THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER MANAGEMENT, CAREER COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION IN FOUR-AND-FIVE STAR HOTELS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Increasingly, hospitality has become one of the successful industry due to its remarkable contribution to the global economy. As part of the hospitality industry, the hotel sector has been recognised as a potential prospect to rapidly growth. Nevertheless, hotels faced with the challenges in managing its human resources in order to survive in increasing competitive business environment. It has been widely perceived that jobs in hotel sector offered quite low salary, long working hour thus to retain motivated, committed and high performing employees are challenging. The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between career management, career commitment and employee job satisfaction in four-and-five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This study chose a survey design with questionnaires and 300 sets of questionnaires were distributed to employees and the data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The study managed to collect 130 returned questionnaires and data were analyzed and results indicated that there is significant relationship between career management and career commitment, positive relationship between career commitment and job satisfaction, significant and positive relationship between career management and job satisfaction and career commitment partially mediate the relationship between career management and job satisfaction. The implications of the study will be useful for practitioners, academicians and policy makers. Finally, the limitations of the study were addressed and recommendations for future studies are also provided.

KEYWORDS: career management, career commitment, job satisfaction, hotel, Malaysia
INTRODUCTION

In recent years, organisations are more interested to retain employees who can contribute for organisational success. Hospitality industry in Malaysia has been recognised as a potential prospect in the growth of the service industry (Abdullah, Karim, Patah, Jusoff, Nair & Zahari, 2009) and there is a need for more professional and skilled employees to serve in this industry. The most important part that stands behind the necessary skills and abilities to do the job is the happiness and employees job satisfaction at the workplace. However, many organisations in hospitality industry face difficulty in maintaining employees job satisfaction nowadays (Kilic & Selvi, 2009).

Employee job satisfaction is a difficult task for organisation, however the importance of employee satisfaction had been well supported in hospitality literature (Cetin, Akova & Kaya, 2014). A person who engaged in work that related to an individual job or profession is likely to experience job satisfaction. Job satisfaction has been a part of the nature that comes from a person’s sense of meaning at workplace. The effort of human resource function in an organisation to provide the proper career management will support career commitment initiatives among employees and thus enhance job satisfaction. It has been found that organisation that invest in career management are more likely to increase employees’ job satisfaction (Lee, 2000) yet career management in hospitality sector still received lack of attention in Malaysia.

On the other hand, the employees’ attitude and behaviour are not the only issues in hospitality industry. Career commitment and job satisfaction also become the main interest in the industry. It is because the employees’ attitude, motivation and quality of interpersonal skills with customers are important to satisfy customers. Hospitality industry facing the problem of shortage skilled and motivated employees due to the reason that the people who graduated from tourism faculty will end up to quit the job after three to five years perform duties in the industry (Chuang, Goh, Stout & Dellman, 2007).

Attracting and retaining qualified talent are challenging for the organisation in hospitality sector. Despite the fact that many educational institutions produce thousands of graduates that study in hospitality every year, only a few of them that are willing to pursue career in tourism industry (Gursoy, Uysal, Sirakaya, Ekinci & Baloglu, 2015). Therefore, career management is an effective way of retaining and developing employees.

According to Kong, Cheung and Zhang (2010), career development and career management have become the main subject and attention discussed by researcher in the field of hospitality industry. The combination of career management, career commitment and job satisfaction are still scarce and not much study has been done, particularly in hotel setting in Malaysia. Thus, this study would like to explore the relationship of these variables. The findings of this study will add to the current body of knowledge and will be valuable information to the hotel practitioners as well as academicians.

The relationship between career management and career commitment

The ability of management to plan and manage the progression of employee career management may bring to enhanced positive employee outcomes, especially job satisfaction and career commitment in organisations. Darvish, Zare, and Nekoie (2011) suggested in their finding that the main elements like the nature of the job, emotional commitment, work environment, job security, coworkers, education, job type, salary and the premium and job independence have their influences on burnout and considered as crucial for the management to maintain and monitor the progress in order to enhance employee’s job satisfaction and career commitment.

The organisation plays significant value and functioning as a supportive assistant and innovator of the human assets in career management systems (Baruch, 2006). Career management becomes a crucial topic for organisation because it is connected with someone’s job and affects the employee outcomes. According to Ready and Conger (2007), career management is commonly seen as talent management where management observe the implementation of career programmes under systematic review in order to make it easier for employees to adapt with the rapid organisational changes such as unstable working environment, job instability and insecurity, flexible work practice and multiskilling to achieve higher career progression in organisations.

A study conducted by Chang (1999) also revealed that training and career opportunities provided by organisation can help the employee to develop their skills and abilities which affect employees’ psychological states, and as a result they become more committed to organisation and have been proven to reduce labour turnover. Besides, employees will show their appreciations and fulfil their obligations in form of loyalty and commitment when their organisation offers those developmental opportunities, internal promotion, and support.

Uysal et al. (2015) found that there was a positive and significant relationship between career management and career commitment and the result of the study of career management in hospitality in the case of four-and-five star at Istanbul is similar with the study that conducted by Ballout (2009). Kilic and Ozturk (2009) also investigated the relationship between career management system in five-star hotels and organisational commitment and the results found that career management, career planning and career improvement variables affect organisational commitment. Therefore, based on the above argument, it leads to the first hypothesis:

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H1: There is a positive relationship between career management and career commitment.

The relationship between career commitment and job satisfaction

Commitment is interrelated to satisfaction. Many studies supported the three-factor theory suggesting that career commitment should include fondness for the job itself (affective commitment), evaluation of the cost of changing the job (continuance commitment), and concerns about the violation of social regulations caused by job change (normative commitment).

As the current job climate is dynamic and continuously changing over time, “commitment to an internally defined career may become an important source of occupational meaning and continuity as organisations become more fluid and less able to guarantee employment security” (Colarelli & Bishop 1990: pg. 159). Andre and Ted (2011) also noted that employee that is committed, likes with his or her position in the organisation is likely to show a high level of career commitment. Besides, another study on convention services found that employees with higher titles show a high level of commitment compared with the lower titles (Montgomery & Rutherford, 1994).

A study by Duffy, Dik and Steger (2011) had provided evidence for the positive relationship between career commitment and job satisfaction, even when researchers control covariates such as gender, age, race etc. Career commitment was considered as an important independent variable for job satisfaction because individuals with extremely low career commitment would rarely spend much energy or set high goals at work, and thus would get less return from their occupations, which would significantly exacerbate their psychological dissatisfaction.

Another findings of study conducted by Amy and Chockalingam (2005) found that career commitment could significantly predict job satisfaction and indicated that career commitment was crucial factor in job satisfaction and demonstrate that these factors are related to each other. Besides, Uysal et al. (2015) also found the positive relationship between career commitment and career satisfaction and the result is similar with the relationship suggested by Kong, Cheung and Song (2012). Therefore, based on the above argument, it leads to the second hypothesis:

H2: There is a positive relationship between career commitment and job satisfaction.

The relationship between career management and job satisfaction

The outcomes of the surveys of perceptions of 367 Research and Development (R&D) personnel from Hsinchu Science-Based Industrial Park in North Taiwan in year 2004, perceptions of 505 employees of a leading international Singaporean hotel in Singapore in year 2006 and perceptions of 140 employees of Sabah Local Authority in Malaysia in year 2013 indicated that the readiness of management to appropriately plan and manage career programmes had adequately assisted employees to develop their career paths. As a result, it could lead to enhance job satisfaction in these organisations (Chen, Chang & Yeh, 2004; Ismail, Madrah, Aminudin & Ismail, 2013; Puah & Ananthram, 2006).

For hotels, one of the ways to enhance the career satisfaction of their employees is by engaging in effective career management activities. It has been found that specific career management activities, such as job rotation schemes, are positively related to career satisfaction. Other career management practices, such as career sponsorship, training, and career development programs, also contribute positively to career satisfaction (Ng, Eby, Sorensen & Feldman, 2005). Organisations try to enhance employee career satisfaction by providing effective career support, such as training, performance appraisal, and challenging jobs. This engenders a perception among employees of being supported by the organisation, which leads to better career satisfaction and retention intention (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz & Lima 2004; Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009; Baruch & Rostenstein, 1992).

The implementation of career management in order to develop employees’ careers has affected job satisfaction. The findings of the relationship between career program characteristics and job satisfaction in a city based local authority by Ismail et.al (2011) shows that effective career management practice act as an essential motivating factor that enhance job satisfaction in the organisation. The result also supported the extended career management research by Kong et al. (2012) where the findings show the positive relationship between career management and career satisfaction. Therefore, based on the above argument, it leads to the third hypothesis:

H3: There is a positive relationship between career management and job satisfaction.
METHODOLOGY

The research paradigm for this study was based on quantitative methods with the implementation of structured questionnaires as the research instrument to gather primary data. The quantitative approach was chosen as the most suitable approach for this study because it would be easier for the researcher to make comparisons and statistical aggregation by surveying a greater number of people using a rigid predetermined set of variables. The decision to use the quantitative method also guided by previous research that was done by a number of researchers in career management such as Kong et al. (2012), Adekola (2011), Ismail, Daud and Madrah (2011) and Uysal et al. (2015).

POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE

The population for this study were employees from four-and-five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Four-and-five-star hotels had been chosen in this study due to the reason that these hotels focusing more importance to human resources and the employees of these hotels can be regarded as more dedicated to their careers (Uysal et al., 2015). Besides, four-and-five-star hotels also can be considered as suitable area of activity to analyse career management, career commitment and job satisfaction.

Four-and-five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur were selected as the area of study because the highest distributions of these hotels are located at this area. The unit of analysis in this study was operational employees. According to U.S Department of Labor (2008), operational employees represented the largest groups of employees in hotel industry and Malaysia experience the same situation. Thus, employees from food and beverage, housekeeping, front office and maintenance department are the example of operational employees that are believed to contribute the productivity to organisation and involve in the career management programs. Representation from various departments is crucial since different communication climates exist in each department.

In determining the sample size, the researcher targeted a minimum 50 employees from each hotel and the researcher contacted the human resource department in order to get the approval and permission to conduct the survey in their hotel. Receiving an average of 50 employees for each of four-and-five-star hotels was fairly acceptable. Currently, there are about 54 four-and-five star hotels in Kuala Lumpur. Thus, the expected sample size would be 2,700 employees. In determining the number of respondents, this study decided to calculate the sample size by using the table of population and sample size by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). According to number of populations which consist of 2,700 employees, the appropriate sample size would be 338 respondents. However, Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010) argued that a study that employing seven or less latent constructs can have an ample sample size of 300 respondents. 300 set of questionnaires had been distributed. Data collection period was one month starting from December 2018. However, only 136 respondents willing to answer and participated in the survey. This was due to several limitations where some of the human resources department of some hotels refused to give permission and cooperation while the survey was conducted.

INSTRUMENTATION

Questions used in the questionnaire were adapted from the past researches (Uysal et al., 2015) with several minor modifications in order to fit with the study. In the matter of the instruments, the questionnaire that was used in the survey consists of four sections: Section A was focusing on career management, Section B pinpoint on career commitment, Section C addressed to job satisfaction and in Section D was the set of demographic profile.
RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The statistics of the demographic profile of the respondents who were voluntarily participating in the survey are highlighted. This section demonstrates information regarding gender, age, race, level of education, marital status and monthly income of the respondents. The demographic variables are presented as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions for each variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I have been giving training to develop my career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have been offered financial support for my further education by my hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have experienced 360° performance appraisal in my hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I have been clear feedback on my performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I have been given necessary career advice by my direct manager or the human resource (HR) manager when I need it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My direct supervisor/manager has discussed my career development plan with me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I learned about hotel culture and behaviors in an orientation/induction program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I have experienced job rotation conducted by the hotel to gain cross-functional experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I have been informed of job vacancies by hotels job posting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I have participated in in-house training provided by my hotel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Career Commitment |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1. If I could get another job different from this one and get paid same amount of money, I would probably take it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I definitely want a career for myself in my current area | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. If I could do it all over again, I would choose to work in this profession | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I would recommend a career in hospitality industry to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. If I had all money I need without working, I would probably still continue in this profession | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| Job Satisfaction |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Table 1: Questions for each variable
RELIABILITY COEFFICIENT

Each section of questionnaires was examined separately and the results of the reliability for Alpha Coefficient. The reliability test was undertaken in order to generate prompt information and consistent results in all data collected that given by the respondent. According to Sekaran (2003), the most acceptable test for multipoint-scale item in the questionnaire is by using Cronbach's Alpha. In this study, the result shows that the alpha coefficient for Career Management indicates values of 0.855. Besides, the coefficient values of 0.664 are recorded for Career Commitment while 0.912 coefficient values for Job Satisfaction. All the values in the measurement are ranging from 0.664 to 0.912 were exceeded the minimum acceptability reliability coefficient. Even though the coefficient value of Career Commitment is 0.664, the value is still fairly accepted because it is closed to 0.70. The summary of the result can be easily seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Summary of alpha Coefficient for each variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Alpha Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Management</td>
<td>0.855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Commitment</td>
<td>0.664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regression Analysis to address Hypothesis 1

Regression analysis was used to respond the research objective 1 which was to determine the relationship between career management and career commitment and one formulated hypothesis 1 which stated that there is a positive relationship between career management and career commitment. The hypothesis 1 could be easily simplified as the better career management practices in the hotel, the better of career commitment among hotel employees. Based on the Table 4, the result of the regression indicated that r value is 0.488 and the p-value equal to .000. It shows that there was a substantial correlation or linear relationship between variables. In other words, significant associations were existed between career management and career commitment. The regression model that shows in Table 4 also explained that 23.8% of the variation in career commitment is explained by career management. While other remaining of 76.2% is explained by other predictor variables that does not provided in the data set.
Regression Analysis to address Hypothesis 2
Regression analysis was used to respond to the research objective 2 which was to determine the relationship between career commitment and career job satisfaction and one formulated hypothesis 2 which stated that there is a positive relationship between career commitment and job satisfaction. The hypothesis 2 could be easily simplified as the better career commitment of employees in the hotel, the better job satisfaction among hotel employees. Based on the Table 5, the result of the regression indicated that r value is 0.569 and the p-value equal to .000. It shows that there was a substantial correlation or linear relationship between variables. In other words, significant associations were existed between career commitment and career job satisfaction. The regression model that shows in Table 5 also explained that 32.4% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by career commitment. While other remaining of 65.8% is explained by other predictor variables that does not provided in the data set.

Regression Analysis to test Hypothesis 3
A linear regression analysis was performed to answer to the research objectives 3 which to determine the relationship between career management and career job satisfaction and one formulated hypothesis 3 which stated that there is a positive relationship between career management and job satisfaction. The hypothesis 3 can be easily simplified as the better career management practices in the hotel, the better job satisfaction among hotel employees. Based on the Table 6, the result of the regression indicated that r value is 0.679 and the p-value equal to .000. It shows that there was a substantial correlation or linear relationship between variables. In other words, significant associations were existed between career management and career job satisfaction. The regression model that shows in Table 6 also explained that 46.2% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by career management. While other remaining of 53.8% is explained by other predictor variables that does not provided in the data set.
Mediating Effect of Career Commitment on Relationship between Career Management and Job Satisfaction

In order to respond to the research objective 4 which was to determine the mediating effect of career commitment on the relationship between career management and job satisfaction, hypothesis 4 (Career commitment mediates the relationship between career management and employees job satisfaction) had been formulated. The meaning of hypotheses 4 can be simplified for better understanding as: the better of career commitment among employees, the better the result of the relationship between career management and job satisfaction among employees in four-and-five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur.

Career commitment mediated the relationship between career management and job satisfaction, indirect effect

$$\beta = 0.0880, [0.0420, 0.160],$$

$$r^2 = 0.258[0.0420, 0.160].$$ The direct effect of career management on job satisfaction was

$$\beta = 0.303[0.2220, 0.384]$$ which the effect is after controlling for the mediation effect as seen Table 7. Hence, based on the result it was found that career commitment significantly influenced and partially mediated the relationship between career management and job satisfaction. Thus, a hypothesis 4 was supported. By that, research question 4 was answered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>R-square</th>
<th>Beta (β)</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.391</td>
<td>.318</td>
<td>.465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>.222</td>
<td>.304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect (mediation)</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Mediation effects of career commitment on the relationship between career management and job satisfaction

HYPOTHESES SUMMARIZATION

There were four hypotheses formulated and tested in this study, which included Section A: Career Management, Section B: Career Commitment and Section C: Job Satisfaction. The summarization result of these four hypotheses testing is illustrated in Figure 4.2 and describe in Table 4.19.
Based on the result and finding, four hypotheses that involved in this study were accepted and the objectives of the study were achieved. The summary of the result can be seen in Table 8 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Supported/Not supported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1 There is positive relationship between career management and career commitment</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2 There is positive relationship between career commitment and job satisfaction</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3 There is positive relationship between career management and job satisfaction</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4 Career commitment mediates the relationship between career management and employees job satisfaction</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported (Partially mediated)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION**

The conceptual framework of this study was based on the career management literature to investigate the link between career management, career commitment and job satisfaction among employees at four-and-five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur. Thus, the implications and outcomes from this study were relevant and could be applied to the hotel industry. The main contribution from this study serves as guidance for hotel managers or policy makers regarding how to manage career management practices that will lead job satisfaction and reduce turnover in hospitality industry. Additionally, academic administrator also could make their workforce pleased and to be better on their position and present situation.

This study also contributes to the literature by identifying the mediating effect of career commitment. The study found that, in addition to being directly related with job satisfaction, career commitment also mediated the relationship between career management and job satisfaction of employees in four-and-five-star hotels. Given the scarcity of research on the relationship among career management, career commitment and job satisfaction in hotel industry in Malaysia, the findings of this study constitute a significant addition to the literature may serve as a foundation for future research.

Further, regarding on practical implications, the findings of this study might be used as guidelines by management to improve the execution of career management programs in organisation. This situation posits that hotel managers should plan and manage the progression of career management activities that consist of career appraisal and career improvement to enhance career commitment and job satisfaction.

In addition, this study also might help the hotel managers to retain the qualified staff members and reduce the problem of employee turnover in hotels. Hotels managers could cater the hotel staff by providing them a clear picture about career prospect in hotels. When employees satisfied with their job, they tend to engage themselves further in their work as they have been given chances to develop their career and will try to build career in hotel industry. This is in line with previous study done by Brown, Ardendt and Bosselman (2014) mentioned that enjoyable and challenging jobs become one of the important factors of job satisfaction. Thus, hotels managers must understand and should emphasize the importance of employee participation in hotel career management activities so that employees can retain and remain in this respective industry.

Since both personal affection and organisational involvement influence career commitment, the human resource management of the hotel industry should encourage hotel employees by continuously providing and practicing effective career management activities as this could help them to develop specific career goals in shaping their long
term career improvement and help to increase the level of job satisfaction in the industry.

Consequently, the result from this study contributes career management literature and would be useful for future research. In summary, exploring the needs of employee to commit with the career in hospitality industry may enable organisation to design better career management activities to achieve the desired outcomes and will increase satisfaction among employees.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There were several key limitations addressed during the course of this study. Recommendations for future studies are also provided to overcome these limitations. Based on the limitations highlighted in the existing study, it could offer directions for future research of comparable attention on career management in hospitality industry. The first limitation relates to the size of the sample or target respondent. The sample consisted of hotel employees and this study was carried out at four-and-five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur only. The result of this study might not be accurate in presenting the majority of hotel employees in Malaysia. This is due to the reason that the result only represented the population within the selected area. The larger the study, the more reliable and precise the result. Therefore, in order to get better result for general population of hotel employees, the future research should be extended and suggested to include all four-and-five star rated hotels in Malaysia.

The second limitation of the study is regarding to the background and selection of hotel category. This study only focused at the responses of hotel employees in four star and five star rated hotels. However, it offers valuable result that shows there are relationship and importance of career management, career commitment and job satisfaction in this study. There may be some of the management in other hotel category such as three rated hotels that practicing the same career management activities. Thus, the future research can be further classified and compared based on the distinctive hotel star rating category and it is recommended that three star rated hotels should also be included for further investigation to gain disparity of findings.

For the final point, this study ignores the influence of demographic factors on career management and job satisfaction in hospitality industry. Race and gender might have an impact towards job performance and career outcomes of employees. Therefore, this argument may be served further for future studies. It is recommended that future studies should include the effect of demographic factors on career management, career commitment and job satisfaction among hotel employees and it is hoped that the findings may provide information that would be useful for hotel managers to develop more comprehensive career management activities.

REFERENCES


