The Influence of Psychological Empowerment

on Overall Job Satisfaction of Front Office Receptionists

Mohd Onn Rashdi Abd Patah (Corresponding author)

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

23000 Dungun, Terengganu, Malaysia

Tel: 60-13–934-2148   E-mail: onnrashdi@gmail.com

Salleh Mohd Radzi

Coordinator, Graduate Coursework Program,

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

Tel: 60-13–342-8781   E-mail: salle579@salam.uitm.edu.my

Rahman Abdullah

Industry Linkage Unit, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

23000 Dungun, Terengganu, Malaysia

Tel: 60-19–741- 6820   E-mail: rahma255@tganu.uitm.edu.my

Azahar Adzmy

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

23000 Dungun, Terengganu, Malaysia

Tel: 60-12–323-0192   E-mail: azadz@tganu.uitm.edu.my

Razlan Adli Zain

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

23000 Dungun, Terengganu, Malaysia

Tel: 60-12 – 517-3527   E-mail: razlan75@tganu.uitm.edu.my

Nazarudin Derani

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

23000 Dungun, Terengganu, Malaysia

Tel: 60-13 – 937-9232   E-mail: naza5335@tganu.uitm.edu.my

Abstract

The highly competitive business environment has encouraged the hotel sector to be more practical in its employees' performance so as to provide a high standard of quality services to the customers. With that, their role of upholding a satisfactory service level is vital and at the same instant, depends on their satisfaction level too. Empowering employees are among the factors that might influence positive employee outcomes such as job satisfaction. This study was conducted to examine the influences of psychological empowerment on overall job satisfaction of Front Office Receptionists in Kuala Lumpur 5-star hotels. A total of 210 questionnaires were distributed at 21 hotels in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Results showed that psychological empowerment does have significant influences (through the dimensions of meaningfulness, competence and influence) on overall job satisfaction of the receptionists. The findings also suggested that receptionists' age and tenure affected their sense of overall job satisfaction. Hotel managers should include this in their effort and consideration to enhance employees' performance and competencies. More competitive solutions such as enhancing participation by the departmental decision making process, encouraging creativity, implementing better work environment and employment packages may harmonize work relationships and outcomes.

Keywords: Psychological empowerment, Overall job satisfaction, Receptionists

1. Background of the study

It is undeniable that the contributions of the hotel sector to the national economy are numerous in providing employment opportunities, provision of alternative and added income for the rural population, supporting the growth of secondary activities such as material and equipment suppliers, and the sector also complements the expansion of both domestic and inbound tourism (Awang, Ishak, Radzi & Taha, 2008). The tourism industry contributed a total of RM 47.5 billion from foreign earnings and the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2007 was RM 641.9 billion (Tourism Malaysia, 2008). The industry has expanded at the rate of 7.1% and accounted for 54.3% of the nation's GDP, as compared to previous year's rate at 53.6% (Ministry of Finance [MOF], 2008). The hotel industry is expected to retain its share of 2.4% GDP in 2008, supported by higher consumer spending, sustained domestic investment and higher tourist arrivals (MOF, 2008). The hotel industry has the responsibility and role of increasing guest satisfaction with its services and products. This can be carried out through efficient service by frontline employees, particularly the Front Office receptionists. The Front Office is known to be the nerve centre of a hotel, although its strengths are only supported by 11.0 % of the total workforce by departments in Malaysia (MAH, 2008). Maintaining the appropriate level of services from frontline employees has become a critical issue for the hotel industry because a service firm's success depends on the frontline employees' performance (Chebat, Babin & Kollias, 2002).

As explained by Kemp & Dwyer (2001), employees are likely to be more motivated and more productive if they feel they can make a valuable contribution to the organization through either contributing new ideas, better ways of doing things and participation in decision-making. Kemp and Dwyer (2001) further stressed that employees are more receptive to change in the organization if they feel they have had their views taken into consideration, even if the organization does not implement employees' preferred options. In response to this, hotel managers have sought possible solutions and strategies that will increase frontline employees' performance and job satisfaction. Successful service firms have invested resources into programs in order to increase their employees' performance and job satisfaction (George & Weimerskirch, 1994). Empowering employees may be one of the approaches to a better organizational strategy in harmonizing employees' performance and job satisfaction. Empowerment and job satisfaction have been raised as important issues and emphasized as ways to reduce employee turnover, improve workplace environments, and help organizations function effectively in the hospitality industry (Erstad, 1997). By identifying and exploring the relationship, it is hoped that implementation of such concepts and strategy will help management to reduce sense of dissatisfaction among employees towards their employers. Given the extent to which strategies designed to foster employee empowerment are being implemented in the hospitality industry, research on its outcomes (job satisfaction) is clearly warranted (Sparrowe, 1994). Therefore this study has been carried out to examine the relationship between employee psychological empowerment on overall job satisfaction focusing on the Front Office receptionists of 5-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

2. Literature review

2.1 Employee psychological empowerment

Employee empowerment is not a new management concept since it has been implemented for more than a decade. Employee empowerment which involves employee participation is a complex management tool that over 50 years of research has proved, when applied properly, can be effective in improving performance, productivity and job satisfaction (Sashkin, 1984). Numerous studies have defined empowerment as intrinsic task motivation (e.g, Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) or motivation reflecting the person-environment fit (Zimmerman, 1990). Brymer (1991) on the other hand defined empowerment as the process of decentralizing decision-making in an organization, by means of which managers give more discretion and autonomy to the frontline employees. Although empowerment has been defined in numerous ways, most authors agree that the core element of empowerment involves giving employee discretion (or latitude) over certain task related activities without neglecting the responsibilities that come along with it (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Schlessinger and Heskett, 1991). Early use of the construct of empowerment tended to revolve around issues of power and control where empowerment was considered a management technique used to motivate employees, by delegating or sharing power with them (Kanter, 1983).   Investigation of the use of empowerment in service sector organizations however reveals a number of different forms of empowerment being applied in practice (e.g. Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Spreitzer, 1992, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995).

This study focused on the early work of Spreitzer (1992; 1995) and Fulford and Enz (1995) on psychological empowerment. Spreitzer (1992) focused on the psychological empowerment construct and validation of empowerment. According to Spreitzer (1995) empowerment is a continuous variable; people can be viewed as more or less empowered, rather than empowered or not empowered. Outcomes from the implementation of empowerment at work will result in an organization reaching its desired goals and expectations. Therefore, successful implementation of such a work concept is intended to have a significant positive effect on the organizational and employee outcome variables such as motivation and job satisfaction. The four dimensions of empowerment outlined by Spreitzer (1995) were developed and

evaluated by research conducted in a manufacturing environment. The dimensions, therefore, may not fully apply effectively in a service organization. Fulford and Enz (1995) assessed the effects of perceived empowerment on employees in an empirical study of a number of service organizations, where data were collected from service employees in a number of American private clubs. They argued that in a service environment an employee's ability to influence his or her own work duties is not separate from the ability to influence organizational goals because a significant proportion of organizational outcomes in a service context rely on employee behaviours. As the delivery of services by service employees involves interacting with customers, the dimension of self-determination captures the degree to which employees are able to control the customers' experiences of service. Therefore, Fulford and Enz (1995) suggested the three dimensional construct of psychological empowerment to be more suitable in the service industry setting. They are meaningfulness, competence and influence which are the earlier constructs developed and validated by Spreitzer (1995) and Thomas and Velthouse (1990).

2.2 Job satisfaction

Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Edward and Scullion (1982) identified the meaning of job satisfaction as the overall measurement of working attitudes of the reception, happiness, and pleasure in the job. Employees' job satisfaction is also concerned with supervision quality, working conditions, intrinsic compensation, benefits, and company policies (Hoffman & Ingram, 1992). Robbins and Coulter (1996) stated that job satisfaction is an employee's general attitude towards his or her job. Meanwhile Cranny, Smith, and Stone (1992) defined job satisfaction as whether employees find their employment sufficiently satisfactory to continue in it, either permanently or until they have prepared for greater responsibilities. Susskind, Borchgrevink, Kacmar, and Brymer (2000) explained that job satisfaction represents the workplace and employees' perceptions of their job. Job satisfaction can be predicted by employees' evaluation of the work climate, levels of organizational support and the employment situation. In the hospitality industry, not much of a difference was discovered. According to Lam, Zhang, & Baum (2001) the hotel's goal rests on the employees' belief that their efforts can lead to the satisfaction of employees' needs.

2.3 Employee psychological empowerment and overall job satisfaction

The successful implementation of an empowerment concept in the workplace does have its own unique feedback and results. The purpose of employee empowerment is not only to ensure that effective decisions are made by the right employees but to provide a mechanism by which responsibility for those decisions is vested in individuals and teams (Ford & Fottler, 1995). These additional responsibilities must be viewed as a positive means to enhance productivity and creativity among employees. The outcome expected from this is the ability of employees themselves to experience a higher sense of job satisfaction in their work and performance. Some hospitality and tourism employers have been quick to adopt the construct of employee empowerment as one discriminating element of job satisfaction in the hope of increasing job satisfaction (Salazar, 2000). It is also thought to contribute significantly to reducing service failures. In the 1990s, the employee empowerment approach to service was being touted as the remedy for problems of poor customer service and inefficient operations (Bowen & Lawler, 1995). Previous researchers have also highlighted the significant relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction (e.g. Spreitzer, 1996; Fulford & Enz, 1995; Hancer & George, 2003). Fulford and Enz (1995) had several findings in their study; they suggested that perceiving oneself as empowered is positively linked to the emotional states of workers and their overall attachment to the work environment, but is not as strongly linked to service delivery and performance. Empowerment may contribute to an employee's job satisfaction, but may not shape work effort and performance as profoundly (Fulford & Enz, 1995). This is not surprising, since attitudes are not perfectly linked to behaviours (Schneider, 1988). Nevertheless, the importance of perceived empowerment in enhancing employee job satisfaction should not be ignored, since the unsatisfied employee is more likely to provide poor service, leave, or be absent more frequently (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1994). Based on the literature reviews highlighted above, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: Employee psychological empowerment positively influences overall job satisfaction.

H1a: The employee psychological empowerment dimension of meaningfulness positively influences overall job satisfaction.

H1b: The employee psychological empowerment dimension of competence positively influences overall job satisfaction.

H1c: The employee psychological empowerment dimension of influence positively influences overall job satisfaction.

H2: Employees' psychological empowerment scores differ significantly based on their demographic and work profile information.

H3: Employees' overall job satisfaction scores differ significantly based on their demographic and work profile information.

2.4 Theoretical framework

Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical framework for this study. The independent variable was employee psychological empowerment and the dependent variable was overall job satisfaction. The dimensions of psychological empowerment used were based on the work of Fulford and Enz (1995). For overall job satisfaction, a three items construct was used adopted from Salazar (2000) and Di Xie (2005).

3. Sample of the study & data collection method

Front Office receptionists working at 5 star hotels located in Kuala Lumpur are the sample of the study. Tourism Malaysia (2007) listed 23 hotels categorized as 5 star rated hotels, or large-sized hotels with 100 rooms and above in Kuala Lumpur. Meanwhile, after cover letters were sent to the 23 hotels involved, only 21 hotels agreed to participate. The sample size was amounted to a total of 210 receptionists and mailed questionnaire method was employed. At the end of the time frame, a total of 91 questionnaires were gathered, usable and finally coded. This represents 43 percent of the total questionnaires distributed earlier.

4. Results & analysis

4.1 Reliability & validity analysis

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient value for all variables in the study revealed a range of coefficient value from .68 to .91 accordingly. The dependent variable of overall job satisfaction had a high reliability coefficient of .91 despite the low number of scale items (three items). The independent variable of psychological empowerment showed that its dimensions of meaningfulness had a coefficient value of .87, competence a value of .68 and influence had a reliability coefficient value of .84. The overall coefficient value of psychological empowerment had a reliability coefficient value of .86. The results also indicated that the reliabilities of the scales used in this study were high and aligned with previous researchers' findings (Fulford & Enz, 1995; Salazar, 2000; Di Xie, 2005; Lee, 2008; Coughlan, 2005). It also demonstrates the internal consistency of a reliable scale. (Table 2)

4.2 Descriptive statistics & analysis

Table 3 shows that the distribution of gender was higher for females with a total of 49 female respondents (53.8%). On the other hand, there were 42 male respondents or 46.2 percent out of the total respondents. The age range of the respondents showed that most of them were between 18 and 29 years of age. Specifically, there were 30 respondents (33.0%) between the ages of 18 to 23 years, followed by those with an age range between 24 to 29 years, with the frequency of 31 or 34.1% of the total respondents and, finally 17 of the respondents or 18.7 percent were between the ages of 30 to 34 years. Another 9 or 9.9 percent of them in the range of 35 to 40 years and four of them (4.4%) were aged more than 40 years. In terms of hotel or organizational tenure, 11 percent of the total respondents had fewer than six months of work experience in hotel, followed by 34.1 percent with experience between six months and one year, 30.8 percent with experience of two to three years, 14.3 percent with four to five years of experience and 9.9 percent had more than five years of experience. (Table 3)

4.3 Pearson correlations matrix among study variables

There was a significant correlation between dimension of meaningfulness and competence with $r=.32$ ($p<0.01$). This was followed by a correlation between meaningfulness and influence with $r=.44$ ($p<0.01$) which was also significant. There was also significant correlation between competence and influence with $r=.38$ ($p<0.01$). The results concluded that the three dimensions of employee psychological empowerment were significantly related and correlated with each other and were moving in the same direction as one variable or construct. The correlations between psychological empowerment dimensions and overall job satisfaction showed that there were significant positive correlations between overall job satisfaction and meaningfulness ($r=.49$, $p<0.05$), competence ($r=.48$, $p<0.01$) and influence ($r=.51$, $p<0.01$). (Table 4)

5. Hypothesis testing

5.1 Employee psychological empowerment positively influences overall job satisfaction

The influences of the three dimensions of employees' psychological empowerment on overall job satisfaction were explored and examined by using multiple regression analysis (as shown in Table 5) and after considering that there was no violation of multiple regression underlying assumptions. The coefficient of relationship (R^2) of 0.416 showed that 41.6% of the variance in overall job satisfaction was explained by the three sub dimensions of employee psychological empowerment. From the three dimensions of psychological empowerment, all three sub scales of employee psychological empowerment significantly influenced respondents' state of overall job satisfaction; the factor of meaningfulness ($p=0.00$), competence ($p=0.00$) and influence ($p=0.00$). Conclusively, all three sub dimensions of employee psychological empowerment were the predictors of receptionists' overall state of job satisfaction. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 (H1) was supported.

5.2 Employees' psychological empowerment scores differ significantly based on their demographic and work profile information

An independent *t*-test was conducted to find any differences between genders on employee psychological empowerment. After assessing the significance value of the variables on both genders, there were no significant differences in the scores of both genders when compared, with the employee psychological empowerment of males (*M*=5.92, *SD*=0.58) and females with *M*=5.90, *SD*=0.45; with *t* = 0.186 (equal variances assumed), *p*=0.85 (two-tailed). One way ANOVA was computed to explore the impact of age (in range), and hotel tenure on levels of employee psychological empowerment. There was no statistical significant difference at the 0.05 level in employee psychological empowerment scores based on the profile information of the respondents. Therefore, hypothesis 2 (H2) was not supported.

5.3 Employees' overall job satisfaction scores differ significantly based on their demographic and work profile information

On the other hand, in assessing the differences between demographic and work profiles of respondents with overall job satisfaction, there were also no significant differences with males (*M*=6.02, *SD*=0.95) and females with *M*=5.89, *SD*=0.81; with *t* = 0.676 (equal variances assumed), *p*=0.50 (two-tailed). However, there were significant differences in overall job satisfaction scores based on respondents' age and hotel tenure. The result revealed that the details of the differences with $p < 0.05$ level in overall job satisfaction scores based on age (in range) were $F_{(4, 86)} = 1.91$, *p*=0.00 and hotel tenure of the respondents with $F_{(4, 86)} = 1.68$, *p*=0.00. The results were based on Welch and Brown-Forsythe's robust tests of equality of mean. From the Games-Howell post hoc test, as respondents became older, they were more satisfied with their job, organization and job positions. The results also indicated that the longer the respondents worked with the hotel; the more they experienced an overall state of job satisfaction as compared to those who had less working experience in the hotel. Therefore, hypothesis 3 (H3) was supported.

6. Discussion

6.1 The relationship between employee psychological empowerment and overall job satisfaction

The results previously mentioned stated that there were positive and significant influences between the three dimensions of employee psychological empowerment and overall job satisfaction. This means that receptionists whose job has a higher level of meaningfulness, developed work skills and confidence and those who were influential in the workplace would be most likely to experience a higher level of job satisfaction. They were more satisfied with their current job position, current employer and the type of job that they were doing if they were given more meaningful jobs, given more room to exercise their abilities and skills and allowed more opportunities to participate actively in the work-group decision making process. This result was also aligned and congruent with the findings made by Spreitzer (1996). She found that the dimension of meaningfulness was the strongest contributor to overall job satisfaction. This finding was also parallel to Fulford and Enz's (1995) findings that perceived empowerment did have an influence on the job satisfaction level of employees particularly in the hospitality industry. However, Fulford and Enz (1995) stressed that although employee empowerment may contribute to employee's job satisfaction, it does not profoundly shape work effort and performance. This is not surprising, since attitudes are not perfectly linked to behaviors (Schneider, 1988), and supervisory styles may confuse the degree to which empowerment is actively supported (Fulford & Enz, 1995).

According to the effects of psychological sub dimensions revealed through a study by Fulford and Enz (1995) the dimensions of meaningful and influence were the two strongest influences on job satisfaction. When employees find a fit between their values and the organization's goals and delivering meaningful jobs, they are more likely to be loyal, service oriented, concerned with others, and high performers. Employees perceiving themselves as having influence over others is also a critical factor in shaping job satisfaction as liking the work and being able to influence what happens at work are critical (Fulford & Enz, 1995). It is likely that self-efficacy (mastery), particularly in relatively routine, simple, and repetitive tasks, does not have the motivational potential that perceived meaning as well as influence over the work setting are likely to elicit (Fulford & Enz, 1995). This is consistent with the findings made by Collins (2007) on employees of a limited-service restaurant in the U.S. Most empirical research has also shown a stronger link between meaning and work satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Thomas & Tymon, 1994; Salazar, 2000). An important precondition of work satisfaction is the degree to which an individual finds their work to be personally meaningful (Herzberg, 1966). In contrast, low levels of meaning have been linked to apathy at work and, hence, lower levels of work satisfaction (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). A study by Hancer and George (2003) also found that all three dimensions of employee psychological empowerment were the significant contributors to employees' increased job related satisfaction. Perceptions of empowerment can enhance the value of work for individuals, increase job satisfaction and contribute to work productivity and effectiveness (Spreitzer, 1995). Nevertheless, the findings in this study revealed the need to seek the potential of the sub dimension of competence thoroughly in determining the employee outcome variable, such as job satisfaction, especially in the hospitality industry.

6.2 The differences of overall job satisfaction scores based on demographic and work profile information

The findings in this study showed that there were significant differences in the scores of the overall job satisfaction of the respondents. Based on findings previously stated, the significant differences in the overall job satisfaction scores were found in respondents' age and hotel tenure. It showed that just as their age increases, so does their job satisfaction level. A study by Chang (2003) justified the findings in this study as he also found that age did have a significant effect on overall job satisfaction. An employee's satisfaction with an organization is also closely related to length of service. Smith (1996) stated that there was a significant differences in overall job satisfaction based on tenure in companies in the hospitality industry. Similarly, as the years and experience of receptionists working in the hotel increased, they were actually having more satisfaction at work. This is also aligned with the study by Vondrasek (2000) who found that the degree of tenure had a significant effect on the level of general satisfaction. Salazar (2000) in his study found that race differences existed when evaluating overall job satisfaction. Several other researchers also found that age and tenure were positively related to job satisfaction and they differ significantly among their respective groups (e.g. Smith, 1996; Denton & Kleiman, 2001).

7. Limitations & recommendations for future research

Several limitations faced throughout the process of this study are worth highlighting as these limitations would be the points to consider in future research of similar interest. The first limitation relates to the selection of hotel category and location in this study. Instead of only looking at the responses of receptionists in 5-star rated hotels in Kuala Lumpur alone, it is also recommended that further investigation be carried out into other significant categories of hotel as well (3 & 4-star rated hotels) in the rest of the country. This would certainly give variation to the findings and the study can be further classified and compared based on the distinctive star rating category and location (by city, state or island). Next, the limitation identified through the study was the limited scope of the study. This study targeted employees at the operational level, but the participation of managerial level employees might give different perspectives to the research area due to the role of managerial level employees as employers and department leaders. Input from managers would certainly provide insights and valuable information as to how certain relationships and influences could be established.

8. Conclusion

The study has certainly achieved its objectives in answering the research questions where hypotheses support or otherwise was elaborated. However, the influence of employees' psychological empowerment on their level of job satisfaction proved to be valid and significant in this study. It showed that psychological empowerment was perceived as a medium to enhance overall job satisfaction. In conclusion, it is hoped that the study findings can be used as a basis for Malaysian hotel managers in understanding their workforce's ability, self-efficacy, control and influence over work groups. Specifically, it is hoped that managers will be able to understand the effect of the empowerment concept on their employees. Considering the labour-intensive nature of the hotel industry, coping with turnover trends is relatively significant and a priority for them. From the findings in this study, it can be concluded that the significant effect of employee psychological empowerment and overall job satisfaction were established. Managers certainly need to ensure that employees are satisfied and enjoy what they do at work. More focus should be on developing creativity and rooms for employees to exercise empowerment in order to enhance their job satisfaction level and performance thus providing quality service to customers.

References

Awang, K. W., Ishak, N. K., Radzi, S. M., & Taha, A. Z. (2008). Environmental variables and performance: Evidence from the hotel industry in Malaysia. *International Journal of Economics and Management, 2*(1), 59-80.

Bowen, D. E., & Lawler III, E. E. (1992). The empowerment of service workers: what, why, how and when. *Sloan Management Review, Spring*, 31-39.

Bowen, D. E., & Lawler III, E. E. (1995). Empowering service employees. *Sloan Management Review, Summer,* 73-84.

Brymer, R. (1991). Empowerment: A guest-driven leadership strategy. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 32*, 58-68.

Chang, L. (2003). A study of diversified hospitality workers affecting employee job satisfaction and its relationship to employee retention in the lodging industry. Doctoral Dissertation, Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma. *Dissertation Abstract International, 64*(09) (UMI No: AAT 3105777).

Chebat, J. C., Babin, B., & Kollias, P. (2002). What makes contact employees perform? Reactions to employee perceptions of managerial practices. *Journal of Bank Marketing, 20*(7), 325-332.

Collins, M. D. (2007). Understanding the relationships between leader-member exchange (LMX), psychological empowerment, job satisfaction and turnover intent in a limited-service restaurant environment. Doctoral Dissertation, Ohio State University, Ohio. *Dissertation Abstract International, 68*(04) (UMI No: AAT 3260704).

Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (1988). The empowerment process: integrating theory and practice. *Academy of Management Review, 13*(July), 471-482.

Coughlan, R. (2005). Employee loyalty as adherence to shared moral values. *Journal of Managerial Issues, XVII*(1), 43-57.

Cranny, C. J., Smith, P. C., & Stone, M. (1992). *Job satisfaction: How People Feel About Their Jobs and How It Affects Their Performance*. New York: Lexington.

Denton, D. W., & Kleiman, L. S. (2001). Job tenure as a moderator of the relationship between autonomy and satisfaction. *Applied HRM Research, 6*(2), 105-114.

Di Xie, M. S. (2005). Exploring organizational learning culture, job satisfaction, motivation to learn, organizational commitment and internal service quality in a sport organization. Doctoral Dissertation, Ohio State University, Ohio. *Dissertation Abstract International, 66*(06) (UMI No: AAT 3180630).

Edward, P. K., & Scullion, H. (1982). *The Social Organization of Industrial Conflict: Control and Resistance in the Workplace*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Erstad, M. (1997). Empowerment and Organisational Change. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 9*(7)*,* 325-333.

Ford, R., & Fottler, M. (1995). Empowerment: a matter of degree. *Academy of Management Executive, 9*(3), 21-31.

Fulford, M. D., & Enz, C. A. (1995). The impact of empowerment on service employees. *Journal of Managerial Issues, 7*(2), 161-175.

George, S., & Weimerskirch, A. (1994). *Total quality management: Strategies and techniques proven at today's most successful companies.* New York: Wiley.

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1980). *Work redesign.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Hancer, M., & George, R. T. (2003). Psychological empowerment of non-supervisory employees working in full-service restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 22*(1), 3-16.

Herzberg, F. (1966). *Work and the nature of man.* Cleveland: World Publishing.

Heskett, J. L., Jones, T. O., Loveman, G. W., Sasser, W. E., & Schlesinger, L. A. (1994). Putting the Service-Profit Chain to Work. *Harvard Business Review, 72*(2), 164-174.

Hoffman, K. D., & Ingram, T. N. (1992). Service provider job satisfaction and customer-oriented performance. *The Journal of Services Marketing, 6*(2), 68-78.

Kanter, R. M. (1983). *The change masters: Innovations for productivity in the American corporation*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Kemp, S. & Dwyer, L. (2001). An examination of organizational culture – The Regent Hotel, Sydney. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 20*, 77-93.

Lam, T., Zhang, H., & Baum, T. (2001). An investigation of employees' job satisfaction: the case of hotels in Hong Kong. *Tourism Management, 22*(2), 157-165.

Lee, S. S. (2008). Relationships among leadership empowerment, job satisfaction, and employee loyalty in university dining student workers. Doctoral Dissertation, Iowa State University, Iowa. *Dissertation Abstract International, 69*(04) (UMI No: AAT 3307092).

Locke, E. A. (1976). The nature and consequences of job satisfaction. In M. D. Dunnetter (Ed.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 1297-1349). Chicago: Rand-McNally.

Malaysian Association of Hotels. (2008). *Annual Secretariat Report: June 2007 – May 2008.* Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH).

Ministry of Finance. (2008). *Economic Report 2008 / 2009.* Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad.

Robbins, S. P., & Coulter, M. (1996). *Management*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Rogers, J. D., Clow, K. E., & Kash, T. J. (1994). Increasing job satisfaction of service personnel. *Journal of Services Marketing*, *8*, 14-26.

Salazar, J. P. (2000). The relationships between hospitality employee empowerment, overall job satisfaction and organizational commitment: A study of race and gender differences. Doctoral Dissertation, Auburn University, Alabama. *Dissertation Abstract International, 61*(03) (UMI No: AAT 9965765).

Sashkin, M. (1984). Participative Management is an Ethical Imperative. *Organizational Dynamics, 12,* 5-22.

Schlessinger, L. A., & Heskett, J. L. (1991). Breaking the cycle of failure in services. *Sloan Management Review*, 17-28.

Schneider, D. J. (1988). *Introduction to Social Psychology*. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

Smith, D. (1996). Increasing Employee Productivity, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment. *Hospital Health Services Administration*, *41,* 160-174.

Sparrowe, R. T. (1994). Empowerment in the hospitality industry: An exploration of antecedents and outcomes. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *17*(3), 51-73.

Spreitzer, G. M. (1992). When organizations dare: The dynamics of psychological empowerment in the workplace. Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan*,* Ann Arbor, Michigan*. Dissertation Abstract International, 53*(11) (UMI No: AAT 9308456).

Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement and validation. *Academy of Management Journal, 38*(5), 1442-1465.

Spreitzer, G. M. (1996). Social structural characteristics of psychological empowerment. *Academy of Management Journal,* 39, 483–504.

Spreitzer, G. M. (1997). Toward a common ground in defining empowerment. *Research in Organizational Change and Development, 10,* 31-62.

Susskind, A. M., Borchgrevink, C. P., Kacmar, K. M., & Brymer, R. A. (2000). Customer service employees' behavior intentions and attitudes: An examination of construct validity and a path model. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 19*, 53-77.

Thomas, K. & Tymon, W. (1994). Does empowerment always work: Understanding the role of intrinsic motivation and personal interpretation. *Journal of Management Systems, 6*(3).

Thomas, K. W., & Velthouse, B. A. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: an 'interpretive' model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review, 15*(4), 666-681.

Tourism Malaysia. (2007). *Accommodation guide.* Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Tourism Malaysia.

Tourism Malaysia. (2008). *Tourism Statistics in Brief – 2007.* Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Tourism Malaysia.

Vondrasek, D. A. (2000). A study of relationships between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among restaurant employees. Masters Dissertation. University of Nevada, Las Vegas. *Dissertation Abstract International, 39*(02) (UMI No: AAT 1401772).

Zimmerman, M. A. (1990). Taking aim on empowerment research: on the distinction between individual and psychological conceptions. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 18*(1), 169-177.

Zimmerman, M. A. (1995). Psychological empowerment: Issues and illustrations. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 18,* 169-177.

Table 1. Measures of the study variables

Study Variables	No. of Items	Sources of Scale	Type of Scale	Quest ions Number
Employee Psychological Empowerment • Meaningfulness • Competence • Influence	3 3 6	Fulford & Enz (1995)	A seven-point Likert-scale from (1) " Strongly Disagree" to (7) "Strongly Agree"	1-12
Overall Job Satisfaction	3	Di Xie (2005) & Salazar (2000)	A seven-point Likert-scale from (1) " Strongly Disagree" to (7) "Strongly Agree"	13-15

The instrumentation used in the study for each of the variables adopted from Fulford & Enz (1995), Di Xie (2005) & Salazar (2000).

Table 2. Reliability coefficient values of study variables

Variables	Number of Scale Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (α)
Employee Psychological Empowerment		.86
• Meaningfulness	3	.87
• Competence	3	.68
• Influence	6	.84
Overall Job Satisfaction	3	.91

The above table showed the reliability of the scale for each of the dimensions and variables involved.

Table 3. Respondents' demographic and work profiles

Profiles	Categories	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	42	46.2
	Female	49	53.8
Age	Between 18 – 23 years old	30	33.0
	24 – 29 years old	31	34.1
	30 – 34 years old	17	18.7
	35 – 40 years old	9	9.9
	More than 40 years old	4	4.4
Hotel Tenure	Less than 6 months	10	11.0
	6 months – 1 year	31	34.1
	2 – 3 years	28	30.8
	4 – 5 years	13	14.3
	More than 5 years	9	9.9

The above table showed respondents' demographic and work profile distribution and percentage.

Table 4. Pearson correlations matrix among psychological empowerment and overall job satisfaction

Scales	1	2	3	4	*Mean*	*SD*
1. Meaningfulness	-				*5.89*	*0.80*
2. Competence	.32**	-			*6.02*	*0.53*
3. Influence	.44**	.38**	-		*5.85*	*0.64*
4. Overall Job Satisfaction	.49**	.48**	.51**	-	5.95	*0.88*

The table outlined the correlation strength among the variables, its average mean and standard deviation. Note: N=91

**$p<0.01$*

Table 5. Multiple regressions of employee psychological empowerment dimensions and overall job satisfaction

Independent variable in the equation	*B*	β	*t*	*p*	R² (F)
constant	-0.903		-0.993	0.323	
Meaningfulness	0.294	0.270	2.922	0.00*	0.416
Competence	0.465	0.284	3.159	0.00*	(20.70)*
Influence	0.397	0.290	3.064	0.00*	

The table showed the beta, significance and regression values between psychological empowerment and overall job satisfaction.

$p<0.05$

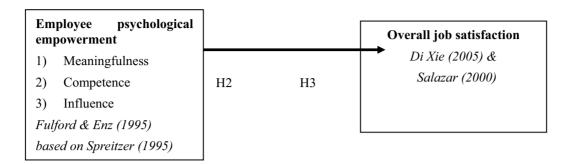| Employee psychological empowerment			Overall job satisfaction
1) Meaningfulness			*Di Xie (2005) &*
2) Competence	H2	H3	*Salazar (2000)*
3) Influence			
Fulford & Enz (1995)			
based on Spreitzer (1995)			

Figure 1. Theoretical framework

The figure above illustrates the relationships between the variables and hypotheses testing involved in the study.