

**WORK CONDITIONS, WORK-FAMILY
CONFLICT, EMOTIONAL DISSONANCE,
EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION AMONG
OPERATIONAL EMPLOYEES IN
THE SABAH HOTEL INDUSTRY**

KATHLEEN ELANIE BT JAMES BAGAH



UMS

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THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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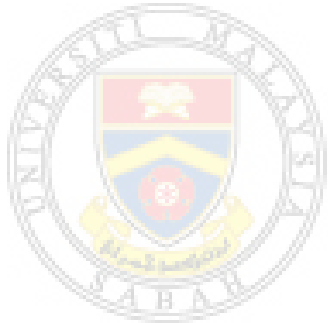
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16 January 2020



KATHLEEN ELANIE BT JAMES BAGAH

MB1521006T



UMS
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CERTIFICATION

NAME : **KATHLEEN ELANIE BT JAMES BAGAH**

MATRIC NO. : **MB1521006T**

TITLE : **WORK CONDITIONS AND EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION: A STUDY OF HOTEL INDUSTRY IN SABAH**

DEGREE : **MASTER OF BUSINESS**

FIELD : **MANAGEMENT**

VIVA VOCE DATE : **16 JANUARY 2020**



CERTIFIED BY:

Signature

- 1. MAIN SUPERVISOR**
Assoc. Prof Dr. Stephen Laison Sondoh Jr.

A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'S. L. Sondoh Jr.'.

- 2. CO-SUPERVISOR**
Dr. Sorayah bt Nasip

A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'S. Sorayah bt Nasip'.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between work conditions and emotional exhaustion among non-managerial and operational hotels employees in Sabah. In relation to this, the study utilizes Conservation of Resources Theory as the theoretical foundation to further enhance the understanding towards the variable. Alongside, the basic tenet and principles of the theory has highlighted the medium of emotional dissonance and work-family conflict in between work conditions and emotional exhaustion. As such, besides the main attention on both work conditions and emotional dissonance, a proposition of mediation effect by emotional dissonance and work-family conflict was made. For this study, a total of 171 hotel employees have been utilized through purposive sampling technique and Partial Least Square 3.0 – Structural Equation Modeling was applied to evaluate the model of the study. The results showed existence of emotional dissonance, work-family conflict, and emotional exhaustion among hotel employees. Meanwhile, it is also found that there is a direct effect between work condition (role ambiguity, time pressure, working hours, pay, supervisor’s support, and work overload), emotional dissonance, work-family conflict, and emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, the mediation effect of emotional dissonance and work-family conflict found to have mediated few of the work condition towards the respective correlations. There are two contributions of this study, which are theoretical and managerial. The limitations, implications and future study were also discussed in the study.

ABSTRAK

KEADAAN KERJA, KONFLIK KERJA-KELUARGA, PERCANGGAHAN EMOSI, KELELAHAN EMOSI DALAM KALANGAN PEKERJA OPERASIONAL DALAM INDUSTRI PERHOTELAN DI SABAH

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara keadaan kerja dan kelelahan emosi di kalangan pekerja hotel bukan pengurusan dan operasional dalam di Sabah. Sehubungan dengan ini, kajian ini menggunakan Teori Konservasi Sumber sebagai asas teoretis untuk meningkatkan lagi pemahaman terhadap pembolehubah. Di samping itu, prinsip asas dan prinsip teori telah menekankan pertikaian emosi dan konflik keluarga kerja di antara keadaan kerja dan kelelahan emosi. Oleh itu, selain perhatian utama terhadap kedua-dua keadaan kerja dan kelelahan emosi, cadangan pengantaraan oleh percanggahan emosi dan konflik keluarga-kerja telah dibuat. Untuk kajian ini, seramai 171 pekerja hotel telah digunakan melalui teknik sampling purposive dan Partial Least Square 3.0 – Structural Equation Modelling digunakan untuk menilai model kajian. Hasil menunjukkan adanya kekacauan emosi, konflik kerja keluarga, dan kelelahan emosi di kalangan pekerja hotel. Sementara itu, terdapat juga kesan langsung antara keadaan kerja (kekaburan peranan, tekanan masa, waktu kerja, gaji, sokongan penyelia, dan beban kerja), percanggahan emosi, konflik kerja-keluarga, dan kelelahan emosi. Selain itu, kesan pengantaraan percanggahan emosi dan konflik keluarga kerja didapati telah mengantarkan beberapa keadaan kerja ke arah hubungan masing-masing. Terdapat dua sumbangan kajian ini, iaitu teori dan pengurusan. Pembatasan, implikasi dan kajian masa depan juga dibincangkan dalam kajian ini.

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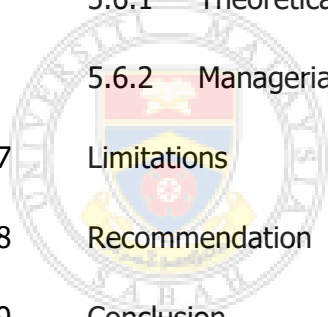
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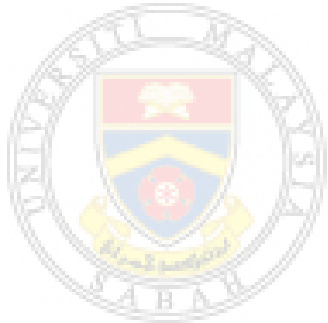
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

There are nine sections in this chapter. Section 1.2 explains on the background of the study and rationale of the study is in section 1.3. Problem statement and research objectives are determined in section 1.4 and 1.5, respectively. Consequently, research questions are explained in section 1.6, whereas significance of the study on section 1.7. Meanwhile, the scope of study is briefed in section 1.8. Likewise, the operational definitions of key terms are clarified in section 1.9. Finally, section 1.10 briefly describes the organization of chapters for this study while short summary is presented in the last section of this chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

Service sector is by far the most important sector in industrialized economies (Breitenfellner, 2003). Its essentiality in global economy is understood yet the services may be homogenous or extremely heterogeneous; in which are difficult to define, differentiate, and categorize. Regardless of its unique and complex attribute, it is said that no economy can survive without a service sector (Kon, 1997).

And so, what is service? In generality, services are often considered to include everything except primary and manufacturing activities. Some of the definitions are; intangible and labour intensive (Moeller, 2010) and consumed as its produced (Pearce, 1989). Hence, it can be said that service itself, is broad in nature such that anyone can be classified as service workers when they are handling the machinery in the production of goods and service (secondary sources) or even during the extraction

process of primary sources (sand, water, mineral etc.). Like so, it is difficult to define 'service' since it also exist in both primary and secondary sources. One of the researchers has mentioned that, 'service' acts as glue that transforms primary sources into secondary sources; sand is extracted for manufacturer to further produce their goods. In this sense, the services which are easily identified would be extraction of primary source and transformation process performed by labourers. Due to this justification, the definition of service has been extended by Hill (1977) as a "change in the condition of an economic unit, which results from the activity of another economic unit, which is brought about as the result of the activity of some other economic unit, with the prior agreement of the former person or economic unit". Simply put, service is an interaction made between the recipient and the producer.

As technology advances, so does the respective industries, and service is not an exception. In the olden days, service is used to be one of the industries that rely heavily on human labour. But now, it is speculated that machines and robots may replace up to 800 million workers by 2030 (*Robots 'to replace up to 20 million factory jobs*, 2019). One of the reasons for this is the persistent increment of labor costs per year (Yi, 2018). Alongside with the technological trend, hotel industry, too, has taken up the challenge on utilizing robots; Henn-na Hotel in Nagasaki. The hotel is opened since 2015 and the first in the world to use robots as a service staff (Rajesh, 2015). This is worrying as hospitality industry; restaurant and accommodation sector has occupied most of the employment share (*Facts & Figures - Hospitality industry contributions to EU economy society*, 2018). Despite this, a survey by Travelzoo (2016) has found that most of its travelers are equally indecisive between fully-robotize hotels and integrated hotels (combination of both human labour and robots). This shows rather good news, in an optimistic view.

1.2.1 Overview and Issues of Global Hotel Industry

An issue in Travel Weekly Group (2019) in hospitality states that terrorism is constantly on the news which pulls the interest of travelling outside of country with fear of sudden attacks. While youth tourism, that is currently a trend, exploring the world

might be restricted due to the disapproval from concerned parents. Next, cyber-threat may be placing hotels and other types of accommodations to data breach. Travel companies are continuously opening new doors to third-party vendors and welcoming all sorts of fraudulent risks such as hacking, pharming, spoofing, and ransomware. The originator of such cyber-attacks could use any of these ways to harm companies by setting a bad reputation. Not just these, though globalization has brought innumerable benefits to the travel market, interdependence also has its downsides. Pandemics such as the Zika virus can also have regional and global impact on travel behavior. Surprisingly, food safety is seen as one of the challenges faced by travel and tourism. One of the recent findings by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), rise in organic farming might not be safe as they ought to be. Demand for locally-sourced than processed foods are on the rise, but farmers do not always address the safety issues such as microbial hazard which occasionally associated with foodborne illness. Basically, all of these challenges faced in travel and tourism industry can affect the hotel industry.

Besides these, concern for the employee retention is beginning to put management on cold feet as turnover has reportedly to rise over the past five years from 2010 (Statistics, 2016). Meanwhile in China, Hotels is recorded the highest turnover rate among other industry with 43.4% followed by Internet (36%), according to (AON Hewitt, 2016). These data support the findings of Birdir (2002) in which the researcher states that turnover rate in hotel industry is relatively high and occurred almost every establishments worldwide. This situation alone is risky and could potentially jeopardize the sustainability of hotel along with the industry. As reported by Travel Weekly Group (2019) high turnover of the industry increases the operating expenses, lowering customers' experience, and guest loyalty. Similarly, Singh, Kumar, Singh, Das and Balaji (2017) have remarked on the impact of issues in retention, leading to low satisfaction among customers and low rate of guest arrival. These external and internal challenges of hospitality industry have been overlooked, if not, taken lightly on its impact towards the economy, business owners, and employees since the existence of such issue remains critical, and somehow, left with no solution.

One of the major concerns to the cause of turnover intention is job characteristics that are projected among hotel employees (O'Fallon and Rutherford, 2010). As a growing industry, companies are pressuring employees to maintain their credibility in meeting customers' expectations. Therefore, exposing their employees to long working hours (Zhao, Mattila and Ngan, 2014), low pay (Ogbonna and Harris, 2002), lack of career advancement and discrimination (Horner and Swarbrooke, 2004). Besides these, Branham (2005) suggests that there are seven main reasons why employees leave a company; (1) employees feel the job or workplace is not what they expected; (2) there is a mismatch between the job and person; (3) there is too little coaching and feedback; (4) there are too few growth and advancement opportunities; (5) employees feel devalued and unrecognized; (6) employees feel stress from overwork and have a work-life imbalance; (7) there is a loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders. Undeniably, these poor working conditions are contributing to frustration, tension, and negative affect which led to emotional and cognitive dissonance (Burke, Schmidt, Wagner, Hoffman and Hanlon, 2017), then contributing to turnover intention among employees (Burke, 2003; Sharma, Verma, Verma and Malhotra, 2010; Tsaur and Tang, 2012).

Generally, work conditions can be identified as one of the predictors of stress in the organization (Lo and Lamm, 2005). It has also been found to be a source of motivation among employees such as higher salary and social support (Law, Baptiste, and Millis, 1995). Not just these, working environments are often associated with productivity, whereas negative environments would have negative impact on employees' productivity and likewise (Elywood, 1999). Besides organizational effect, work conditions lead to different impact towards an individual's lifestyle. For instance, bad working conditions such as work overload would increase the level of psychological strain and this often contributes to unhealthy habits, i.e. drug usage, excessive smoking, and over-eating to cope with high level of stress from high job demand.

Aside from that, employees who often experience double responsibilities from family and work commitment feel an incompatible role pressure or demand (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Generally, the conflicting demand from both aspects is found to be related with job stress and turnover intention (Sidin, Sondoh and Balanting, 2015).

This happens due to the negative spillover from work towards family and when employees fail to balance the two, they end up sacrificing one for the other. Work environment such as social support does affect work-family conflict, the motivation might help to reduce the stress level experienced by employees. However, job demand such as work overload can elevate the stress level as employees would spend more time finishing their task thus unable to commit with family responsibilities.

1.2.1.1 Overview and Issues of Hotel Industry in Malaysia

Malaysia is a country that consists of 13 state; Selangor, Pahang, Johor, Kedah, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Terengganu, Perlis, Kelantan, Penang, Sabah and Sarawak. Basically, Malaysia comprises of several accommodation services such as resort hotels, budget hotel, apartment hotels, chalet and rest houses, guest houses, hostels, also bed and breakfast. Table 1.1 shows that in 2016, the top five states with the highest hotel guests by state are, Pahang with a total of 10,300,117 including both domestic and foreigner guests, Johor and Penang with 7,013,784 and 6,379,185 respectively and lastly, Sabah with 6,173,000 which comprise of 4,136,390 domestic guests and 2,036,610 foreigner guests. Hospitality and tourism are among of the most promising sources of GDP due to its contribution in 2013, with a total of RM60.6 billion (Tourism Malaysia, 2016) and approximately 25.7 million international in the same year (Lahap, Ramli, Said, Radzi, and Zain, 2016). Not surprisingly, Malaysia is included in top ten tourist destination (UNWTO, 2012; Boten, Cenus, Kalughin, Lupusor, and Panainte, 2014) as the country is rich with unique flora and fauna that is suitable for sustainable tourism (Mazumder, Ahmed, and Al-Amin, 2009). With Regards to this, the development of hotels is rapidly increasing from 1669 hotels in 1996 to 2475 hotels in 2008. It is also expected that hospitality industry will achieve RM113.3 billion by 2023 (Syaqirah and Faizurrahman, 2014) and 70.7 million tourist with USD41.8 billion by 2030 (Yeoman, 2010).

Through recent collaboration between Tourism Malaysia and Air Asia Sdn bhd, the industry is able to promote tourism in Malaysia with brand advertising, promotional activities and campaigns. In a statement by Spencer Lee, AirAsia head of commercial,

the partnership is aimed to generate awareness and publicity on Malaysia as a preferred leisure and business destination, at the same time, boosting the country's tourist arrivals and receipts. He also adds that the collaboration would focus on developing promotional activities to promote Malaysia to all countries such as China, Japan, Korea, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Australia, and New Zealand (Yoga, 2017). Meanwhile, recent press release by Team NST (2017) the government proposes to allocate budget as much as RM2 billion in 2018 as tourism fund to provide loans for operators. As stated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, "of the amount, RM1 billion will be allocated for Tourism Infrastructure Development Fund as soft loans". He denotes that RM500 million is allocated for development and promotion activities through improved tourism facilities, homestay and eco-tourism programmes. In line with national objective, the implementation of e-visa entry for China and India has allowed an easier and convenient entry into Malaysia.

Table 1.1: Hotel Guests by State

State	Domestic	Foreigner	Total
Selangor	2,440,004	1,624,265	4,604,269
Pahang	7,930,172	2,369,945	10,300,117
Johor	4,431,801	2,581,983	7,013,784
Kedah	2,474,404	1,281,471	3,755,875
Melaka	2,840,620	1,804,544	4,645,164
Negeri Sembilan	1,902,098	459,966	2,362,064
Terengganu	1,516,335	192,530	1,708,865
Perlis	170,720	5,946	176,666
Kelantan	1,139,021	57,664	1,196,685
Penang	3,467,402	2,911,783	6,379,185
Sabah	4,136,390	2,036,610	6,173,000
Sarawak	4,069,647	599,985	4,669,632

Source: Adapted and modified from Tourism Malaysia (2016)