

Labouring to Learn: Employment Experience and Cross-cultural Adjustment of Migrant Workers

YOO In Young
Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

Abstract

International labour mobility has become more evident due to globalisation. This study helps to identify the relationships between perceived employment experience and the cross-cultural adjustment of migrant workers, especially in the hospitality sector. To facilitate examination two cities with a high portion of foreign workers and hotel workers in the Asia Pacific region were selected. These cities are Darwin in the Northern Territory, Australia and Beppu in Oita Prefecture, Japan. Both cities are comparable in terms of demographic size and both their economies largely depended on tourists.

The central question for this study is whether perceived employment experience would result in cross-cultural adjustment. This study examines (i) whether the employment experience of migrant workers can be a predictor of the workers' cross-cultural adjustment in a new cultural environment? (ii) If employment experience could predict the workers' cross-cultural adjustment, and, would this relationship be similar in the Darwin and Beppu contexts; and (iii) Would type of visa influence employment experience as well as cross-cultural adjustment? If so, which type of visa for migrants would have less cross-cultural adjustment and negative impact on workers? And how does the outcome like in Darwin and Beppu? Each of these questions was used to hypothesise concepts for further analysis.

The findings of the study have established that cross-cultural adjustment varies according to the employment experience of migrant workers. When migrant workers perceive job characteristic as poor, cross-cultural adjustment is negatively affected. The model is explained better with migrant workers in Darwin than Beppu. Temporary migrant visa holders tend to have less cross-cultural adjustment than long-term visa holders as reflected in Darwin and Beppu. However, the results of employment experience between visa category was dissimilar between the destinations. The study's findings help to enhance migration studies, especially for future job design and adequate policy-making designed to raise migrant workers' quality of work. The consequence of such change is expected to improve work productivity and to enhance the quality of life for migrant workers.

Key words: Employment experience, Cross-cultural adjustment, Migrant workers, Hospitality industry, Temporary migrants