A STUDY ON PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT OF BUDGET HOTEL EMPLOYEES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN SABAH

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Abstract: With COVID-19 in year 2020 giving impacts to tourism industry in Malaysia, the authors have conducted an industrial analysis on small and medium companies in Sabah. This paper provides on insight on the perceived organizational support of employees at budget hotel in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah during the pandemic period of COVID-19. Organizational support is an important factor in maintaining employees' morale and it is crucial to know the perception of employees of the organizational support that they perceived to have from the employers and managers at workplace. With the feedback and response, industrialists especially managers are encouraged to communicate more with employees. The results suggested that employees perceived organizational supports as a whole, with lower score on the job. Therefore, the study concluded that job design can be an interesting factor to look at in managing human capital at this difficult time.

*Keywords***: *COVID-19, Perceived Organizational Support, Budget Hotels*
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Introduction
Back in October 2020, Arumugam and Landau from New Straits Times reported that Sabah was continuing to record the highest number of COVID-19 positive cases at 702, 80.6 per cent of the total cases reported today, of 871 registered cases in Malaysia. The surge was due to active screening and increased number of samples sent to the institute for medical research.

Such crisis time led to uncertainty as organizations having difficulties to sustain the business and facing various challenges.

Organizational support would be an important factor to motivating staffs and increase the morale at workplace. Eisenberg et al. (1986) stated that perceived organizational support would expland employees' commitment to the organization. It is characterized as a representative's observation that the organization esteems their commitment and think about the prosperity of workers at workplace. During this pandemic time of crisis, hotels are severely affected, and there is a need for industry analysis to be conducted.

Hotels turnover culture has been concentrated intensely in various area, while the turnover intention culture on that influenced by perceived organizational support and organizational commitment despite everything doesn't have the attention and consideration. Ariffin & Che Ha (2014) mentioned in the yearly surveys made by Malaysian Employers Federation (2011) that the yearly work turnover rates in Malaysia for 2010 and 2011 were extremely high, around between 9.6 percent and 75 percent separately. The review shows that the turnover rates for hospitality industry are 32.4 percent. Poh (2019) expressed that the development of hotel visitors and rooms in Malaysia was 34% and 83% separately in 2018. In achieving organization targets and objectives, perceived organizational support and organizational commitment are the crucial part. The researcher will attempt to identify that the relationship between those variables lead to big impact towards the hotel industry growth especially in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. This article will provide an preliminary result from the survey conducted during the pandemic period, with other variables (organizational commitment, and turnover intention) are not included. This study provides an insight on the importance of organizational support, as perceived by the employees in the budget hotel industry.

Landman (2020) defined budget hotel as a hotel that provides minimum amenities and services for a lower price than a regular hotel in the area. This type of hotel provides clean rooms that are safe and meet the basic needs of a guest. Extra amenities may be available but for an extra cost. Ahmad et al. (2018) mentioned that the contribution of tourism sector to the economic development is pretty significant in Malaysia, and budget hotels plays an important role in the tourism industry. The origin of budget hotel may be traced back to 1920s in the US. Ahmad et al. defined budget hotel as small hotel that is financed by one individual or a small group of individuals, and its managers are the same time its owners.

Literature Review
This section reviews the outbreak of COVID-19 in Sabah, review on budget hotel in Sabah during the pandemic, and perceived organizational support.

COVID-19 Outbreak in Sabah
To this date as of 24 December 2020, the total confirmed case of COVID-19 is 35,166. 94.5% has been reported of recovered, with 0.75 death and 4.75% active cases. The total case of confirmed in Sabah is about 35.6% of total confirmed case in Malaysia (Sabah Outbreak, 2020). Back in 15 December 2020, Sabah has registered a total of 100 clusters, with Kota Kinabalu contributing the highest number with 22 clusters, according to COVID-19 spokesperson Datuk Seri Masidi Manjun (Peter, 2020).

Elengoe (2020) reported back in April 2002, there were only about 5,251 cases including 86 deaths. The first Malaysian case was confirmed on the 4th of February 2020. The 41-year old man had recently returned from Singapore with symptoms of fever and cough.

With the increasing cases of COVID-19 in Malaysia, the Malaysian Government has implemented a preventive measure Movement Control Order (MCO) or commonly known as MCO. The goal of MCO is containment of the pandemic. Malaysia has announced restrictions on movement for two weeks from March 18, barring its citizens from travelling overseas and shutting all businesses except shops selling food and daily necessity (Sukumaran, 2020).

McKenzie (2020) shared his summary of Order as follows:
a) no mass gatherings – general prohibitions on mass movements and gatherings, including religious, sports, social and cultural activities.
b) closure of premises – house of worship, business premises as well as all government and private premises must be closed, except for:
   i. supermarktes, public markets, convenience stores (including convenience stores selling everyday necessities) or known as essential stores; and
   ii. those involved in essential services for the country (water, electricity, energy, telecommunication, postal, transportation, irrigation, oil, gas, fuel, lubricants, broadcasting, finance, banking, health, pharmacy, fire, prison, port, airport, safety, defence, cleaning, retail and food supply) or categorized as essential services.
c) closure for education sector – closure for all. The closure including kindergartens, government and private schools including daily schools, boarding schools, international schools, tahfiz centers and other primary, secondary, and pre-university institutions; and public and private higher educations (IPTs) and skills training.
d) travel ban and requirements: (i) Malaysian citizens are prohibited from travelling out of Malaysia, (ii) Malaysian citizens returning from overseas travel must undergo a health check and be self-quarantined for 14 days; and (iii) all tourists and foreign visitors are prohibited from entering Malaysia.

In his article, McKenzie also include liability for non-compliance of the Order. The Order is made under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Act `988 (PCIDA) and the Police Act 1967 (PA). The police is required to render assistance for the purpose of enabling any officer authorised under the PCIDA to execute the Order. The police can take lawful measures, including: (a) apprehending all persons whom he is by law authorised to apprehend, (b) conducting prosecutions, and (c) giving assistance in the carrying out of any law relating to revenue, exercise, sanitation, quarantine, immigration and registration.

McKenzie further explained that with the implementation of MCO, business face concerns of decreased revenue and the ability to maintain its overhead cost in respect of its operations, including payment of wages to its employees. Some businesses have also indicated the possibility of implementing retrenchment exercises in light of the virus outbreak.
Impacts of the exercise of MCO has caused closure of business, travel restrictions, and alternative work arrangements.

COVID-19 and Hotel Industry

In view of hotel industry in America, American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) (2020), highlighted that 71% of hotels in America would not make it another 6 months without further assistance given current and projected travel demand, and 77% of the workforce will facing lay-off.

According to Grant Thornton (2020), the hotel industry is dealing with an unprecedented crisis due to the disruption caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. With hotels shut or operating severely reduced capacity and with customers in lockdown, businesses will have to position better for reopening.

COVID-19 pandemic has unprecedentedly disrupting hotel businesses as independent operators are facing severe cash flow pressures. The first half of 2020 saw a widespread drop off in occupancy rates around the world. In May 2020, New York occupancy rates were below has been expected, with many hotels temporarily closed. The challenges impacted almost every part of hotel's operations, from room occupancy levels and staffing plans, to food and beverage provisioning. The pandemic has the potential to have far-reaching effects on the industry, long past the lifting of travel restrictions and regional lockdowns.

The challenges including liquidity, employment, and debt and restructuring. Liquidity is the immediate challenge for hotel owners and operators including cash flow management and forecasting. For hotel managers and owners, the focus will be on increasing liquidity and reducing cash requirements. Many hotel operators have been able to scale down their labour costs significantly through reduced hours, or the use of government support to furlough sections of their staff. The boost provided liquidity has been hugely beneficial to large parts of the industry, but also creates a number of potential issues. With revenue and resulting cash flow diminished for both owners and operators, it is important to quickly identify those items where available funds may not be sufficient to meet obligations.

A report published by Deloitte highlighted impacts of the pandemic on cash, working capital and profitability. The impacts on operation and mitigation are: an extended cash flow forecast for the next six months; company has to be realistic and have base and downside scenarios to understand critical cash points and any breaches of lending covenants; managing operational payment to suppliers; minimize all discretionary operational and capital expenditure (reconsider or postpone maintenance and other capital expenditure where possible to conserve cash); and place an advanced revenue management system and pricing models to respond to market developments quickly.

For financial impacts, Deloitte stated that if one business forecasts highlight a funding requirement, it has to assess equity or debt funding sources available, it has to be transparent towards existing lenders and involve them in the mitigating procedures and continuity plans.

In the context of Malaysia, Foo et al. (2020) reported that the outbreak of COVID-19 has exposed a major risk to Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign as 50% of Malaysia's tourists are originate from Singapore and China. The increasing cases of COVID-19 in both countries has led to the cancellation of many tours, which has already led to a large drop in the number of tourists to Malaysia.

Foo et al. (2020) reported the impact of COVID-19 on hotel businesses that a total of 170,084 hotel room bookings during the period 11 January 2020 until 16 March 2020 had been cancelled, which caused a loss of revenue amounting to RM68.190.364. The loss was directly attributable to the outbreak of COVID-19.

The cancellation of hotel bookings has caused a loss of RM23,021,301 in revenue and followed by Sabah which suffered a loss of RM11,550,605 in revenue. The state which has been least affected by COVID-19 is Sarawak as the total room cancellations during the said period was merely 76, with a loss of less than RM23 million. The spate of cancellations in hotel bookings is expected to continue until MCO ended. The local hotel sector is projected to lose RM3.3 billion in revenue by June 2020, as a result of MCO which has been extended to 12 May 2020.

From a sample size if 17,826 workers, 542 workers equivalent to 3% had been laid off. Meanwhile, 3641 (20%) workers had been asked to take unpaid leave and 2880 (16%) workers had faced pay cuts. In the context of Sabah, total sampling size of workers is 4,934, 177 has bee laid off, with 893 experiencing pay cut and 1,075 workers are facing unpaid leave.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Eisenberger et al. (1986) holds that so as to meet socio-emotional necessities and to survey the advantages of expanded work exertion, employees structure a general discernment concerning the degree to which the organization esteems their commitments and thinks about their prosperity. Such perceived organizational support (POS) would expand employees' felt commitment to enable the organization to arrive at its targets, their affective commitment to the organization, and their desire that improved exhibition would be compensated. Conduct results of POS would remember increments for in-job and extra-job execution and diminishes in pressure and withdrawal practices, for example, truancy and turnover.

Eisenberger (2020) characterizes "perceived organizational support as a representative's observation that the organization esteems their commitment and thinks about the worker's prosperity." Perceived organizational support gives a wide and esteemed arrangement of socio-enthusiastic and unoriginal resources to employees, thus, employees will feel committed to enable the organization to accomplish its objectives (Eisenberger et al.,1986).

Perceived organizational support is imperative to representative satisfaction and loyalty, administration conduct and how the employees see their boss support likewise assume a fundamental job in acquiring the ideal work results. Past investigations show that perceived predominant support (Eisenberger et al., 2002) is emphatically identified with perceived organizational support. Besides, Rhoades et al. (2001) found that the relationship between director support and work results (organizational responsibility) is intervened by perceived organizational support (Breaux, 2004). Moreover, supportive initiative conducts and solid relationship with prevalent impact employees' perceived organizational support (Krause, 2004).

Perceived organizational support is explainable by Organization Support Theory. It is a theory that explain employees form a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization value their contributions and cares for well-being, to meet their socioemotional needs and to assess the benefits of increased work effort.

A study done by Imran et al. (2020) concluded that the present research examined the direct effect and indirect effect of perceived organizational supports on work engagement through flourishing and thriving in an organizational setting in the South Asian context. The study findings confirmed that it is positively associated with employee flourishing, thriving, and work engagement. The results obtained from their research indicated that perceived organizational support influences work engagement via flourishing and thriving as mediators.

The context is similar to a research done by Islam et al. (2015), the level of importance of perceived organizational support and the expected outcomes (employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment) have strong correlations. It could be concluded that an organization where employee fell supported makes reciprocate favourably by offering attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, as satisfaction with job, psychological congruence with organization and its goals (commitment) and psychological and mental attachment with organization (engagement). Islam et al. (2015) reported that the findings are consistent with previous studies, including Riggle et al. (2009), and Rhoades and Eisenberg (2002).

Research Design

Researchers applied quantitative approach in examine the connection between POS perceived organizational support and turnover intention mediate by organizational commitment. The research will be done at budget hotel in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Survey Monkey, an online survey software was used as the online questionnaire that will distribute to the participants.

Research Framework

Perceived Organizational Support → Organizational Commitment → Turnover Intention

Sampling Technique

The sampling method applied in the study was convenience sampling method. The target sample is employees of 15 budget hotel in the city area of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.The sampling frame focused on operation level. The survey questionnaire has been distributed to operation level and management level.

Sample Size

Table 1: Raosoft* Sample Size Calculator to calculate the sample size needed in this study

Item	Score	Description	
Margin of error	5%	Amount of error can be tolerate	
Confidence level	95%	Amount of uncertainty can be tolerate	
Population size	150	Total people chose	
Response distribution	50%	Minimum recommendation size for survey	
Alternate scenarios			
Confidence level of (%)	90	95	99
Sample size	39	41	43

*Raosoft is an online survey software provider (Source: http://www.raosoft.com)

Instrumentation and Questionnaire Design

The perceived organizational support will use the scale proposed by Apodaca (2010) with 7-points of frequency response likert scale from 1 (strongly disagreed) to 4 (strongly agreed).

Table 2: Likert Scale 7-points on Perceived Organizational Support

Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Questionnaire Items

My organization values my contribution to its well-being.

My organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me (R)

My organization would ignore any complaint from me (R)

My organization really cares about my well-being

My organization shows very little concern for me (R)

My organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work

Even if I did the best job possible, my organization would fail to notice (R)

My organization cares about my general satisfaction at work

The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible

The organization is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability

Research Findings

The target population of this study consists of employees, who are currently working in the in the budget hotel in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The data was collected covered all the department of the hotel. The data collection activities began on the second week of August till the end of the month in 2020. The questionnaires were distributed to the employees from the targeted through all the department of the hotel.

A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed. However, only 116 questionnaires were returned. The sample size of 120 fulfilled the minimum sample required for factor analysis by G Power in which the minimum respondents are 109 and maximum are 141. Therefore, the current study sample size of 116 is acceptable and appropriate for analysis. Of 116, only 115 was completed and 1 questionnaire has missing item.

Profile of Respondents

The table shows the demographic profile of the respondents. A total of 116 respondents were involved in the final sample. The respondent consist 42.2% of female which frequency of 49 . 56.9% of male respondent which frequency of 56.9%. for employment status, shows that 50% of full time staff (58 people) and 49.6% of part time staff (57 people). As for the age profile , 21 - 25 years consist 51 staff (44.0%) . for 26 -31 years consist 41 staff (35.3%). 30 - 36 years consist 17 staff (14.7%). 41 - 45 years consist of 4 staff (3.4%). More than 46 years consist 2 staff (1.7%). As for the working experience profile , there were 3 groups which is 1-5 years , 6-10 years and more than 10 years. For 1-5 years consist of 67 staff (57.8%). For 6-10 years consist of 38 staff (32.8%). For more than 10 years consist 10 staff (8.6%).

Table 3: Gender of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Female	49	42.2
	Male	66	56.9
	Total	115	99.1
Total		116	100.0

Table 4: Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	21 - 25 years	51	44.0
	26 - 31 years	41	35.3
	30 - 36 years	17	14.7
	41 - 45 years	4	3.4
	more than 46 years	2	1.7
	Total	115	99.1
Total		116	100.0

Table 5: Employment Status of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Full time	58	50.0
	Part time	57	49.1
	Total	115	99.1
Total		116	100.0

Table 6: Working Experience of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1 - 5 years	67	57.8
	6 - 10 years	38	32.8
	more than 10 years	10	8.6
	Total	115	99.1
Total		116	100.0

Validity and Reliability Tests

Validity Analysis: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Factor analysis is a measurement statistic to explore the component and analysis of the data information in independent variables (Perceived organizational support) and dependent variable (Turnover intention) and (organizational commitment) as the mediation from the questionnaire feedback by the respondent. All the data analyzed within the SPSS version 27 using Varimax with Kaiser normalisation and principal component method.

Table 7: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

	Perceived Organizational Support
POS1	0.8
POS2	0.941
POS3	0.879
POS4	0.901
POS5	0.831

Table 8: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.306
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	8617.085
	df	1326
	Sig.	.000

KMO of 0.306 value that closes to value 1 shows good value in both independent variables. Lastly, the Chi-square is significant (Chi-square = 8617.085, $p < 0.01$) indicates to have a relationship between the item in the independent variables. In this study, the value indicates 0.899. These measures provide a minimum norm that should be passed before a factor analysis (or a key component analysis) can be performed.

Reliability Analysis: Cronbach Alpha Reliability Result of Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Table 9: Reliability Analysis

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Perceived Organizational Support	0.921	0.94	0.76

Based on Table 9, the reliability test was used to analyze 52 items from the questionnaire by indicating excellent in Cronbach's Alpha. Firstly, training records the Cronbach's Alpha the highest value of 0.921. Besides that, the dependent variable where the turnover intention shows the Cronbach's Alpha with 0.845. Next, the variable where the POS recorded the Cronbach's Alpha of 0.921. Reliability test was conducted as a test of whether data collecting instrument yield the same results on repeated trials. The measurement of the reliability of a data instrument helps the researcher to gauge the goodness of the variable of the measurement. The widely used Cronbach coefficient alpha was employed to assess internal consistency.

Descriptive Analysis of Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Table 10: Mean Score for Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Items	Mean
My organization values my contribution to its well-being	5.36
My organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me (R)	4.78
My organization would ignore any complaint from me (R)	4.78
My organization really cares about my well-being	5.19
My organization shows very little concern for me (R)	5.14
My organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work	5.19
Even if I did the best job possible, my organization would fail to notice (R)	5.06
My organization cares about my general satisfaction at work	5.14
The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible	4.98
The organization is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability	4.97

Table 11: Frequency and Percentage for Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Items	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree
My organization values my contribution to its well-being	11 (9.5%)	46 (39.7%)	40 (34.5%)
My organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me (R)	20 (17.2%)	12 (10.3%)	30 (25.9%)
My organization would ignore any complaint from me (R)	23 (19.8%)	8 (6.9%)	35 (30.2%)
My organization really cares about my well-being.	25 (21.6%)	20 (17.2%)	39 (33.6%)
My organization shows very little concern for me (R)	21 (18.1%)	25 (21.6%)	34 (29.3%)
My organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work	14 (12.1%)	37 (31.9%)	33 (28.4%)
Even if I did the best job possible, my organization would fail to notice (R)	25 (21.6%)	23 (19.8%)	20 (17.2%)
My organization cares about my general satisfaction at work	21 (18.1%)	24 (20.7%)	33 (28.4%)
The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible	21 (18.1%)	22 (19.0%)	30 (25.9%)
The organization is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability	13 (11.2%)	25 (21.6%)	44 (37.9%)

Interpretations of Data and Discussions

Based on the analyses made, the report suggested that the agreeableness of the respondents towards the perceived organizational support is depicted and ranked in the following table:

Table 12: Ranking of Agreeableness

Items	Agreeableness	Percentage
My organization values my contribution to its well-being	97	84.30%
My organization really cares about my well-being	84	73.00%
My organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work	84	73.00%
The organization is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability	82	71.30%
My organization shows very little concern for me (R)	80	69.60%
My organization cares about my general satisfaction at work	78	67.80%
The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible	73	63.50%
Even if I did the best job possible, my organization would fail to notice (R)	68	59.10%
My organization would ignore any complaint from me (R)	66	57.40%
My organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me (R)	62	53.90%

The ranking and agreeableness above indicates that the feedback from the respondents are higher in the wellbeing of employees compared to job related issues. The results could suggest that the organizational policy and approach in taking care of the employees are implemented well and generally satisfied to that. The lower rating and ranking on job related can be improved via job design of employees and making it more interesting. This would suggests that the practical approach and contextual intelligence of supervisor or management to review the jobs during pandemic crisis is needed. The findings of this interpretation of data is similar to the suggestion made by Hall (2020) where prioritizing well being of employee is one of the five areas to focus on in taking care of team during COVID-19.

Changes of work design to make it interesting would probably boost up the morale of employees at this difficult time. White (2020) suggested that the role of leader involves providing employees with what they need, and so it is important to recognize the difference between employees need and what they want which including: i) employees may want to know what is coming next; ii) employees need to know that they can trust their supervisors and other organizational leaders to have their best interests in mind; and iii) employees need to feel their concerns are being hard, listened, and acted upon.

Brownlee (2020) suggested that there are seven leadership traits for the Post COVID-19 workplace: i) candor (honesty without ambiguity), ii) consistent reliable fact-based communication, iii) empathy, iv) managing hybrid teams, v) flexibility and adaptability, vi) humility, and vii) active listening.

Conclusions

Based on the issues and crises revolving amid the pandemic of COVID-19, workplace is facing serious challenges in retaining employees, boosting employees morale, and the future of employment could be changing forever. Stahl (2020) stated that one thing is certain is remote work is here to stay as the new norm post COVID-19. Apart from this, systemic thinking is one major way of workplace supervisors to look at as to survive their business model. Organization in future must adapt to the future of work, and move with speed and agility (Brower, 2020). According to her, organizational culture too is a critical contribution area for human resource, and brilliant leadership will ensure the success for organization.

Acknowledgement

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