



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL SUPPORT AND CAREER
SUCCESS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN SIBU, SARAWAK**

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PhD

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IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN
SIBU, SARAWAK**

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This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours
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The project entitled 'The Relationship Between Social Support and Career Success in The Hospitality Industry in Sibul, Sarawak' was prepared by Nurhaifa Hazirah binti Tioh and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Human Resource Development)

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ABSTRACT

Career success is a major concern by individuals who are currently working or still under employment. However, this concern is not only involving the individual but also the organization. Thus, in order to achieve career success, social support has become a consideration and it has been proven that its contribution to career success in the past studies. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between social support and career success among the employees in the hospitality industry in Sibul, Sarawak. In addition, this study is conducted to examine the dominant factor that influences career success among the employees in the hospitality industry. Questionnaires were distributed to 80 employees in this particular industry. Spearman Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to test the hypotheses in this study. All of the hypotheses were accepted. Thus, the result of the study revealed that supervisor support and co-worker support have a significant relationship with career success. The dominant factor that influences career success in this study is supervisor support. This result can be an aid to the management of the hospitality industry and practitioners who are keen to achieve career success. The findings of this study may provide beneficial information to the body of knowledge including practitioners and future researchers for the purpose of enhancing the application of social support.

Keywords: Social support, supervisor support, co-worker support, career success

ABSTRAK

Kejayaan kerjaya menjadi perhatian utama individu yang kini bekerja atau masih dalam pekerjaan. Walau bagaimanapun, perhatian ini tidak hanya melibatkan individu tetapi juga organisasi. Oleh itu, untuk mencapai kejayaan dalam kerjaya, sokongan sosial telah menjadi pertimbangan dan telah terbukti bahawa sumbangannya terhadap kejayaan kerjaya dalam kajian-kajian lepas. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara sokongan sosial dan kejayaan kerjaya di kalangan pekerja di industri hospitaliti di Sibu, Sarawak. Di samping itu, kajian ini dilakukan untuk mengkaji faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi kejayaan kerjaya di kalangan pekerja di industri hospitaliti. Soal selidik diedarkan kepada 80 pekerja dalam industri tertentu. Ujian Korelasi Spearman dan Analisis Regresi Berganda digunakan untuk menguji hipotesis dalam kajian ini. Semua hipotesis diterima. Oleh itu, hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa sokongan penyelia dan sokongan rakan sekerja mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan kejayaan kerjaya. Faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi kejayaan kerjaya dalam kajian ini adalah sokongan penyelia. Hasil ini dapat menjadi bantuan bagi pengurusan industri hospitaliti dan pengamal yang berminat untuk mencapai kejayaan dalam kerjaya. Penemuan kajian ini dapat memberikan maklumat yang bermanfaat kepada badan pengetahuan termasuk pengamal dan penyelidik masa depan untuk tujuan meningkatkan penerapan sokongan sosial.

Kata Kunci: Sokongan sosial, sokongan penyelia, sokongan rakan sekerja, kejayaan kerjaya

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In this chapter, the relationship between social support and career success in the hospitality organizations is discussed. This study is quantitative research whereas to determine the relationship between social support and career success in the hospitality industry in Sibul, Sarawak. It also includes background of study, problem statement, objectives, as well as the research hypothesis. A statement of the problem is summarized to propose a solution to the problem. The objectives have been established as the solution to the problem. Additionally, the chapter also discusses the conceptual framework, significance of the study, limitations of study and definitions of terms. Ultimately, the chapter ended with a summary.

Background of study

People currently place a greater focus on their careers because it can symbolise one's accomplishments in life. The definition is the advancement of an individual in their employment throughout the course of their lives, including opportunities for progression. Career is logically meaningful in life, as a solid career provides stability such as financial security, direction in our lives and the potential to achieve social status. Therefore, career success is crucial because it makes people feel that they can make a significant contribution to society and that they are valuable in life. According to Pachulicz, Schmitt, and Kuljanin (2008), career success often contributes to the success of an organization and the well-being of its employees. A satisfied employee is not only more likely to be motivated and delighted

to perform well, but he or she is also bound to be more dedicated to the organisation (Joiner et al., 2004).

As stated by Carson & Bedeian (1994) in the study of Yoon (2019), a career is related to individuals as long as they have a life-long job, career is becoming more and more important nowadays when the employment relationship is uncertain. Consequently, research on careers has been emphasized in several disciplines and there has been a growing interest in career management, career changes, career results and career success. In fact, career success has been regarded as a vital achievement for career development activities as stated by (Pan & Zhou, 2015).

On the other hand, a career can be described as a structured path through time and space taken by a person. Additionally, this term is generally interpreted as representing the advancement or progress of an individual in a profession. According to (Saksri, 2018), past studies have analysed that career success is acceptable mutually by an individual who assesses another individual's career, typically including job title, wages and promotion as objective career success indicator while job security, longer holidays and hierarchical advancement as subjective career success indicator. Not only that, according to Gattiker and Larwood (1986) in the study of (Saksri, 2018), career success is measured by five variables, namely job success, interpersonal success, financial success, hierarchical success and life success.

“Social support” term has been used a lot in literature and conceptual definition. Cobb (1976) suggested social support as an information that allows people to feel that they are cared for and loved, giving them respect, appreciation and a sense of belonging, while House (1981) described social support as an interpersonal transaction namely emotional concern, instrumental aid, information and appraisal. In contrast with Antonucci and Jackson

(1990), there are three different types of social support, namely emotional support (compassion), affirmative support (in the form of recognition of ideas), and tangible support (money, information, and advice). Besides, social support is referred to as the presence of helping relationships, as well as the enhancement of the quality of those relationships (Leavy, 1983).

Not only that, through (Brough and Pears, 2004) lenses, social support can be classified into two categories: Organisational support and family support. Additionally, these past researchers added that work-related social support is provided by organisational members including peers and supervisors, whereas personal social support is provided by a spouse, parents, children, extended family, or friends. This finding was supported by Shakespeare-Finch and Obst (2011) where sources for social support are including family, friends, co-workers and supervisor. However, in the workplace, co-workers and supervisors are considered sources of social support, where employees seek care, respect, and help through these supports to achieve their goals and objectives in the work domain. Furthermore, two types of social support are known as formal social support and informal social support. Formal and informal social support are both important components of the “social capital” of a person, which is a valuable resource that helps improve health (Cattell, 2001), in another social support perspective.

Formal social support involves the services rendered by skilled, qualified workers, usually paid for their work. On a side note, informal social support involves the support from friends, partners and so on and so forth. Hence, in this research, social support will be investigated to determine whether it has a correlation with career success or otherwise.

On the other hand, to achieve professional outcomes that are accepted and respected by the organization and ultimately contribute to promotion and higher salaries, career success

depends on the intrinsic motivation to build determination, effort and hard work. Also, from the individual's perspectives, career success must have psychological implications that can be experienced by a person (Saksri, 2018). However, another significant factor that influences career success is known to be social support. It is a basic desire for a person to receive social support, to live a social life with others, which involves interaction at work with each other. In addition, Sarafino and Smith (2014) stated that people seek support from those around them. Support makes them feel that they are part of a social group; with social support, individuals feel valuable and a sense of belonging. Besides, previous research has shown that support from co-workers, supervisors, mentors within the organization has been believed to lead to career success (Ibarra, 1993).

Moreover, past research have found several positive outcomes of social support, including career development (Chen et al., 2012), happiness and positive attitudes (Dunst et al., 1986; Uchino, 2006), job performance (AbuAlRub, 2004; Beehr et al., 2000) and work-family facilitation (Hill, 2005). Considering those positive outcomes of social support, it makes social support a hot topic to be investigated in the world of research.

In recent years, specifically, over the past 12 years, Malaysia's tourism industry has accomplished and grown at a much faster rate than other economic sectors with an annual growth rate of 11.2% on average. Hence, the number of tourists visiting Malaysia in 2019 was 26.1 million but not in year 2020. Malaysia received 4 million international tourist arrivals in 2020, a decrease of 83.4% from the 26 million that was being registered in 2019. Thus, the massive drop in international tourist arrivals is due to Malaysian borders being closed since 18 March 2020 due to the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Moving on, the hospitality industry signifies a range of companies and services linked to leisure and customer satisfaction. The distinctive feature of the hospitality industry is that it

focuses on the concepts of enjoyment, luxury, pleasure and experience, as opposed to the necessities and the fundamentals. According to ILO (2010) in the study of (Bharwani & Butt, 2012), the hotel industry and tourism are among the fastest-growing industries, and they account for more than one-third of global service trade. In addition, the hospitality industry is one of the main contributors to Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP). There are three main categories of the hospitality industry namely accommodation, food and drinks and travel and tourism.

Likewise, the hospitality industry is a large group of companies that provides customer services. It is focusing on customer's satisfaction and provides specific experiences for them. Equally important, this industry also strives to please their customers by providing high-quality services and products. Moreover, keeping pace with the wider market is one of the ways owners can help to guarantee that their businesses have an extraordinary customer's experience (Revfine, 2020). According to Kuslivan and Kuslivan (2000), having a dedicated, enthusiastic and skilled worker is essential to the success of companies in the industry. As a consequence, it is very important to identify the variables that contribute to the career success of the hospitality industry. On the contrary, to avoid being left behind, however, it is critical for businesses that are operating within the hospitality industry to keep up with the latest hospitality trends, specifically due to the current situation, the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Problem statement

In conjunction with the discussion given above, the research study takes into account the expansion of the reviewed literature of social support and career success in the hospitality industry.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between social support and career success. Although there are many studies in the previous that relate with this topic, unfortunately most of the studies have been conducted outside of Malaysia, in particular the United States and China. Although the studies are from Malaysia, the studies concentrate only on work-life balance, motivation, and most of the study is in West Malaysia. Thus, this proves that career success studies are still under researched. In addition, it is challenging to find the studies related to this topic in the hospitality industry. Hence, this brings the researcher's attention to test these two variables as a contribution to the body of knowledge and also to avoid the replication and repetition from past studies.

According to Arthur and Rousseau (1996), approximately 75% of career research has largely focused on objective metrics, while Heslin (2005) and Klenke, (2016) claimed that subjective career research has been severely under-researched. Moreover, career success is still very much a subject of discussion in today's communities, indicating that it is still a topic of scholarly interest. As a matter of fact, people are starting to concentrate on subjective dimensions of career success, which are more applicable in today's career perspective compared to objective dimensions. But in this study, researcher will look into both types of career success instead of only one.

As claimed by (Saksri, 2018) in his studies, if a teacher receives award and support from authorities, colleagues and students, it will definitely enhance the work performance which could lead to the teacher's career success as social support can affect career success. This is something to figure out in this study as the researcher wants to investigate if there is a correlation between social support and career success in the hospitality industry. Meanwhile, social exchange theory emphasizes the importance of social support in the work area for commitment, retention, and performance outcomes. This shows that social support is considered important as it impacts commitment, retention and performance outcomes.

In addition, social support is significant in enhancing psychosocial work environments, encouraging a healthy working environment and leads to the development of career achievement. Therefore, in past studies, these three outcomes are specifically expected to be significantly affected by work domain compared to community and family domain support. In contrast, without the support of supervisors, the stressful demands of work, situations and environments are potentially detrimental to the overall well-being of employees (Offer and Schneider, 2008). Hence, this might be affecting the career success and the employees' well-being itself. Besides, social support stimulates career adaptability and job satisfaction, and thus helps to reduce turnover intentions (Karatepe and Olugbade, 2016).

Moreover, supervisors contribute significantly in influencing the attitudes, expectations and behaviour of their employees (Griffin et al., 2001; Rathi and Lee, 2017). In the world of working, supervisors' responsibilities are to give instruction, guidance and motivation to the subordinates and at the end of the day, supervisors will evaluate their subordinates' performance. Motivating environment could make the employees feel safe and engage greatly in their responsibilities at work. Not only that, according to (Mohamed & Ali, 2016), with the supportive environment, employees are willing to try out new things without a sense of fear of the impacts and consequences.

Besides, supervisor support is an important source of support for employees, as most of them seek advice from supervisors on administrative matters, clinical cases, and skill development (Hughes, 2010; Lloyd et al., 2002). Moreover, according to (Saksri, 2018), receiving social support is a basic desire for a person to live a social life with others, involving interaction at work with one another. This translates that social support being important and a fundamental desire for all kinds of people in this world.

Equally important, co-workers are not just a necessary element of the job; but they do co-create the social atmosphere in workplace together. Nonetheless, most workplace's guanxi (a sort of social networking behaviour) research often focuses on the dynamics of supervisors and subordinates, making co-worker relationship understudied. Regardless of the scarcity of research, there is evidence of the impact of co-worker support in reducing stress and burnout (Halbesleben, 2006), promoting employee task performance (Karatepe, 2012), and reducing turnover intentions (Karatepe, 2013). Besides, Chiaburu and Harrison (2008) used a meta-analysis to explain the connections between co-worker support and employee outcomes such as role perceptions, work attitude, individual retreat, and effectiveness. In this regard, maintaining close relationships with co-worker has become very important.

Objective of study

General objective:

1. To examine the relationship between social support and career success.

Specific objective:

1. To examine the relationship between supervisor support and career success.
2. To examine the relationship between co-worker support and career success.
3. To examine the dominant factor that influences career success among the employees in the hospitality industry.

Research hypothesis

Ha1: There is a significant relationship between supervisor support and career success.

Ha2: There is a significant relationship between co-worker support and career success.

Ha3: There is a dominant factor that influences career success among the employees in the hospitality industry.

Conceptual framework

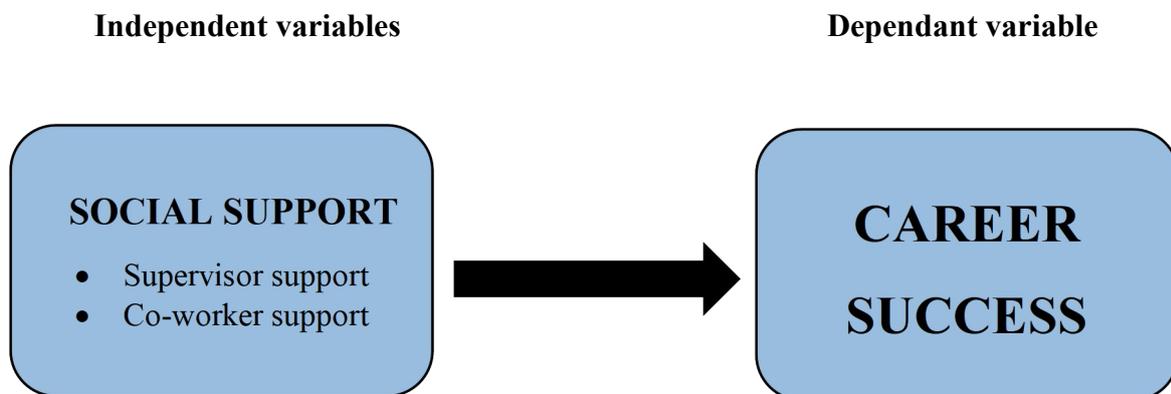


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for social support and career success. Based on the objectives, social support is an independent variable while career success is a dependent variable. Moreover, social support is made up from two elements namely supervisor support and co-worker support.

Significance of the study

This study contributes to the body of knowledge as it will provide necessary information on the need for the hospitality industry by using appropriate intervention to help the employees. Thus, few employees from the hospitality industry are selected in this study. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine if there is a relationship between independent and dependent variable. This study will also contribute to academic literature, particularly in the Malaysian setting. Furthermore, this study helps to develop the existence of theories and models in the aspect of career success. Hence, the theories that have been improved in this study may be used for future studies.

Limitations of the study

The focus of this study is to test the relationship between social support and career success in the hospitality industry in Sibul, Sarawak. Hence, the findings of this study may not be applicable to other industries.

It is impossible to deny that this study is challenging since there are limitations in the study. Besides, due to the current situation, Covid-19 pandemic has been limiting researcher to do data collection and the process has taken more time than it should. As a result, it has been affecting and limiting the researcher to carry out the research as how it should be carried out.

On the other hand, researcher only choose one variable that affects career success which is social support even though there are several variables that can be chosen based on past studies. As reported by (Saksri, 2018), morale, work performance and social support are variables that can affect career success. Hence, it can be chosen in this study but the

researcher chooses social support. Therefore, limitations of the study are happening here as limited articles recommend future researcher to do this topic. Overall, this study should be conducted extensively so that the information and the data obtained later are aligned with the purpose of this study.

Definition of terms

Table 1 Conceptual and Operational Definition of Terms

Terms	Conceptual	Operational
Social Support	Social support refers to different types of support that people receive from others and generally divided into two (sometimes three) main categories: emotional, instrumental (and sometimes informational) support (Seeman, 2008).	In this study, social support is a support that is provided by a supervisor and co-worker.
Career Success	Career success is described as the “positive psychological or work-related outcomes or accomplishments that one has accrued as a result of one’s work experiences” (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995 p. 486).	In this study, career success is described as achieving desired work-related outcomes at any point during a person's work experience over time.

Summary

The background and purpose of this study has been clearly explained by the researcher in this first chapter. There are some specific objectives that will be studied in this study that have been mentioned which have been translated into problem statements. The research framework and hypotheses have also been made. In the next chapter, the researcher will explain the literature review of this study based on the previous studies.