Diversity and inclusion in hospitality and tourism: Guest editorial

Introduction

Diversity and inclusion are vital for the success of the hospitality and tourism industry. This industry caters to global customers with diverse backgrounds and cultures. Having a workforce that mirrors this diversity ensures a deeper understanding of customer needs and better service delivery. Diverse teams bring a rich array of perspectives and ideas, fostering creativity and innovation, which are essential for staying competitive. Additionally, an inclusive workplace not only attracts top talent but also retains it, leading to a more stable and committed workforce. Ultimately, embracing diversity and inclusion is not just a moral imperative but also a strategic advantage that fuels growth, enriches experiences and strengthens the industry's global standing. Yet, research on diversity and inclusion in the hospitality and tourism industry is still in its nascent stages, warranting further investigation and discussion. This includes understanding how to amplify the voices and empower disadvantaged groups within the industry, such as working mothers, ethnic minorities, migrants and employees with disabilities, as well as catering to diverse customer segments like the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities.

This special issue contains 16 papers that cover a broad range of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) issues from perspectives both within and outside organizations. For example, Madera *et al*. (2023) critically reflect on diversity and inclusion research in the hospitality and tourism literature by integrating two separate perspectives: human resources and customer behavior. This paper bridges the gap between these perspectives and proposes a research agenda for future studies in three key areas: human resources management, diversity resistance and consumer behavior, focusing on theory-driven research with practical applications to enhance inclusivity in the hospitality and tourism industry for both employees and customers. The paper highlights the importance of an integrated approach to understand the interconnectedness between employees and customers while emphasizing the need to translate research findings into practical initiatives for more effective diversity efforts in hospitality and tourism organizations.

In this special issue, we bring together a diverse range of contributions that collectively shed new light on the challenges faced by disadvantaged/minority groups within the hospitality and tourism industry. These contributions encompass critical reviews, groundbreaking conceptual research and innovative study designs, all of which reveal fresh insights into this crucial subject matter. In the following sections, we provide concise summaries of the papers featured in this special issue, structured around the perspectives of three key stakeholders: consumers, employees and organizations.

Consumers

Li *et al*. (2023) investigate the impact of regional discrimination on tourists' unethical behavior intentions and the role of tourist anger as a mediator. They also explore whether tourist self-efficacy moderates the relationship between regional discrimination and tourist anger. The results from three experiments indicate that regional discrimination indirectly influences tourists' unethical behavior intentions by eliciting tourist anger. Furthermore, the

findings suggest that tourist self-efficacy can weaken the connection between regional discrimination and tourist anger. This study offers a unique angle of DEI research through the lens of consumer reactions and suggests opportunities for further exploration of this issue from different theoretical perspectives and field experiments.

Qi *et al.* (2023) investigate the challenges faced by individuals with autism and their families when traveling. Using constructivist grounded theory to analyze data from 28 interviews, they reveal five travel patterns among people with autism and their families, including mutual support, relatives' visitation, independent travel, expanded socialization and package tours. These patterns were adapted as the abilities of individuals with autism improved. This study offers implications for accessibility tourism, public and industry awareness of autism-related tourism activities, and practical guidance for family travel within this population, ultimately contributing to a broader exploration of disability-related issues in travel research.

Employees

Bogicevic *et al.* (2023) examine the impact of brand activism on LGBTQ+ employees in hospitality firms. This study focuses on perceptions of gay and lesbian leaders as token hires and how this influences the company's motives for hiring leaders. They use a mixed-methods approach, including an experiment and a qualitative study. The findings suggest that tokenism is more pronounced for gay male leaders and affects the company's egoistic motives for activism. In addition, LGBTQ+ employees tend to manage their sexual identities at work with a post-gay vs. political approach and feel ambivalent toward token-hiring as a form of LGBTQ+ brand activism.

Dong and Shum (2023) investigate the impact of abusive supervision on insubordination by considering employees' attribution bias toward leader gender. Two mixed-method studies were conducted. The first study involves 173 F&B employees who participated in a quasi-experiment. The second study recruits 116 hospitality employees to complete a two-wave time-lagged survey on abusive supervision and gender-leadership bias, followed by questions on external attribution and insubordination two weeks later. The findings suggest a three-way moderated mediation effect, where abusive supervision, leader gender and gender-leadership bias influence external attribution, subsequently increasing insubordination, particularly among employees with high leader-gender bias working under female leaders. This research sheds light on the role of external attribution in abusive supervision and explores the impact of gender bias against female leaders.

Lee and Yu (2023) explore the impact of socioeconomic diversity in the hospitality industry, focusing on Generation Z employees' social class backgrounds, family expectations and career outcomes. The first study assessed the perception of hospitality jobs compared to similar industries, confirming the negative perceptions of the hospitality industry. The second one reveals a negative link between social class background and intentions to pursue hospitality careers due to family expectations, but this effect is mitigated when managerial positions are considered. Interestingly, college students majoring in hospitality expressed positive intentions toward both frontline and managerial roles. This research highlights the importance of broadening organizational diversity beyond traditional demographics and suggests that addressing social class diversity can help the hospitality industry foster a more inclusive culture and improve recruitment efforts, shedding light on the career development of Generation Z.

Lee *et al.* (2023) explore how stereotypes and perceptions about warmth and competence can impact Asian employees' behaviors during service interactions using three studies. The first study examines customer evaluations of service recovery by Asian employees, the

second study explores the emotional labor strategies used by Asian employees to counter occupational-racial stereotypes and the third study investigates the cumulative effects of negative perceptions on Asian employees. Their findings reveal that Asian employees in the hospitality industry are often perceived as less warm during service failures, leading to increased emotional labor and negative outcomes. The study highlights the importance of addressing occupational-racial stereotypes to reduce racial disparities in the service industry.

Ponting et al. (2023) explore women's professional identity in the hospitality industry, aiming to understand what matters to women in this field and to include their voices in the workforce. They use a mixed-methods approach, starting with 24 in-depth interviews with female middle and senior managers in the U.S. lodging industry. These interviews led to the creation of a quantitative survey completed by 330 women in both managerial and non-managerial roles within the US hospitality sector. The findings reveal three main themes and 10 subthemes related to women's professional identity, highlighting the importance of work environment, social evaluation, perception of work and demonstrating professional competence.

Shum et al. (2023) focus on racial code-switching in the hospitality industry, a behavior where individuals adjust their communication and behavior to fit into social and professional settings outside their own racial norms. Using a two-wave time-lagged survey involving 286 restaurant frontline employees, this study reveals that those who engaged in racial code-switching were more likely to consider leaving the industry. This effect is mediated by feelings of identity threat, shame and depression. The authors highlight the need for promoting employee authenticity and tenure in the hospitality sector and suggest actions for greater diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and belonging.

Zhong et al. (2023) investigate the influence of pandemic-related media coverage on ageist attitudes toward older individuals among younger hospitality and tourism employees. Using a mixed-method approach with an online survey of 416 U.S. hospitality and tourism employees under 55 years old, they reveal that media-induced cognitive reactions negatively impact aging anxiety and intergenerational tension, subsequently affecting younger employees' willingness to work with older individuals. Intergenerational contact frequency moderates the effect of intergenerational tension on younger employees' willingness to collaborate with older colleagues. This study offers valuable insights for addressing workplace ageism in the hospitality and tourism sector, filling a research gap in understanding media influences on age-related attitudes.

Organizations
The events sector is a dynamic and innovative field that thrives on a creative and diverse workforce. Unfortunately, it currently lacks diversity in its workforce, particularly in leadership roles, which are predominantly occupied by white males. Fletcher et al. (2023) address this issue by conducting qualitative interviews with 17 ethnically diverse event managers in the UK. The study reveals that racism and discrimination, both overt and covert, are prevalent in event organizations, ranging from microaggressions to subtle exclusion. The authors argue that to truly promote diversity, the events industry must acknowledge the role of racial power dynamics and implement interventions to address these issues.

Koh et al. (2023) point out that prior research focused on entrepreneurs' actions as opportunistic and voluntary, neglecting the influence of social and economic systems. Using institutional theory, they investigate how restaurant crowdfunding success is impacted by entrepreneurs' race and geographic location. Using ANOVA and logistic regression models

to analyze 2,008 restaurant crowdfunding projects in the USA between 2010 and 2020, this study found that socioeconomic prosperity and race do affect crowdfunding success, with lower prosperity hindering fundraising outcomes. While restaurant experience positively affects crowdfunding success, it cannot fully offset socioeconomic disparities. This research highlights the need for policymakers to address socioeconomic disparities to support fundraising success among minority entrepreneurs and contributes to a broader understanding of the institutional effects on crowdfunding outcomes.

Lim *et al.* (2023) focus on the hospitality industry's diverse workforce and explore the impact of employees' perceptions of diversity management on a company's financial performance. From online reviews, this study identifies nine categories of diversity and inclusion (age, organizational climate, culture, disability, education, gender, physical differences, policy and practice and race) that companies should address in their diversity management efforts. Using panel data analysis, the study further reveals a positive relationship between employees' perceptions of diversity management and company financial performance, with this connection being further strengthened by greater diversity among board members (age, education, gender, nationality and time on board).

Ponting and Dillette (2023) investigate the development and execution of DEI practices in the hospitality and tourism sector based on structuration theory. Using a three-stage Delphi technique involving DEI experts from the industry, they offer a DEI framework that explains the importance of both individual agencies and the organizational structure in the initiation, development and execution of DEI practices. Their results showcase that to fully embrace intricate frameworks like DEI practices within hospitality and tourism organizations, effective leadership with proactive initiative is essential.

Russen *et al.* (2023) develop a theory explaining how organizations can foster inclusivity at individual, organizational and societal levels. Using constructivist grounded theory methods based on data from interviews with 20 hotel executives and their company websites, they propose a "leadership inclusion theory" which asserts that organizations should address individual differences, organizational policies, culture and societal norms to establish inclusivity. This theory further suggests that equity naturally follows inclusivity, facilitating fair treatment and ultimately leading to increased diversity. This study also sheds light on several unintended exclusion practices and generational attitudes among organizations, offering managers actionable steps to cultivate inclusivity, address exclusion practices and promote equality.

Tracey *et al.* (2023) focus on factors contributing to firm diversity and specifically examine the impact of a set of diversity management initiatives on firm-level reported diversity including gender, ethnicity, race and disability. Using data from 200 U.S. restaurants and food service companies in the third quarter of 2021, their results reveal that formal diversity management policies, oversight structures of diversity management, and senior leaders' beliefs in the utility of diversity initiatives are positively correlated with firm-level diversity.

Concluding remarks

This special issue provides a comprehensive exploration of diversity and inclusion in the hospitality and tourism industry, with a focus on critical areas such as customer behavior, employee experiences and organizational strategies. The research in this special issue underscores the importance of understanding and effectively managing diversity and inclusion for the industry's continued success. Through various studies, this special issue sheds light on consumer responses to discrimination, travel patterns for individuals with autism and the impact of brand activism on LGBTQ+ employees. Additionally, it delves

into employee experiences, covering topics like abusive supervision, social class backgrounds, racial code-switching and stereotypes. The issue also examines organizational approaches, revealing the influence of diversity management initiatives on reported diversity in firms. This body of work collectively advances our knowledge and provides valuable insights for both industry practitioners and researchers alike. Lastly, this special issue includes studies featuring a number of disadvantaged groups from the perspective of both employees and consumers, suggesting that attention to diversity has been expanded beyond race and gender.

Wan Yang
The Collins College of Hospitality Management, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, California, USA
Juan M. Madera
Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership, University of Houston, Houston, Texas, USA
Shi (Tracy) Xu
School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK
Laurie Wu
School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, and
Emily (Jintao) Ma
School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Surrey, Stag Hill Campus, UK

References

Bogicevic, V., Li, Y. and Salvato, E.D. (2023), "Tokenism in the workplace: does brand activism benefit LGBTQ+ employees in the hospitality industry?", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Fletcher, T., Dashper, K. and Albert, B. (2023), "Whiteness as credential: exploring the lived experiences of ethnically diverse UK event professionals through the theory of racialised organisations", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-11-2022-1494.

Koh, Y., Mao-Chark, X. and DeFranco, A. (2023), "The impact of socioeconomic prosperity and race on crowdfunding success", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Lee, L. and Yu, H. (2023), "Socioeconomic diversity in the hospitality industry: the relationship between social class background, family expectations and career outcomes", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-11-2022-1356.

Lee, L., Yu, H. and Jolly, P.M. (2023), "Keeping warm: racial disparities of warmth judgments in the service industry", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-12-2022-1510.

Li, Y., Tu, J., He, M. and Liu, P. (2023), "Polluted psyche: the effect of regional discrimination on tourists' unethical behavior intention", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-11-2022-1325.

Lim, J., Vaughan, Y. and Jang, J. (2023), "Do employees' perceptions of diversity management enhance firm's financial performance: the moderating role of board members' diversity level", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-11-2022-1441.

Madera, J.M., Yang, W., Wu, L., Ma, E.J. and Xu, S.T. (2023), "Diversity and inclusion in hospitality and tourism: bridging the gap between employee and customer perspectives", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Ponting, S.S.-A. and Dillette, A. (2023), "Diversity, equity, and inclusion practices: a Delphi study to build a consensus in hospitality and tourism organizations", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-11-2022-1503.

Ponting, S.S.-A., Yu, H.C., Lee, L. and Gonzales, N. (2023), "What really matters: an exploratory sequential mixed-method study of women's hospitality professional identities", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-11-2022-1329.

Russen, M., Dawson, M., Madera, J.M., Kitterlin-Lynch, M. and Abbott, J.L. (2023), "Leadership inclusion theory: a grounded theory study on hotel executives", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-10-2022-1252.

Tracey, J.B., Le, V., Brannon, D.W., Crystal-Mansour, S., Golubovskaya, M. and Robinson, R.N.S. (2023), "The influence of diversity management initiatives on firm-level diversity: evidence from the restaurant and foodservice industry", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-11-2022-1502.

Zhong, Y.Y., Leung, X.Y., Sun, J. and Ng, B.P. (2023), "The impacts of pandemic-related media coverage on workplace ageism among younger hospitality and tourism employees", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-11-2022-1351.

Further reading

Garlington, J., Shum, C., Wong-Padoongpatt, G. and Book, L. (2023), "'What it do?' The effects of racial code-switching on industry turnover intention", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Yun, D. and Shum, C. (2023), "An attribution account of the effects of leaders' gender and abusive supervision on employee insubordination", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Zhao, Z., Shi, D., Qi, X., Shan, Y. and Liu, X. (2023), "Family travel among people with autism: challenges and support needs", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.