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**THE PRACTICE OF ORGANIZATIONAL FLEXIBILITY
IN MALAYSIAN HIGHER RATED HOTELS**



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UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

**MASTER OF SCIENCE
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**THE PRACTICE OF ORGANIZATIONAL FLEXIBILITY
IN MALAYSIAN HIGHER RATED HOTELS**



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**A Thesis submitted to the Ghazali Shafie Graduate School of Government
in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Science
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Kolej Undang-Undang, Kerajaan dan Pengajian Antarabangsa
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ABSTRACT

This study explores the practice of organisational flexibility in four- and five-star hotels in Malaysia, which is referred to as Malaysian higher rated hotels in this study. The practice of organisational flexibility is particularly important in hotel industry because the industry is by nature labour intensive. As such, wages constitute the highest cost element of hotel expenditures. The two forms of organisational flexibility (functional flexibility and numerical flexibility) enable hotels to efficiently manage its labour force. With functional flexibility, hotels are able to redeploy its employees through a variety of different work practices whilst numerical flexibility enables hotels to vary the types of employees through the engagement of short-term employees. This study is framed based on three research questions. The first research question determines the purposes of practising organisational flexibility in Malaysian higher rated hotels. The second research question seeks to identify the approaches employed by Malaysian higher rated hotels in practising organisational flexibility. The third research question aims to investigate the outcomes of organisational flexibility practice. In seeking the answers to these research questions, qualitative methodology and semi-structured interview methods are employed. The findings of this study indicate that different hotels practise organisational flexibility for different purposes. Similarly, the extent to which approaches are employed to practise functional and numerical flexibility in each hotel also varies. It is discovered that functional flexibility is preferable as compared to numerical flexibility. The findings of this study reveal that the most common approaches of functional flexibility used in Malaysian higher rated hotels are multi-skilling, job rotation and cross-exposure whilst employment of casual and agency workers are the most preferred approach of numerical flexibility. The practice of organisational flexibility results in more positive outcomes. The findings of this study contribute to both theoretical and practical knowledge. In terms of its theoretical contribution, this study recognises that organisational flexibility is an important aspect of human resource management especially in higher rated hotels. The investigation into the area of organisational flexibility serves as a reference point for managers and human resource practitioners intending to pursue organisational flexibility.

Keywords: Higher Rated Hotels, Organisational Flexibility, Functional Flexibility, Numerical Flexibility, Human Resource Management, Malaysia

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meninjau amalan fleksibiliti-organisasi di hotel bertaraf empat dan lima bintang di Malaysia yang dikenali rakyat Malaysia sebagai hotel yang bernilai tinggi dalam kajian ini. Amalan fleksibiliti-organisasi adalah penting khususnya dalam industri perhotelan disebabkan penggunaan tenaga kerja yang ramai. Kos pekerja merupakan kos operasi hotel yang tertinggi. Dua bentuk fleksibiliti-organisasi (fleksibiliti-fungsi dan fleksibiliti-angka) membolehkan hotel untuk mengurus pekerja dengan cekap. Fleksibiliti-fungsi membolehkan pekerja dipindahkan untuk melaksanakan pelbagai jenis pekerjaan, sementara fleksibiliti-angka membolehkan hotel untuk mempelbagaikan jenis dan bilangan pekerja dengan pengambilan pekerja untuk tempoh yang pendek. Kajian ini dirangka berdasarkan tiga soalan kajian. Soalan kajian yang pertama mengenal pasti tujuan amalan fleksibiliti-organisasi di hotel bertaraf empat dan lima bintang di Malaysia. Soalan kajian yang kedua mengenal pasti pendekatan yang digunakan oleh hotel bertaraf empat dan lima bintang dalam amalan fleksibiliti-organisasi. Soalan kajian yang ketiga mengenal pasti hasil daripada amalan fleksibiliti-organisasi. Kaedah kualitatif dengan kaedah temu bual separa berstruktur digunakan untuk menjawab kesemua soalan kajian. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa fleksibiliti-organisasi diamalkan bagi tujuan yang berbeza. Tahap amalan dan pendekatan yang diambil dalam amalan fleksibiliti-fungsi dan fleksibiliti-angka adalah berbeza dan pelbagai. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa fleksibiliti-fungsi lebih kerap digunakan berbanding dengan fleksibiliti-angka. Hasil kajian ini mendedahkan bahawa pendekatan yang biasa diambil dalam amalan fleksibiliti-fungsi di hotel bertaraf empat dan lima bintang di Malaysia adalah pelbagai-kemahiran, pusingan-kerja, dan pendedahan-silang. Untuk fleksibiliti-angka, pendekatan yang digunakan adalah pengambilan pekerja kasual dan pekerja agensi. Amalan fleksibiliti-organisasi mempunyai banyak kebaikan. Hasil kajian ini menyumbang kepada pengetahuan teori dan praktikal. Daripada segi sumbangan teori, kajian ini mengiktiraf kepentingan fleksibiliti-organisasi sebagai aspek yang penting dalam pengurusan sumber manusia terutamanya di hotel bertaraf empat dan lima bintang. Hasil kajian ini boleh digunakan oleh pengurus sumber manusia yang berhasrat untuk mengamalkan fleksibiliti-organisasi sebagai rujukan.

Kata kunci: Hotel Empat dan Lima Bintang, Organisasi-Fleksibel, Fleksibiliti-Fungsi, Fleksibiliti-Angka, Pengurusan Sumber Manusia, Malaysia

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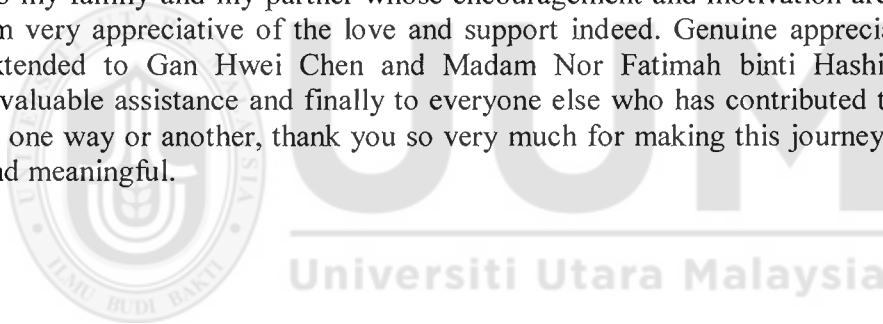


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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter provides a general idea to the background of this research. A brief introduction to organisational flexibility is discussed and the current state of organisational flexibility in the hotel industry is elaborated. This chapter begins with the preface of environmental changes affecting the industry. It then discusses the relevance of discussing organisational flexibility in line with the implementation of the national minimum wage policy. The issues afflicting organisational flexibility in Malaysian higher rated hotels are also explained.

The importance of this study is to highlight the theoretical and practical contributions of organisational flexibility in four- and five-star hotels in Malaysia, which is termed throughout this study as ‘Malaysian higher rated hotels’. The limitations restricting further exploration are identified and the key terms applicable to the context of this study are subsequently defined.

1.1 Background of Study

The Malaysian hotel industry according to Awang, Ishak, Radzi, and Taha (2008) is experiencing radical changes due to its external environment. What concern hotel organisations are the factors outside the boundary of a hotel that may affect its operation and management. Taken into account the detrimental effects of a highly volatile environment, it is only sensible that organisations monitor and institute their business operations, internal processes, systems and strategies based upon the assessment of its external and general environment (Awang et al., 2008; Kim &

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