

CULTURAL COMPETENCIES OF THEMED RESTAURANT DINING STAFF



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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Background of the Study

Culture is a system of values and a determinant of consumer behavior. A particular culture transform their experiences with their physical and social environments to an abstract level of belief about what is desirable and what is not (Lillis and Tian 2010).

Moreover, Siftar (2013) emphasized the importance of culture as not just a mere showcase of language, food, clothing, rituals, beliefs, traditions and behaviors, but rather culture is so valuable that is followed by a certain generation and passed on to the future generations and that to create harmony with others, cultural awareness and understanding must be practiced. In concise, culture includes people exhibiting various mannerisms, their religious or spiritual beliefs, and principles that define their actions.

In Europe, particularly in United Kingdom, cultural differences is highly observed in training to avoid problems of misunderstanding and miscommunication in which an example is that a waiter that will not remove plates from a table until everyone is finished while in the United States, waiters remove plates as people finish. What is considered proper practice in one culture is considered rude in the other. Queuing and waiting one's turn is the custom in most Western cultures. However, designing on the assumption that visitors will wait their turn and queue in an orderly manner in Italy or the Middle East, where the cultures are more synchronic, will only result in serious operational problems. A lack of cultural competencies training can cause problems to a business operation such as miscommunication between

workers and the customers. Aside from these, the lack of knowledge over cultural and ethnic differences can lead to misunderstanding and bias, which will eventually affect the company or business name (Bowes, 2007).

However, Siftar (2013) concluded that lack of cultural competencies training is the cause of business losses, both time and money which lead to multiple damages. This is due to miscommunication between workers and the customers. Thus, developing a culturally competent workplace, through cultural competencies training allows organizations or companies to become more productive and innovative. Culturally competent workplaces are better equipped to tackle the challenges derived from the multicultural and global marketplace.

The importance of cultural competencies, particularly in the hospitality industry has prompted the researchers to conduct such study. The researchers sensed an urgency to explore the level of cultural competencies of dining staff so as to get important data and information that can widen their knowledge and at the same time, can be utilized by schools, particularly offering hospitality and restaurant management courses as their baseline data to improve the cultural competencies of their students, in which they can be used for the future practice of their chosen profession.

Statement of the Problem

This research study determined the level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents, particularly in terms of:

- 1.1 Age;
- 1.2 Sex; and
- 1.3 Educational background?

2. What is the level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff, particularly in terms of:

- 2.1 Cultural awareness;
- 2.2 Intercultural skills; and
- 2.2 Attitude towards cultural differences;

3. Is there a significant difference on the level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff when analyzed according to demographic profile?

Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was measured at 0.05 level of significance stating that:

Ho: There is no significant difference on the level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff when analyzed according to demographic profile.

Review of Related Literature

Presented in this section are the related literatures that are relevant in the present study taken from various sources such as books, magazines, newspapers, journal and the internet.

Cultural competence is an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, particularly in human resources aspect (Lillis and Tian 2010). This competence comprises four components: (a) awareness of one's own cultural worldview, (b) attitude

towards cultural differences, (c) knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and (d) cross-cultural skills. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures (Stevens, 2009).

Taylor (2006) stated that an integrated pattern of human behavior including thought, communication, ways of interacting, roles and relationships, and expected behaviors, beliefs, values, practices and customs as indicators of cultural competencies. In addition, Sea, Brown & Griffin (2004) stated that cultural competence may also be associated with diversity. Diversity must be prevalent and valued before one may be considered culturally competent.

According to Baum, Devine and Hearn (2007), people always talk about workforce diversity, such as age, religion, gender, etc. However, inadequate attention has been paid to the cultural diversity issues, especially those that come from labor migration. Tian (2010) added that as more and more minority groups enter the hospitality industry of the United States, managing cultural diversity is becoming a challenging issue in this industry, especially to human resource managers.

According to Wells (2008), developing a culturally competent workplace allows organizations to become more productive and innovative. It is important to understand that heterogeneous of the customers to generate ideas and strategies than a homogeneous customers while Taylor (2006) said that diverse work force encourages originality because each person has a unique perspective. Culturally competent workplaces are better equipped to tackle the challenges derived from the multicultural and global marketplace. These organizations have a competitive advantage over organizations that have not become more diversified workplaces.

Therefore, restaurant management should develop strategies that not only encompass diversity trainings, and recruitment efforts but a 'big picture' strategy that develops and embeds company knowledge of cultural issues into critical corporate policies, procedures and initiatives to become cultural competent (Taylor, 2006). The reality is that all companies and all leaders have a choice: they can embrace and benefit from diversity or be left behind in a very competitive, diverse marketplace. Ignoring diversity can reduce productivity and performance, but badly managed efforts run the equal risk of creating conflict and contributing just as much to sub par business performance. As a first step, it is helpful to define cultural competence and diversity (Branston, Ineson & Lyons, 2006).

Wells (2008) stated that the end result of cultural competence is improved understanding and development of the organizational environment, capabilities and services. Achieving cultural competence in the workplace demands that discrimination not be tolerated, and ethnocentric attitudes put to rest. Employees and managers must acknowledge that there are cultural, racial, and sexual differences, yet they do not imply inferiority or superiority. Moreover, business organizations should adopt trends through the collective knowledge from their employees with different experiences all over the world and different backgrounds. These new ideas and adaptability to cultural trends would draw in business from diverse groups as well (Day, 2007).

According to Wilborn (2007), diversity programs can also reduce problems within the workplace. This includes both litigation and bias. The programs can also reduce the amount of time it takes to settle an internal dispute. This is beneficial to the company because the reduction of these problems results in increased efficiency and effectiveness. As stated

previously, misunderstanding and inappropriate behavior is also reduced, between co-workers and with customers. In order to avoid misunderstanding in the workplace, employees all need to be trained, because employees who go through diversity-awareness training will be able to communicate effectively with employees from multi-cultures and respect multicultural beliefs needs of employees and customers.

In the hospitality industry diverse cultures infuse on a daily basis. There are several contrasts between employees or between a customer and an employee in the hospitality organization. Cultural competency management is necessary in order to understand the variability of cultures that initially appear inside the organization. It is important to recognize cross-cultural behavior if the company wants to have a competitive edge in the hospitality industry. Cultural competency involves both recognizing differences and accepting them. Acceptance is a respect of culture and appreciation of differences in culture, such as values, norms, styles, behavior (Rosinski, 2003).

Devine (2007) stated that an organization's success and competitiveness depends upon its ability to embrace cultural competency and realize its benefits. When organizations actively assess their handling of workplace diversity issues and develop and implement competency plans, there are multiple benefits for the organization. Davis and Donald (2007) stated that in essence, cultural competency creates cultural harmony for the organization. It has several ways of providing a competitive edge and increased productivity particularly in the hospitality business.

Furthermore, cultural competency in a workplace has a great socio-cultural aspect. First, cultural competency management enables employees to become more knowledgeable of diverse employees and customers of the

organization. It can help broaden their views and the way they approach problems in the future (Smith, 2007). Further, organizations employing a diverse workforce can supply a greater variety of solutions to problems, especially in customer service (Clarke, 2007). When people have different views and backgrounds, they often observe a problem from distinct perspectives. Diverse members can better understand and ultimately help those customers who are similar to them. From the customer's perspective, customers feel more comfortable dealing with an organization's employees that are like them (Hadson, 2008).

Devine (2007) stated that customers feel an identity with associates like them and are more willing to interact with organizational employees who are culturally knowledgeable. Thus, cultural competency improves customer service. Fullerton & Toosi (2011) posits that diverse members can provide more information, novel approaches, and richer perspectives on solving organizational and customer problems. Basically people become more innovative by enhancing creativity. Further, one of the characteristics of cultural is the individual and systematic response through respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each other (Davis & Donald, 2007).

Moreover, as observed by Gibelman (2000), cultural competence is being manifested through congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals and enable the system, agency, or professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural

situations. Gallegos (2002), competence in cross-cultural functioning means learning new patterns of behavior and effectively applying them in appropriate settings. Therefore, cultural competence is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services, thereby producing better outcomes (Hu et al, 2009).

Gallegos (2002) also provided one of the first conceptualizations of ethnic competence as a set of procedures and activities to be used in acquiring culturally relevant insights into the problems of minority clients and the means of applying such insights to the development of intervention strategies that are culturally appropriate for these clients (Stanley & Tung, 2003). This kind of sophisticated cultural competence does not come naturally to any social worker and requires a high level of professionalism and knowledge (Powell, 2006).

There are five essential elements that contribute to a system's ability to become more culturally competent (Wheelright, 2006). The system should (1) value diversity, (2) have the capacity for cultural self-assessment, (3) be conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact, (4) institutionalize cultural knowledge, and (5) develop programs and services that reflect an understanding of diversity between and within cultures (Cox & Blake, 2008). These five elements must be manifested in every level of the service delivery system. They should be reflected in attitudes, structures, policies, and services (National Association of Social Workers, 2000).

According to the study of Keller (2007), it is argued that there is a correlation between the level of cultural awareness in the hospitality industry

and the subsequent perception of product/service quality on the part of the customers or guests. Increased customer satisfaction is likely to ensue as a result of enhanced staff cultural awareness and subsequent development of culturally appropriate products and services. Ultimately in today's competitive market it is vital to understand the economic benefits that cultural awareness can bring to the hospitality industry.

In addition, Pearce (2005) stated that cultural awareness matters to all stakeholders in the hospitality industry, both the customers and guests themselves and the service providers such as hotels and restaurants. In many cases this is a subconscious requirement and it generally only becomes apparent when things go wrong. Coburn (2007) revealed that employees should be culturally aware in order to provide effective customer service that meets the needs, and exceeds the expectations of customers, while Crotts and Erdmann (2000) said that from a business perspective, the industry decision makers need to have an understanding of diverse cultures as they are responsible for making decisions or formulating policy affecting culturally diverse clients. Such decisions will ultimately affect income generation and competitiveness that will impact upon long-term survival.

Quappe (2002) stated that cultural awareness is the foundation of communication and it involves the ability of standing back from everyone and becoming aware of their cultural values, beliefs and perceptions. Cultural awareness becomes central when one has to interact with people from other cultures. Denton (2007) said that people see, interpret and evaluate things in a different ways. What is considered an appropriate behavior in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another one.

In addition, increasing cultural awareness means to see both the positive and negative aspects of cultural differences. Cultural diversity could be a source of problems, in particular when the organization needs people to think or act in a similar way. Diversity increases the level of complexity and confusion and makes agreement difficult to reach. On the other hand, cultural diversity becomes an advantage when the organization expands its solutions and its sense of identity, and begins to take different approaches to problem solving. Diversity in this case creates valuable new skills and behaviors.

Cultural diversity has an important place in the communicational problems in multinational or global business, particularly in the hospitality industry, thus a need for cross-cultural skills is essential. Informing incompletely about cultural structure and properties of an employee group causes wrong estimations in the period of performance evaluation, measurement and, in general, the decision making of management. In most hospitality industry businesses, difficulties are encountered in the performance evaluations of employees because of cultural needs of showing diversity (Akova, 2000).

Denton (2007) stated that cultural differences can be helpful in knowledge transfer. Although human beings come in different colors, shapes and forms, they do not seek to be different from others. Rather, people prefer to be with their own kind. Most people agree with that when two strangers come together, it is much easier for them to break ice if the two have some common backgrounds or experience. In the workplaces, obviously, it is much easier to communicate and transfer information and knowledge if some of the employees speak the same language, have the same cultural background, and think or behave in similar ways. Efficiency increases simply because that

misunderstanding can be greatly reduced by eliminating communication barriers from cultural differences.

Hartigan (2010) opined that hospitality management must ensure consistency in their communication and approach to diversity. They must stay consistent with what they teach their employees and the way they act within the organization when dealing with a diversity issue. With consistency comes clear communication and interaction. Clear and open communication between management and employees is necessary in order to communicate effectively the importance of diversity and be able to implement diversity programs in the workplace.

In addition, hospitality managers must lead and interact with a consistent and positive example so employees are encouraged to work in the same manner as the managers who are accepting of diversity. When employees respect their managers, they feel comfortable discussing important issues including diversity with them. They value their managers' views on diversity and will adopt those views if managers are consistent with their words and actions. When interacting and communicating about the importance of diversity, managers should also make sure there is no ambiguity in what is expected from the employees. This should be done in a positive and encouraging way. If there is no ambiguity about what managers expect out of the employees, then the employees will be able to focus all their effort on attaining the business establishment's goals (Branston, et al, 2006).

Effectively managing cultural differences through cultural interaction increases companies' competitiveness. The hospitality industry is an extremely competitive one. To survive in the competition, companies in this industry will have to control labor costs and increase customer count. In order

to achieve these goals, companies must learn how to motivate employees, decrease turnover, and attract more customers. Successful diversity management will definitely do help (Belfry & Schmidt, 2009).

According to Seymen (2006), in today's dynamic markets, companies have to serve various customer groups with different characteristics. Hence, cultural competence through constant interaction in the workforce can help companies to develop their capability of understanding customers' needs and keeping long-term business relations with them.

Since conflicts between people of different cultures often occur when appropriate behavior in one culture is deemed inappropriate in another (Cusher & Brislin, 2006) and people are unaware of these differences, researchers have begun to focus more on culture's influence on service interactions (Furrer et al, 2010).

International visitors on leisure and business trips often expect service providers to understand their values and their cultural beliefs by exhibiting a certain level of cross-cultural competence (Katriel, 2005). If a hospitality or travel firm does not perform to the expectations of the international guest, a cross-cultural conflict may occur. These conflicts are often caused by cultural norms and values that are dissimilar between guest and service worker and can lead to a dissatisfied customer, a frustrated service provider, and lost business (Cushner & Brislin, 2006). These service failures can be avoided because most hospitality and travel businesses have resources available to prevent cross-cultural misunderstandings.

Furthermore, studies show that intercultural sensitivity—an attitude that enables a worker or a customer to interact effectively with

people from foreign cultures (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2002) is an ability that can be measured and learned (Bhawuk, 2001; Cushner and Brislin, 2006). Research shows that heightened intercultural sensitivity achieved through subjective training can increase employee performance and result in more successful cross-cultural encounters (Sizoo et al, 2005).

This same study also finds that service workers with high intercultural sensitivity perform better on other measures, including service attentiveness, revenue contribution, interpersonal skills, job satisfaction, and personal satisfaction (Sizoo, Plank, Iskat, and Serrie, 2005).

Cross-cultural competence has generated confusing and contradictory definitions because it has been studied by a wide variety of academic approaches and professional fields. One author identified eleven different terms that have some equivalence to cross-cultural competency: cultural savvy, astuteness, appreciation, literacy or fluency, adaptability, terrain, expertise, competency, awareness, intelligence, and understanding (Bloom, 2009). The development of intercultural competence is mostly based on the individual's experiences while he or she is communicating with different cultures. When interacting with people from other cultures, the individual experiences certain obstacles that are caused by differences in cultural understanding between two people from different cultures. Such experiences may motivate the individual to acquire skills that can help him to communicate his point of view to an audience belonging to a different cultural ethnicity and background (Brown & Davis, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

This research study is anchored on the Campinha-Bacote Model (2009) which stated that cultural competence begins with the individual and continues at the family and community levels. It is the successful integration of one's own cultural background with that of people from different cultures to achieve mutual understanding and meet unique needs. This model fitted most to people working in the hospitality industry since they meet or cater people with different cultures and traditions.

Moreover, Campinha-Bacote's model of cultural competency is a process rather than an end result and has five interdependent constructs. Cultural awareness arises from gaining an appreciation for a client's culture and its effect on values, beliefs, practices, and problem-solving strategies. Health care professionals must examine their own cultural backgrounds and ask themselves and their clients questions related to values, beliefs, and practices. Gaining cultural knowledge means familiarizing oneself with the cultural variations in families, health beliefs, and socio-demographics among various cultural groups. Cultural knowledge also involves developing an understanding of and educational base about different cultures' health practices, food habits, and notions about obtaining assistance from health care professionals. It also involves knowing the physical, biological, physiological, and psychological differences among cultural groups. Knowledge about another ethnic and racial group includes assessments about the relevant norms, values, world views, and practicalities of everyday life.

Conceptual Framework

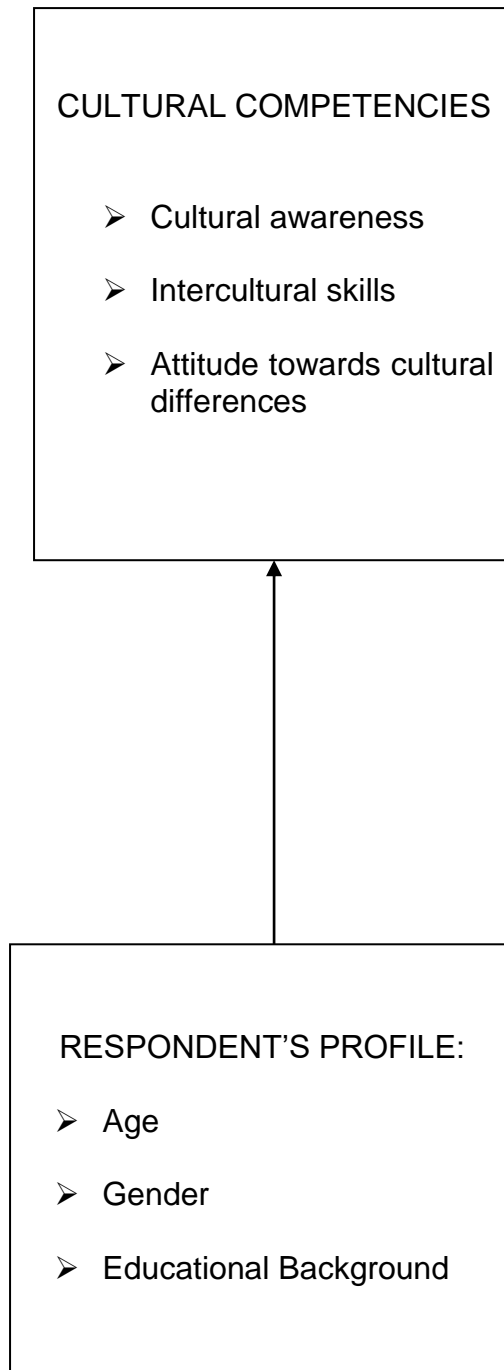


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Shows the Variables of the Study.

Significance of the Study

The valuable output of the study would benefit the following:

Themed Restaurant Managers. The result of the study will provide restaurant managers importance information and knowledge which can be used as their basis to enhance the cultural competency level of their dining staff through regular trainings which should include communication skills through learning of languages / dialects, the do's and don'ts from other cultures, etc.

Themed Restaurant Dining Staff. The outcome of this study would serve to increase the awareness and knowledge of theme restaurant dining staff in the importance of cultural competence since the work that they are in are catering to diversified cultures.

Faculty / Instructors. Data and information from this study can be utilized by faculty / instructors on how to improve the cultural competencies of their students by inserting the topic in the class discussions. Through this, students will be aware of the importance of cultural competencies, particularly in the hospitality industry.

HRM Students. The result of this study will provide HRM student important knowledge about the importance of cultural competencies and at the same time, increase their level of awareness on cultures of customers

Future Researchers. The result of this study would serve as the basis of the future researchers in pursuing a research study on the related topic such as cultural competency of hotel staff .

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as used in the study:

Cultural Competencies. It refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, particularly in the context of human resources, non-profit organizations, and government agencies whose employees work with persons from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds (nih.gov, 2014). In this study, it refers to the cultural skills of theme restaurant dining staff in dealing with customers with cultural diversity.

Themed Restaurant.. It refers to restaurants in which the concept of the restaurant takes priority over everything else, influencing the architecture, food, music, and overall 'feel' of the restaurant (Wright, 2012). The food usually takes a backseat to the presentation of the theme, and these restaurants attract customers solely on the premise of the theme itself. In this study, it refers to restaurants operating in Davao City with specific theme, catering to special occasions or events, to customers with diverse cultures.

Dining Staff. It refers to someone employed to provide service in a dining room (audioenglish.org, 2014). In this study, it refers to individuals who rendered their services in theme restaurants such as preparing, cooking and serving of foods to its customers.

Chapter 2

METHODS

Presented in this chapter are the discussions on the research design, the procedure in conducting and identifying the respondents, the instrument used and the statistical tools employed.

Research Design

The researchers decided to make use of descriptive survey method. According to Deci (2005), this method is concerned with perceptions, conditions, relationships that exists, practices that prevail, beliefs, processes that are going on, effects that are being felt, or trends that are developing and how variable varies with another that is, to have similar relative positions. Because of this, descriptive survey method was an appropriate and ideal research design that was used or employed by the researchers.

Research Subjects

The research subjects of this study were one hundred (100) dining staff of selected themed restaurants in Davao City. The research subjects were given a researcher-made survey questionnaires during the conduct of this study. The researchers used simple random sampling method. The distribution of survey questionnaire was conducted from September to October 2014.

Research Instrument

A researcher-made survey questionnaire was formulated by the researchers. The researcher-made survey questionnaire was divided into two

(2) parts. Part I consisted of the demographic profile of the respondents such as age, sex and educational background. The second part consisted of the ten (10) questions from each three (3) indicators of cultural competencies.

In evaluating the level of cultural competencies of the respondents, the following scale were used:

Scale	Parameter of Limits	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
5	4.20 - 5.00	Very High	If the respondent has a very high level of cultural competencies.
4	3.40 - 4.19	High	If the respondent has a high level of cultural competencies.
3	2.30 – 3.39	Moderate	If the respondent has a moderate level of cultural competencies.
2	1.80 – 2.29	Low	If the respondent has a low level of cultural competencies.
1	1.00 – 1.79	Very Low	If the respondent has a very low level of cultural competencies.

Data Gathering Procedure

The following steps will be followed by the researchers in the conduct of the study:

Asking Permission to Conduct the Study. The researchers asked permission, through a formal letter duly noted by its thesis adviser, to the Dean of College of Hospitality Management, to conduct the research study.

Distribution of Self-Made Survey Questionnaire. After obtaining permission from the College Dean, the researchers distributed the researcher-made survey questionnaires to the respondents.

Retrieval, Collation and Tabulation. After the respondents answered the researcher-made survey questionnaires, the researchers retrieved,

collated and tabulated all the data that was subjected to statistical analysis through the assistance of the school statistician. Then the results were analyzed and interpreted based on the statement of the problem of the study.

Statistical Treatment of the Data

The following statistical tools were used in the computation of data testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Frequency. This statistical tool was used by the researchers in determining the numbers of respondents according to their demographic profile.

Percentage. This statistical tool was used by the researchers in determining the ratio of respondents in percentage form according to their demographic profile.

Mean. This was used in determining the level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This was used in determining the significant difference on the level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff when analyzed according to age and educational background.

T-test. This was used in determining the significant difference on the level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff when analyzed according to sex.

Chapter 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presented in this section are the analyzed data and discussion. The presentation as arranged as follows: Demographic Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Age, Gender and Educational Attainment, Level of Cultural Competencies of Theme Restaurant Dining Staff and Significant Difference on the of Cultural Competencies of Theme Restaurant Dining Staff When Analyzed by Demographic Profile.

Profile of the Respondents

Presented in Table 1 is the profile of the respondents according to age and educational attainment. There were 100 total respondents in this study and in terms of age, majority of the respondents are between 18-23 years old with 31, which is equivalent to 31 %. 30-35 years old and 36 years old and above had 24 respondents each or 24 % while 24-29 years old had the least number of respondents with 21 or 21 %. Findings show that theme restaurant dining staff are young with most of them are between 18-23 years old.

In terms of sex, male and female respondents had equal number with 50 each or 50 %. In terms of educational attainment, majority of the respondents are college graduate with 51, which is equivalent to 51 % while college level respondents had 42 or 41 %. High school level respondents had the least number with 7 or 7 %. Findings show that most theme restaurant dining staff are college graduates.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents According to Age, Gender and Educational Attainment

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	18- 23 years old	31	31%
	24 - 29 years old	21	21%
	30 – 35 years old	24	24%
	36 years old and above	24	24%
	Total	100	100%
Gender	Male	50	50%
	Female	50	50%
	Total	100	100
Educational Attainment	High School Graduate	7	7%
	College Level	42	42%
	College Graduate	51	51%
	Total	100	100%

Level of Cultural Competencies of Themed Restaurant Dining Staff

Presented in Table 2 is the level of cultural competencies of themed restaurant dining staff. Findings revealed that respondents have high level of cultural competencies as reflected in the overall mean score of 4.23, which is described as high. Specifically, respondents have high level of cultural competencies in terms of cultural awareness (4.26), intercultural skills (4.20) and attitude towards cultural differences (4.23), all indicators being described as high. Findings can be attributed to the fact that most of the staff of themed restaurant dining staff are already aware of the cultural differences of customers based on their observation and experiences and at the same time, management of themed restaurants conduct regular skills training to be able to serve their customers well, particularly on how to deal with different cultures.

In terms of cultural awareness, the overall mean score is 4.26 which is described as very high, which means that themed restaurant dining staff manifested very high level of cultural competencies, particularly in terms of cultural awareness. The highest mean score is statement: *provides foods/menus based on cultural / beliefs of customers*, with a mean score of 4.50 (very high) and the lowest mean score is statement: *asks customers about their cultures and beliefs to acquire advance awareness*, with a mean score of 4.04 (high). Further, the median mean is statement: *conducts some researches about different cultures to raise the level of awareness*, with a mean score of 4.23 (very high).

Findings imply that the cultural awareness of theme restaurant dining staff is evident and manifested by providing to their customers foods / menus

Table 2. Level of Cultural Competencies of Theme Restaurant Dining Staff

Cultural Awareness	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Provides foods/menus based on cultural / beliefs of customers.	4.50	Very High
2. Observes intently dress codes, languages and mannerism to create self-awareness.	4.45	Very High
3. Regularly asks information about customers' culture (do's and don'ts).	4.30	Very High
4. Refrains from using different dialects / languages while communicating with customers.	4.30	Very High
5. Conducts some researches about different cultures to raise the level of awareness.	4.23	Very High
6. Gains valuable knowledge and experience performing tasks in a multicultural work environment.	4.20	Very High
7. Learns other cultures through research and constant readings.	4.13	High
8. Asks customers about their cultures and beliefs to acquire advance awareness.	4.04	High
9. Provides facilities or amenities that will suit the cultural practices of customers.	4.29	Very High
10. Promotes constant conversation with customers to gain important knowledge about their culture, traditions and beliefs.	4.29	Very High
Total Mean	4.26	Very High
Intercultural Skills		
1. Learns to speak dialect / language of customers.	4.39	Very High
2. Learns mannerism and other distinct traits of other people.	4.25	Very High
3. Learns to prepare/serve foods based on customer's culture and belief.	4.36	Very High
4. Conducts regular studies about other culture and tries to assimilate them.	4.14	High
5. Shares regularly customers about their culture, foods, traditions etc. to provide	4.19	High
6. Recognizes and respect people's diversity and individual differences.	4.20	Very High
7. Notices details that others might normally miss	4.00	High
8. Able to adjust to and fit into different situations	4.15	High
9. Maintains composure under close customer scrutiny and criticism.	4.16	High
10. Able to relate to and interact with people of differing personalities and backgrounds.	4.26	Very High
Total Mean	4.20	Very High
Attitude Towards Cultural Differences		
1. Refrains from arguing with customers due to language barriers.	4.33	Very High
2. Shows courtesy and respect towards other culture and belief.	4.40	
3. Learns to understand other culture and beliefs.	4.24	Very High
4. Provides patience when misunderstanding happens.	4.38	Very High
5. Learns to value the importance of cultures of other people.	4.28	Very High
6. Learns to appreciate people from other culture and belief.	4.29	Very High
7. Refrains from uttering words that are offensive from other belief or culture.	4.17	High
8. Refrains from showing mannerisms that are offensive from other belief or culture.	4.06	High
9. Shows flexibility and understanding towards other cultures and beliefs.	4.31	Very High
10. Promotes pleasant communication to ease cultural barriers.	4.00	High
Total Mean	4.23	Very High
Overall Mean	4.23	Very High

based on the cultural practices of their customers. This can be attributed to the fact that in any theme restaurants, customers have different sets of beliefs, culture and practices, thus the need to be sensitive to their needs, particularly foods that are culturally accepted should always be observed by the dining staff, thus achieving customer satisfaction.

Findings is supported by Keller (2007) who stated that there is a correlation between the level of cultural awareness in the hospitality industry and the subsequent perception of product/service quality on the part of the customers or guests. Increased customer satisfaction is likely to ensue as a result of enhanced staff cultural awareness and subsequent development of culturally appropriate products and services.

In terms of intercultural skills, the overall mean score is 4.20 which is described as very high, which means that themed restaurant dining staff also manifested very high level of cultural competencies, particularly in terms of intercultural skills. The highest mean score is statement: *learns to speak dialect / language of customers*, with a mean score of 4.39 (very high) and the lowest mean score is statement: *notices details that others might normally miss*, with a mean score of 4.00 (high). Further, the median mean is statement: *shares regularly customers about their culture, foods, traditions, etc* with a mean score of 4.19 (high).

Findings imply that the intercultural skills of theme restaurant dining staff is manifested and evident when they are able to learn to speak the local dialect or language of their customers. Learning and studying different dialects and languages are important aspect in the food industry since dining staff are dealing with different customers from different tribes or countries with different dialects and languages, thus by studying and learning, them

restaurant dining staff are promoting intercultural understanding and develop also their intercultural skills.

Findings is supported by Denton (2007) who stated that in workplaces, it is much easier to communicate and transfer information and knowledge if some of the employees speak the same language, have the same cultural background, and think or behave in similar ways. Efficiency increases simply because that misunderstanding can be greatly reduced by eliminating communication barriers from cultural differences.

In terms of attitude towards cultural differences, the overall mean score is 4.23 which is described as very high, which means that themed restaurant dining staff also manifested very high level of cultural competencies, particularly in terms of their attitudes towards cultural differences. The highest mean score is statement: *shows courtesy and respect towards other culture and belief*, with a mean score of 4.40 (very high) and the lowest mean score is statement: *promotes pleasant communication to ease cultural barriers*, with a mean score of 4.00 (high). Further, the median mean is statement: *refrains from uttering words that are offensive from other belief or culture*, with a mean score of 4.17 (high).

Findings imply that attitude is very important in promoting cultural harmony and understanding, and this can be manifested by showing proper courtesy and respect towards other culture and belief. Theme restaurant dining staff's attitude toward their customers is evident by showing respect to them. This can be attributed to the fact that respect towards different beliefs and cultures of customers is essential and it is always being inculcated by the management to their staff.

Findings is supported by Hartigan (2010) who opined that hospitality management must ensure consistency in their communication and approach to diversity of culture. They must stay consistent with what they teach their employees and the way they act within the organization when dealing with a diversity issue. With consistency comes clear communication and interaction. Clear and open communication between management and employees is necessary in order to communicate effectively the importance of diversity and be able to implement diversity programs in the workplace.

Significant Difference on the Level of Cultural Competence Of Theme Restaurant Dining Staff When Grouped According to Age

Table 3 shows the significant difference on the level of cultural competence of theme restaurant dining staff when grouped to age. Findings revealed that when analyzed by age, it indicated that there is no significant difference as reflected in the overall p-values in terms of age (.404). Findings imply that the level of cultural competence of themed restaurant dining staff are the same across all age brackets. Findings can be attributed to the fact that all themed restaurant dining staff are all adults, have wide experiences in dealing with different culture and acquired the same training skills provided by management of different themed restaurants in Davao City.

Significant Difference on the Level of Cultural Competence Of Themed Restaurant Dining Staff When Grouped According to Sex

Table 4 shows the significant difference on the level of cultural competence of theme restaurant dining staff when grouped according to sex. Findings revealed that when analyzed by sex, it indicated that there is no

significant difference as reflected in the overall p-values in terms of sex (.501). Findings imply that the level of cultural competence of them restaurant dining staff are the same on both sexes. Findings can be attributed to the fact that competency of every individuals, particularly those working in themed restaurants need the same competency level, whether they are male or female, to serve their customers well and be aware of their cultural differences.

Significant Difference on the Level of Cultural Competence Of Themed Restaurant Dining Staff When Grouped According to Educational Attainment

Table 5 shows the significant difference on the level of cultural competence of themed restaurant dining staff when grouped according to educational attainment. Finding shows that f-ratio is 3.366 while p-value is 0.039 which is lesser than 0.05 level of significance, thus there is a significant difference in the level of cultural competence of theme restaurant dining staff. Findings imply that the level of cultural competence of high school graduate, college level and college graduate are different. Findings can be attributed to the fact that the higher education or knowledge a person acquired, the higher his cultural competency level. Said findings is in conformance with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2014) which stated that the level of education has a significant impact on the level of knowledge and competencies of an individual.

Table 3

**Significant Difference on the Level of Cultural Competence
Of Theme Restaurant Dining Staff When Grouped
According to Age**

Profile	Indicators	f-ratio	p-value	Decision on Ho
Age	Cultural Awareness	.836	.477	Accept
	Intercultural Skills	1.147	.334	Accept
	Attitude Towards Cultural Differences	.734	.534	Accept
	Overall	.984	.404	Accept

Table 4

**Significant Difference on the Level of Cultural Competence
Of Themed Restaurant Dining Staff When Grouped
According to Sex**

Profile	Indicators	f-ratio	p-value	Decision on Ho
Sex	Cultural Awareness	1.860	0.423	Accept
	Intercultural Skills	1.421	0.764	Accept
	Attitude Towards Cultural Differences	0.437	0.461	Accept
	Overall	0.464	0.501	Accept

Table 5

**Significant Difference on the Level of Cultural Competence
Of Themed Restaurant Dining Staff When Grouped
According to Educational Attainment**

Profile	Indicators	f-ratio	p-value	Decision on Ho
Educational Attainment	Cultural Awareness	1.980	.144	Accept
	Intercultural Skills	1.785	.173	Accept
	Attitude Towards Cultural Differences	5.541	.005	Reject
	Overall	3.366	.039	Reject

Chapter 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains the summary of findings in the sub-problems set out in Chapter 1. Conclusions were derived from the findings. Recommendations are set forth on the findings and conclusions.

Summary of Findings

This study was conducted to determine the level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff.

The findings of the study are summarized as follows:

1. In terms of demographic profile of the respondents, particularly in terms of age, majority of the respondents are between 18-23 years old, with equal numbers of male and female respondents and majority of them are college graduate.

2. In terms of the level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff, findings revealed that there is a high level of cultural competencies as reflected in the overall mean score of 4.23 which has a descriptive equivalent of high. Specifically, cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff is evident through their cultural awareness, intercultural skills and attitudes towards cultural differences.

3. In terms of significant difference on the level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff when analyzed according to

profile, there is no significant difference when analyzed by age and sex, but there is when analyzed by educational attainment.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Most of the theme restaurant dining staff are young college graduates.
2. There is a high level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff and is manifested through cultural awareness, intercultural skills and attitude towards cultural differences.
3. Age and sex are non-factors in providing significant differences in the level of cultural competencies of theme restaurant dining staff, while educational attainment is a factor.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are given:

Restaurant Managers should enhance the cultural competencies of their staff through skills trainings, seminars and other plans / activities. This is to ensure that their staff are well equipped with the highest level of competencies because they are dealing with different people with different cultures and the restaurant industry is slowly creating a very competitive environment, thus cultural competency of staff are very essential to achieve total customer satisfaction which will result in customer loyalty and retention.

Theme Restaurant Dining Staff should develop and enhance their level of cultural competency without depending on the activities or plans

provided by the restaurant management. This can be done through constant reading of books about competency and joining trainings on achieving competency. By doing this, they will be equip with enough competency level that will help shape their career into success.

Faculty / Instructors should discuss extensively topics regarding cultural competencies, its importance and how to be highly competent in dealing with different cultures. Faculty / instructors should include in their discussion the different culture, tradition, languages and do's and don'ts so as to provide awareness to hospitality management students.

HRM Students should continuously enrich their knowledge about cultural competency by continuous reading and research. They can also join various seminars/trainings on cultural competency so that while they are still studying, they are already slowly developing their competency level which they can use for the future practice of their chosen profession.

Future Researchers should continuously conduct research and other studies should be done, particularly in other areas or aspect that were not discussed in this study such as cultural competencies of hotel staff in Davao City.

Questionnaire

Dear Sir / Ma'am:

Greetings!

We, the BSHRM graduating students of the University of Mindanao is currently conducting our undergraduate thesis entitled: **“Cultural Competencies of Theme Restaurant Dining Staff.”** In this connection, we are inviting you to participate in our data gathering. We will assure that your responses and all the data gathered will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Thank you very much for you time and support.

Very truly yours,

The Researchers

Kindly answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

I. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Name: (optional) _____

Age: 18 - 23 years old 30 – 35 years old
 24 – 29 years old 36 – above years old

Gender: Male Female

Educational Attainment:

High School Graduate
 College Level
 College Graduate

II. Direction: Kindly read the items properly and put a check (√) in the appropriate box that corresponds to your answer based on the scale below.

Scale	Descriptive	Interpretation Equivalent
5	Very High	This indicates that the competency embodied in the statement is highly evident.
4	High	This indicates that the competency embodied in the statement is evident.
3	Moderate	This indicates that the competency embodied in the statement is somewhat evident.
2	Low	This indicates that the competency embodied in the statement is slightly evident.
1	Very Low	This indicates that the competency embodied in the statement is not evident at all.

Cultural Awareness	5	4	3	2	1
1. Provides foods/menus based on cultural / beliefs of customers.					
2. Observes intently dress codes, languages and mannerism to create self-awareness.					
3. Regularly asks information about customers' culture (do's and don'ts).					
4. Refrains from using different dialects / languages while communicating with customers.					
5. Conducts some researches about different cultures to raise the level of awareness.					
6. Gains valuable knowledge and experience performing tasks in a multicultural work environment.					
7. Learns other cultures through research and constant readings.					
8. Asks customers about their cultures and beliefs to acquire advance awareness.					
9. Provides facilities or amenities that will suit the cultural practices of customers.					
10. Promotes constant conversation with customers to gain important knowledge about their culture, traditions and beliefs.					
Intercultural Skills	5	4	3	2	1
1. Learns to speak dialect / language of customers.					
2. Learns mannerism and other distinct traits of other					

people.					
3. Learns to prepare/serve foods based on customer's culture and belief.					
4. Conducts regular studies about other culture and tries to assimilate them.					
5. Shares regularly customers about their culture, foods, traditions etc. to provide					
6. Recognizes and respect people's diversity and individual differences.					
7. Notices details that others might normally miss					
8. Able to adjust to and fit into different situations					
9. Maintains composure under close customer scrutiny and criticism.					
10. Able to relate to and interact with people of differing personalities and backgrounds.					
Attitude Towards Cultural Differences	5	4	3	2	1
1. Refrains from arguing with customers due to language barriers.					
2. Shows courtesy and respect towards other culture and belief.					
3. Learns to understand other culture and beliefs.					
4. Provides patience when misunderstanding happens.					
5. Learns to value the importance of cultures of other people.					
6. Learns to appreciate people from other culture and belief.					
7. Refrains from uttering words that are offensive from other belief or culture.					
8. Refrains from showing mannerisms that are offensive from other belief or culture.					
9. Shows flexibility and understanding towards other cultures and beliefs.					
10. Promotes pleasant communication to ease cultural barriers.					