ETHICAL BELIEFS OF HOTEL EMPLOYEES IN MALAYSIA

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INTRODUCTION

Unethical consumer practices in Asian countries have attracted much attention from business practitioners. However, it seems that little attention has been paid equally to employee ethics and behaviours in the workplace.

Service industry have launched a slogan "customer is god", but how can satisfy your "god" desire - that is about what products and services are likely to be provided to them. An improved professional service has been happening in south-east Asian countries especially in Malaysia. In 2007, when Malaysia is to celebrate 50 years national hood, most hotels improve their customer services to attract more guests coming. However, in the service industry and in the hotel industry in particular, besides the quality, the ethical standards and behaviors of the direct service providers (the staff members) are critical elements of the business transaction. Consumers are not satisfied with just the hotel environment and devices, or their tangible feelings of the hotel experience; the degree of guests' satisfaction depends much more on how they perceive they are being treated by the hotel's staff. Realizing on this, hotel management must aim to create a rewarding ethical environment which will enhance the service quality being delivered to the customers. Most employees prefer to work in an environment that has high ethical standards. Controls and auditing are less effective when the ethics and integrity of an organization and its management cannot be affirmed and surely this will not benefit the hotels.

Research Objective and Significance of Study

This research aims to investigate the job-related ethical beliefs of hotel employees. Ethics is now becoming more important than before in attracting customers besides superior service, quality products and competitive pricing (Dreyfack, 1990).

Another argument is presented by Lynch (1992) who proposed that quality and ethics can transform total quality management (TQM) into total care management. He pointed out that ethical behaviour should include six values: legality, equity, social legitimacy, justification, confidentiality and sincerity. TQM is now widely practiced in Marriott and Ritz Carlton chain hotel groups. There seems little doubt that their ethical beliefs of the service employees in hotels can influence a customer's final satisfaction.

In order to ensure consistently high quality service based on high ethical standards, it is important for hotel managers to understand the ethical values and job-related behaviours of their employees. Employees often faced ethically ambiguous situations in hotel industry. This could be due to hotel business's odd hours and unpredictable events that often present employees with tempting opportunities. Ethical ambiguity also stems from the fact that employees and guests are from many cultures, which means that people in hotels can have a variety of expectations and ethical standards. Besides that, while managers may attempt to establish high ethical standards, such information does not always reach frontline employees. Adding to this mix, high turnover rate of staff and the uses of part time employees has a recipe for ethical disasters.

By its nature, hotel industry places employees and guests in situations that might be morally ambiguous. In some of these situations, for instance, people may be in a position to steal money or items, while other situations may involve personal interaction that can be considered inappropriate.

Besides that, guests themselves may try to induce employees to behave unethical such as bribing the staff to ignore the theft of hotel property. As employees always face ethical challenges in their workplace, employees must make instant decisions about what to do, often without direct supervision and often in the absence clear corporate code of conduct.

Employee work ethics are therefore more important for service industries than in other industries. Managers need to identify those situations where temptation and potential ethical dilemmas exist for their staff members and they need to devise a clear corporate code of conduct that all employees understand and abide by. Along this line of thinking, an individual's belief on work ethics becomes his/her basic compass for all judgments as well as temptation. An employee's individual ethical beliefs also affect their final judgments on any work-related challenges.

As ethics are equally important to employees and they face similar ethical dilemmas like the consumers, we aim to investigate the hotel employees' ethical beliefs in their workplace. This would be a worth area of study as employees also face similar ethical dilemma like consumers in the marketplace. The consequences of their behaviours, however, may be more far-reaching; the way employees carry out their work can determine customer perceptions of the hotels, and subsequently impact the organization's profitability. Addition to that, we also aim to addressed the current ethical standards of hotel industry in Malaysia and propose the strategies and ways to ensure high ethical standards environment in hotels besides the quality.

Scope of the Study

Our study is designated to investigate on five-star hotel employees in Klang Valley. A questionnaire is developed to test employees' job-related ethical beliefs. This questionnaire is similar to the one conducted by Wong et. al (1996) followed by Simon Chak (1998).

Our main target is to focus on three service departments where the hotel staffs directly do their services for guests. Those core working units including housekeeping, food and beverage, and front office. Therefore, some common ethical challenges in purchasing and sales departments (i.e. non-service encounter departments) were excluded. Nevertheless, questionnaires were also distributed to other departments such as human resource, kitchen, finance, security and sales departments for comparison purposes with results of the three main departments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In reviewing past literature on business ethics, Forsyth focused on moral standards in general and certain dishonest behaviour (Forsyth, 1980). Barnett and Karson discovered that each moral judgment was situation-specific (Barnett and Karson, 1987). Some studies also reported that the types and years of education, and the types and years of employment, were related to an individual's ethical beliefs (Beltramini, 1984; Hawkins and Cocanougher, 1972).

Mars (1984) concluded his findings on understanding people's behaviours in his book: Cheats at Work. He summarized and classified people into four groups: hawks, donkeys, wolves and vultures. Each group bears a different set of attitudes and how they view the world. After that, more and more researchers participated in investigating work ethic issues such as Brodeur (1995) on work ethics in health care organizations and Punch (1996) on exploring corporate misconduct.

Stevens, B and Fleckenstein, A. (1999), studied on seven true-to-life hotel employee situations with potentially ambiguous ethical overtones. The scenarios involved stealing, sharing company secrets, racism, sexual harassment, violating hotel policies and lying. Hotel managers and college students rated how ethical they considered the employees' actions to be in each scenario. Stealing money was roundly condemned, for instance, but the other assessments were not unanimous. In general, students were less likely than managers to view a situation as very unethical, although all the situations were viewed as unethical in some measure by both groups.

Inman, C. and Enz, C. (1995), studied the behavior of part time workers in hotels. Their study shows that critical work attitudes and behavior were as strongly exhibited by part-time workers as by full-time workers, including such measures as competence, work ethic, attendance, and acceptance of organizational standards and values. They concluded that food-service industry should therefore try to retain part-time employees by offering enhanced compensation packages, providing adequate training, establishing clear communication channels, allowing access to different jobs and responsibilities, and offering employment benefits.

Austin, K. (1993), concluded that when something such as money or a favor is offered or given to someone to influence views or conduct, coercion is implied. If it is a bribe, it is collected right away, but if it is merely an incentive, it is fairly worked for.

Steven, B. and Brownell, J. (2000), studied on communicating standards and influencing behaviour in the hotel industry. Their study showed that ethics is a good thing for an organization. Employees, managers and top executives need to behave ethically so that the public can be confident that a company is not engaging in illegal practices, that managers are not harassing and threatening employees, and that line workers are not stealing from the company or from guests. They concluded by saying that a business can never have high enough ethical standards.

Siu, V., Tsang, N. and Wong, S. (1997), studied on what motivates Hong Kong's hotel employees. Respondents were asked to rank 10 job-related factors that might motivate them in their jobs. A sample of hotel employees in Hong Kong listed the following three factors as uppermost: 1-Opportunities for advancement and development; 2-Loyalty to employees (company treats with respect and trust); and 3-Good wages. While the specific rankings of the top motivating factors change slightly from department to department, the top factors were remarkably consistent.

Damitio, J., Schmidgall, R. (1993) surveyed club managers, hotel general managers and accounting managers to obtain their opinions on business situations with ethical implications. Seven scenarios described a hypothetical manager's reactions to a situation involving ethics. The scenarios involved salary, hired spies, yard work, new roof, cash coverage, fringe benefits and free wine. The three groups were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the manager's response. Overall there was reasonably good agreement among the three groups regarding the ethical underpinnings of the seven scenarios. The study of seven scenarios suggests that there is a reasonable amount of agreement across three professional management groups as to what constitutes ethical behavior.

Koss-Feder, L. (1995) in their "True hospitality requires some humanity" concluded that hotel employees need to be trained in handling unexpected problems. According to them, guests are people, not just confirmation numbers.

Fox, J. (2000) studied on managerial ethical standards in Croatia's hotel industry. The author feels that good managerial ethical standards are important and necessary in the hospitality industry. The costs of a poor ethical environment are high. In his research, employee attitude surveys were used to determine the prevailing ethical environment of Croatia's hotel industry. Results recommend its immediate improvement: the dominating self-centered managerial style has to develop a more biased prosocial behavior.

According to Vallen, G. and Casado, M. (2000), a survey of 45 general managers of the largest hotels in several U.S. states found a strong perception that hotel-industry workers and managers do not always behave ethically. The General Managers' estimates of the annual cost of ethical violations in their own hotels ranged from under $10,000 to over $500,000, with a mean exceeding $100,000. Given a list of 12 ethical principles, the respondents ranked the concepts according to their importance to profitable hotel operation and then again according to how frequently each principle was breached. The four most important ethical principles for successful operation were leadership, accountability, commitment to excellence, and integrity. The three most-often-breached principles (in the managers' view) were accountability, commitment to excellence, and respect for others. Anecdotal comments comprised scathing observations of unethical behavior. Like so many people, the respondents considered

themselves more ethical than others in the industry and also believed that the industry itself had a distance to go in relation to other businesses.

In 1992, Vitell and Muncy develop a questionnaire to check consumers' ethical beliefs in a general manner. They studied the influence of personal attitudes on ethical decision-making. Correlation analysis was used to check the relationship between people's general attitudes and their ethical judgments. The result generated four-dimensional factors:

1. Actively benefiting
2. Passively benefiting
3. Deceptive "legal" practices
4. No harm

Using the same four-dimensional factors model used by Vitell and Muncy (1992), Simon Chak (1998) investigated the job-related ethical beliefs of hotel employees in Hong Kong. The results show that the four-dimensional factors model as suggested by Vitell and Muncy (1992) can explain hotel employees' job-related ethics. Correlation analysis revealed that there was a significant relationship among the four factors and the general attitudinal statements. Significant differences were observed when analyzing the demographic variables (eg. age ad education level) with the four factors including: no harm; unethical behaviours; actively benefiting; and passively benefiting. The results suggest the need for a clearer ethical policy for employees, and the identification of the behaviours that are viewed as "no harm" in the work environment. He concluded that hotel management would benefit by being able to identify those areas where employees need guidance and training.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

There are 21 statements related to employee attitudes towards work-related situation (employee job-related ethics) which act as an independent variable. The employee job-related ethic concept consists of five dimensions, which are No Harm, Unethical Behaviours, Actively Benefiting, Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act and Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act. Dependent variable in this study is general attitudinal characteristics, which consists of six attitudinal statements. The relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable is shown in Figure 3.0.

FIGURE 3: Diagram of the Relationships among Independent and Dependent Variables

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable
Employee job-related ethics a. *No Harm* b. *Unethical Behaviours* c. *Actively Benefiting* d. *Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act* e. *Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act*	**General Attitude Characteristics**
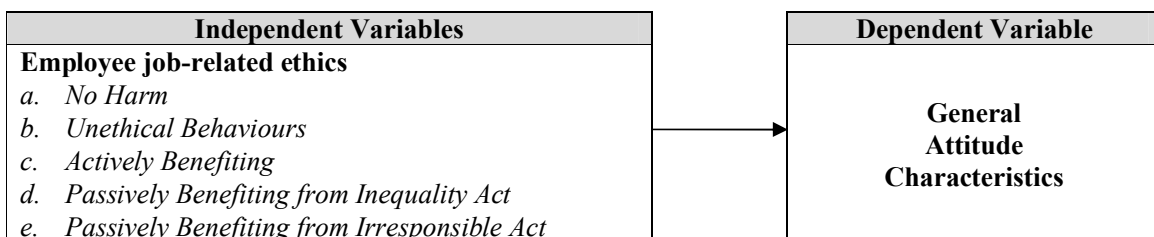
Research Hypotheses
The following hypotheses will be tested in the study:

Hypothesis 1:
H_0:   There is no relationship between hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace and the six general attitude characteristics.
H_1:   There is a relationship between hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace and the six general attitude characteristics.

Hypothesis 2:
H_0:   There is no difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace between all the working departments.
H_2:   There is a difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in their workplace between all the working departments.

Hypothesis 3:
H_0:   There is no difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace between genders.
H_3:   There is a difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in their workplace between genders.

Hypothesis 4:
H_0:   There is no difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace between age groups.
H_4:   There is a difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in their workplace between age groups.

Hypothesis 5:
H_0:   There is no difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace between education levels.
H_5:   There is a difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in their workplace between education levels.

Hypothesis 6:
H_0:   There is no difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace between position levels.
H_6:   There is a difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in their workplace between position levels.

Selection of Measures and Test Statements

We have developed a questionnaire to test employees' job-related ethics among the hotels in Malaysia. The questionnaire was used in a similar survey conducted by Wong et al. (1996) and Simon Chak (1998). 21 statements related to job-related ethics was devised to test employees' attitudes towards work-related situations, and another six additional general attitudinal statements were used to test respondents' attitudes towards guest service and humankind.

For study on hotels, many unethical statements can be developed. However, in this study, we will focus on three major working environments where there is direct service occur between hotel employees and guests compare to other working environments. The three major service environments are Housekeeping, Front Office, and Food & Beverage departments. Although we focus on this three departments, respondents from other departments such as Human Resource, Sales & Marketing, Security etc were also surveyed in order to compare the results between the three major departments with other departments.

The survey questionnaire is divided into three sections, which are:
- Section 1: 21 ethical statements to test ethical beliefs of hotel employees with the relation to their workplace.
- Section 2: six general attitudinal statements to test respondents' attitude towards guest service and humankind in general.
- Section 3: respondents' profile.

Respondents Demographic Profile

Respondent's demographic profile which under Section 3 of the questionnaire was collected from the survey. This information includes gender, age group, education level, working department and position level in their hotels.

Development of Test Measures

In Section 1 (21 statements) and Section 2 (6 statements), 5 point scale was used to study ethical beliefs at workplace of the hotel employees. In Section 1, respondents were required to indicate their degree of attitude towards the ethical statements based on the following scale:
1 = Strongly Wrong
2 = Wrong
3 = Neutral
4 = Not Wrong
5 = Strongly Not Wrong

For Section 2, respondents were required to indicate their degree of agreement towards the general attitude characteristics based on the following scale:
1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

Sampling Design

The sample population consisted of the five-star hotel employees in Klang Valley. According to Euromonitor International, there were a total of 537 star-rated hotels for Malaysia in 2005, comprised of 72 five-star hotels, 86 four-star hotels, 141 three-star hotels, 158 two-star hotels and 80 one-star hotels.

From all the five-star hotels in Klang Valley, 10 hotels were randomly selected. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed where 15 sets for each of the selected hotels. The questionnaires were distributed via Human Resource Department and friends who working in that hotels. Most hotels either distributed the questionnaires to different departments for filling in, or distributed in the staff canteen.

Though confidentiality was strongly emphasized, hotel employees may be cautious in answering the questionnaire. Nevertheless, the answers represented the people's ethical beliefs only, whether they would "actually perform" in real life is difficult to verify. It is not possible to check the employees' actual behaviour as compared to what they answered in the questionnaire. Although recognizing these natural limitations, we believe that the data collected should represent an overall feeling of hotel employees' ethical beliefs. In total, 101 useful completed questionnaires were collected. This represents a response rate of 67%. The whole process of data collection took about two months, from February to March 2007.

Data Analysis Techniques

Respondents Demographic Profile

The respondents' demographic profiles such as sex, age, education level, working department and position level in hotel will be analyzed and presented in the form of frequency tables.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a class of multivariate statistical methods whose primary purpose is to define the underlying structure in a data matrix. With factor analysis, the analyst can first identify the separate dimensions of the structure and then determine the extent to which each variable is explained by each dimension. This dimension can be used for summarization and data reduction. Hair et al. (1995) suggest the various criteria for selecting the right number of factors: "The factor analysis should always strive to have the most representative and parsimonious set of factors possible". "Latent root/eigenvalue" criterion will be applied.

A principal component analysis with varimax rotation test will be performed to factor analysis hotel employees' job-related ethics. The decision to include a variable in a factor will be based on factor loading of 0.5, and an eigenvalue over 1. Further, an alpha test will be performed to test the internal reliability of the results for each factor. Reliability can be defined as the degree to which measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results.

Factors identified from this analysis will be used for further analysis in this study. The six general attitudinal statements in Section 2 of the questionnaire will be analyzed to determine the degree of respondents' ethical beliefs. Mean score and the ranking of the six-attitudinal statements will be determined for analysis and interpretation.

Correlation Analysis

Factors identified from factor analysis will be analyzed with the six general attitudinal statements (in Section 2) by correlation analysis using Parson Coefficient. This coefficient will indicate both the magnitude and direction of the relationship between the variables.

Independent T-test by Gender

T-test is a technique used to test the hypothesis that man scores on some variable will be significantly different for two independent samples or groups. An independent t-test for gender will be performed to test the differences between the two gender groups.

ANOVA Analysis

ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) is used when there is a need to compare the means of two or more groups or populations. ANOVA analysis will also be performed to test the mean differences between the working department, age, education level, and position level with the factors identified. The tolerance level of unethical behaviours by working department, age group, education level and position level will be analyzed to determine whether they is any significant level of differences among the demographic variables.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Respondents Demographic Profile
A summary of the respondents' statistic is presented in frequency tables. We analyzed the demographic profile of the respondents such as gender, age group, education level, working department and position level by using analysis of frequency.

Respondents Gender
There are 101 respondents responded out of the 150 questionnaire distributed, representing a response rate of 67%. Table 1 (Appendix 1) shows the number of respondents by gender. Male respondents are slightly higher than female respondents with composition of 50.5% and 49.5% respectively.

Respondents Age Group
Majority of the respondents are from age group 21 – 25, that is 32.7%. This are follow by 23.8% for 26 – 30 age group level and 18.8% for 31 – 35 age group level. Lowest respondents are from 45 years old onwards with 1% respectively for each group of 46 – 50 years old and over 50 years old. Table 2 (Appendix 1) shows in details the frequency of respondents by age group.

Respondents Education Level
Majority of the respondents are secondary school educated (40.6%). This is quite representative of hotel employee's population as Malaysia hotel industry employ low level education staff for most of its department such as food & beverage, housekeeping and security. 29.7% of the respondents are from university level. This number is slightly higher due to respondents are from departments such human

resource, finance/accounting, engineering and sales and marketing, which normally employ University graduates.

There are 20.8% of respondents from vocational institute while 6.9% from primary or below and 2% from post-graduate level. The result is in Table 3 (Appendix 1).

Respondents Working Department
As we focus the study into three working departments which the employees' duties are directly affect to the hotel guests, majority of the respondents are from housekeeping (16.8%), food and beverage (18.8%), and front office (17.8%) departments. These three departments accounted for 53.4% of the respondents. As we recall from the survey, questionnaires were also distributed to other departments such as human resource, kitchen, sales and marketing, finance/accounting, security, and engineering. Details of the results are presented in Table 4 (Appendix 1).

Respondents Position Level
Majority of the respondents were general staff such as food and beverage assistants and housekeeping attendants. Based on the survey, 51.5% of the respondents were in general staff grade. This phenomenon is desirable for the study as these workers have direct dealings with the hotel guests. 22.8% of the respondents are from supervisory grade and 19.8% from managerial level such as section head and middle-level executives. Only 5.9% of the respondents are from top-executive level such as departmental head. (Appendix 1: Table 5)

ANALYSIS OF STATISTICAL RESULTS

Mean Score Analysis

Most hotel employees responded quite strongly that they believed that all ethical situations listed were "wrong" with an overall mean value of 1.69 (Appendix 1: Table 6). The results show an "ethical" atmosphere among the five-star hotels employees in Malaysia. This result may due to the fact that employees may have been afraid that their answers would be viewed by hotel management. To anticipating this situation beforehand, our group members had already given a clear instruction to the hotels on the "way" to conduct this survey. However, after analysis of the variance and the trend of degree agreement in each statement, we concluded that the sample collected could be used for statistical analysis.

Factor Analysis

A principal component analysis with a varimax rotation test was conducted based on factor loading of 0.5 and eigenvalue over 1. Further, and alphas test was performed to test the internal reliability of the results. By convention, a lenient cut-off of .60 is common in exploratory research; alpha should be at least .70 or higher to retain an item in an "adequate" scale; and many researchers require a cut-off of .80 for a "good scale. Based on the reliability analysis, each factor had an alpha test more than 0.6. Therefore, we concluded that the five factors extracted from factor analysis could be used for the purpose of statistical analysis.

These factors are different from the previous studies conducted by Wong et al (1996) and Simon Chak (1998), where four factors were used based on the four-dimensional factors model used by Vitell and Muncy (1992).

The five factors in our study were:
1. Factor 1: No Harm
2. Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours
3. Factor 3: Actively Benefiting
4. Factor 4: Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act
5. Factor 5: Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act

Table 7 (Appendix 1) summarizes the results of the factor analysis.

In this research, we believe that the employees do not rely on the sources of benefits developed by Wong et al. (1996). The results showed that hotel employees do not concern themselves about the sources of benefits (from the guests or hotel). Rather, whether the benefits are active or passive determines the underlying motive of their ethical beliefs.

In ranking the five ascending order ranging from 1, "Strongly believe that is wrong," to 5, "Strongly believe that it is not wrong" (Appendix 1: Table 8), it was discovered that hotel employees were less tolerant of the two factors; "Factor 5: Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act" (mean value = 1.53) and "Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours" (mean value = 1.56). "Factor 1: No Harm" was slightly higher than Factor 2 and Factor 5 with mean value 1.64. This shows that hotel employees were also less tolerant of this factor. On the other hand, employees reacted with more tolerance to "Factor 4: Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act" (mean value = 1.83) and "Factor 3: Actively Benefiting" (mean value = 1.86). In conclusion, the overall mean value is 1.68. In the survey conducted by Simon Chak (1998) in Hong Kong, the overall mean value obtained was only 1.19 (Appendix 1: Table 9). This shows that a perception that Hong Kong employees have lower tolerance level towards unethical behaviours as compared to employees in Malaysia.

In analyzing the six general attitudinal statements (Appendix 1: Table 10), it was found that employees tended to disagree with sacrificing the company for the sake of customer satisfaction. People reacted positively towards the benefit of the hotel rather than the guest ("Satisfying a guest's needs is necessary even if it is contradictory to company's policy"). This ranking is same with the survey conducted by Simon Chak (1998). Respondents also disagree that "Man is basically good" and "If a guest treats me well, I should serve him/her better". However, hotel employees choose honesty rather than satisfaction with a mean value 3.17 on "Honesty is more important than guest satisfaction". This mean value indicated a slight inclination to believe that guest satisfaction is more important than honesty. Finally, respondents agree positively on "If something is illegal, then it must be ethically wrong to do it" and "Flexibility is more important than honesty". Most of the results are differ from the past study by Simon Chak (1998).

Correlation Analysis

The five factors: No Harm, Unethical Behaviours, Actively Benefiting, Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act, and Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act were analyzed with the six general attitudinal statements by correlation analysis using Pearson coefficient. Results of the analysis were not consistent with the study done by Simon Chak (1998) in Hong Kong.

From the analysis (Appendix 1: Table 11), Statement 22: "Satisfying a guest's needs is necessary even if it is contradictory to company's policy" positively correlated with Factor 1: "No Harm" and Factor 2: "Unethical Behaviours". This suggests that employees may tend to behave unethically towards the company for the sake of better customer service.

Statement 23: "If a guest treats me well, I should serve him/her better" correlated negatively with Factor 1: "No Harm". This shows that employees are not tolerate to unethical behaviour in response to a guest's kind treatment. Employees will not satisfy the guests even though there may be unethical behaviours involved.

As for Statement 26: "If something is illegal, then it must be ethically wrong to do it", this statement correlated positively to Factor 1: "No Harm" but correlated negatively to Factor 5: "Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act". This suggests that employees might tolerate to certain ethical behaviours which they feel less negative impact to them. However, employees have lower tolerance to Factor 5. This might be because employee believes that those unethical behaviours from irresponsible act could bring more negative impact to them indirectly although they benefiting it directly from that behaviour.

Finally, Statement 24: "Honesty is more important than guest satisfaction", Statement 25: "Man is basically good", and Statement 27: "Flexibility is more important than honesty" were found no particular correlation with the five factors identified.

Independent T-test by Gender

An independent t-test was performed to test the differences between the two genders. From the analysis, we concluded that there were no significant differences between the genders for all the five factors at significant value of 0.05 (overall significant value = 0.426). This meant that both genders reacted in a similar way that was not tolerating to unethical behaviours.

Although both genders were reacted similarly, we found that female (1.61) have lower tolerance towards unethical behaviours than men (1.76) by comparing the overall mean value. Result of the analysis is shown in Table 12 (Appendix 1).

ANOVA Analysis by Working Department

ANOVA analysis was performed to understand the further differences between the department and the five factors. The result showed that there were no significant differences between the departments for all the five factors where the employees of all the departments believed that it was wrong to act in unethical manners (overall significant value = 0.413).

In overall mean, we found that sales and marketing department (overall mean = 1.47) had lowest tolerance towards unethical behaviours while housekeeping and engineering (overall mean = 1.77) had the highest tolerance toward unethical behaviours. Our focus departments (housekeeping, front office and food and beverage) had high tolerance towards unethical behaviours compare to other departments. The result can be found in Table 13 (Appendix 1).

ANOVA Analysis of Age Group

ANOVA analysis was performed to test the differences between age group with the five factors. In analyzing the age group with the five factors, there were no significant differences found for all the five factors (overall significant value = 0.466).

By comparing the overall mean, younger employees such as those aged 18-20 and 26-30 showed higher tolerance of unethical behaviours rather than older employees with aged 46-50. The result can be viewed from Table 14 (Appendix 1).

ANOVA Analysis of Education Level

From the analysis, there were no significant differences between education levels with all the five factors (overall significant value = 0.505). Based on overall mean, it seems that the lower the education level, the more likely that hotel employees tolerate unethical behaviours. Respondents from primary and secondary showed the greatest differences in term of their value towards unethical behaviours. Table 15 (Appendix 1) summarizes the findings for the overall ANOVA analysis by education level of respondents.

ANOVA Analysis of Position Level

As for the analysis of position level with all the five factors, we found that no significant differences in all the five factors (overall significant value = 0.404). Based on this finding, we can conclude that Malaysia hotel employees, despite differences in their job levels, reacted in similar ways towards unethical behaviours.

From the overall mean, general staff had the highest tolerance towards unethical behaviours than other position levels. Table 15 (Appendix 1) summarizes the result of ANOVA analysis.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

This study reveals that there are five major dimensions, which govern the hotel employees' ethical beliefs. There are:
1. Factor 1: No Harm
2. Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours
3. Factor 3: Actively Benefiting
4. Factor 4: Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act
5. Factor 5: Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act

In this study, hotel employees reacted positively in their ethical judgments since all the mean scores of the five factors were less than 2.0. Most respondents responded most of the statements as wrong. This was a healthy phenomenon for Malaysia hotel industry though rather higher than expected.

Hypothesis 1:
H_0: *There is no relationship between hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace and the six general attitude characteristics.*
H_1: *There is a relationship between hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace and the six general attitude characteristics.*

The overall result shows that there is a relationship among the five factors and the six general attitude characteristics. Thus, null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2:
H_0: *There is no difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace between all the working departments.*
H_2: *There is a difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in their workplace between all the working departments.*

The result shows there is no significant difference between the five factors across all working departments. Thus, null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected. The overall mean shows that our focus departments (food and beverage, housekeeping, and front office) have higher tolerance towards unethical behaviours compare to other departments.

Hypothesis 3:
H_0: *There is no difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace between genders.*
H_3: *There is a difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in their workplace between genders.*

We concluded that there were no significant differences between male and female for all the five factors. Thus, null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 4:
H_0: *There is no difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace between age groups.*
H_4: *There is a difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in their workplace between age groups.*

The overall result shows that there is no difference among the five factors and age group. Thus, null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected. Younger employees (under 30 years old) tend to show more tolerant of unethical behaviours when comparing the overall mean across age group.

Hypothesis 5:
H_0: *There is no difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace between education levels.*
H_5: *There is a difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in their workplace between education levels.*

From the study, there is no difference among the five factors and education levels. Thus, null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected. In overall mean, employees from

primary and secondary showed the greatest differences in term of their value towards unethical behaviours.

Hypothesis 6:
H_0: There is no difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in workplace between position levels.
H_6: There is a difference in hotel employees' ethical beliefs in their workplace between position levels.

The result shows there is no significant difference between the five factors across all position levels. Thus, null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Generally, based on the results of the survey, we can conclude that Malaysia hotel employees have reasonably low tolerance towards unethical behaviours. This research fulfilled the objective of finding out more about hotel employees' job-related ethical beliefs in Malaysia. Hotel management should be able to get an insight in how to ensure a consistency of quality service in this competitive industry in Malaysia.

Nevertheless, when placed in ranking order, Factor 3: "Actively Benefiting" activity was rated as the highest mean score comparatively. This indicated that employees showed a higher tolerance on the activities they thought would benefit them. It is important for hoteliers to understand how their employees think. There is a saying: "What we think affects what we act". Therefore, hotel management should ensure that communication on message such as what should and should not do in hotel is reachable and understandable by all hotel employees in order to minimize unethical beliefs in hotel environment.

Recommendations

In order to minimize the potential embarrassment due to any ethical dilemma faced by the employees, we suggest the following recommendations to the hotel management:

1. In analyzing the correlation among the five factors and the six general attitudinal statements, employees tend to choose satisfying a guest than following company policy (Statement 22). Ethical employees should follow company policy instead of satisfying guests by violating the company policy. Company policy act as the minimal general guidelines that is compulsory for each employee to comply with. It was also found that employees tend to feel that it is ethical not wrong to do something that is illegal when they feel that those activities do not harm them (Factor 1: "No Harm"). Hotel management should emphasizes and create awareness to employees that it is wrong and unethical to do something that is illegal although less harm and low possibility of getting caught.

2. Although all employees from different departments reacted similarly towards unethical behaviours, our focus departments which have closest contact to the guests have potential of high tolerant towards unethical behaviours if comparing to other departments. As this will deteriorate the relationship between hotel management and customers, it is worth to pay more attention to these departments and study the impact of staffs' ethical judgment towards customers to ensure that the service quality and customer satisfaction is maintained.

3. Younger employees (those aged under 30) seemed to be more tolerant of unethical behaviours in general. Therefore, hotel management should start to perform ethical test in recruiting processes. It is not enough to judge a person based on technical ability only as ethic also play an important role in hotel industry. Moreover, company should include ethical education in hotel orientation programmes so that employees are briefed clearly once they start working. This can be done not just by oral presentation but also include video show during the orientation programme to educate employees on the situations which is consider ethical or unethical.

4. Finally, this research reveals that there is a strong need for a proper education and training to all hotel employees especially to those with lower education levels as this group of employees is more tolerant of unethical behaviours. Proper guidance and clear guidelines of ethical boundaries should be taught in an orientation or training programme. Hotel management should make compulsory for every employee to attend a refresher ethical training yearly and organize a daily short session of by each sections to discuss all the ethical dilemmas faced by employees.

In general, hotel management can benefit most by understanding more about their employees react and behave when faced an ethical dilemma. This study reveals that there are five major dimensions which govern the hotel employees' ethical beliefs. Statistically, it seems that hotel management can improve the three dimensions: "No Harm", "Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act" and "Actively Benefiting", since employees perceived these dimensions as "less unethical".

Recommendation for Future Research

This research only marks a preliminary study of hotel employees' ethical beliefs focusing on three main major services (front office, food and beverage, and housekeeping). Less emphasis was placed in other departments which have less direct contact to the customers. We suggest for further research in the following areas:

1. Further research can be conducted in other departments such as sales and marketing, human resources, security, and other areas to compare the results of this study. Besides that, another set of statements about more ethically-challenging job-related situations could be devised in other working areas in the hospitality industry in order to give a more holistic picture of the job-related ethics of employees.

2. We also suggest testing hotel employees from different rated hotels such as four-star, three-star and budget hotels in order to test the differences of ethical beliefs from different working environment.

3. This research limits the sample to hotel employees from Klang Valley only. We suggest including hotel employees from other hotels across Malaysia such as Johor, Penang, Perak, Kedah or others in the study in order to get a better analysis on overall ethical beliefs of Malaysia hotel employees.

4. Besides that, similar research could also be done in other countries such as Asian countries to identify and compare the ethical beliefs among hotel employees between Malaysia and other countries.

5. Further research can also be done to survey hotel guests' attitudes on these ethical issues. Hotel guests may feel ethically correct when tempting the hotel employees who face an ethical dilemma. Therefore, hotel management should understand the ethical beliefs from employees and customers perspective in order to create high ethical standards in hotel environment.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are:
- This sample does not represent all hotel employees in Malaysia from all hotels rating, because all the respondents are from five-star hotels in Klang Valley. The results could be different if the study is conducted nationwide.
- Total number of questionnaires collected from the survey is only 101. This sample size is consider small and does not represent the whole hotel employees' view in Malaysia.
- Respondents are selected by using quota sampling and convenient sampling techniques. Quota sampling is used to obtain more respondents from the three major working departments (food and beverage, front office and housekeeping) as these departments are the focus of the study. Convenient sampling is used to obtain higher response from respondents. A research using convenient sampling signals that the study lacks of objectivity (Zikmund, W.G., 1997).

- We faced limited information, data and literature on this topic of study due to limited researches on this topic by local researchers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of Tables

TABLE 1: Respondents Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	51	50.5
Female	50	49.5
Total	**101**	**100.0**

TABLE 2: Respondents Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	Percent (%)
18 - 20	8	7.9
21 - 25	33	32.7
26 - 30	24	23.8
31 - 35	19	18.8
36 - 40	10	9.9
41 - 45	5	5.0
46 - 50	1	1.0
Over 50	1	1.0
Total	**101**	**100.0**

TABLE 3: Respondents Education Level

Education Level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Primary or below	7	6.9
Secondary	41	40.6
Vocational Institute	21	20.8
University	30	29.7
Post-graduate	2	2.0
Total	**101**	**100.0**

TABLE 4: Respondents Working Department

Working Department	Frequency	Percent (%)
House keeping	17	16.8
Front office	18	17.8
Human resource	5	5.0
Food and Beverage	19	18.8
Kitchen	5	5.0
Finance/Accounting	9	8.9
Security	6	5.9
Engineering	14	13.9
Sales and Marketing	8	7.9
Total	**101**	**100.0**

TABLE 5: Respondents Position Level

Position Level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Top- Executive	6	5.9
Managerial Grade	20	19.8
Supervisory Grade	23	22.8
General Staff	52	51.5
Total	**101**	**100.0**

TABLE 6: Mean Score of Ethical Statements

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean_Score	101	1.00	4.24	1.6907	.49090

TABLE 7: Results of Factor Analysis

Factor name and items	Mean	SD	Factor Loading	Alpha test	Eigenvalue
Factor 1: No Harm				0.893	7.689
Watching TV or a hotel movie in a guest room	1.50	0.890	0.838		
Making telephone call in a guest room	1.57	0.920	0.838		
Listening to the radio in a guest room	1.54	0.742	0.775		
Using the toilet in a guest room	1.60	0.788	0.759		
Eating an extra meal in the staff canteen without a valid coupon	1.98	0.916	0.519		
Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours				0.856	2.358
Breaking a glass or plate but blaming it on a guest 's carelessness	1.42	0.875	0.780		
Consuming mini bar beverages and charging them to a guest's	1.32	0.692	0.763		
Offering free coffee or tea to a friends in the restaurant without issuing a captain's order	1.61	0.812	0.671		
Not dropping cash tips to the central pool and keeping them personally	1.69	0.880	0.665		
Not issuing a captain's order to the cashier while still getting food	1.58	0.803	0.652		
Collecting left-over fruits from guest rooms for self-consumption	1.73	0.811	0.601		
Factor 3: Actively Benefiting				0.869	1.854
Eating left over food from the buffet at the back of the house	1.97	0.854	0.875		
Drinking or eating company food at the back of the house	1.78	0.965	0.837		
Consuming soft drink in the bar before the bar is in operation	1.83	0.884	0.762		
Factor 4: Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act				0.688	1.469
Accessing info about a guest through computer out of curiosity	2.22	0.976	0.812		
Releasing guest info to friend	1.60	0.722	0.777		
Upgrading a "familiar" guest to a higher grade room type	1.67	0.776	0.662		

Factor 5: Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act				0.610	1.390
Releasing the room number to a stranger	1.47	0.657	0.825		
Not changing the bed sheets in guest room due to busy work	1.58	0.711	0.622		

TABLE 8: Five Factors Mean Score and Ranking

Factors	Mean 1 – wrong, 5 – not wrong	SD	Ranking
Factor 1: No Harm	1.64	0.72	3
Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours	1.56	0.62	2
Factor 3: Actively Benefiting	1.86	0.80	5
Factor 4: Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act	1.83	0.65	4
Factor 5: Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act	1.53	0.58	1
Overall mean	1.68		

TABLE 9: Factors Mean Score from Simon Chak (1998) study on Hong Kong Employees

Factors	Mean 1 – wrong, 5 – not wrong	Ranking
Factor 1: No Harm	1.25	4
Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours	1.16	1
Factor 3: Actively Benefiting	1.19	2
Factor 4: Passively Benefiting	1.23	3
Overall mean	1.19	

TABLE 10: Mean Score and Ranking of Attitudinal Statements

General attitudinal statements	This Study (2007)		Simon Chak (1998)	
	Mean	Ranking	Mean	Ranking
Satisfying a guest's needs is necessary even if it is contradictory to company's policy	2.81	1	1.56	1
If a guest treats me well, I should serve him/her better	2.94	3	3.34	3
Honesty is more important than guest satisfaction	3.17	4	3.92	6
Man is basically good	2.86	2	3.77	5
If something is illegal, then it must be ethically wrong to do it	3.51	5	3.29	2
Flexibility is more important than honesty	3.66	6	3.65	4

TABLE 11: Result of Correlation Analysis (Pearson Coefficient)

		Factor 1: No Harm	Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours	Factor 3: Actively Benefiting	Factor 4: Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act	Factor 5: Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act
Satisfying a guest's needs is necessary even if it is contradictory to company's policy	Pearson Correlation	.253*	.306**	.186	-.031	.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.002	.062	.760	.758
	N	101	101	101	101	101
If a guest treats me well, I should serve him/her better	Pearson Correlation	-.198*	.131	-.091	-.085	-.182
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	.192	.366	.400	.069
	N	101	101	101	101	101
Honesty is more important than guest satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.164	-.056	-.130	-.114	-.138
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.101	.575	.194	.256	.168
	N	101	101	101	101	101
Man is basically good	Pearson Correlation	.019	.021	.041	-.128	-.143
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.854	.838	.687	.202	.152
	N	101	101	101	101	101
If something is illegal, then it must be ethically wrong to do it	Pearson Correlation	.213*	.130	.013	.003	-.370**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.194	.899	.973	.000
	N	101	101	101	101	101
Flexibility is more important than honesty	Pearson Correlation	.161	.147	.176	.096	.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.107	.142	.078	.341	.854
	N	101	101	101	101	101

TABLE 12: Result of Independent T-test Analysis between Genders

Sex	N	Mean Value					Overall
		Factor 1: No Harm	Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours	Factor 3: Actively Benefiting	Factor 4: Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act	Factor 5: Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act	
Male	51	1.82	1.58	1.95	1.91	1.52	1.76
Female	50	1.46	1.54	1.77	1.75	1.53	1.61
F probability		3.441	0.629	1.012	2.608	1.653	
t value		2.605	0.363	1.177	1.202	-0.090	
Significant		0.011	0.717	0.242	0.233	0.929	0.426
Significant level at 0.05		Yes	No	No	No	No	No

TABLE 13: ANOVA Analysis: Department by Factors

Department	Mean Value					Overall
	Factor 1: No Harm	Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours	Factor 3: Actively Benefiting	Factor 4: Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act	Factor 5: Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act	
House keeping	1.68	1.56	2.16	1.76	1.71	1.77
Front office	1.46	1.49	1.89	1.74	1.61	1.64

Human resource	1.36	1.40	2.00	2.00	1.50	1.66
Food and Beverage	1.75	1.70	1.96	1.67	1.66	1.75
Kitchen	1.52	1.40	1.53	1.53	1.40	1.48
Finance/Accounting	1.89	1.37	1.29	2.52	1.06	1.63
Security	1.93	1.81	1.50	1.72	1.67	1.73
Engineering	1.61	1.65	1.95	2.14	1.50	1.77
Sales and Marketing	1.53	1.44	1.79	1.42	1.19	1.47
ANOVA probability	0.595	0.515	1.212	2.818	1.607	
Significant	0.780	0.842	0.301	0.008	0.134	0.413
Significant level at 0.05	No	No	No	No	No	No

TABLE 14: ANOVA Analysis: Age Group by Factors

	Mean Value					
Age Group	Factor 1: No Harm	Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours	Factor 3: Actively Benefiting	Factor 4: Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act	Factor 5: Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act	Overall
18 - 20	1.68	1.85	1.79	1.75	1.75	1.76
21 - 25	1.50	1.78	1.95	1.79	1.50	1.71
26 - 30	1.68	1.52	2.07	1.79	1.56	1.72
31 - 35	1.65	1.39	1.79	1.89	1.47	1.64
36 - 40	2.06	1.32	1.43	2.23	1.50	1.71
41 - 45	1.52	1.07	1.67	1.67	1.60	1.50
46 - 50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Over 50	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.50
ANOVA probability	0.838	2.009	0.929	1.130	0.446	
Significant	0.558	0.062	0.488	0.351	0.870	0.466
Significant level at 0.05	No	No	No	No	No	No

TABLE 14: ANOVA Analysis: Education Level by Factors

	Mean Value					
Education Level	Factor 1: No Harm	Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours	Factor 3: Actively Benefiting	Factor 4: Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act	Factor 5: Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act	Overall
Primary or below	1.74	1.83	2.00	1.67	1.50	1.75
Secondary	1.81	1.61	1.99	1.71	1.59	1.74
Vocational Institute	1.58	1.52	1.68	1.94	1.43	1.63
University	1.47	1.49	1.81	1.99	1.52	1.66
Post-graduate	1.10	1.08	1.33	1.50	1.50	1.30
ANOVA	1.397	0.774	0.823	1.193	.254	

probability						
Significant	0.241	0.545	0.514	0.319	0.907	0.505
Significant level at 0.05	No	No	No	No	No	No

TABLE 15: ANOVA Analysis: Position Level by Factors

Position Level	Mean Value					Overall
	Factor 1: No Harm	Factor 2: Unethical Behaviours	Factor 3: Actively Benefiting	Factor 4: Passively Benefiting from Inequality Act	Factor 5: Passively Benefiting from Irresponsible Act	
Top- executive	1.77	1.69	1.78	1.50	1.42	1.63
Managerial grade	1.45	1.39	1.92	1.93	1.50	1.64
Supervisory	1.48	1.34	1.61	1.93	1.54	1.63
General Staff	1.77	1.71	1.96	1.79	1.54	1.70
ANOVA probability	1.551	2.606	1.084	0.918	0.096	
Significant	0.206	0.056	0.359	0.435	0.962	0.404
Significant level at 0.05	No	No	No	No	No	No

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