Chapter 2   Literature Review

2.0   Introduction

Recent studies by fellow researchers often find that managers nowadays are singularly focused on the goal to build "strong" brands (Aaker, 2004). As mentioned by Kay (2006), having a notably 'strong' brand is a considerable managerial resource by establishing distribution networks, enabling brand extensions to facilitate new product's acceptance by potential customers and lastly, building up the product's pricing flexibility. Balmer (2001), in his article, has also urged the managers in assisting the organisations to develop strong brands as an essential part of their business strategies. Process of brand development over the years is not deemed to be easy, according to Aaker (1996). The most notable perspective on branding which developed by Aaker (1993) has been centered on understanding how to develop the "equity" of the brand as a useful managerial tool. The brand equity hereby often symbolizes the 'heart and soul' of one brand.

In this research, the significant benefits of building a strong hotel brand, particularly, have also been well documented by fellow academicians over the years. Prasad and Dev (2000) emphasized strongly that brands are seen by hotel firms as the most efficient way to identify and differentiate themselves in the minds of the customers in terms of the particular hotel chain, its products

and services. To further support the view above, Forgacs (2003) has mentioned that most of the branded hotels surpass the non-branded properties, based on performance indicators such as average room rate, level of occupancy, revenue per available room, revenue per available customer, and return on investment. The correlation amongst all the measures above have been proven in establishing a positive relationship between brand success, for instance brand equity, and financial performance in the luxury hotel sector (Kim & Kim, 2005). Furthermore, the said brand equity will eventually drives stock prices and more importantly, shareholder values which remain as the main concerns of a CEO or owner of one hotel (Jiang et al., 2002).

Viewing on the significant perceived benefits of a successful hotel brands, Prasad & Dev (2000) suggests that appropriate branding strategies will need to be adopted extensively in the hotel industry. Indeed, there has been a proliferation of new hotel carrying different brands over the last five years. Taking into consideration of such an emerging trend arising in the global hotel industry, Kim *et al.* (2008) argued that the plethora of hotel brands with different products and services provided actually creates confusion amongst its potential customers.

However, the significant roles carried by the internal employees often been neglected in building up such strong hotel brand, although they are seemingly as part of the hotel's stakeholders. Bell (2005) believed that companies which

compete in a highly branded nature of business have the competitive advantage to be seen as an attractive employer. Although this may not mean that they are the best place to retain the internal workforce, but the personal pride and social status gained from the working place can be an important driver. This, in turn, will eventually boost up the level of employees' commitment towards their company, which hereby the particular hotel chains that they work for. As part of the employees' value proposition (EVP) as introduced by Bell (2005), the employees' commitment towards their organisations does not uniquely belong to Human Resources function. Indeed, employees gain the level of commitment from the company values, principles and its strategic objectives which suit them the best in the workplace.

2.1   Employees' brand commitment

In order to gain a strong brand position of one product or service, it is vital to build internal brand building as a process to align staff's behaviour with a corporate brand's identity (Mitchell, 2002). The process can be simply identified by reducing the gap between the desired corporate brand identity and the perceived identity by the company's stakeholders (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2001). It is frequently pointed out that employees play a crucial role in which their commitment in supporting the brand should remain as the priority for top management (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2009). As mentioned,

brand-consistent behaviour often supports the development of a coherent brand image and is considered as one of the crucial success factors in corporate brand management (de Chernatony & Vallaster, 2005).

Hence, it is commonly seen that the employee commitment to the organisation has been covered comprehensively in the management literature. In the literature, commitment is usually defined as employee effort, measured by job performance and the frequency with which employees consider leaving the organisation (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2009).

Some researchers like Iverson & Mcleod (1996), for instance, have defined that employees' commitment consists of willingness to exert additional efforts to achieve the desired organisational values. Besides the importance of the consistent delivery of the brand promise, human interactions often involved the unpredictability individual behaviour while delivering the process of service branding in service brand (Punjaisri et al., 2009). Hence, internal branding has recently been viewed as the main determinant for employees to deliver the brand promise, in order to meet the various customers' brand expectations in one organisation (Drake et al., 2005).

Internal branding has been proposed mainly to promote the brand inside an organisation, namely to internal employees in an organisation (Ahmed et al., 2003). Studies with empirical evidence have proven that there are close linkage between internal branding and employees' brand commitment (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). According to these researchers, internal branding

will shape the employees' behaviour which is largely based on the assumption of the employees' understanding and commitment to the brand values inherent in the brand promise. In such circumstances, they will try to perform in the ways that will possibly live up to customers' brand expectations. When the employees are aligned with the desired brand values of a corporate brand, which in this case applied to service brand, will tend to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Pringle & Thompson, 2001).

In this present research, employees' brand commitment is defined as the degree to which employees identify and are involved with their service brand, are willing to exert additional efforts to achieve the goals of the brand and are interested in remaining with the service organisation.

2.2   Employer Brand

The concept of employer branding was firstly introduced by Ambler & Barrow (1996). According to them, employer brand is an image of one organisation which is seen through the eyes of its associates and potential hires. To be more precisely, their definition is "a package of all functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identifies with the employing organisation" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). As mentioned, the functional benefits often refer to the development and useful job related activities, while one firm's reward system and the feeling of purpose and belonging in consider as the perceived economic and psychological benefits.

A wider scope of employer branding involved the employees as the internal customers, which is the reason why the organisation needs to create the employees' satisfaction in order to enhance on the employees' understanding and commitment towards organisation's goal. According to Kimpakorn & Dimmitt (2007), the extension of such concept consist not only the creation of employees' satisfaction, performance, commitment, alignment with organisation and workforce retention, but covers the area of attracting the best possible talent by differentiating and leveraging the organisation image.

When organisations are able to convince the employees that their organisation is a good place to stay and retain, the employees, in turn, will become the guardian of the brand image as the organisation's culture becomes imprint in their hearts and minds (Kimpakorn & Dimmitt, 2007). Hence, while branding strategies focus on the enhancement of such corporate image, employer branding, on the other hand, is seen as part of the overall corporate brand. The job satisfaction which is aligned by the employees' behaviour and performance on the job is viewed as the significant key elements in driving a successful employer branding.

Berry (1981) considered employees as the internal customers and alongside jobs are viewed as internal products. The concept stressed on the better service delivery to external customers by firstly satisfying the internal customers' needs. And the quality external service values can only be created by satisfied, loyal and productive employees. Vilares & Coelho (2003) further supported the view above by revealing that customers' perception on

employees satisfaction and commitment have a depth impact on their perception on the products and services qualities which in turn associated with customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In view of the significant correlation of employee engagement with their firm in the fields of human resource management and internal marketing, Gilbert (2000), often emphasized on internal service quality in delivering the adequate training to enhance the service providers' knowledge of their services and capabilities. Apart form this, the employees' commitment may be encouraged by internal branding and internal communication as well (Kimpakorn & Dimmitt, 2007).

In the present research, the concept of employer branding is used in the luxury hotel industry to determine which dimensions appeared to be meaningful to managers and employees in their conceptualisations of employer branding (Kimpakorn & Dimmitt, 2007). The holistic viewpoint in which the organisation develops its employees' positive attitude and commitment towards their brand is possibly seen as the vital process of all (Ind, 2003).
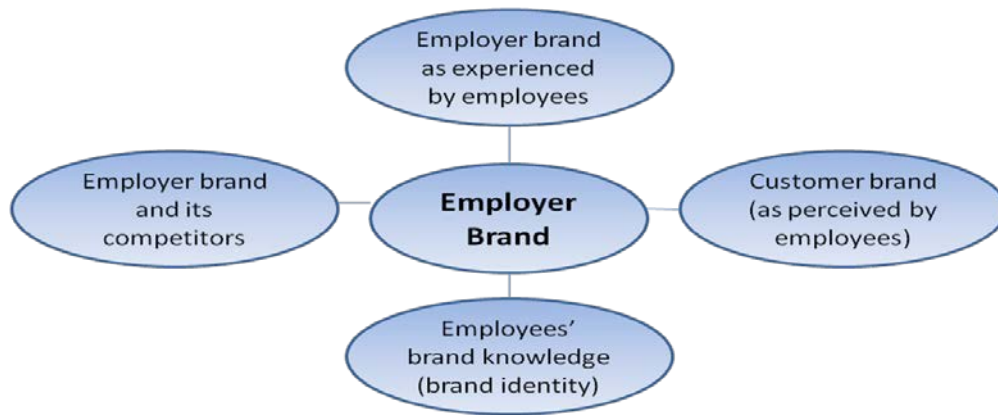
Figure 2.0: Dimensions of the employer brand as perceived by employee

(Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2007)

2.3   Employees' brand knowledge

H1: There is a relationship between employees' brand knowledge and employees' brand commitment.

Another dimension in identifying brand commitments is the brand knowledge provided to employees. Keller (1998) defined brand knowledge as items of brand information that are interconnected by links to form an associative network. It relates closely with the brand-related information stored in the consumer memory, which in this case, the employees' (Keller, 2003).

According to Kimpakorn & Tocquer (2007), such brand knowledge is inclusive of the main three dimensions: brand meaning, knowledge on customer needs and expectations and employee understanding of their responsibility in delivering the brand promise. However, it is surprised to reveal that the

concept and practice of giving sufficient internal brand knowledge, which recognises the fundamental importance of people in delivering the brand experience, has received less attention than external branding (Hankinson et al., 2007).

Brand identity which consists of organisation's vision, values and positioning, as stated by top management, is portrayed to be essential in ensuring most employees to share a consistent understanding of the brand (Kimpakorn & Dimmitt, 2007). When the same theory applies in the context of pure services, it is the actual experience with the brand that dominates customer brand perceptions, of which employees play a major role (Ind, 2003). King & Grace (2008) stated that the main role carried by the employees is understanding what the brand means, and how it provides value to consumers, in order to develop and deliver its tangible and intangible components accordingly. Other researchers such as Aurand et al. (2005) stressed on the inherent power in having an informed workforce that is both able and committed to delivering the brand promise.

Without sufficient brand knowledge provided to the employees, it is a difficult task for them to transform the brand vision into the brand reality. An employee can only show their commitment to the brand by aligning their behaviour accordingly to the organisation value when brand values are well communicated and assimilated (Balmer, 2001). Hence, Thomson et al. (1999) argued that the employees need to internalize these values before they deliver them to the external stakeholders. Efficiency of such internalization

can be proven through the acid test of how the employees behave in the way that reflects the organisation's values (Hankinson, 2004).

2.4   Customer brand as perceived by employees

H2: There is a relationship between customers brand image as perceived by employees and employees' brand commitment.

According to Garlick (2004), employees often been influenced by their perceptions of the external company image which will ultimately influence both employee actions and the level of employee commitment to the company objectives (Kahn, 1990).   In order to instil a positive customer brand in the employees' mindset, the employees' first have to recognise the customers' power of brand and its ultimate value to the firm resides with the customers (Gyling & Lindberg-Repo, 2005).   According to both the scholars, customer brand depends very much how customers respond on the brand knowledge that has been long created in their minds.

As mentioned by Berry (2000), the basic of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) is to figure out how the brand makes customers feel, act and think with respect to the brand.   From the perspective of the employees, the employees are more likely to identify with the brand if the customers have a significant level of positive attitude towards their organisation (Underwood et al., 2001).   As part of one organisation, the employee perceptions are influenced by how and what they think external stakeholders think of them as

a brand. The customers' perception of a brand or the brand image, hereby, is often the reflection held in the customer's memory.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that there are always a gap between the employees' perceptions of the customer's brand image and the image that the customers actually have of the company (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). The gap that existed remain as the main obstacle in achieving the harmony between the positive identity (from the perspective of employees) and image (from the perspective of customers) of one brand, which has been long discussed by fellow researchers like Davies et al. (2003). Davies et al (2003), in their argument on corporate reputation chain, mentioned that the differences between employees and customers' satisfaction towards one brand affect the level of brand commitment among themselves. The motto, which has been stressed by Davies et al. (2003), is "the maxim of happy staff equals happy customers".

2.5   The employer brand and its competitors

H3: There is a relationship between the perception by employees of the employer brand relative to its competitors and employees brand commitment.

In the hotel industry, there is fierce competition on the labour market. Employees are often lured by benefits packages offered by new hotels. According to Kimpakorn & Tocquer (2007), one of the main purposes of

employer branding is to create a positive state of mind instilled in employees that the brand is unique as compared to its competitors, relatively, and that the company is a good place to work. That is why the employer brand will have to be differentiated from its direct competitors as the key step in the brand-building process (Moroko & Uncles, 2008).

An organisation with a differentiated employer brand is often seen as the key in winning the 'war for talent' (Chambers et al., 1998). However, the nature of the working environment such as job-related factors is often similar within the same industry. It is therefore difficult for the employees to view and differentiate themselves as employees from their competitors (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). That is why the concept of identity is seen to be the best tactical way to help the company establishing some real differentiation from its competitors in employees' minds (Bromley 2001). In essence, corporate identity reflects the reality and uniqueness of an organisation which is closely related to both its internal and external image and reputation through corporate communications (Gray & Balmer, 1998).

Davies (2007) has also mentioned that there are various factors in influencing the employee to leave an organisation to rivalry organisations, or to remain despite being dissatisfied. It is revealed that most labour turnover models, which in this case applied in the service industry, include a significant impact of affective factors, including organisation commitment, well-being and job satisfaction (Steel, 2002). Winterton (2004) in his article relates the job satisfaction and organisational commitment to the reason why the employees

decide to leave one organisation. Yet the significant influence of the corporate brand on this process has been viewed as the secondary attributes. This is why probably the most significant affective factor in an organisation is never been taking seriously and considered by various stakeholders.

2.6   The employer brand as experienced by employees

H4: There is a relationship between employer brand as experienced by employees and employees' brand commitment.

As mentioned earlier, the employees will tend to first consider the way they experience the brand in their daily routine work when they are examined on perception about the employer brand. These experiences are largely influenced by the company management style, human resource management practices and cross-functional coordination. Throughout the collaboration among these factors, this in turn will eventually shape the employees' perceptions and behaviour (Ahmed et al. 2003).

Rucci et al. (1998), for instance, identified that the relationship between employee perception and business outcomes has become the major concern in the field of human resources management. Heskett et al. (1994), in his article, has also emphasized the significant role of employees' insight towards the organisation in influencing the business performance.

Traditionally, human resources practices such as job description, wages, employees' perks and benefits, training and development are the main determinants in ensuring employees' satisfaction in one organisation (Foreman & Money, 1995). To be more precisely, researchers have focused on the most defining characteristics of human resources management which is the organisation culture that will encourage employees' commitment (Guest, 1995). Guest (1987) has suggested that the employees' commitment can be further enhanced through an intensive human resources approach within the areas of recruitment and selection, training and development, reward systems and employee participation, involvement and empowerment. If these systems are implemented in practice, no doubt the commitment to the organisation will be increased among the internal employees followed by the desired employer brand.

Apart from the human resources management, the internal service quality management is likely to have a depth impact on the services provided to external customers (Davis, 1993). Heskett et al. (1997) defined the internal service quality management as the tool of service climate and culture which provides a psychological identity of an organisation for employees. Bienstock et al (2003) often stressed on the way the employees been treated by their organisations, which will ultimately associate closely with their work behaviour. In addition, scholar like Schnieder (2000) also highlighted that the employees' experiences of their firms' quality will has a direct effect on the customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention.

On the other hand, poor internal service quality is likely to have negative impact on the quality of services provided to external customers (McDermott & Emerson, 1991). Viewing the importance of such practice, Bruhn (2003) suggested a concentrated set of internal service quality dimensions, namely competence, reliability, accessibility, friendliness, reaction speed, time to provide service, flexibility, customization, added value generated, cost benefit rationale, transparency in services offered and cost transparency. Davidson et al. (2001) clearly stated that the organisation climate dimensions also include leadership, job challenge, work group cooperation, etc. Nevertheless, keep in mind that the practices involves not only one human resource management policy or one training programme, but to be collaborated with employees through the policies, practices, and procedures that it has already in place for practice (Kimpakorn & Dimmitt, 2007).

Another major influent in employer brand as experienced by its employees is the practice of internal branding in getting the current employees to live the brand through their day-to-day work activities (Balmer, 2001). The main focus of internal branding is to create the emotional connection to the organisation while preparing them in approaching their jobs with a clear brand vision in their mind, and lastly the employees will get to decide whether or not they will support such brand in every decision they will make (Mitchell, 2002). In this case, internal branding aims to have the employees whom will feel passionate about the brand through greater performance in their work functions.

Berry (1981), in addition, defined internal branding as the practice of developing the organisation's brand message in a meaningful manner in hopeful that one employee will feel satisfied, motivated and tends to act in a customer-orientated fashion. It is often crucial that the employees need to develop a shared understanding of their brand values (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Their depth understanding of such brand values is mostly influenced by the organisation's vision, culture, formal policies and marketing communication activities (Dowling, 1993).

Hence, internal branding nowadays often focuses on the current employees and is opposed to the employer branding which cover a broader area focusing on both current employees and potential recruits. Both employer and internal branding is viewed as a holistic approach in the current marketplace in developing a successful brand.

2.7   Employers' characteristics / leaders' personalities

H5: There is a relationship between CEO/leader personality traits and employees' brand commitment.

Back in the previous years, leadership research has been conducted with leader's background of front liner or middle-level managers (Wood & Vilkinas, 2004). We often argued that in an age of complexity and change in such large organisations or even a nation state, leaders are more important than

ever (House et al., 1991). Senior executives such as CEOs are viewed as the personnel operate in a much different organisational context from the middle-level managers. These group of people may have been undergone a higher level of development pathways that eventually shaped their ways of thinking (Conger et al., 2000). In the more recent researches, leaders' personality can be determined to predict their leadership behaviour and the positive association such as subordinate satisfaction with the leader, overall job satisfaction, organisation commitment, work motivation and leadership effectiveness (Judge & Bono, 2000).

Viewing the importance of such performance in the organisation, it is vital to select and develop appropriate individuals for high level leadership position (Wood and Vilkinas, 2004). Research on Identification of the leader or CEOs' characteristics as nominated by fellow theorists (Waldman et al., 2001) is based on theoretical, unlike those postulated by the empiricists. However, both groups has agreed that one CEO will need to portray an achievement and worklife balance, a humanistic and positive thinking approach, a willingness to be inclusive and self-awareness, and lastly to achieve a significant level of integrity and level of trust in an organisation. Through the study, it is found that CEOs effectiveness depends on their personality and charisma and not solely on their control over bureaucratic structures (House et al., 1991). .

2.7.1 Achievement and worklife balance

Decades ago, issues on the CEOs' achievement orientation has been thrown in the light by David C. McClelland, a Harvard psychologist (1961). A concrete establishment between the need for achievement and the level of economic development of societies is inter-correlated. His argument is simple by which he mentioned if a nation develops a large number of people especially managers, leaders and entrepreneurs whom are driven by motives to achieve, to build and develop things, they eventually will contribute to the generation of economic development (McClelland, 1961).

Kunnanatt defined achievement motivated people as those who set their goals realistically by taking only moderate levels of risk. They tend to posses the need for immediate feedback on the success or failure of the tasks they have executed. When they are given a task, they will pre-occupy with it once they start working on it. Most importantly, they crave satisfaction with accomplishment per se. Other researchers such as Timmons (1990) who tested this theory also found that high need for achievement correlates with countries' economic development and the need come "before" spurts in economic activity in a society, as was witnessed in the case of Western societies.

Carland and Carland (1992) observed that the achievement-oriented managers always have senses of risk-taking, creativity and proactivity which they can be distinguished in terms of striving organisations' objectives through

various effective approaches. Personality of achievement-oriented managers reflects assumptions and values, according to Xenikou and Simosi (2006), while practicing them on task by organisation with the aim to accomplish goal setting, organisational objectives, experimentation, and an emphasis placed on being effective. While analytical and proactive decision-making is deemed important, Miller and Toulouse (1986) had found that highly achievement-orientated managers favour market-oriented strategies, with broad approaches, formal and sophisticated structures.

Timmons (1990), as mentioned earlier, observed that characteristics such as creativity and innovation are also contributed in differentiating among entrepreneurially oriented entrepreneurs and managers from others. Entrialgo et al. (2000) concluded that managers with a high need for achievement opt to formulate strategies which are attainable to achieve goals by an enhanced level of control over their settings.

Yet, the highly achievement-orientated individuals need to develop adaptive strategies which they "actively construct and modify their roles, resources, and relationships" (Becker & Moen, 1999) to offset the possible conflicts and try to derive the benefits of assuming multiple roles. Most basically, individuals whom are working view that career and family can either hinder or facilitate each other (Ezzedeen & Ritchey (2009). That is why Greenhaus and Powell (2006) pointed out that there is growing awareness that facilitation can coexist with conflict in work/family relationships. This concept of facilitation is based on theories of role accumulation by Sieber (1974), which argue that

individuals, for instance women, needs social support, resource access and diversified gratification in order to be comfort in taking multiple roles (Rao et al., 2003).

2.7.2 Humanistic and positive thinking

According to Gluckman (2007), only the leader can create the organisational climate with the "atmosphere" in which subordinates and associates work. In order to treat all associates with respect and understands them, the leader needs to understand himself/herself as well, first before engaging and managing the employees. Bennis (1989) once introduced the concept of adaptive capacity in which he emphasized the leader's understanding of the inner world as it will make the external world gets much easier to understand and navigate. The concept requires the leader to make better choices in the way they react to the world around him/her and eventually the choices made necessary for a greater organisational access.

Cangemi et al. (2008) concluded that some leaders limit human capacity development without engaging further effort in doing so. Most of them have limited realization on how much they can severely manipulate the creative spirit in a human being, which perhaps bringing in permanently damages (Maslow, 1970). The de-motivation elements that stay within the leaders somehow often discourage people and it mostly engrossed a significant waste of monetary fund. That is why Policy (2005), in his study, mentioned that motivation on the part of associates can never be demanded, yet it must

come from within. Condition is the leader who creates a humanistic environment is one whom practices mutual trust, motivation, new ideas that eventually develop and nourish high productivity in an organisation (Policy, 2005).

As mentioned by Cangemi et al. (2008), a leader affects its organisation's culture by demonstrating their values in the daily tasks. Discouraging leaders can create fear in subordinates, be it the fearful of being put down, humiliated, disrespected, and talked in the sarcastic way. Most of the employees appear to be hateful to negative emotional-behaviours of this sort more than the fact of being terminated. The employees will do whatever it takes to steer clear of these types of responses from leaders.

In an increasingly competitive and internally-centric business environment, humanistic approach often affiliates closely with the positive thinking of one leader. Hence, Robert Rawlinson (2007) urges the leader to utilise creative thinking in order to gain the upper hand. The relevant skill in creativity can be defined as the ability to think creatively, generate alternatives, engage in divergent thinking, and/or suspend judgment (Shalley & Gibson, 2004). Chen and Ling (2010) revealed that the CEO's thinking manners and preferences in decision making is influential in the firm's final performance through the strategic choices.

Additionally, successful business leaders, especially in the highly competitive market, need to have strong integrative thinking skills in order to achieve their success (Karakas & Kavas, 2008). Integrative thinking is often defined as the

ability to constructively solve the obstacles from opposing thinking models in order to generate a creative resolution and a holistic model. It should contains elements of the individual thinking models instead of choosing one model at the expense of the other, but goes beyond them (Karakas & Kavas, 2008). Hereby, the integrative thinking requires creative brainstorming with a high tolerance for change, innovation, openness and flexibility.

By adopting an integrated strategy to improve the positive thinking of the top management, ie CEO, these organisational leaders can help their employees win the race of sustained competitive advantages. Hence, training in instilling positive and creative thought is seen as vital processes in constructive improvements to attitudes associated with divergent thinking (Basadur et al., 1982).

2.7.3 Inclusive and self-awareness

Many business organisations are interested in the nature of empowerment among fellow employees as it may be the potential element to increase the organisational effectiveness and innovation (Boudrias, 2010). According to Cotton (1996), employees' empowerment is generally defined as a form of participative process in utilising the full capacity of workers and is often designed to improve the employees' commitment to organisation success. In this case, CEOs and leaders of organisations as part of the workforce, play a crucial role in maintaining the element of inclusiveness by full participative practices.

The managing concept of high-involvement work practices (Lawler, 1992) and employee participation (Wagner, 1994) introduced by fellow researchers involve the leaders' encouragement in participating in various organisations' activities. Throughout the participation, both the leaders and employees are given the authority in decision-making and control over the work environment. This will eventually raised employees' motivation and lead them to take initiatives in securing or develop work effectiveness (Boudrias, 2010).

While significant studies have been conducted within the practices of participative by fellow leaders, the initial focus was primarily within the domain of the top management, president, CEO, or the top management team and subsequent executive members. Anderson (2004) revealed that the economic performance is highly correlated with the distributed decision authority, participation in decisions and strategic planning processes. The argument was supported by Floyd and Lane (2000) whom challenged the conventional top management perspective by introducing the concept of inclusiveness. A development of a new model where the strategic value of adding other organisational employees' perspective and inclusiveness in the strategic process, was found to be directly linked to improve organisational performance.

Though the inclusiveness of the organisations' leaders is deemed positive and vital in the business performance, the nature of participation also lead them to the sense of self-awareness and learning from other employees. The work of Heyman and Dweck (1992) identified that there are always two types of goals

to be attained by a CEO which is performance goals and learning goals. CEOs with performance goal orientation strive to demonstrate their competence via task performance to avoid negative judgments of their competence. In a contrary, a learning oriented CEO will tend to strive to understand something new or to increase their level of competence in a given task. Learning-oriented individuals consider skills and abilities changeable and therefore strive to improve and master the tasks (Mayo & Mayo, 2007).

Leaders with a learning goal orientation will see themselves as dedicating efforts to improve their subordinate's abilities. Tabernero and Wood (1999) disclosed that stronger self-efficacy will tend to be instilled in learning-oriented individuals when they maintain more positive effect and set themselves more challenging goals across multiple trials. Also, VandeWalle et al. (2000) found that learning goal orientation was highly related to active feedback-seeking behaviours with respect to overall performance and technical aspects of the tasks given. These behaviours are consistent with a transformational leadership style that emphasizes the importance of self-learning. Transformational leaders will then act as coaches to oversee the employees' abilities.

2.7.4 Integrity and level of trust

There are numerous writers in the past (Adams et al., 2001; Wood & Rimmer, 2003) whom have proposed the notion that a code of ethics should exist as a means of enhancing the ethical environment of an organisation, in order to

improve the level of integrity within the organisation. In general, Montefiore and Vines (1999) defined integrity as an association of virtues such as purity, solidarity, involvement, sincerity. However, integrity of such an ethical code by itself is not sufficient to ensure that the employees of organisations will actually manifest ethical behaviours while carrying daily tasks. This idealistic of integrity requires more than just a code. It actually requires supporting procedures to be in place so that the ethos of the code is entrenched in all level that the company does (Kaptein & Reenen, 2001).

A CEO or organisation leader who operate with integrity and have developed trusting relationships with all of their stakeholders may create a new source of competitive advantage, according to Rok (2009). Some CEOs actively engaged in the corporate sustainability and responsibility agenda by re-examining the way employees are treated, reviewing the consistency of leadership patterns and their human resources strategies, internal development programs. This in turn will cause better understanding and eventually implement growing expectations of all stakeholders. To some extend, they impose strong pressure to demonstrate fairness, integrity and respect for all individuals at every level of the organisations.

When CEOs achieve a significant level of integrity when practicing them in the daily tasks, it will eventually lead to trustworthiness as well. Trust is thought to be particularly important in today's organisations in view that when trust is relatively high, employees are more committed to authorities and the institutions that the authorities represent (Brockner et al., 1997). Fink and

Kraus (2007) believed that trust is good, desirable and even essential for organisations to function properly. Trust will help in promotes cooperation, which is essential in large organisations, particularly, (La Porta et al., 1997) and increases the levels of interpersonal helping among employees with the coordination enhancing behaviours (McAllister, 1995). In an organisational level, trust relationships will enhance the quality of work life, providing needed support, pleasure, meaning and purpose (Baumeister and Leary, 1995)

Trust, which McGrath and Zell (2009) plays a key role in the effective functioning of both lower and top management in one organisation. Organisations with a high level of trust manage to reduce transaction costs, increases sociability and serve as the basis for cooperation, with condition if its CEOs and leaders are the practioner of such value. According to Wellman and Wortley (1990) the development of trust depends on the degree to which the CEOs and leaders perceive the presence of three critical attributes of ability, benevolence and integrity within their support networks. These required attributes also examine their ability to match these qualities with the type of support they seek in any particular situation.

The basis for trust giving can lead to a better organisation performance with the constructive collaboration between CEOs and subordinates. CEOs are more likely to give trust based on the ability to carry out tasks as required to uphold the organisations' performance. By engaging in activities that support the optimal level of trust, both top management and subordinates are likely to develop a quality relational leadership style.

2.8 Statement of research hypothesis

Based on the literature analysis, there are 5 research hypothesis which will be further studied. They are listed as below:

H1: There is a relationship between employees' brand knowledge and employees' brand commitment.

H2: There is a relationship between customers brand image as perceived by employees and employees' brand commitment.

H3: There is a relationship between the perception by employees of the employer brand relative to its competitors and employees brand commitment.

H4: There is a relationship between employer brand as experienced by employees and employees' brand commitment.

H5: There is a relationship between CEO/leader personality traits and employees' brand commitment.

2.9 Conceptual framework

The rationale behind the conceptual framework used in this study is the factors influencing the level of employees' brand commitment towards their hotel brands. Five identified factors of employees' brand commitment were established and will be studied in this study:

1. Employees brand knowledge

2. Customer brand as perceived by employees

3.   Employer brand and its competitors

4.   Employer brand as experienced by employees

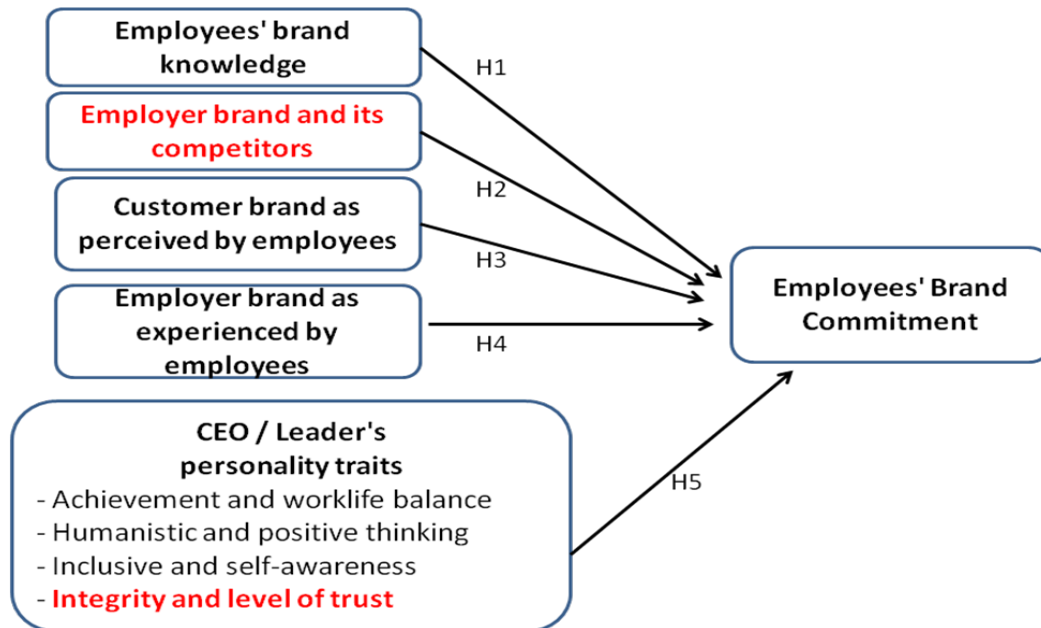5.   CEO/ Leaders' personality traits

They are illustrated as below:

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of employer brand

as perceived by employees

2.10 Summary

The importance of brand commitment by the employees across the service sectors seems to be a more complex issue than what the theory has been suggested by the past researchers. Therefore, the main key to increase the level of such brand commitment in the service sector, particularly hospitality industry, is to put forward the major strategic and operational emphasis of hotel brand management on the shoulder of human resources, employers and the marketing of the said brands. A higher focus on brand commitment requires both efforts from the employers and employees to understand in depth of the brand values before implementing and communicating them to customers.

Tracing the processes that shape the employees' brand commitments will definitely helps the management on a better plan for brand growth. Combined with the identified factors in growing prominence of such service brand, employees' brand commitment is viewed as a marketing imperative for services that are mainly dominated by the stakeholders' experience and credence attributes.