to these demographic changes, industry leaders recognized the need for diversity management training initiatives which became widespread in the 1990's (Lubove, 1997; McCune, 1996; Weaver *et al.*, 2003; Adebayo *et al.*, 2013). Innovators of diversity management programs in the hospitality industry included Airlines, Restaurants, Hotels and Resorts. These organizations were some of the first to create diversity management programs and/or created managerial positions specifically for the development and understanding of diversity issues (Hospitality Industry Diversity Institute, 1997). Previous research reported that up to 79% of organizations use some form of diversity training (Galvin, 2013).

It is important for future managers to understand the benefits of diversity training as they prepare to manage a diverse workforce. Morrison (1992) suggested five principal benefits from managing diversity, which include increased market share, reduced cost, increased productivity, and improved recruiting efforts. Woods and Sciarini (1995) explained that increased diversity among employees promotes larger market shares of diverse customers. Customers are more likely to buy from someone with whom they can readily identify with rather than from someone with whom there is no affiliation (Woods and Sciarini, 1995). By reducing turnover, which is a major issue in food service operations, hiring and training cost may be reduced (Iverson, 2000; Woods and Sciarini, 1995). As employees observe the actions of an organization, they draw conclusions about the company's values and priorities. Based on these perceptions, employees decide where they should focus their efforts and determine if they enjoy their work and whether they should be loyal to the organization (Iverson, 2000). Lastly, as the workforce in the U.S. continues to change, attitudes towards minorities are changing and an increasing portion of the workforce will come from what today are considered to be minority groups (Woods and Sciarini, 1995).

In addition to knowing the benefits of diversity training, new managers need to be aware of the impending challenges associated with working with a diverse workforce. Employees working in the hospitality industry today experience cross-cultural interactions with other employees, managers, and/or customers on a daily basis (Taylor & McArthur, 2009). Language barriers are one of the greatest impediments to smooth integration of immigrants into a workforce (Loosemore and Lee, 2001; Victor 1992). Foodservice managers often struggle to communicate with Non-English speakers (Lee & Chon 2000). About 62% of Hispanic and 40% of Asian individuals prefer to speak a language other than English. In addition, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that about 11.9 million individuals living in the U.S. were linguistically isolated—meaning that the person lives in a home in which no person aged 14 or over speaks English at least very well (Shin & Bruno, 2003).

Future managers not only have to understand the challenges to working with a diverse workforce, they will also have to lead this group and may have to conduct their own diversity training sessions.



Diversity training became very popular in the 1990s: however, there were many problems associated with these programs. One common problem with these early diversity programs was that they included improperly trained “consultants” that used unorthodox, non-validated training techniques that caused backlash (Lubove, 1997; Nemetz & Christensen, 1996; Overmyer-Day, 1995; Weaver *et al.*, 2003). Backlash is the stirring up of hostility, anguish, and resentment but not giving individuals the tools to deal with these feelings (Lubove, 1997). Rather than creating backlash, effective diversity training programs should be focused on specific topics and promote empathy towards other groups.

In 2008, Clements and Jones authored a textbook specifically on diversity training. The text describes the facilitation of diversity training which includes knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, and behavior. A key purpose of learning about diversity is to increase employee’s knowledge of the issues and one way to do this is to address myths or stereotypes and show that they are false. One such myth is that “non-English speaking employees are lazy.” Diversity trainers will need to have factual information readily available to counter or challenge such thinking. In addition, it is important for employees to not only know about diversity issues but to also understand them. Often, diversity training programs are referred to as “diversity awareness training;” however, raising employee’s awareness of issues does not help prepare them with how to deal with this issue on a daily basis in a working environment. Diversity training should also provide employees a context in which they are able to learn, develop and practice the skills (sometimes interpersonal skills) they will need to respond to diversity issues in their interactions with co-workers. Each employee brings to work attitudes about “others” which may be positive or negative. Often times these attitudes are based on experience or a particular stereotype and may be based only on partial knowledge. Changing attitudes which translates into changes in behavior is what really counts. Improving how do co-workers relate to and behave toward each other is one of the main goals of diversity training.

One potential strategy is perspective-taking—a cognitive capacity to consider the situations from the viewpoints, feelings, and reactions of others (Dovidio *et al.*, 2004; Galinsky & Ku, 2004; Galinsky, & Moskowitz, 2000). Perspective-taking requires a person to think and feel what it would be like to be a member of an out-group, which tends to produce a mental representation of the self and in-group (e.g., English speaking individuals) and others/out-group members (e.g., non-English speaking individual). As such, induced perspective-taking requires individuals to not think in terms of in-groups and out-groups or us versus them (Galinsky, Ku, & Wang, 2005).

Research has shown that perspective-taking can lead to social bonds by decreasing prejudice and stereotypes of others (Dovidio *et al.*, 2004; Galinsky & Ku, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

This investigation adopted qualitative research methods, through observations and open-ended questionnaires. Qualitative research methods are employed to collect data regarding activities, events, occurrences, and behaviors and to seek an understanding of actions, problems, and processes in their social context (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Additionally, qualitative methods allow researchers the opportunity to understand how individuals perceive the meaning of the



world around them and their consequential actions, which is a phenomenological perspective (Van Maanen, 1983).

In qualitative research, determining sample size is dependent “until one reaches the point of redundancy and no new information is coming forth,” and therefore replication adds to the validity of findings (Borg, Borg, & Gall, p.181). In order to reach the point of redundancy and replicate the findings, data for this investigation was collected over the course of three- semesters from a freshman level kitchen production course. The sample consisted of 211 college students (80 men and 131 women). The majority of participants worked in the hospitality industry (69%) and had frequent (21%) to daily (42%) interactions with non-English speaking individuals at work (see Table 1).

Table 1
Participant Demographics

Gender (N = 211)	
	Frequency
Male	38%
Female	62%
Ethnicity (N = 211)	
Hausa	40%
Fulfulde	25%
Yoruba	17%
Igbo	8%
English Creole	1%
“Other”	9%
Speak a second language (Other than English) (N= 211)	
Yes	57%
No	43%
Was born outside the State (N= 211)	
Yes	31%
No	69%
Currently works in the hospitality industry (N=211)	
Yes	69%
No	31%
Has management experience (N=211)	
Yes	25%
No	75%
Frequency of interactions with Non-Local speaking individuals in the workplace (N = 148)	
Never	11%
Sometimes	14%
Occasionally	12%



Frequently	21%
Every day	42%
Frequency of interactions with Non-Local speaking individuals in their social life (N = 211)	
Never	14%
Sometimes	26%
Occasionally	21%
Frequently	19%
Every day	20%
Frequency of interactions with Non-Local speaking individuals in their neighborhood (N = 211)	
Never	52%
Sometimes	21%
Occasionally	12%
Frequently	6%
Every day	9%

Procedure

During a required laboratory session of the class, students were randomly assigned into groups of three to four. One student was assigned as a “manager” and the remaining students as “employees.” The researchers explained the nature of the exercise to the students by describing that often in the hospitality industry a manager is required to train and lead employees who speak limited or no English. Employing a behavioral manipulation of perspective-taking (Batson et al., 1997; Galinsky & Ku, 2004; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000), both the manager and employee-students were instructed to produce a meal in silence (three separate recipes), imagining that they could not speak nor understand English. The recipe was then distributed to the participants. The manager-student was provided with the recipe and instructions in English, but the employee-students were provided with the recipe and instruction in an abstract, non-English language using Cyrillic letters. The groups completed the recipe without talking and used only non-verbal methods of communications. After completing the exercise, the students were given a short opened questionnaire based upon their experience.

RESULTS

The initial reaction of the students was often frustration, especially on the part of those in the manager role. From the outset, each manager tried to do everything on their own and left the other “employees” to watch. Once they realized they were being observed, the manager began a combination of gestures, pointing, and demonstrations to engage their employees. Each manager would try several non-verbal techniques until an employee understood exactly what to do. Within the first 25 minutes, each group began to find their own rhythm in order to work together.

Table 2 summarizes the results from the open-ended survey questions given to the 211 participants after the exercise. In many cases, students provided multiple responses to each question. Students were asked what they learned from this experience. Twenty percent of the students found that it was difficult to communicate without speaking to one another. Direct



statements from the survey included: “It was hard to truly express myself without words;” “I learned to be more patient;” “I found ways to communicate non-verbally;” “This is something I can use in the real world;” and “This lab was fun.”

Table 2
Summary of Open-ended Questions*

Learning Outcome (N = 211)	
Responses	Frequency
Difficult to communicate without speaking	20%
Patience	13%
Ways to communicate without speaking	12%
Communication is important	10%
Quiet = Efficiency and Concentration	7%
This exercise was fun	5%
Hard to express myself without words	4%
Hard to get things done effectively	4%
Teamwork is important	4%
Always better to speak more than one language	2%
Need other forms to communicate other than verbal	2%
People are different and sometimes require help	1%
Must give employees exact instructions	1%
Feel towards Non-Local Speakers (N = 211)	
Responses	Frequency
They should strive to learn English	23%
I am have empathy for them	22%
I am frustrated for them	19%
I feel fine (no problem)	9%
These are generally hard workers	9%
English speakers should learn another language	6%
We should make every effort to understand each other	6%
It must be challenging, they have a disadvantage	6%
If they are skilled, then it doesn't matter	4%
I appreciate them	3%
Group effort for equality	3%
They deserve the job as much as I do	2%
They are an important asset	2%
Allows me to learn another language	1%
I don't feel strongly, one way or the other	1%
Most Effective Non-Verbal Communication Technique (N= 211)	
Responses	Frequency
Gestures	46%



Demonstrating	44%
Pointing	42%
Approval by smiling, head nod, thumbs up	7%
Eye Contact	2%
Grunting	1%
Communication Barriers and Observations Identified by Managers (N= 60)	
Responses	Frequency
Difficult to stress exact details (measurements, cooking techniques, temperatures)	95%
Others paid attention more than usual	18%
Had to go to each person separately to give instructions	18%
Not everyone understood my non-verbal instructions	18%
We actually finished the lab faster than usual	4%
Safety & Sanitation Issues (N=211)	
Responses	Frequency
Could not alert others (hot plates, knives, behind you)	25%
Cross-Contamination	19%
What needs to be done with the product (instructions)	15%
None	11%
Temperatures	10%
Lack of hand-washing	7%
Cooking Times	6%
Cleanliness	2%

* Possible for participants to provide multiple responses.

When asked, “How do you feel about people who do not speak English and work in the hospitality industry,” almost one-fourth of the students (23%) believed that non-English speakers should strive to learn enough of the language to be effective in the workplace. Students also felt empathy (22%) or frustration (19%) for non-local speakers. Some of the comments from the students were: “As a second language English speaker, I think it takes some time to get use to working with others;” “We need to bridge the gap for people who work so hard;” and “They can do the same job anyone else can do with the proper information.”

The students believed that a combination of gestures (46%), demonstration (44%), and pointing (42%) were the most effective non-verbal forms of communication. One of the student-managers stated, “I had to motion or do a small demonstration first, then handed the task over.”

Several of the students (7%) described that it was helpful when the manager gave them some type of acknowledge through smiling, head nods, or even a “thumbs up.” A few students (18%) were frustrated because they could not understand each other’s hand signals or gestures. The researchers noticed that one group of Asian girls were trying to help the manager communicate by holding up different cooking utensils in order to figure out what equipment was needed for the vegetables.



Sixty of the students were given the role of manager. The managers were asked to identify their biggest barrier to communicating without words and to list any other direct observations. The student-managers overwhelmingly (95%) found it difficult to stress the details that someone could typically read or describe when training someone to complete a recipe such as exact measurements, cooking techniques, presentation, temperatures, and in some cases ingredients. The managers found it difficult to provide instructions to all of their employees at one time and had to go to each person separately (18%). The comments included, “I couldn’t explain words like sauté;” “It was difficult to express units of measurement without grabbing the measuring cup;” and “Getting started was the most difficult part of the process.”

Lastly, the students were asked to describe any food safety issues that they became aware of while not being able to speak. Twenty-five percent of the group noted that they were unable to alert others of potential dangers in the kitchen such as a hot pan, working with knives, or just letting others know when someone is behind them. Although 11% of the students stated that they saw no sanitation or safety issues, many had concerns about cross-contamination (19%), correct temperatures (10%), and lack of hand washing (7%). One student stated, “It was hard to enforce food safety standards, describing what needed to be done with the ingredients was hard enough.”

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As future managers, hospitality graduates must understand that it is very likely many employees will not speak English as a first language. The initial intent of this exercise was to help students gain the perspective of a non-English speaker. By completing a recipe in silence, imagining that they could not speak and understand English, and using instructions in an abstract, non-English language, the participants experienced how non-English speaking individuals work in the kitchen. As a result of this instruction method, students empathized with non-English speakers. The students realized that when they could not speak, they were often frustrated, could not effectively express themselves, and other forms of communication were needed.

Those in the role of managers were able to identify barriers that may occur when one is not able to speak to their employees. The managers stated that the largest communication barrier was describing measurements for the recipes, providing directions for new cooking techniques, and providing a task for each employee. The managers also found it difficult to enforce food safety practices (i.e. hand washing, proper cooking temperatures, avoiding cross contamination). From an employee perspective, the participants in the employee role experienced the barriers and frustrations that non-local speakers experience and in particular, the possible confusion of receiving instructions from a manager in another language. As a result, the three most frequent learning outcomes were difficulty to communicate without speaking, patience, and ways to communicate without speaking.

This experience also identified effective non-verbal methods in order to communicate. The students found that a combination of gestures and demonstrating the desired behavior were the most effective training methods. This finding is particularly important, because the participants also found that the most frequent safety and sanitation issues were not being able to alert others about safety issues, such as hot plates or about knives and other utensils. These results may



indicate what hospitality firms can do about creating a safe and healthy work environment that includes a multicultural workforce. According to the National Safety Council (2015), in 2013 alone, there were a total of about 10,000 nonfatal occupational injuries in the hospitality industry; contact with an object or equipment as the most frequent cause. Within the hospitality industry, food service industry lead the number of workplace injuries, accounting for almost 6% of the reported injury cases of entire Nigerian private industry (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). The vast majority of accidents and injuries occurred in food preparation areas. In the current study, the second most frequent issue related to cross-contamination and instructions to what needs to be done with the product. These results are important considering that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that there were 1270 outbreaks of food-borne disease outbreaks in the Nigeria with the most cases associated with poultry, leafy vegetables, and fruits and nuts (CDC, 2009).

Despite these implications, the current study also has limitations and directions for future research. First, the use of students provided with instructions to not speak and a recipe in a non-local, abstract language might not be the same as the occurrences that immigrants or someone who speaks English as a second language experience. That is, the duration of the experiment was about three hours, which is only a fraction of what non-local speakers experience in the workplace. Future research might examine these issues with a sample of non-local speakers. Additionally, further studies might also examine the methods and techniques that managers use with non-local speaking employees. In the current study, gestures, pointing, and demonstrating were the most frequent effective methods that student managers used with their employees. Future research might also examine how non-local speaking workers feel as a result of language barriers. If a worker without English is underutilized because he or she cannot communicate with managers, and vice versa, he or she may feel alienated and eventually leave. Given the high turnover rate of the hospitality industry and the costs associated with turnover, there is a need to examine the dynamics of language barriers in the workplace.

Given the increasing number of immigrants and multiculturalism in the food service industry (Mukhtar, 2011), it is imperative for the industry to be proactive rather than reactive to the demographic changes. Diversity training and education is an effective tool for both firms and educators to use to teach current and future managers about working with within a multicultural environment. The current study provides insight into a method and tools that can be utilized in the workplace.

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