

Communication and working practices  
between Saudi hotel employees and non-  
Saudi managers  
A Case Study of the Al Hokair hotel group

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# Background information

- ▶ Saudi Arabia – mostly reliant on the oil industry  
Alternative sources of income – hospitality industry
  - ▶ Highly dependent on immigrant workers in the hospitality industry (Sadi and Henderson, 2005)
  - ▶ **Saudisation** – replacing the expatriate workers with Saudi nationals (Aldosari, 2013)
  - ▶ Hospitality in Saudi Arabia – growing industry
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# Rationale



- ▶ “Transfer of information” (Aldosari, 2013)
- ▶ Three of the five factors discovered to influence Saudis’ commitment level to their hotel careers were “the way that foreign managers treat Saudis working in the industry”, “the level of support and guidance received from managers” and “the degree of freedom and independence at work” (Assiri, 2016).
- ▶ Gap in research regarding the workplace communication between Saudi nationals and their managers (Assiri, 2016; Aldosari, 2013; Sadi and Henderson, 2005)

# Aims and objectives

- ▶ The aim of this paper is to investigate the communication and working practices of Saudi employees working with non-Saudi managers within the Al Hokair Hotel Group.

# Objectives

1. To assess cultural dimensions (differences) from the perspective of Saudi hotel employees working with non-Saudi managers;
  2. To investigate communication barriers in the workplace between Saudi employees and non-Saudi managers;
  3. To identify the key communication issues that need to be addressed in the working relationships and managerial practices between Saudi hotel employees and non-Saudi managers.
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# Key Literature and models

- ▶ 2.2.1 G. Hofstede's Cultural dimensions (1980)
  - ▶ 2.2.2 E. Hall High-context and Low-Context cultures (1976)
  
  - ▶ 2.3.1 Cultural Consideration within the Contemporary Management Approaches
  - ▶ 2.3.2 Saudisation within the hospitality industry
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# Company background



- ▶ Al Hokair Hotel Group:
  - “Arabian Hospitality with a Global Focus”
  - 34 hotels – various brands (4\* and 5\*)
  - 4100 employees of different nationalities
  - Hospitality School as part of the big brand
  - **Abdul Mohsen Al Hokair High Institute For Hospitality**



# Methodology

- ▶ Qualitative
  - ▶ Semi-structured interviews
  - ▶ Purposive sampling – nationality, gender, age, English level, Working experience and Education
  - ▶ 10 interviews based on previous studies in the intercultural communication field
  - ▶ (Trofimova, 2016; Kenesei and Stier, 2016)
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# Limitations & Challenges

- ▶ Narrow and specific sample
  - ▶ Relevance and accuracy of answers
  - ▶ Subjectivity of the interviewer and interviewees
  - ▶ Different nationality and religion
  - ▶ Privacy, time constraints, internal policies (Alquasayer, 2016)
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# Conclusion & Recommendation

- ▶ Specifics of intercultural communication, between Saudi employees and non Saudi managers
- ▶ Transferability
- ▶ Specific intercultural training for the managers
  
- ▶ Mixed methods research



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# Questions and Suggestions

