

DOES COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION INFLUENCE JOB PERFORMANCE: A STUDY ON THE MALAYSIAN HOTEL INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Frontline employees play a pivotal role in shaping the public perception of the hotel industry, serving as a crucial standard for competing on service quality. This research aims to examine how emotional intelligence and communication satisfaction influence job performance among frontline employees, employing a causal steps approach. A structured survey, adapted from previous studies, measured job performance (18 items), emotional intelligence (21 items), and communication satisfaction (17 items) among 377 respondents from star-rated hotels in Malaysia. The findings highlight significant and positive correlations between emotional intelligence, communication satisfaction, and job performance. The study emphasises the potential for the hotel industry to enhance frontline employee performance through targeted training interventions based on these results.

Keywords: Communication Satisfaction, Emotional Intelligence, Frontline Employees, Hotel Industry, Job Performance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry is a developed and major economic contributor in Malaysia. Quality-of-service hotels are important factors in defining customer satisfaction and business success in this competitive environment. Wattimena (2023) found that the ability of hotel staff to carry out procedures and provide quality service, as well as their empathy and responsiveness to customer needs, has a significant influence on customer satisfaction. The work performance of front-line employees is the main key to resolving the quality of services offered. Thus, understanding the factors that determine the effect of frontline employees on the hotel industry is very important.

The work performance of hotel workers is influenced by various factors, including emotional intelligence, culture, and development (Hamidah Norman et al., 2021). The

organisation of hotel management refers to the ability to deal with multiple tasks simultaneously (Araslı et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2020), which all the frontline employees need to implement since they are the ones who first face customer demand. On the other hand, it offers an innovative culture that promotes the introduction of new ideas and methods (Bibi, 2018; Zakariah et al., 2018) in variation that allows organisations to adapt to environmental changes to make sure the employees are stabilised, especially in emotional intelligence (Dubey et al., 2018; Ogiemien et al., 2016). It is consistency that emphasises core values, agreement, and integration between employees (Casey, 2013; Mohammed et al., 2016). These factors play an essential role in the work performance of hotel employees and further contribute to the organisation's success in the increasingly competitive hotel industry.

Communication satisfaction is considered a crucial factor affecting frontline employees' job performance. Communication will give a good impression of the relationship between the company and the customer (Tahir & Monil, 2015). Communication satisfaction refers to individual satisfaction with various aspects of organisational communication, such as with supervisors, colleagues, and customers. The communication style of leaders and employees is important to improve work performance (Viana, 2018).

Work performance, communication, and emotions are crucial, especially in the service industry, especially for frontline employees (Miao et al., 2021). Since the hotel industry is not excluded as one of the most crucial industries in the service industry, enhancing the research in the area is needed to improve and help it excel in competing within the industries. Frontline employees are most adaptable with the research of emotional intelligence and communication satisfaction in their work performance as the front face to confront customer demand.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Job performance encompasses behaviours aligned with an organisation's goals and objectives, managed by individual employees (Zacher et al., 2023). According to Demerouti et al. (2010), job performance is vital to organisations due to its impact on workplace productivity. Katz et al. (2022) suggest that further performance involves deliberate, goal-orientated behaviours, and significant job performance issues will arise in the coming decades. The ongoing focus on organisational effectiveness, productivity, and rising community demands for quality service will emphasise the connection between individual and corporate performance (Bhayangkara, 2023). These pressures will necessitate a more strategic and integrated approach to performance management (Treinta et al., 2020; Da Waal, 2017; Ismail et al., 2023).

A critical factor for success in the hotel and tourism industries is the ability of frontline employees to maintain relationships with tourists. These employees are customers' first point of contact and play a pivotal role in shaping long-term relationships within the organisation and with tourists through their human interactions. Garrigos-Simon et al. (2019) argues that most service failures in tourism and other sectors reduced by perceptual issues and interactions influenced by passion and emotions. Kusulvan (2003) emphasises that the primary role of frontline employees is to sustain long-term relationships in hospitality firms, especially in emotional intelligence.

Numerous studies consistently demonstrate the substantial impact of emotional intelligence on job performance (Cote & Miners, 2006; O'boyle Jr. et al., 2011; Alwali & Alwali, 2022). Individuals exhibiting higher levels of emotional intelligence across dimensions such as self-regulation, self-awareness, self-motivation, and social skills are apt to excel in their professional roles, correlating with heightened job satisfaction (Mohamad & Jais, 2016). Besides, employees with high emotional intelligence are better at dealing with stress and formulating strategies to mitigate its adverse effects (Thomas et al., 2006). Additionally, they

can leverage their capacity to regulate emotions in others, fostering constructive interactions, boosting group morale, and collectively bolstering job performance for all involved (Shimazu et al., 2004; Rohman et al., 2022).

Several studies have shown a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance, such as among academicians (Mohamad & Jais, 2016; Chong et al., 2020), information technology professionals (Masrek et al., 2014), service workers (Hwa & Amin, 2016), and other sectors. Regarding the hospitality industry, Salisu et al.'s (2014) study of 190 employees of four-star hotels in Malaysia revealed a favourable correlation between EI and job performance. A similar result was also found in another study by Francis et al. (2018) with one hundred hotel staff in Kuala Lumpur. The study conducted by Ramos et al. (2021), including 172 employees in family hotels, demonstrates that job satisfaction and organisational commitment positively impacted by views of organisational support. In the meantime, the association between organisational commitment and organisational support moderated by emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is an important aspect that affects communication satisfaction among front-line workers in the hotel industry. Front-line workers are a group that is often faces challenging situations due to having to deal with several types of customers. Thus, emotional intelligence is essential to ensure effective communication can be implemented in hotel organisations to achieve communication satisfaction.

According to Miao et al. (2017), front-line employees' communication satisfaction and job performance were associated with emotional intelligence, especially in controlling empathy. Employees with good emotional control tend to have higher communication satisfaction levels because they can communicate more effectively even in difficult situations. It aligns with Sharifah Hanim et al.'s (2023) show that front-line workers with high emotional intelligence are more satisfied with communication at work. Emotional intelligence also assists frontline workers in avoiding conflicts and misunderstandings with colleagues and customers (Ganesh et al., 2022). It will enhance the employee's satisfaction and provide good customer feedback to generate a harmonious environment through communication satisfaction. Liu et al. (2022) demonstrated that effective emotional intelligence significantly influences communication satisfaction; aligning with Mensah et al. (2021) study, there is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence, communication satisfaction, and work performance among front-line workers. These studies emphasise these factors' critical role in employee success and service excellence. Hence, enhancing communication satisfaction is essential, as it can lead to increased job satisfaction, improved productivity, and superior service delivery within the hospitality industry.

However, a gap remains in identifying the factors that enhance frontline workers' communication satisfaction. Consequently, it is imperative for hotel management to prioritise the cultivation of emotional regulation among these employees (Law et al., 2024). Initiatives such as implementing emotional management training programs, fostering a supportive work environment, and encouraging the practice of emotional intelligence should be undertaken to aid employees in managing their emotions more effectively. Such measures are expected to elevate communication satisfaction levels, enhancing the quality of service delivered to customers.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The quantitative analysis methodology leverages numerical data and insights to process knowledge and validate claims. This research will focus on Malaysia's hotel industry, encompassing establishments ranging from one to five stars. Primary data, derived from previous studies, will be utilized, with the unit of analysis being the individual frontline employees. A probability sampling technique, specifically simple random sampling, will be employed to ensure minimal bias and high generalizability (Sekaran, 2016). The sample size

for this study is 120, with a response rate of 90 percent. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21 will be used to examine the reliability, correlations, and regression models based on the approach of Baron and Kenny (1986) to test the relationships between dependent and independent variables (Benitez et al., 2020). The individual survey items are guided by well-established theoretical concepts and constructs, which have been validated in prior research (McNeish & Wolf, 2020). A 5-point Likert Scale will be used to measure respondents' attitudes, allowing them to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. The adapted job performance measure includes 18 items, while 21 items will assess emotional intelligence, and another 21 items will measure communication satisfaction. Therefore, the conceptual framework as follow:

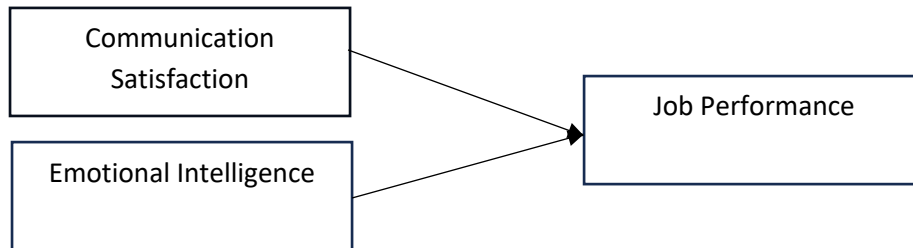


Fig.1 Conceptual Framework

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tables below present the study's outcomes examining the effects of two independent variables, emotional intelligence, and communication satisfaction, on job performance as dependent variables. The study uses Cronbach's alpha for reliability measurement, Pearson Correlation Coefficient for correlations, and regression to analyse to answer the research objective. The first table shows the results of Cronbach's alpha which was 0.976, suggesting a good value of the reliability test dependent variable (Sekaran, 2016). Meanwhile, emotional intelligence was 0.916, also considered good, and communication satisfaction was also good at 0.953. Therefore, all the variables are categorized as good in the value of Cronbach Alpha.

Table 1: Reliability analysis

No	Name of variable	No of item	Cronbach Alpha
1	Job Performance	18	0.976
2	Emotional Intelligence	21	0.916
3	Communication Satisfaction	17	0.953

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was employed to evaluate the strength of the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. A p-value less than 0.05 was considered significant, indicating whether the correlation was strong, moderate, weak, or nonexistent (Schober et al., 2018). The table below shows that all independent variables significantly correlate with job performance. Notably, only one independent variable exhibited a significant and strong correlation: career emotional intelligence ($r = 0.884$, $p < 0.1$). Communication satisfaction demonstrated a moderate yet significant correlation ($r = 0.790$, $p < 0.1$), supporting both of independents towards dependent relationship.

Table 2: Correlation

	Performance	Emotional Intelligence	Communication Satisfaction
Job Performance	1.000		
Communication Satisfaction	.790**	1.000	
Emotional Intelligence	.884**	.820**	1.000

The results below of table 3 indicate coefficient R square was 0.7947 and adjusted R was 0.7940. Thus, 79.4 variations in job performance were justified by the varying independent variables: communication satisfaction and emotional intelligence. The β values indicated the relationship of the variables: emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.8752$, $p < 0.05$), and communication satisfaction ($\beta = 0.2099$, $p < 0.05$). All the variables were supported as $p < 0.05$.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis

Unstandardised β Coefficient	β	Sig.
Emotional Intelligence	0.8752	0.00
Communication Satisfaction	0.2099	0.00
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Coefficient of Determination	Model 1	
R	0.8914	
R ²	0.7947	
Adjusted R ²	0.7940	

The study examined how emotional intelligence and customer satisfaction relate to job performance in the hotel industry. Its goal was to understand the connection between these variables, using both descriptive and inferential survey methods. The research employed quantitative methods to gather unbiased data, ensuring the reliability and generalizability of its findings to a wider audience (Yoon et al., 2021). On the other hand, many businesses encounter challenges in job performance due to a lack of well-structured career development programs and emotional intelligence training for employees (Merican et al., 2022). This issue highlights the importance of enhancing job performance through effective retention programs. While numerous studies have explored the impact of emotional intelligence on performance and effectiveness, they have often overlooked the influence of communication satisfaction (Alsayed, 2022; Tahir & Monil, 2015).

Communication satisfaction and emotional intelligence are key motivators for employees, leading to improved job performance by demonstrating an employer's commitment to their future (Fairudeen et al., 2021). Other factors, such as career development, are increasingly important for enhancing performance and productivity. Implementing effective methods can foster an increase in the motivation and growth of subordinates (Forson et al., 2021).

5.0 FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

This research was conducted quantitatively in the hotel industry, ranging from 1- to 5-star hotels. Future research recommends further qualitative research and using different types of methodology, such as focus groups or interviews. The respondents can also be expanded to other departments and other levels of management. The mixed method will also assist in further research in the future. In conclusion, this study's target audience included 377 employees who responded to a standardised questionnaire using a Likert scale. Statistical descriptive and inferential techniques were applied to examine the data, uncovering a noteworthy link between the variables studied. The results suggested that employees expressed satisfaction with their roles and a desire to continue working within the

organization. Moreover, the research demonstrated that both independent variables are crucial in employee job performance. Thus, the study highlighted the significant influence of emotional intelligence and communication satisfaction on employee performance, emphasising their importance for future research endeavours (Alsayed, 2022).

CO-AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The authors affirmed that there is no conflict of interest in this article. Author1 carried out the fieldwork methodology, data entry and results. Author2 overlooked the writeup of the whole article, Author3, Author4, and Author5 prepared the literature review and references.

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