

## Empowerment: Hotel employees' perspective

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**Abstract:** An empowered worker is a knowledgeable worker. Thus, the aims of this study were to examine how empowerment is perceived by the front-line hotel employees and secondly, to identify the factors affecting empowerment within the industry. Factors such as communication, coaching, participation, training and reward were examined for any significant relationship with empowerment, along with whether the employee's socio-demographic characteristics affected their perceptions of empowerment. The findings indicated that except for gender, socio-demographic factors were not a strong influence on the diffusion of empowerment among employees. In order to ensure that the employees feel empowered, factors such as communication, coaching, participation, training and reward should be given due attention by the management. Based on the findings, implications for companies are discussed and further research is suggested.

**Keywords:** empowerment, knowledgeable workers, front-line employees, hotel industry

### 1 Introduction

With the government's emphasis on the tourism industry (i.e., increased investment in the industry and campaigns like *Cuti-Cuti Malaysia* and Visit Malaysia Year 2007), the hotel industry is gaining prominence as a valuable revenue earner for the Malaysian economy. Thus, there is presently a pressing need for more knowledgeable employees to serve the hotel industry. Empowerment of front-line employees is important because they are the direct point of contact for visitors and as such need the autonomy to deal effectively with visitors' concerns. Furthermore,