

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Generally, based on the results of the survey, we can conclude that Kuala Lumpur 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 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Hotel management should be able to get an insight in how to ensure a consistency of quality service in this highly demanding industry in Kuala Lumpur.

Nevertheless, when placed in ranking order, Factor 3: "Actively benefiting" activity was rated 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 how we act".

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, In order to minimize the potential embarrassment due to any ethical dilemma faced by hotel staff and management, the following recommendations are made by the author to hotel management: -

1. It is worth taking note on seeing the impact within different departments on the ethical judgments of staff. Staff employed in back-of-house departments such as human resource, finance and security, had a lower tolerance of unethical

behaviours. This may be due to their lack of customer contact. Since each of these departments interact with hotel guests in different ways all the time from when the guest steps into the hotel, any unethical behaviour would easily deteriorate the relationship between management and hotel guests.

2. Younger employees (those aged under 30) seemed to be more tolerant of unethical behaviours in general. Hotel management should therefore start to inject ethical testing in recruitment and selection processes. It would be inappropriate to judge a person on their technical ability only. Hotel orientation programmes should include a company ethical education so that employees are briefed clearly once they start working.
3. In analyzing the correlation among the four factors and the general attitudinal statements, people with positive beliefs about mankind tended to be less tolerant of unethical behaviours. However, there were discrepancies found when they needed to choose between "satisfying a guest or following company policy". Ethical employees should tend to follow company policy rather than satisfying the guests. It was also found that employees tend to be tolerant of unethical behaviours when someone treats them well. They think it is all right to "pay back the favour" to another person, even though the activity is unethical.
4. Finally, this research reveals that there is a strong need for a proper ethical education and training. Proper guidance and clear guidelines of ethical boundaries should be taught in an orientation programme or incorporated in other training sessions. There is a strong implication for management to develop and maintain ethical policies and procedures in the hotel industry.

In general, hotel management can benefit most by understanding more about how their employees react and behave when faced with an ethical dilemma. This research reveals that there are four major dimensions, which govern the hotel

employees' ethical beliefs. Statistically, it seems that hotel management can improve the two dimensions: "actively benefiting" and "unethical behaviours", since employees perceived these dimensions as 'less unethical' and showed a higher tolerance in these areas.

Female employees seemed to be more 'ethical' than their male counterparts. Besides, employees working in different departments, age groups and education levels should be treated differently. Hotel management will benefit most by tailor-making a suitable ethical education and training programme for the appropriate employee sector.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research only marks a preliminary study of hotel employees' ethical beliefs focusing on four main major services encounter areas that are front office, housekeeping, food and beverage and engineering. Less emphasis was placed for those departments which have less contact with hotel guests i.e. kitchen, security, finance and human resource. Further research can be conducted with higher emphasis on other areas such as sales and marketing, purchasing, accounting and finance, human resource, training and other areas to compare the results of this study. 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.

It could be useful to test hotel employees within different categories of hotels (for example 5-star, 3-star and budget hotels), to test whether the different working environments result in any significant difference in the employees' job-related ethics.

Because the sample for this research was all in Kuala Lumpur only, similar surveys could be done for hotel employees working in other major towns in Malaysia such as Penang, Johor Bahru or in other Asian countries such as Indonesia or Philippines. Similar research could be done in other countries to identify any cultural differences between the countries. It is also an interesting area to explore the validity of this survey to other cultures besides the oriental cultures. If the research could be done with more employees living in other countries around the world, it may be more appropriate to develop representative and universal dimensions of job-related ethical beliefs. In addition, the other side of the story, hotel guests' attitudes on these ethical issues is not surveyed yet. Further research can be done on hotel guests who may feel ethically correct when tempting the hotel employees who then face an ethical dilemma.