

Hospitality Intelligence: Evolution, Definition and Dimensions

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Abstract

This article reviews ‘hospitality intelligence’ as the ability to create a foundation upon which a delightful and engaging service experience can be readily delivered. The evolution of service quality leading to hospitality intelligence was identified chronologically via literature reviews. Five conceptual models of service quality that formed the basis of the key dimensions of hospitality intelligence were provided as a framework for inciting theoretical advancement and further research. The dimensions and implications of hospitality intelligence, based on the syntheses of the hospitality related psychology literature, were described for advancing the concept of hospitality intelligence and further research.

Keywords: Hospitality Intelligence, Delightful Experience, Quality Service, Customer Delight, Inspirational Training, Empowerment

Introduction

What comes to mind when you hear the word hospitality? Do you think of foodservice, restaurant, hotel, theme park, or bar and grill when you think of hospitality? If you think of any of the above establishments, you are correct. However, think again. What is the real meaning of hospitality? If you seek the meaning of hospitality, you will realize that hospitality is associated with synonyms like welcome, friendliness, warmth, kindness, openness, etc. When you think of those words critically, you will see the association of hospitality with social science (psychology). Hence, hospitality is more than mere food, entertainment, and lodging, but it is highly associated with psychology. Bearing the above in mind, it is obvious that if frontline employees are well trained to provide adequate hospitality, customer delight could be easily attained with the appropriate hospitality intelligence. The purpose of this study is to explore quality service and the evolution of hospitality intelligence. In addition, this study will explore the impacts of hospitality intelligence dimensions on stakeholders’ happiness, well-being, and experience.

In this paper, an evolution of service quality concepts and how they initiated the development of ‘hospitality intelligence’ are discussed. Emphasis was placed on the impacts of hospitality intelligence and future research. This paper is based on five main sections. The first section is entitled The Concepts of Service Quality; it describes five service quality concepts in chronological order. The five concepts show the evolution of various models of service quality and the importance of inspirational training. In the second section, Inspirational Training is described as competent, inspiring, and empowering training from service quality perspective. It also shows some of the challenges of service employee training for effective quality service and delightful customer experience. Hospitality Intelligence, from psychological perspectives and research literature, constitutes the third section. The review presents a definition of hospitality, the description of intelligence followed by the evolution of hospitality intelligence within the context of both hospitality and intelligence quotient. Section four, Dimensions of Hospitality Intelligence; identifies the seven common dimensions of hospitality intelligence. The seven dimensions are described from a psychological perspective. Various habits within the dimensions

of hospitality intelligence were identified. The Conclusions and Implications constitute the fifth section. The conclusion and implications of hospitality intelligence, from a social science (psychological) perspective, are presented. Implications were also drawn for advancing the concept of hospitality intelligence, including suggestions for further research on hospitality intelligence.

The Concepts of Service Quality

Nordic Concept of Service Quality: According to Gronroos (1982), service quality is the intermingling of functional quality (how is it delivered?) and technical quality (what is delivered?). Functional quality includes the (1) hotel receptionist friendliness, restaurant server's behavior, train conductor's helpfulness, etc., while technical quality includes the quality of (1) hotel room and bed, (2) restaurant food, (3) ski resort ski-lift machine, etc. Obviously, the Nordic concept of service quality could be a great model if the frontline employees can be well trained with the proper skills for providing an engaging and delightful experience.

Two-Dimensional Concept of Service Quality: According to Lehtinen (1983), service quality is based on 'process quality' (experiences during the service) and 'output quality' (experiences/satisfaction after the service). Knowing that customers are incapable of assessing the outcome of the service until it is completed, their only option is to assess their experience of the process. Basically, the customers simultaneously assess the service provider's ability to make them feel comfortable and connect with them. For example, a restaurant server may show friendliness to a customer to make him/her feel comfortable. The process quality is usually a service organization's 'moments of truth,' which usually affects the customer's memorable experience. In a service context, a customer's positive, memorable experience is one of the most significant assets of an organization (Kandampully & Solnet, 2015). Bearing this phenomenon in mind, it is very important to have frontline employees who are well trained and empowered with the right intelligence to make proper service decisions for the customer's positive, memorable experience.

The Gaps Concept of Service Quality: Is based on the gap between service expectations of the consumers (what I want) and their perception of the real service given (what I get). Like the above service concepts, it is reasonable to acknowledge that the gap concept of service quality could be a great model if the frontline employees are well trained and empowered with the right intelligence to satisfy the customer's wants.

The SERVQUAL Concept of Service Quality: Is the most commonly utilized and cited model and also the subject of many criticisms. There were ten dimensions of SERVQUAL, which was later reduced to the five dimensions listed below (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991).

- Tangibles: Appearance of personnel, communication materials used, equipment, and physical facilities.
- Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
- Responsiveness: Willingness to assist customers and provide quick service.
- Assurance: Knowledge and civility of employees and their aptitude to inspire trust and assurance in the customer.
- Empathy: Caring, individualized attention the organization provides its customers.

The SERVQUAL concept of service quality also shares the same potential for effectiveness as the rest of the above service concepts if the service employees are well trained and empowered with the right intelligence to carry out the service dimensions.

SERVPERF Concept of Service Quality: Brady and Cronin's (2001) concept of service quality suggested three primary levels:

- Interaction quality: based on three sub-dimensions of experience, attitude, and behavior.
- Physical environment quality: based on three sub-dimensions of social factors, ambient conditions, and design.
- Outcome quality: based on three sub-dimensions of waiting time, valence, and tangibles.

SERVPERF, like the other four service concepts, could be effective if the service employees are well trained and willing to provide an engaging and delightful service experience. Therefore, how can the service employees be inspired with the right intelligence and empowerment to provide reliable, quality service for a delightful experience? This question and the above five concepts of service quality are the antecedents of the purpose of this study, hospitality intelligence.

Inspirational Training

The competence and enthusiasm of frontline employees is extremely important because of its direct impact on customers' experience of service quality (Ottenbacher, Gnoth, & Jones, 2006). Customers often rate a service generally on the service obtained from employees (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985); thus, the attitudes and habits of frontline employees can substantially influence customers' experiences and service quality. Therefore, organizations should find ways to effectively influence their service workers' attitudes and habits so that they can consistently deliver high-quality services (Hartline, Maxham, & McKee, 2000). Because of service employees' direct impact on customers' experience, they are immensely vital to the success of their organizations (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2006). Bearing the above in mind, it is very important for frontline employees to be endowed with technical and interpersonal skills necessary for optimal job performance (Hochschild, 1983).

For a successful new service development (NSD), employee training deserves high priority and should be guided by a cautiously structured approach (Ottenbacher et al., 2006). It is encouraged for NSD not to only improve general skills, but also improve the employees' interpersonal skills to enhance customer experience (Ottenbacher et al., 2006). An effective service training and development would change employees' attitudes, knowledge, skills, and/or social behavior (Ottenbacher et al., 2006). If a service organization wants to enjoy a competitive advantage via its human resources, it is essential for the organization to invest in the critical training programs needed to ensure that the service employees have the appropriate competencies and abilities (Ottenbacher et al., 2006).

Technical and interpersonal skills are not certainly bestowed on all employees as traits. Some may have some of these skills, while others may not. Hence, these skills require a reasonable amount of training and development, which might be different from the previous ways many organizations are currently training their employees. Bearing the above in mind, it is therefore vital for service providers to find ways to effectively enhance their employees' attitudes and behaviors in order to rely on their ability to deliver high-quality services at the right

time. This phenomenon may require some form of employees' inspiration, empowerment, and intelligence to make the right decision at the right time to enhance the customer's experience. Thus, initiating a reliable service training and development approach for inspiring and empowering service employees is critical for enhancing frontline employees' ability to ensure consistent quality service and delightful experience.

A past study shows that empowerment attributes of employees, which enable guests to perceive employees as knowledgeable about the organization's policies and authorized to make appropriate decisions, positively impacts guests' satisfaction with the complaint process, make the guests feel welcome and understood, as well as a great predictor of overall guests' satisfaction with the organization (Ogbeide, Boser, Harrington, & Ottenbacher, 2017). Considering all the above information, an effective training approach for continuous quality service and delightful experience should include the following:

- The necessary technical skills for providing a delightful experience
- The necessary inspiration to evoke needed empathy and friendliness for a delightful experience
- Employee empowerment with the right intelligence to make proper service decisions at the right time

Thus, this is the significance of inspirational training. The potential service employees described above would require 'inspirational training.' The author defines inspirational training as a form of training that would inspire and empower employees to do the right thing at the right time for customer delight. Inspirational training is more than mere orientation and induction at work; it requires empathy simulation to help the employees understand and feel the importance of their role in the organization. It would include simulations that would help the employees see the paradigm of their potential customers, understand their needs and desires, feel empowered, as well as develop the ability to utilize hospitality intelligence to provide them with the right service at the right time for a delightful experience.

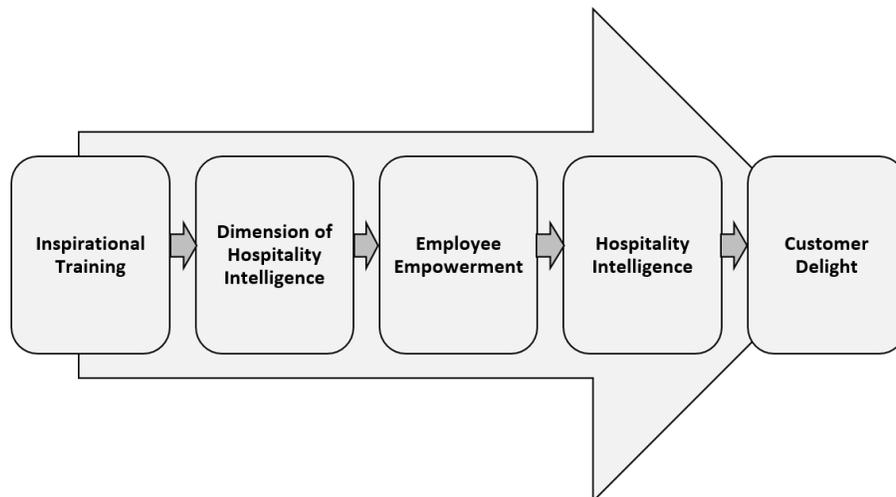


Figure 1. A Model of Inspirational Training Plan

The main goal of inspirational training is to develop employees to provide customer delight or delightful experience. Collins English Dictionary defined delight as “a feeling of very great

pleasure.” Bearing this definition in mind, customer delight can be described as customer’s feeling of great pleasure or enjoyment. Therefore, for an organization to provide a delightful experience, it would need someone or something that can provide great pleasure (happiness, joy, excitement or enjoyment) for customers. This is the essence of hospitality intelligence, to provide customers with the right service at the right time for a delightful experience.

Hospitality Intelligence

Hospitality: Generally speaking, hospitality is associated with hospitality organizations. These organizations are aware of the importance of welcoming guests to their organizations. The organizations are expected to develop service principles that are based on hospitable behaviors. This is why past studies suggest that frontline employees in the hospitality and tourism organizations should possess technical and interpersonal skills for optimal performance (Hochschild, 1983). As indicated above, hospitality synonyms include friendliness, warmth, welcome, kindness, openness, etc. According to Merriam Webster’s Dictionary, hospitality is the generous and friendly treatment of guests and visitors. Collins English Dictionary defined hospitality as “friendly, welcoming behavior toward guests or people you have just met.” According to the Macmillan Dictionary, hospitality is the “friendly and generous behavior toward visitors and guests, intended to make them feel welcome.” Considering the above definitions, it suffices to say that hospitality is a social science (psychology) that refers to the friendly, empathetic, and kind way of attending to people. Connecting hospitality with intelligence would present a good description of hospitality intelligence. Thus, what is intelligence?

Intelligence: For many decades, the study of intelligence was mainly based on the use of cognition abilities (e.g., Wechsler, 1939; Piaget, 1972). Recently, more approaches to understanding intelligence were proposed by theorists such as Gardner (1983) and Sternberg (1988). One of the most recent domains of intelligence is “emotional intelligence” (Goleman, 1995). This particular domain of intelligence was based on the experience and expression of emotions. Presently several models of emotional intelligence provide different theoretical frameworks for conceptualizing this particular domain of intelligence. These models indicate different views on the domain of emotional intelligence. It could be inferred that Gardner (1983) concepts of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences provided a foundation for later models of emotional intelligence.

The concept of emotional intelligence was initiated by Salovey and Mayer (1990). It was later revised to emphasize the cognitive components of emotional intelligence and its ability for intellectual and emotional growth (Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995). Currently, this domain of intelligence is readily adopted by all sorts of professionals (e.g., educators, business organizations, medical practitioners, arts and entertainment industry, etc.) across the world. According to Collins English Dictionary, the real meaning of intelligence is “the ability to think, reason, and understand instead of doing things automatically or by instinct.” The Macmillan Dictionary defined intelligence as “the ability to understand and think about things, and to gain and use knowledge.” Bearing the above in mind, it suffices to say that intelligence is more than analytical skills. For hunters, intelligence might be foraging skills or

survival skills. For linguists, intelligence might be language skills. For musicians, intelligence might be music composition skills. For hospitality professionals, intelligence might be hospitality skills. Hence, *hospitality intelligence* refers to the ability to deliberately attend to people with friendliness, empathy, and kindness (see Figure 2).

These ideas of intelligence were supported by Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence, which differentiates intelligence into specific 'modalities,' instead of seeing human intelligence as one general ability (Gardner, 1983). Howard Gardner proposed this model in his 1983 book, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. He argues that humans possess eight or more relatively independent intelligences. Humans draw on these intelligences, corporately, and individually, to create products and resolve challenges in various context (Gardner, 1983).

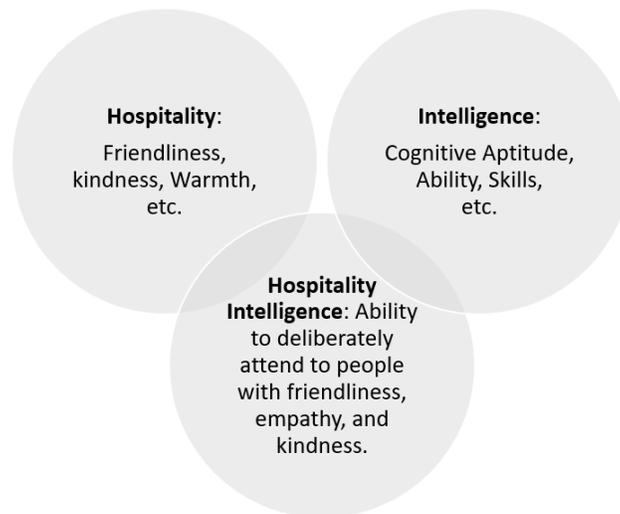


Figure 2. Hospitality Intelligence Defined

Dimensions of Hospitality Intelligence

The dimension of hospitality intelligence was developed from an extensive review of literature followed by a preliminary analysis of hospitable behaviors. The result of the review is organized into seven main dimensions of hospitality intelligence. These seven dimensions were discovered to be hospitable habits for positive and delightful customer experience. These habits indicate the importance of going above and beyond the customer's needs for a great experience in any organization. The seven main dimensions of hospitality intelligence include (1) enthusiasm, (2) acknowledgment, (3) friendliness, (4) respect, (5) empathy, (6) kindness, and (7) gratitude.

Enthusiasm: The first dimension of hospitality intelligence is enthusiasm. Collins English Dictionary defined enthusiasm as “great eagerness to be involved in a particular activity that you like and enjoy or that you think is important.” For hospitality professionals, enthusiasm refers to the eagerness, passion, and excitement the employees exude when they are in front of a customer/guest. This enthusiasm can be detected in the employee body language and tone of voice. Communication not only encompasses verbal and written language, but body language

during face-to-face encounters communicate quite a lot as well. Non-verbal communication is all of the ways we act, facial expressions, arm and body positioning, reactions, etc. (Michael, 1999).

Enthusiasm could be detected in frontline employees' expressions and willingness to assist a customer. Most frontline employees would express their willingness to help by saying: "May I help you?" This is good verbal communication of the employee's willingness to help. However, how the employee asked the question and her/his body language is a great indication of the employee's real willingness and enthusiasm to help. If you want to communicate candid desire and enthusiasm to serve your customers, you must be mindful of your body movement, facial expressions, attitudes, tone of voice, gestures, and interactions-posture (Michael, 1999).

Human body language is unique and could be interpreted as our actual feelings than words. It not uncommon to ask a loved one if she or he is okay. The person asking knew just by looking at her or his body language that something was wrong. Similarly, customers could detect employees' enthusiasm when welcoming them to an organization via their verbal and non-verbal communication. These verbal and non-verbal communications are often the first impression the guests will encounter in any organization. An amazing first impression would lay the foundation for a great experience. This is why the enthusiasm of the employee is a critical dimension of hospitality intelligence. In college, enthusiasm is associated with good attitudes toward facilitators (Natof & Romanczyk, 2009). Work productivity is also associated with the influence of enthusiasm (Rimanto & Ali, 2018).

Some of the common descriptions of facilitator's enthusiasm in previous studies include the following: (1) frequent, expressive or friendly gestures, (2) varied, stagy body movements, (3) wagging, wide open eyes, (4) rapid, inspirational, and varied voice, (5) choice of varied words, (6) varied, excited facial expression, (7) cheerful overall energy level, and (8) ready lively acceptance of ideas and moods (Bettencourt, Gillett, Gall, & Hull, 1983; Brigham, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1992). The author postulate that the ability of each employee to demonstrate enthusiasm at work would enhance stakeholder's delight and engagement.

Acknowledgement: The second dimension of hospitality intelligence is acknowledgement. The importance of acknowledging customers cannot be over enumerated. According to the Macmillan Dictionary, acknowledgement is "something that you say or do in order to show that you accept that something exists or is true." Whenever we first encounter a customers in our organization, how do we acknowledge their presence of existence? The combination of the employee's enthusiasm and acknowledgement could initiate or be the first impression that could define the customer's experience at this organization.

Employees could acknowledge their stakeholders by smiling, nodding, greeting, etc. In the hospitality and industry, smiling is viewed as a natural means of communication, displaying positive and cheerful attitudes, and welcoming others (Michael, 1999). The act of smiling draws attention to the person and helps others feel more comfortable. For this reason, when interviewing potential employees, one of the more substantial hotel chains is said to exclude candidates who were reported as smiling less than four times in the interview (Michael, 1999). Smiling comes naturally to hospitality professionals, and it is something they enjoy doing. Smiling has many benefits, a few are that those who smile are more energized, and appear more approachable, friendly, relaxed, open, and comfortable (Michael, 1999).

In addition to smiling, eye contact is another way to acknowledge customers. In the hospitality industry, eye contact is a valuable tool because looking someone in the eye implies their presence is acknowledged and, in that moment, they are the most important person (Michael, 1999). Eye contact tells the person that you're listening while failing to make eye contact implies that the person is not important enough for full attention. Recognition is the most important takeaway from eye contact, and a simple glance is not enough. In the majority of cases, eye contact lasts around one second, and then people look away. However, it is recommended that the initial person making the eye contact should look about 2-3 seconds – but not stare at people as it can come off as intimidating (Michael, 1999). So, someone doesn't feel uncomfortable; it is important to break eye contact periodically during the interaction but ensure the person feels listened to. For eye contact, it is encouraged to focus on the other person's chin, mouth, or side of their face when interacting. However, eye contact norms and expectations vary in other cultures. In western society, long eye contact is uncomfortable, and no eye contact is rude. In Latin America, eye contact is associated with one's status, and in Japanese culture, eye contact is impolite. No matter what the culture is, the author postulate that the knowledge and skills to acknowledge the stakeholders in the best possible way would enhance the stakeholder's experience and delight.

Friendliness: The third dimension of hospitality intelligence is friendliness. Collins English Dictionary defined a friendly person as someone who “behave in a pleasant, kind way, and like to be with other people.” Friendly employees are sociable, affable, and approachable. Friendly employees have the interpersonal skills to create an amiable relationship with a customer. In the service provider-customer relationship, interpersonal social factors are essential in creating a personal bond (Hausman, 2004). This is because social interactions impact customer-service provider relationships (Goodwin & Gremler, 1996). Social benefits can be collected when customer and service provider relationships are cultivated by means of personal associations (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987; Wilson & Jantrania, 1995).

Customers are much more likely to return friendly behaviors when they identify the service employee as friendly, engage in conversation, and are open to starting a relationship (Price & Arnould, 1999). Positive social skills, such as friendliness, in employees, can bring about positive emotions, social benefits, and friendship from customers. As time passes, these components help build a foundation of service friendship (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998; Price & Arnould, 1999). Friendship contributes to an individual's own life value, which directly influences happiness and creates a stronger sense of self-worth when one knows they are valued by others (Leibowitz, 2018).

Past research has shown that customers are more willing to comply when employees are friendly and show concern for the customer (Korsch, Gozzi, & Francis, 1968). Compliance of customers changes over time when impacted by social interactions with service providers (Hausman, 2004). Friendly behaviors practiced by service providers bring about personal connections, therefore enhancing positive emotional responses and want to reward providers by seeming compliant (Vale, Jelinek, Best, & Santamaria, 2002). Other studies have also conveyed a connection amid interpersonal interactions and compliance of customers (Hughes, 2003; Loden & Schooler, 2000; Say & Thompson, 2003).

Friendship and personal connections, and the level of reciprocation of those relations among consumer and salesperson are the primary outcomes of company sales (Mavondo & Rodrigo, 2001). Other studies have shown that there are social benefits that arise from interpersonal relationships among customers and service providers and these relationships can significantly influence service outcomes (Foster & Cadogan, 2000; Johnson, Barksdale, & Boles, 2003; Guenzi & Pelloni, 2004). Some suggest that more significant employee and customer relationship closeness (Barns, 1997; Guenzi & Pelloni, 2004), friendly interactions (Johnson & Zinkhan, 1991), and friendships (Price & Arnould, 1999) leads to further customer satisfaction. In addition, customers who don't have personal relationships with employees are not typically as satisfied as those customers who develop personal relationships with a particular employee (Gutek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth, & Cherry, 1999). Friendship adds to a person's sense of own self-worth, therefore contributing to happiness in both individuals in a friendly relationship (Leibowitz, 2018). The importance of friendly employees cannot be undermined. Bearing the above in mind, if employees have the ability to be sociable and exhibit friendly behaviors with the right interpersonal skills, stakeholder's experience would be greatly enhanced.

Respect: The fourth dimension of hospitality intelligence is respect. According to McDougall, Lasswell, and Chen (1980), respect is the innermost value of human rights. It can be defined as an inter-relationship amid humans whereby they mutually understand one another's freedoms, worthiness, and equality (McDougall et al., 1980). Gaut (1986) describes respect as an attitude essential in justifying ethical actions among individuals. Past studies revealed that most researchers agreed that respect is the core principle for caring exchanges (Browne, 1993; Carper, 1979; Gaut, 1986; Kelly, 1990). A key characteristic of the caring process is respect, and according to Browne, (1993) it is assumed to stem from a profound interest in humanity. Fenton (1987) brought the notion of humanistic care to light, and it is associated with several of the same values as respect, such as equality, worthiness of an individual, freedom of action, and uniqueness of an individual. From the caregiver's perspective, respect has been defined as any interaction with patients in which recognize their existence, uniqueness, and individuality (Forrest, 1989). Other elements of caring,

Some of the practical examples of respect for service employees include an interested manner, eye contact throughout encounters, wide range of tone of voice, appropriate body language, wide range of facial expressions, etc. Actions of exclusion were also examined and associated with disrespect, such as no eye contact, being rushed or too casual, flat tone of voice, dismissive statements, etc. (Drew, 1986). Some other behaviors that might be disrespectful when a customer approaches a service worker include laughing disrespectfully, talking with co-employee, or making wrong gestures, especially with a customer from a different culture. Obvious for service employees to appropriately grasp the habit of respecting different customers from different culture, require proper training. Thus, the importance of inspirational training of each service worker for hospitality intelligence to exhibit the habit of proper respect for each customer cannot be over enumerated. Such training will incorporate the proper way to revere, admire, and value a stakeholder for an delightful stakeholder's experience.

Empathy: The fifth dimension of hospitality intelligence is empathy. Empathy can be defined as the feeling of concern and sympathetic emotions towards another individual. Empathy

is considered a significant predictor of helpful behavior (Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006). Empathy brings forth motivation to decrease the distress of others; it is also regarded as a driving force behind helpful behavior in a number of circumstances. Bearing the above in mind, empathy can be described as the ability to understand the paradigm of others and show compassion and sympathetic emotions towards them. Over the years, researchers have focused on improving knowledge of the difference between altruistic motivation provoked by empathy where a person becomes motivated to decrease the distress of another person, and egoistic motivation provoked by one's own distress where a person becomes motivated to decrease the distress they personally feel in response to witnessing someone else's distress (Batson, 1991; Batson et al., 1988). More recent studies have focused on empathetic concern and potentially motivating antecedents (e.g., Batson, Eklund, Chermok, Hoyt, & Ortiz, 2007; Batson et al., 2003; Batson, Lishner, Cook, & Sawyer, 2005).

The type of motivation that empathy inspires is important because each motivation-type enacted has varying effects on the continuance and frequency of helpful behaviors. Autonomous motivation not only increases helpful behaviors, but it positively impacts the person being helped, as well as the well-being of the helper (Pavey, Greitemeyer, & Sparks, 2012). For instance, in an experimental study conducted by Weinstein and Ryan (2010), the researchers discovered that helpful behaviors, if motivated autonomously, were much more beneficial to the well-being of the helper when compared to controlled motivators. Empathy is associated with autonomous motivation, which means if a service worker's helpful behaviors are based on empathy, the helpful behavior will be very beneficial to the well-being of the service worker while enhancing the experience of the customer (Pavey et al., 2012).

Pavey et al., (2012) also reported that empathy's positive correlation to help others and its overall inclination to offer to help others is based on the conversion of emotional involvement to autonomous motivation to help, which affects one's willingness to help others. This type of helpful behavior (based on empathy) is very sustainable because empathetic concern inspired more helpful behaviors.

Other studies have confirmed that autonomous motivation to help can increase the helper and help the recipient's wellbeing (e.g., Thoits & Hewitt, 2001; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). Meanwhile, when one experiences empathy, they may continue to participate in continued helping behaviors, which is beneficial to the helper as well as the help recipient. Obviously, it is very important for service workers to have empathy. Thus, incorporating empathy that is based on autonomous motivation into the training design (inspirational training) of the workers, would inspire the necessary helpful behaviors to create a delightful stakeholder's experience.

Kindness: The sixth dimension of hospitality intelligence is kindness. Collins English Dictionary defined kindness as "the quality of being gentle, caring, and helpful." The above definition shows that kindness is the epitome of humanity, the act of generosity or helpfulness to others. The act of kindness may be in the form of advice, directions, luggage assistance, free accommodation (charity), etc. (Filep, Macnaughton & Glover, 2017). Strangers are pressured to act generously when kindness is expected as part of the social role of the host or 'donor' (Buchanan & Bardi, 2010). For instance, it is expected of tourism professionals to help tourists and exemplify helpful behaviors. Many tourists have shared positive stories of experiencing kindness from strangers while traveling. According to Filep et al., (2017), kindness enhanced the

well-being, self-confidence, and self-actualization of those who expressed the acceptance of kindness. Intentions of ‘donors’ were examined and altruism emerged as a common theme as the respondents (recipients of kindness) were sure that the ‘donor’ acted without expecting something in return or underlying motives (Filep et al., 2017).

One past study indicated the importance of showing altruistic kindness (Filep et al., 2017). Bearing the above in mind, it is obvious that the act of kindness should be unselfish and given selflessly. A real act of kindness should not be based on what the benefactor may receive in return. The return on kindness is psychological, emotional, and imperceptible. The person showing the act of kindness and the person receiving it will both experience some form of happiness based on emotional well-being, personal growth, self-confidence, self-actualization and social capital (Emmons & Shelton, 2002; Filep et al., 2017; Sirgy & Uysal, 2016).

The act of Kindness is very inspiring in the sense that recipients of kindness often want to be kind to the person showing them kindness (Filep et al., 2017). According to a study on “Tourism and gratitude: Valuing acts of kindness,” all of the respondents of the study expressed their willingness to return the favor to their benefactors. In addition, they felt this way no matter how much time had passed since the initial act of kindness (Filep et al., 2017). Imagine how powerful the act of kindness could be if all employees are kind to one another. Also, imagine the delightful experience that could be created between an employee and a customer. Such acts of kindness would not only enhance the organization but have a positive impact on all the organization’s stakeholders. Thus, incorporating the impact of showing altruistic kindness into the training design (inspirational training) of all service employees would inspire the necessary altruistic kind behaviors in employees to create a delightful customer’s experience.

Gratitude: The seventh dimension of hospitality intelligence is gratitude. Emmons and Shelton (2002) assert that gratitude is, in essence, thankfulness. It encompasses the act of recognizing what you are given and remembering good fortune that comes your way, as well as living life in a way that helps you see everything as a miracle. Gratitude has also been defined as the awareness and thankfulness of the good in life (Park & Peterson, 2006). In past literature, gratitude has been identified in two ways – first, as a virtue which is a favorable practice that signifies quality in one’s character and second, as an optimistic emotional response to life (Emmons & Shelton, 2002). When defined as an emotional response to life, gratitude is described as an interpersonal emotion as it cannot be concentrated on oneself. Gratitude is displayed through ‘well-meaning intentions’ in situations where one is feeling loved or valued because they have received kindness from others (Emmons & Shelton, 2002). According to Heider (1958), people show signs of gratitude when others intentionally provide them with a reward or benefit. Emmons and Shelton (2002) describe gratitude as “wonder, thankfulness, and appreciation for life” (pg. 460).

A past study distinguished between two types of gratitude: *state gratitude* and *trait gratitude* (Wood, Maltby, Stewart, Linley, & Joseph, 2008). State gratitude describes the way individuals experience gratitude following the acceptance of an act of kindness, including the nature and the extent of gratitude. Trait gratitude surfaces as a person’s ability to experience thankfulness (Wood et al., 2008). Based on the above, gratitude can be described as thankfulness, appreciativeness, or gratefulness by the recipient of kindness.

Philosophical understandings of gratitude differ from the above-mentioned emotional and psychological definitions. Philosophically, gratitude is considered a virtue which is highly valued. This view is shared among various historical and religious writings, such as Christian, Hebrew, and Greco-Roman. Through this lens, gratitude is viewed as a duty or moral obligation (Berger, 1975; Meilaender, 1984) that is owed to others. According to Berger (1975), the donor acts in an altruistic and virtuous manner, and the recipient is grateful. This understanding of gratitude is common in ethical writing, especially religious ethical writing (Camenisch, 1981).

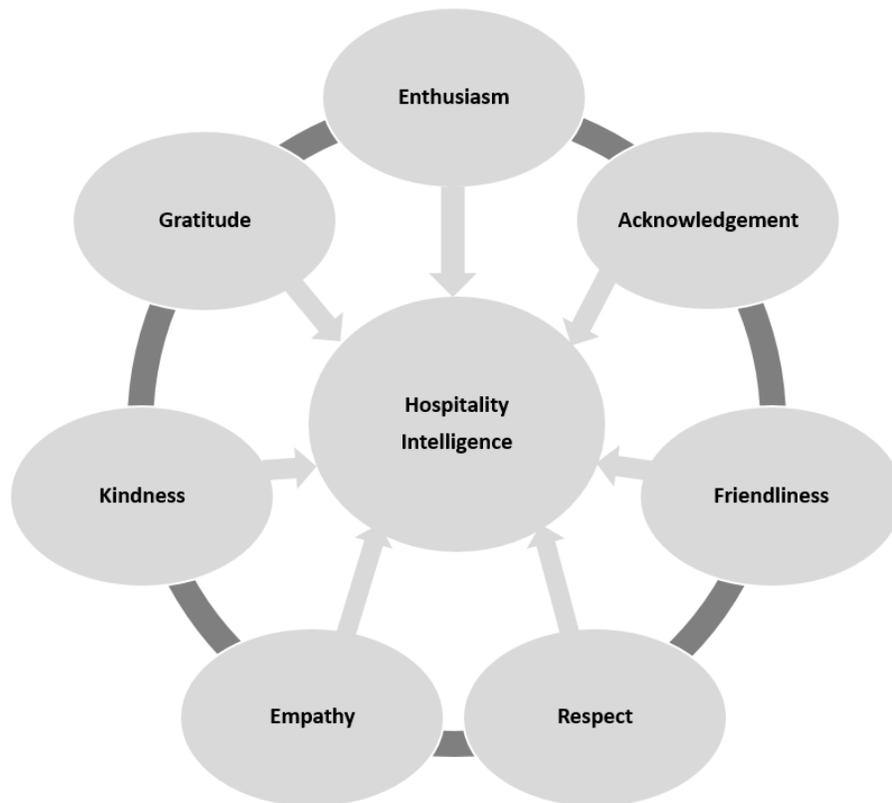


Figure 3. Conceptualization of Hospitality Intelligence

Numerous researchers have studied the impact of gratitude on mental and physical well-being and found positive correlations (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Watkins, Woodward, Stone, & Kolts, 2003). Through practicing thankfulness, humans become happier with enhanced resiliency; gratitude has been shown to strengthen relationships while also easing strain and enhancing health and self-esteem (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006; Toepfer & Walker, 2009). According to Wood, Joseph, and Maltby (2008), gratitude actually serves as a strong predictor of life satisfaction. Gratitude has also been linked to other positive outcomes, including life satisfaction, happiness, subjective well-being, optimism, pro-social behaviors (Chan, 2013; Froh, Yurkewicz, & Kashdan, 2009; McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002).

In a study on college students, gratitude was demonstrated to have a positive relationship with happiness and was found to be an important predictor for happiness (Kausar, 2018). These

findings are supported by a number of works (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006; Watkins et al., 2003; Toepfer & Walker, 2009; Sun, Jiang, Chu, & Qian, 2014). To top it all off, experiencing gratitude inspires recipients to reciprocate it to their benefactors and act generously to third parties. Demonstrations of gratitude also inspire benefactors to continue to act generously (Kausar, 2018).

Obviously, the ability for each employee to demonstrate gratitude at work would enhance stakeholder's delight and experience. Thus, incorporating the impact of showing gratitude into the training design (inspirational training) would enhance employees' inspiration and empowerment to do the right thing at the right time for a delightful stakeholder's experience.

Conclusion and Implications

Conclusion: This seminal study was based on a general review. The result of the study shows that various hospitality intelligence dimensions have had incredible impacts on stakeholders' happiness, well-being, stronger sense of self-worth, personal growth, self-confidence, social capital, self-actualization, optimism, pro-social behaviors, and positive experience (see Figure 4). Leeming's (2016) study on Iceland hosts' interactions with tourists had similar findings regarding the interpersonal significance of some of the dimensions of hospitality intelligence (kindness and gratitude). The participants of the study stated that the kindness they had encountered positively affected their appreciation of other people and cultures (Leeming, 2016). Other researchers like (Wijesinghe, 2013) propose that virtue and authentic kindness have fallen to the wayside in tourism and hospitality because of profit-maximizing commercialism requirements. Leeming (2016) also suggested that the nature of tourism, generally speaking, has the power to link strangers and draw them together, although briefly, which creates a unique context for studying kindness and gratitude.

Obviously, the review of literature revealed the positive impacts of the hospitality intelligence dimensions. However, hospitality intelligence is only as good as the facilitator of hospitality intelligence. Thus, the importance of "inspirational training" to inspire and empower the employees to do the right thing at the right time to create a delightful experience for customers. Figure 1 provides a model of inspirational training plan that can be utilized by organizations and human resource professionals to design an inspirational training model that could inspire and empower employees to do the right thing at the right time for a delightful stakeholder's experience.

Implications for management: Organizations interested in enhancing their customer experience potential would find hospitality intelligence useful for their frontline employees' ability to deliver a delightful and engaging experience. Fostering an inspirational training approach to enhance hospitality intelligence of service workers can benefit hospitality and tourism stakeholders by ensuring that the employees have the inspiration and empowerment to provide the best hospitality service possible at all times.

In the suggestion for further research an important theme to be mindful of is the empirical identification of factors associated with delightful and hospitable service experience in different organizations and communities. Increasingly, the importance of hospitality is gradually

transparent in many organizations. Thus, it is necessary to further justify the importance of hospitality intelligence for a delightful and engaging customer experience. Further studies are needed to elaborate on the significance of the hospitality intelligence dimensions (enthusiasm, acknowledgement, friendliness, respect, empathy, kindness, and gratitude) on stakeholder's experience (see Figure 4). Such studies would place hospitality at the forefront of all organizations, just like human resources. The implications of such studies would further justify the significance of hospitality intelligence in many sectors of the society including business organization, educational institutions, medical/health care facilities, retirement/nursing homes, religious organizations, and different communities and organizations around the world.

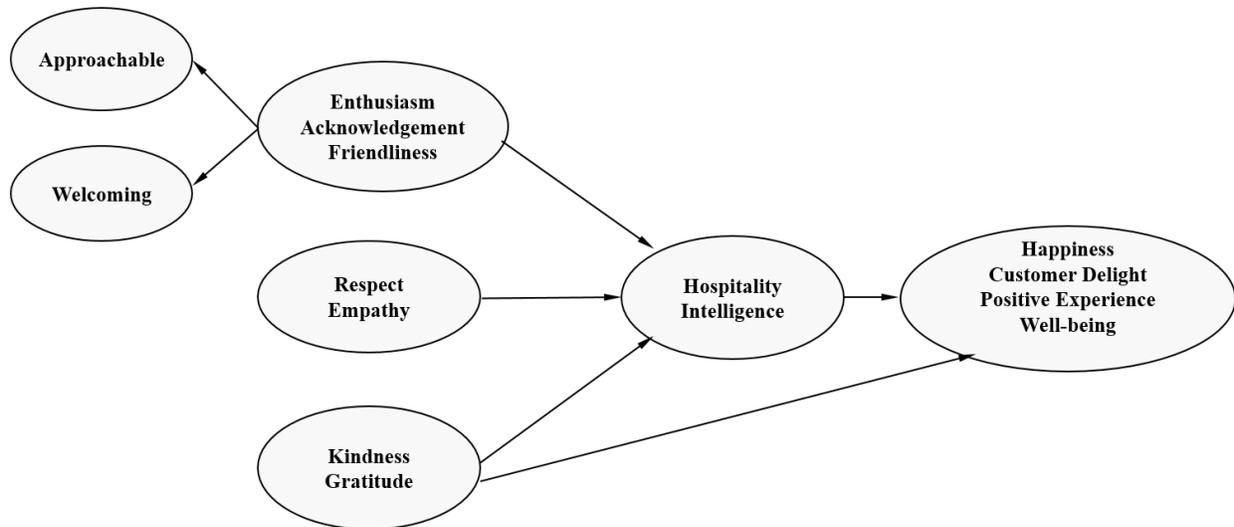


Figure 4. A Model of Hospitality Intelligence Dimensions' Impact

Theoretical Implications: It is obvious that hospitality studies are in the primary stage of development with outstanding scope for theoretical growths. Reviewing the literature on various hospitality intelligence dimensions described above, as well as the impacts on various stakeholders, indicates the potential concepts/theories that could be developed base on the hospitality intelligence phenomenon. In the hospitality and tourism industry, there are many business approaches and concepts to management, these approaches will continue to be useful, but it is necessary to employ the necessary psychology to enhance hospitality. Many psychologists are publishing articles that are based on hospitality service quality. The appeal from other disciplines is boosting the number of hospitality or service quality papers in sociology, psychology, marketing, economics, and other methodical publications. A comprehensive range of methodologies from various closely related professional fields are suitable and important for enhancing knowledge and developing theory related to hospitality intelligence.

General Organizational Implications: 'Hospitality Intelligence' includes the necessary skills needed in both academics and service practitioners' organizations. But the driving force of hospitality intelligence is quality service for a delightful experience. Accordingly, most of the

themes used in the discourse are in relation to quality service, customer experience, and customer delight and engagement. These themes are very important to the hospitality and tourism industry as well as other organizations interested in providing a delightful and engaging customer experience. The literature review makes it very obvious that the benefits of the hospitality intelligence dimensions apply to every human being. Hence, the importance of hospitality intelligence is not merely for delightful and engaging customer experience, but also for delightful and engaging stakeholders and working environment of any organization.

This is a seminal paper on hospitality intelligence. More contributions in regard to hospitality intelligence would create an empirical foundation upon which a delightful and hospitable service can be readily measured. This study is part of the first stage in developing a concise, reliable, and valid dimensions of hospitality intelligence. The proposed inspirational training of frontline employees or service workers should be based on a comprehensive model of hospitality intelligence. More studies are encouraged to look into the empirical analysis of each hospitality intelligence dimension and further study the impact of each dimension on customer delight and experience in several organizations. In addition, researchers should also look into the empirical impact of hospitality intelligence in various communities to further enhance the importance of hospitality intelligence in society.

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