UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED LEADER EMOTIONAL LABOUR, ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG THE HOTEL OPERATIONAL STAFF

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By

PARISA EHSAN KASHANI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

February 2021

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Mahnaz Kamrani and my father, Saeed Ehsan Kashani.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

FECTS OF PERCEIVED LEADER EMOTIONAL LABOUR, ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG THE HOTEL OPERATIONAL STAFF

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Employee's organizational commitment in service-oriented organizations including hotels is highly crucial and significant to meet customer satisfaction. Therefore, hotel operators are suggested to establish a good relationship between employers and employees. Past researchers suggested that organizational commitment could be affected by the leadership. Despite numerous studies conducted to test leadership style and organization commitment, limited studies have specifically addressed the impact of perceived leader emotional labour, ethical leadership, and leader-member exchange on organizational commitment in the hotel industry. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the influence of perceived ethical leadership, perceived leader-member exchange, and perceived leader emotional labour on organizational commitment among the operational staff within the hotel industry in Malaysia, particularly in 4-star and 5-star hotels. This study focused on operational staff's perception of leaders, following the empirical evidence that employees could become less or not committed when weaknesses are identified on the leader ethical behaviour, leader-member exchange, and leader emotional labour. This situation could also affect the employees' behaviours towards the customer, leading to negative customers' perceptions and satisfaction. Due to the complex nature of this research model, the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is the most appropriate software for analysis of the research data due to its matching robustness. In this study, data were obtained from 422 hotel operational staffs who worked in the 4-star and 5-star hotels in Klang Valley.

The beta coefficient, coefficient of determination, and predictive relevance of the constructs were analyzed for organizational commitment, followed by the results that indicated statistical significance. Following that, the effect sizes of the driver constructs (f^2 and q^2) were tested with small and medium-sized effects. All the hypothesized relationships were examined and supported at a 95% confidence interval with the

i

corresponding t-values above the 1.96 threshold value. However, the relationship between the leader variety of emotional labour and organizational commitment failed to achieve significant value. Subsequently, perceived leader emotional labour was identified as intensity, frequency, deep acting, and surface acting that significantly influenced employee commitment. The model further tested the mediation role of perceived leader-member exchange on the relationship between perceived ethical leadership and organizational commitment. Results supported that there is partial mediation effect of perceived leader-member exchange on the relationship between perceived ethical leadership and organizational commitment. In summary, the results of the analysis have proven that perceived ethical leadership, perceived leader-member exchange, and perceived leader emotional labour significantly and positively influence organizational commitment in 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia. The proposed model of this thesis could provide useful insights, which are especially pertinent to an improved understanding of emotional labour in the context of leadership and the outcomes of perceived leader emotional labour. However, these aspects were not adequately discussed in the current literature. The results indicated that the dimensions of perceived leader emotional labour, including deep acting, surface acting, frequency, and intensity influenced organizational commitment.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

KESAN PERSEPSI PEMIMPIN TENAGA KERJA EMOSIONAL, KEPEMIMPINAN BERETIKA DAN PERTUKARAN PEMIMPIN-ANGGOTA KE ATAS KOMITMEN ORGANISASI DI KALANGAN STAF OPERASI DI HOTEL

Oleh

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Komitmen organisasi pekerja dalam organisasi berorientasikan perkhidmatan termasuk hotel adalah amat penting dan signifikan dalam memenuhi kepuasan pelanggan. Justeru, pengusaha hotel disarankan untuk membina hubungan yang baik antara majikan dan pekerja. Kajian terdahulu menunjukkan bahawa komitmen organisasi dipengaruhi oleh kepimpinan. Walaupun terdapat banyak kajian yang menguji gaya kepimpinan dan komitmen organisasi, tidak banyak kajian yang khusus dalam mengkaji kesan persepsi pemimpin tenaga kerja emosional, kepemimpinan beretika, dan pertukaran pemimpin-anggota terhadap komitmen organisasi di industri perhotelan. Justeru, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat pengaruh persepsi kepimpinan beretika, persepsi pertukaran pemimpin-anggota, dan persepsi tenaga kerja emosional pemimpin terhadap komitmen organisasi dalam kalangan staf operasi di industri perhotelan Malaysia, terutamanya bertaraf 4 dan 5 bintang. Kajian ini memfokuskan persepsi staf operasi terhadap pemimpin, lanjutan daripada bukti empirikal bahawa pekerja boleh menjadi kurang atau tidak komited apabila terdapatnya kelemahan dalam tingkah laku pemimpin beretika, hubungan pertukaran pemimpin-anggota, dan pemimpin tenaga kerja emosional. Keadaan ini juga boleh mempengaruhi tingkah laku pekerja terhadap pelanggan mereka, dan menyebabkan timbulnya ketidakpuasan hati dan persepsi pelanggan yang negatif. Oleh sebab model kajian ini yang bersifat kompleks, model persamaan berstruktur melalui kaedah kuasa dua terkecil separa (PLS-SEM) merupakan perisian yang paling sesuai bagi tujuan analisis data kajian berikutan daya ketahanannya. Data dalam kajian ini diperolehi daripada 422 orang staf operasi di hotel-hotel bertaraf 4 dan 5 bintang di Lembah Klang.

Pekali beta, pekali penentuan, dan perkaitan ramalan konstruk telah dianalisis dari aspek komitmen organisasi, yang menunjukkan hasil kajian yang signifikan secara statistik. Lanjutan dari itu, saiz kesan konstruk pemacu (f^2 dan q^2) telah diuji dengan kesan kecil

dan sederhana. Kesemua hubungan hipotesis telah dikaji dan disokong pada selang keyakinan 95% dengan nilai-t yang melebihi nilai ambang iaitu 1.96 Namun begitu, hubungan antara pelbagai pemimpin tenaga kerja emosional dan komitmen organisasi tidak berjaya mencapai nilai yang signifikan. Seterusnya, persepsi pemimpin tenaga kerja emosional juga dikenalpasti melalui intensiti, kekerapan, lakonan mendalam, dan lakonan permukaan yang mempengaruhi komitmen pekerja secara signifikan. Model selanjutnya menguji peranan perantara persepsi pertukaran pemimpin-anggota dalam hubungan antara percepsi kepimpinan beretika dan komitmen organisasi. Hasil kajian ini menyokong hipotesis yang dibina, di mana terdapatnya kesan perantara persepsi pertukaran pemimpin-anggota dalam hubungan antara persepsi kepemimpinan beretika dan komitmen organisasi. Kesimpulannya, keputusan telah membuktikan bahawa persepsi kepimpinan beretika, persepsi pertukaran pemimpin-anggota, dan persepsi pemimpin tenaga kerja emosional mempengaruhi komitmen organisasi secara signifikan dan positif di hotel-hotel bertaraf 4 dan 5 bintang di Malaysia. Model yang dicadangkan oleh tesis ini juga dapat memberikan pandangan yang berguna, terutamanya berkaitan pemahaman mengenai persepsi pemimpin tenaga kerja emosional dalam konteks pemimpin dan hasil daripada persepsi pemimpin tenaga kerja emosional tersebut. Walau bagaimanapun, aspek-aspek ini tidak dikupas dengan lebih mendalam dalam literatur semasa. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa dimensi persepsi tenaga kerja emosional, iaitu lakonan mendalam, lakonan permukaan, kekerapan, dan intensiti dapat mempengaruhi komitmen sesebuah organisasi.

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This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) were adhered to.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST APPENDICES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND MEANINGS

EL	Ethical leadership
SA	Surface acting
DA	Deep acting
VA	Variety
IN	Intensity
FE	Frequency
LMX	Leader-member exchange
OC	Organisational commitment
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
MOTAC	Ministry Of Tourism, Arts and Culture

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Chapter overview

This chapter presents an overview of the study to provide an understanding of the research interest, motivation, and expected contributions. Specifically, it explains the background of the study, statement of the problem, research aims and objectives, significance and scope of this study, the definition of key terms, and an outline of the research organisation.

1.2   Research background

The success or failure of any organisation is determined through the performance displayed by the members, which has been reckoned to be affected by the organisational commitment (OC). To illustrate this point, several work-related attributes are affected, including job satisfaction, work motivation, organisational citizenship behaviour, and loyalty (Farrukh, Ying, and Mansori, 2017; Kumar et al., 2016; Maiti, Sanual, and Mazumder, 2020). Organisational commitment is described as a psychological state that characterises the relationship with the organisation and has implications on the decision to continue membership with the organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1991). It is stated that a committed employee has a lower possibility to withdraw especially in difficult conditions due to their loyalty. This notion was confirmed by Van Waeyenberg, Peccei, and Decramer (2020), who indicated that a strong feeling of commitment would lead to engagement and support among employees to the organisational goals.

Past literature suggested that three types of commitment are present, which include affective commitment (AC), normative commitment (NC), and continuance commitment (CC) (Allen and Meyer, 1990). The AC, which is observed as the strongest type of commitment, refers to an employee's strong feelings towards the organisation that helps prevent the employee's withdrawal from the organisation. Specifically, affectively committed employees to continue their employment solely due to their desire to work at the organisation (Yen-Ku, 2013). Naturally, the presence of affectively committed employees is preferable in each organisation, given that AC is highly correlated with job performance and loyalty. Besides, affectively committed employees to perceive satisfaction with their jobs, value organisational goals and objectives, and assist in business success (Fanggidae et al., 2016).

The NC is a type of commitment that addresses the feelings of obligation or a sense of responsibility or duty to remain at the firm and assist in meeting organisational goals (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Employees who experience a high level of NC are compelled to fulfil their obligations towards the organisation to avoid guilt and anxiety or the

1

obligation to fulfil the expectations of others. It has been posited that NC is developed through reciprocity norms, and it is promoted through lifelong organisational socialisation and acculturation (Bergman, 2006). The NC could also be self-motivated if an employee experiences commitment as a desire to perform the right action, in which the employee may experience NC with a high level of AC (Vandenberghe, Mignonac and Manville, 2014).

The CC is the type of commitment when an employee avoids the risk of leaving the organisation and retains the economic benefits and opportunities by remaining in the organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1990). The CC specifically refers to a non-transferable investment made by an employee, which is also unique to the firm. The examples of CC include retirement benefits, relationships with colleagues, and seniority-based privileges (Markovits et al., 2010). Given the high cost involved in losing organisational membership, employees who experience CC tend to prolong their employment as long as the organisation satisfies their economic needs and better prospect from other organisations is not available. These employees seek and value positive extrinsic rewards, such as pay raises, and rewards, and over and above organisational objectives. The CC has been regarded as the weakest level of commitment, primarily considering that commitment is dictated by cost and benefits (Nassar, 2017).

Scholars recommended that the presence of committed employees is essential for business success, including the hotel industry. To illustrate, being in the service industry, hotel staff are required to deliver a service with superior quality to satisfy their customers and gain a positive reputation. Service quality is highly prominent to achieve customer's satisfaction as it reflects their perception of services received compared to expected services (Mmutle and Shonhe, 2017). Provided that the hotel industry necessitates a high degree of interaction between staff and customers, service quality, customers' perception, and revisit intention are significantly affected by actions and behaviours of hotel staff (Cheng et al., 2018; Sadeghi et al., 2016; Altmann and Aleksanyan, 2016; Harkison, 2017; Khoo, 2020). Employees' behaviours and actions during face-to-face interaction with customers account for approximately 68% variance in customer loyalty (Galler, 2017).

Organisational commitment makes a major contribution to employees' actions and behaviours. It also signifies their devotion and loyalty (Tomic et al., 2018). The employees with the highest level of commitment have an 87% lower probability to leave the organisation and exhibit better performance compared to other employees by 20% (Phillips and Edwards, 2021). Committed employees are capable to go beyond their actual tasks to achieve the primary goal including customer satisfaction (Charni, Brun, and Ricard, 2019). On the other hand, the lack of organisational commitment is associated with withdrawal intention, lateness, absenteeism, and turnover, which reduce the productivity and performance of the organisation (Somers, 1995; Lambert et al., 2015; Kim and Beehr, 2020). The hotel industry has been recognised as a potential prospect in the development of tourism, which is a major contributor to the global economy (Amissah, 2013). Tourism plays a dynamic role in employment and foreign exchange developments. Figure 1.1 presents the contributions of tourism to the global

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 2000 to 2019. Based on the data, the direct contribution of the tourism industry accounted for the increase of the total global GDP from 3.2 in 2018 by 3.3% in 2019. Comparatively, the total contribution of the tourism industry in 2019 accounted for 10.4% of the total GDP worldwide (Statista, 2021). However, the share decreased to 5.5% in 2020 due to the ongoing COVID-19 virus restrictions to mobility (World Travel Tourism Council, 2021).
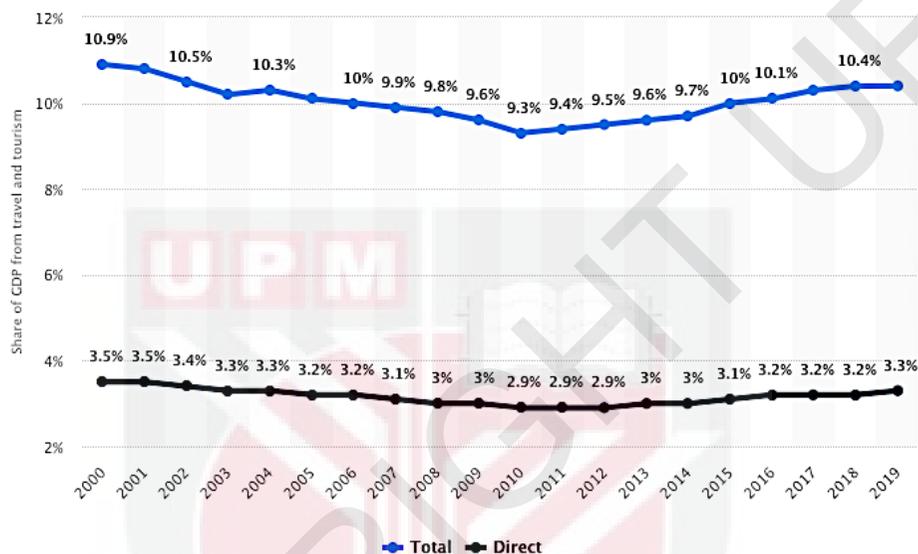
Figure 1.1 : Tourism contribution to GDP generated worldwide
(Source : Statista, 2021)

Tourism is recognised as the largest and fastest-growing industry in the global economy, which contributes to job creation, export revenue, and domestic value-added income in many countries, including Malaysia. In Malaysia, tourism has been acknowledged as one of the focus areas of the government for the development of a high-income nation (Povera, 2020). Malaysia has obtained several outstanding achievements in the tourism industry, which include "3rd Most Popular Asian Travel Destination" by World Travel Monitor (Malaysia: The World's Healthcare Marvel, 2019), "2nd Best Shopping Destination in Asia-Pacific Region" by Globe shopper index; "Ulysses Award for Innovation In Public Policy and Governance" by United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), and "4th Place in World's 10 Best Shopping Cities" by Cable News Network (CNN) (Tourism Malaysia, 2014); and "1st Place in Muslim-Friendly Destinations" in the Global Islamic Economy (SGIE) report by Dinar-standard (Dinar-standard, 2020; p. 15). Besides, the industry is also known as the third growth contributor after the manufacturing and palm oil industry (Puah et al., 2018). In 2019, tourism contribution to employment is accounted for 23.6% (3.6 million), which raised from 23.5% (3.5 million) in 2018 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020). According to a report by Tourism Malaysia for 2021 regarding the number of tourist arrivals and receipts over the past six years (2015 - 2020), Malaysia welcomed a total of

3

25,832,354 international tourists in 2018, which contributed to RM84.1 billion to the country's revenue. Following that, the increase in tourist arrivals in 2019, which accounted for a total of 26,100,784 international tourists visiting Malaysia, contributed to RM86.14 billion to the country's revenue. However, the tourist arrivals were reduced by 83.4% in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19, leading to a total of 4,332,722 international tourist arrivals (Tourism Malaysia, 2021).

The significant decline in the number of visitors in 2020 was attributed to the closure of international borders in response to the transmission of COVID-19. After the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March, the Malaysian government imposed Movement Control Order (MCO), which barred the entry of international tourists on 18 March. As a result, the monthly arrivals of tourists for 2020 amounted to 2,164,459 in January, 1,397,912 in February, 671,084 in March, 7,546 in April, 5,411 in May, 6,585 in June, 18,660 in July, 11,631 in August, and 16,131 in September, which was extremely low compared to the monthly average of 2,175,065 recorded in 2019 (Chan, 2021). According to the data from the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), Malaysia and neighbouring ASEAN countries, including Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia, are faced with a decline in the number of tourist arrivals (Shankar, 2021).

As a result of COVID-19 infection and travel restrictions imposed by the government in 2020, thousands of tourists have cancelled their visit to Malaysia, which affect the hotel industry. Table 1.1 presents the hotel performance in 2019 and 2020. It is indicated from the data that the decline in tourism has a negative impact on hotel performance. Besides, the decrease in demand leads to the loss of RM 6.54 billion revenue faced by hotels in 2020 (Ganesan, 2021).

Table 1.1 : Hotel performance in 2019 and 2020

2019		2020		
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE (%)	AVERAGE DAILY RATE (RM)	AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE (%)	AVERAGE DAILY RATE (RM)	LOSS OF REVENUE (RM BIL)
64.49	223.48	2751	196.69	6.54

(Adapted from Ganesan 2021)

The fluctuation in the labour market of the hotel industry damages the productivity, reputation, and development of tourism (Miah and Hafit, 2020). The hotel industry has been facing challenges in the establishment of employee motivation and loyalty. Furthermore, employee retention is an ongoing challenge for managers in hotel operations. The voluntarily turnover rate is above the average in the hotel industry in many countries, including Malaysia (Zainol, et al., 2015). It could be highlighted from Figure 1.2 that the annual employee turnover rate in the restaurant and accommodation sector is higher compared to the overall private sector in the US. In 2018, 74.9% of turnover rate was recorded, which was the highest since 2008 (National Restaurant Association, 2019).

4

The Data of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) demonstrates the lack of employee loyalty in the Australian hotel industry. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018), the hotel industry exhibited a turnover rate of 16% above the average rate of 8.1% in comparison to other industries. This case was similar to the case in New Zealand, in which the industry recording with high turnover rates of 21% and 26% was above the average rate of 20.5% in 2017 and 2018, respectively (Lawson Williams, 2019). According to Aon Hewitt (2016), in China, the hotel industry exhibited a turnover rate of 39.2% above the average rate of 14.9% in 2016.
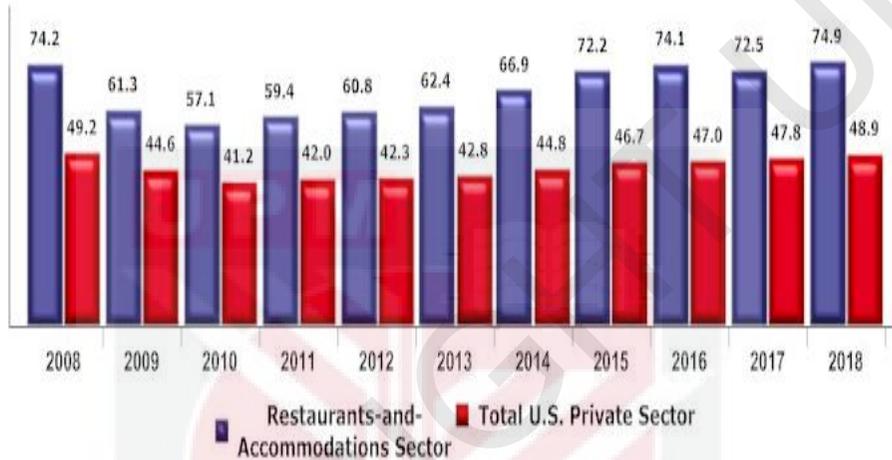
Figure 1.2 : Annual turnover rates in US
(Source : National restaurant association 2019)
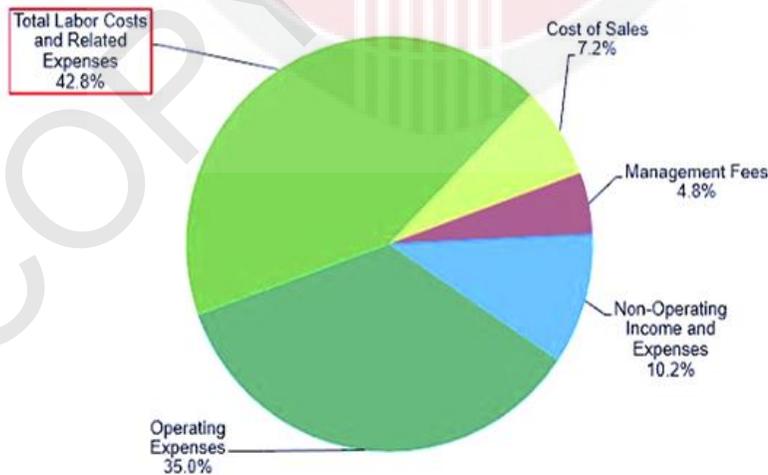
Figure 1.3 : A hotel's expenses
(Source : Ricca, 2018)

5

Figure 1.3 indicates hotel's labour cost. The data demonstrates that labour accounts for a large portion of a hotel's costs. Labour turnover in the global hotel industry costs a substantial amount of money and reduces the efficiency and productivity of hotels (McGew, 2018). Statistical data in Figure 1.2 and Figure 1.3 suggest that employee retention is significant for hotels in a developed country such as the US, but it is also critical for hotels in developing countries such as China. When an employee voluntarily leaves the organisation, the replacement of his/her position would be costly for the organisation. The substitution of employee costs approximately 33% of the employee's annual salary, which cover the recruitment, hiring, and training of a new hire (Work Institute, 2017). Turnover costs consist of direct (e.g., costs of training, recruitments, and employee developments) and indirect costs (e.g., loss of high performers and trained employees, low morale, errors in the operation process, and service delivery). Therefore, the turnover of high performers and trained employees incurs a significant cost to hotels and reduces their reputation and productivity (Ricca, 2018).

Empirical research into labour turnover as a common issue in the hotel industry was performed on the global level in several countries including Australia (Deery, Jago, and Stewart, 2008), New Zealand (Poulston, 2008), USA (Holston, 2018), Turkey (Akin et al., 2016), Saudi Arabia (Masfar, 2020), China (Haldorai et al., 2019), Korea (Kim, 2010), and Malaysia (Tan et al., 2020). The literature suggested that turnover in the hotel industry is caused by employees' dissatisfaction regarding various factors, such as working conditions, work timings, salary, and other benefits (Haldorai et al., 2019; Masfar, 2020; Tan et al., 2020). While these issues are present in the industry due to inadequate labour laws, there are organisations that implement successful management over the staff (Goodwin, 2018).

It was proven in the literature that the human resource management system, which aims to motivate employees towards their job and retain them, is more developed in 4 and 5-star hotels (Nassar, 2017; Yu et al., 2020; Al-fandi, 2020). In contrast to small-sized and medium-sized hotels (e.g., 1-star, 2-star, and 3-star hotels), large hotel chains, such as 4-star and 5-star hotels have more resources, which include attractive pay packages, flexible working hours, well-designed career growth, and development programmes to attract and retain the staff with exceptional skills. Based on the hotel rating system, 4-star and 5-star hotels have the highest requirements and scores for the professionalism of staff compared to hotels with lower ratings. Hotels with 4-star and 5-star ratings are also considered the properties that offer upscale, high-end, and luxury amenities and hospitality service (Decook, 2020). On the other hand, 1-star and 2-star hotels offer accommodation with simple amenities, which could only satisfy the basic needs of travellers. While 3-star hotels offer more amenities, they are lacking professional and luxury services in comparison to 4-star and 5-star hotels (Decook, 2020). For instance, the minimum requirement for front-desk staffs of 4-star and 5-star hotels includes excellent communication skills to interact with international customers and proficiency in at least English, with 7 - 8 points for 4-star hotels and 9 - 10 points for a 5-star hotel and 1 - 4 points for 1-star and 2-star hotels (Ministry of Tourism, Art, and Culture, 2021). It could be assumed from the discussion above that the working environment in 4-star and 5-star hotels have higher performance compared to lower star hotels.

6

Retaining human assets is a significant challenge among hotel managers around the world, including Malaysia, which has been recorded with the second-highest involuntary rate at 6% and the third-highest voluntary rate at 9.5% in Southeast Asia (Aziz, 2017). Malaysian organisations are faced with the yearly loss of approximately 38% of their staff (International Data Corporation, 2019). Several evidence pieces demonstrate that Malaysian employees have a low satisfaction level of management leadership (Sangaran and Kumar, 2015; Malaysian Reserve, 2017; Haldorai et al., 2019). This dissatisfaction towards leadership has led to the employees' counterproductive behaviours, such as theft (Goh and Kong, 2018), frustration, negative behaviour with customers, low morale, lack of collaboration (Brubaker, 2019), and voluntarily turnover (Ahmad, 2018). Kelly Services' global survey, which covered 120,000 multinational employees, discovered that dissatisfaction with leadership behaviour was the main factor of the turnover intention among 51,600 employees or 43% of respondents (Kelly services, 2013).

Another global survey of 320,000 employees recorded dissatisfaction with leadership as the major reason for employee turnover intention (Zenger and Folkman, 2014). An international analytical and advisory firm, Gallup, estimated that leadership accounted for 75% of the variance of employee behaviour (Gallup, 2008). Effective leadership could improve employee commitment and motivate employees to show their best performance beyond their tasks. Whereas ineffective leadership behaviours lead to severe consequences that impact the employees (Jang and Kandampully, 2017). Similarly, Gallup (2017) conducted a global survey on employee commitment, which involved 50,000 working adults across 155 countries, including the US, the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. As a result, it was found that ineffective leadership was the main factor of the lack of commitment. Additionally, Gallup (2017) discussed that 85% of respondents in this survey (42,500 employees) were lacking commitment (Gallup, 2017).

The argument above demonstrates the importance of a committed workforce for businesses, particularly for hotels. The organisational commitment was identified as the significant predictor of turnover intention by several scholars (Freund, 2008; Perryer, Firns, and Travaglione, 2010; Masud and Wan Daud, 2019) and a significant challenge among managers in the hotel industry (Jaddoud, 2019). Therefore, this research focused on investigating organisational commitment in the hotel industry.

1.3   Problem statement

Given hotel dependency on the staff to deliver quality service to their customers, all staff's commitment is important in shaping the customers' perception and loyalty (Li et al., 2020). It could also affect the guests' intention on whether to revisit the hotel or vice versa (Suchanek and Kralova, 2019).

Several job roles should be filled to maintain the operation of the hotel, which include front-desk services, housekeeping, food and beverage, and maintenance. As a team, the staff must cooperate to deliver a superior service experience (Westcott and Anderson, 2021). However, high turnover in the industry indicates that employees are not loyal to their organisations. Besides, they have a weak relationship with the organisation (Alom et al., 2019).

Researchers who have studied the issue of labour turnover in the hotel industry over the past decades described that turnover is associated with several problems, including the shortage of skilled and well-trained staff, expenditures for recruitment fees, and additional costs of training new employees, which negatively affect the healthy operations, efficiency, and productivity of hotels (Shaw, 2011; Han, 2020; Masfar, 2020). Moreover, scholars added that several major contributors to the problem include dissatisfaction with working conditions, work timings, salary, job training and development, and management's leadership (Heimerl et al., 2020; Haldorai et al., 2019; Masfar, 2020; Tan et al., 2020).

Some scholars suggested organisational commitment as a predictor for turnover intention (Marash and Mannari, 1977; Somers, 1995; Ahmad, 2015; Masud and Daud, 2019). Organisational commitment is described as a psychological state that characterises the relationship with the organisation and has implications for the decision to continue membership with the organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1991). The literature also indicated the significant impact of management's leadership behaviour on employee performance (Walumbwa et al., 2005; Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2018; Lyndon and Rawat, 2015; Asif et al., 2019), which could ultimately lead to the employees' intention to leave (Sangaran and Kumar, 2015; Malaysian Reserve, 2017; Haldorai et al., 2019). Therefore, further investigation is required on the methods of improving leadership to increase the commitment and minimise the turnover intention.

It was proven from the literature that the leader's emotion influences follower's attitudes and behaviours (Little, Gooty, and Williams, 2016; Humprey, Pollack, and Hawver, 2008; Moein, 2018). The previous studies on emotion within the context of leadership primarily focused on the leader's emotional intelligence, which was described as the ability to identify, assess, and control one's emotions and the emotion of others (Goleman, 2001). It was elaborated by past scholars that the leader's emotional intelligence significantly influenced leader-member exchange (Gupta and Bajaja, 2017), organisational commitment (Long and Tan, 2015), job satisfaction, and turnover intention (Ngirande and Harry, 2014). However, limited studies were performed on the outcome of perceived leader emotion.

Emotional labour was a term coined by Hochschild (1979,1983) as a part of service employees' job, which describes the process of managing emotion and expressions to fulfil the emotional requirements of service providers' jobs (Rafiq et al., 2020). The construct of emotional labour is different from emotional intelligence (Wen, Huang, and Hou, 2019). The literature has focused mainly on the antecedents and consequences of

service employees' emotional labour during the enactment of service roles, with minor emphasis placed on the relation between the perceptions of leaders' emotional labour and followers' job outcomes (Moon, Hur, and Choi, 2018; Moein, 2018; Humphrey, Pollack, and Hawver, 2008; Gardner, Fischer, and Hunt, 2009). This research investigated the association between the perceived leader emotional labour and organisational commitment, given the understanding that the employees' emotions are significant and could affect their behaviour. Therefore, the emotion and behaviour of the employees are significant to ensure customers' satisfaction in the service-based sector.

Previous studies in the hotel industry advocated that ethical leadership behaviours increased employees' job satisfaction and reduced turnover intention (Lee and Cheng, 2010; Tahernejad, et al., 2015; Abdulhamid, Abdulrahim, and Salamzadeh, 2020). Ethical leaders are highly concerned with ethical standards, make disciplinary actions against wrongdoings, and highly value their subordinates. Thus, the leaders give constant encouragement to the subordinates and make the utmost effort to treat them with respect and fairness, which would significantly enhance job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Tahernejad et al., 2015; Bahadori et al., 2021; Ausar, Kang, and Kim, 2016; Abdulhamid, Abdulrahim, and Salamzadeh, 2020). An ethical leader is also perceived as an honest, fair, and trustworthy individual who acts as a role model and designs a working environment, where employees learn and practise ethical conduct (Brown and Trevino, 2006; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008; Rashed and Nesha, 2017) and perceive leader supportiveness, honesty, and fairness. Subsequently, job satisfaction and organisational commitment are significantly increased (Rashed and Nesha, 2017; Attar, Cagliyan, and Ajdarovska, 2017; Bahadori et al., 2021). However, limited studies were focused on ethical leadership based on the perception from employees, specifically in the 4-star and 5-star hotels, particularly in Malaysia. Accordingly, this research investigated the influence of ethical leadership on organisational commitment in 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia.

Most of the previous studies discussed the outcomes of ethical leadership from the perspective of social learning theory, and limited research focused on the outcomes of ethical leadership from the perspective of social exchange theory (Hansen et al., 2013; Garba, Babalola, and Guo, 2018; Bormann, 2020). Previous studies recorded the significant and positive linkage between ethical leadership and positive organisational outcomes through the development of social exchange relationships, which included job satisfaction (Mitonga Monga, Flotman, and Moerane, 2019), organisational commitment (Hansen et al., 2013), and leader-member-exchange (Qian et al., 2017). However, none of the existing studies focused on 4-star and 5-star hotels.

Several past studies were performed on the mediation role of leader-member-exchange as an indicator of the quality of the social exchange relationship between the leader and follower (Scandura, Graen, and Novak, 1986), including the relationship between various factors, organisational commitment, job satisfaction (Ariani, 2012), and transformational leadership (Keskes, 2018). The mediation role of leader-member exchange in the relationship between ethical leadership and organisational commitment has been suggested in some of the past studies (Loi et al., 2015; Hassan et al., 2013)

9

although yet to be tested. Thus, the investigation of how ethical leadership results in organisational commitment is important. Accordingly, this research aims to investigate the relationship between ethical leadership, leader-member exchange, and organisational commitment in 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia. In sum, Table 1.2 presents a summary of research gaps, which are discussed in this section.

Table 1.2 : Summary of research gaps

Gap 1	The influence of perceived leader emotional labour on organizational commitment has not been investigated in 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia.
Gap 2	Perceived ethical leadership has not been investigated as a predictor for organizational commitment among operational staffs in 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia.
Gap 3	Limited studies are available on the relationship between perceived ethical leadership and percieved leader-member exchange. This relationship has not been investigated in 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia.
Gap 4	The mediating role of perceived leader-member exchange has not been investigated in the relationship between perceived ethical leadership and organizational commitment.

1.4 Research questions

The following research questions identified the main research issues highlighted in this research:

1. Is there a relationship between perceived leader emotional labour and organisational commitment?
2. Is there a relationship between perceived ethical leadership and organisational commitment?
3. Is there a relationship between perceived leader-member exchange and organisational commitment?
4. Is there a relationship between perceived ethical leadership and the perceived leader-member exchange?
5. Does the perceived leader-member exchange mediate the relationship between perceived ethical leadership and organisational commitment?

1.5 Aims and objectives of the research

This research aims to investigate organisational commitment (OC) from the stance of leadership within the context of the Malaysian hotel industry. It focused on operational staffs of 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia, and investigated the perception of perceived ethical leadership, perceived leader emotional labour, and perceived leader-member exchange relationship. The specific objectives for this research are as follows:

1. To explore the significance of the relationship between perceived leader emotional labour and organisational commitment
2. To examine the relationship between perceived ethical leadership and organisational commitment
3. To examine the relationship between perceived leader-member exchange and organisational commitment
4. To examine the relationship between perceived ethical leadership and the leader-member-exchange
5. To assess the mediation effect of perceived leader-member exchange between perceived ethical leadership and organisational commitment

1.6   Significance of research

Given the importance of the findings of this research for various factors, the findings have contributed to notable values for theoretical expansion and enhancement of organisational commitment in the hotel industry, particularly 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia. Based on the literature review, the majority of past studies focused on Western countries (Lee and Ok, 2015; Kim, Choi and Borchgrevink, 2017; Prentice, Dominique Lopes, and Wang, 2019). However, it was argued that the cultural differences between developed and developing countries could affect organisational commitment (Mulinge and Mueller, 1998; Gelade, Dobson, and Gibert, 2006; Boo, Madrigal, and Pages, 2010; Mousa and Alas, 2016). Therefore, the investigation of organisational commitment in developing countries is important. The current research was performed on organisational commitment in Malaysia's hotel industry due to the limited availability of research in this context.

Both theory and empirical findings of this research have contributed to the understanding of organisational commitment. Theoretically, this research extended Social Exchange Theory (SET) by explaining the relationships between the variables of ethical leadership, leader emotional labour, leader-member exchange, and organisational commitment from the perception of operational employees. Therefore, the findings would help the hotel management understand how leadership behaviours, such as leader-member exchange, leader emotional labour, and ethical leadership, could enhance organisational commitment. This outcome could be achieved as the study specifically examined the relationship between perceived leader emotional labour and organisational commitment. Leaders may perform emotional labour to develop and maintain good relationship with their followers, and influence them and guide them through the right path to achieve the common goals (Godwyn, 2011). In this case, it was suggested that when employees were expected to perceive leader's authentic emotions, employees' commitment would increase, as recommended by Moein (2018). However, limited studies focused on the outcomes of perceived leader's emotional labour. The current research have made a significant contribution to the literature on emotional labour and organizational commitment by suggesting the significant and positive influence of perceived deep acting, surface acting, intensity, and frequency of leader's emotional labour on follower's commitment.

The significant and positive relationship between ethical leadership and organisational commitment was recorded in past studies (Abuzaid, 2018; Kalyar, Usta, and Shafique, 2019; Celik, Dedeoglu, and Inanir, 2015). However, none of the aforementioned studies focused on the Malaysian hotel industry. As suggested in the literature, an ethical leader acts as a role model who communicates the importance of ethical standards and designs a working environment, which encourages positive organisational outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Gabriunas, 2017), organisational citizenship behaviour (Garba et al., 2018), and job engagement (Ahmad and Gao, 2018). As suggested in the literature, the investigation on how ethical leadership results in positive outcomes, including organisational commitment, would be recommended (Kim and Brymer, 2011; Celik, Dedeoglu, and Inanir, 2015; Gabriunas, 2017). Based on the social learning perspective, previous studies suggested that ethical leadership significantly and positively enhanced organisational commitment (Kalyar, Usta, and Shafique, 2019). Meanwhile, the social exchange perspective demonstrated that the findings of the current research have made a significant contribution to the literature on ethical leadership by suggesting a significant and positive relationship between ethical leadership and organisational commitment.

The findings have made a notable contribution to the literature on both ethical leadership and leader-member exchange. It was also suggested that ethical leadership and leader-member exchange enhanced organisational commitment in Malaysia's 4-star and 5-star hotels. Furthermore, the significant mediation effect of leader-member exchange in the relationship between ethical leadership and organisational commitment had a significant contribution to the literature on organisational commitment, ethical leadership, and leader-member exchange (Kalyar, Usta, and Shafique, 2020).

The findings of this research have led to several practical contributions. This research offered detailed insight into organisational commitment in 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia. The findings presented the significant influence of ethical leadership, leader-member exchange, and leader emotional labour on organisational commitment. Therefore, it was indicated that to enhance employees' commitment in Malaysian 4-star and 5-star hotels, emphasis should be placed on understanding and improving ethical leadership, leader-member exchange, and leader emotional labour. The findings of this research would assist hotel managers and immediate supervisors in developing effective strategies to enhance organisational commitment, which is recognised as a significant predictor for labour turnover. Given that employee turnover is a crucial issue in the hotel industry, the findings of this research would be useful for the human resource managers at hotels (Labrague et al., 2018; Guzeller and Celiker, 2020).

The significant and positive relationship between leader emotional labour and organisational commitment has demonstrated that hotel managers and immediate supervisors should acquire new skills of emotion management to enhance employee commitment. One useful technique that could be used by supervisors to improve their emotion management skills is the involvement in 360-degree feedback, in which leaders and subordinates evaluate their performance and match the performance evaluation up against the opinions of one another. Through this process, hotel managers and

supervisors would gain insights into their behaviour and discover how their emotions are perceived in the organisation (Landry, 2019). Subsequently, this condition improves the managers' and supervisors' understanding of the influence of their emotional expressions on other individuals and assists in their management of emotions while interacting with employees to achieve the desired outcome (Stosny, 2017).

Another practical contribution is the framework for leadership-related factors that influence organisational commitment to gain organisational commitment in the context of 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia. The contribution of this research is the understanding of the influence of factors based on theoretical assumptions, namely ethical leadership, leader-member exchange, and leader emotional labour on organisational commitment in the specific context of 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia. The research model could be used as a practice tool by hotel managers, immediate supervisors, and stakeholders (Suchanek and Kralova, 2019).

1.7   Scope of research

This research aims to investigate employees' perceptions about leadership and its impact on their commitment to Malaysia's hotel industry. This research particularly focused on the operational employees of 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malaysia, provided that the investigation on employees' perception about leadership requires organisations with complex hierarchy and well-established leadership. Generally, 4-star and 5-star hotels comprise a more complex business hierarchy compared to 1-star to 3-star hotels or budget hotels (Widener, 2018). This research was conducted on the commitment of operational employees in 4-star and 5-star hotels, with its specific focus on operational level employees, given the significant impact of the commitment of operational employees on the hotel guests' satisfaction and loyalty (Hur, Park, and Kim, 2010).

This research focused on the hotels in Klang Valley in Malaysia, considering that Klang Valley is a bustling metropolis wherein contains a number of the country's popular tourist attractions and most 4-star and 5-star hotels are located in this area. The data on hotels were obtained from the Ministry Of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC). Table 4.1 (number of 4 and 5-star hotels in Malaysia), which presents the number of hotels in every state, indicates that most of 4-star and 5-star hotels are situated in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia, 2017). While Klang Valley includes Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Putrajaya was also included in this study as it enclaves Selangor. With the major tourist tractions within Klang Valley, the hotel guests in this area mostly consist of foreign travellers, thus, meeting their satisfaction is essential for their revisit to Malaysia (Tomar and Tomar, 2013).

As a result of financial and time constraints, purposive sampling was employed for data collection. The data of 4-star and 5-star hotels, which are located in each state of Malaysia, were obtained from the Ministry Of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC), and listed. As the exact number of employees in the 4-star and 5-star hotels in Klang

Valley was not available, the human resource managers of all 80 hotels in Klang Valley were approached to obtain approval for data collection. From the 80 hotels, approval received from 56 hotels, in which 42 of the hotels are located in Kuala Lumpur, 13 hotels are located in Selangor, and 1 hotel is located in Putrajaya. Considering that the data collection required the involvement of the human resource managers were required to distribute the questionnaires among their operational staff. Overall, 460 questionnaires were collected, of which 422 questionnaires were useful for the current research (Rastogi, 2018).

Provided that this research was performed on employee commitment and the perspective of employees on leadership, a survey would be the most appropriate method of collecting data. For data analysis, this research used Smart-PLS software, Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) software as it was the most suitable analytical tool of CO-variance Based Structural Equation Modeling (SB-SEM). This research fulfilled the criteria for the use of PLS-SEM software, such as few a priori knowledge of the structural model relationships. Moreover, it aims to investigate the influence of perceived leader emotional labour, perceived ethical leadership, and perceived leader-member exchange on employee organisational commitment, the development of the complex model, and requirement of latent variable scores, as shown in the analysis of predictive relevance (Q^2), total effect, and effect sizes (f^2 and q^2) assessments (Ramayah et al., 2018).

The expansion of scope and extra rigour required for this thesis is to be investigated in future studies. Future researchers may wish to conduct a longitudinal or cross-sectional study that will involve managers and employees in hotels (Thomas, 2020). Given the sole focus of this research on employee's perception, future studies could expand the knowledge in this area by involving both leader's and follower's views about leadership (Barron-Stark, 2010). These studies may involve budget hotels, 1-star to 3-star hotels, and hotels in other countries. Considering that the research was performed in Southeast Asia, the findings might not be relevant to Western countries. Thus, future studies should examine the model in other countries and include cultural factors into the model (Zwetsloot et al., 2017).

1.8   Delimitations

The expansion of scope and extra rigour needed for this research is to be investigated by future scholars. In this case, future scholars may wish to conduct a longitudinal or cross-sectional study that will involve more hotels (e.g., budget hotels, 1-star, 2-star, and 3-star hotels), while the survey should be performed on other states of Malaysia. Additionally, future studies should consider the research resources, such as time and funds that match research scope in the future.

1.9 Definition of key terms

This section discusses the definition of key terms used throughout the thesis. Table 1.3 presents a summary of the key terms used in the thesis, including their definitions and sources.

Table 1.3 : Definition of key terms

Organisational Commitment
A psychological state that characterises the relationship with the organization, and has implication for the decision to continue membership with the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1991).
Leader-Member Exchange
A two-way influence relationship between a leader and a follower aimed primarily at attaining mutual goals (Uhl-Bien, 2006).
Ethical Leadership
The demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication reinforcement, and decision making (Brown et al., 2005).
Emotional Labour
Management of feelings in order to sustain an outward appearance and produce particular state of mind in other people, which is performed as a part of paid job (Taylor, 1998).

1.10 Organisation of thesis

This section presents an overview of all the chapters in the thesis. Six chapters are present in this research, namely introduction, literature review, research framework and hypotheses development, research methodology, analysis and results, and discussion and conclusion. The first chapter of this thesis introduces the background of this research, which includes past studies on organisational commitment and empirical evidence of the turnover issue in the hotel industry. Moreover, the background of the study discusses the current issues of human resource managers in the hotel industry worldwide and Malaysia. It also illustrates the rationales for linking the tourism industry of Malaysia with leadership, theoretical relationships of leadership, and organisational commitment.

The first chapter covers the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, scope of research, the significance of the study, definition of terms, and organisation of the thesis. The research objectives and questions are listed to illustrate the underlying problems. The scope of research identifies the boundary of the area of this thesis. Furthermore, the theoretical contributions of the proposed framework in the literature and practical contributions of this thesis for business practitioners are presented under the significance of the research. This is followed by the definitions to be adopted in this research and the organisation of the thesis, and ends with the conclusion section.

The second chapter reviews past literature regarding the variables in the theoretical framework proposed in this thesis. It covers the arguments and results of other researches, which have been previously developed and are relevant to the aforementioned variables of research to support the proposed framework in this thesis. The second chapter discusses the relationship between the variables of the study, namely organisational commitment, leader emotional labour, leader-member exchange, and ethical leadership. The discussions include the origin, conceptualisation, definitions, past research of each variable, and the results and arguments from previous scholars.

The third chapter of this thesis discussed the theoretical framework and research hypotheses. It highlights the filled research gaps and discusses the social exchange theory, which explains the relationships between the research variables and framework. The breakdown of each relationship in the framework is as follows: the relationship between leader emotional labour and organisational commitment; the relationship between ethical leadership and organisational commitment; the relationship between leader-member-exchange and organisational commitment; the relationship between ethical leadership and leader-member-exchange; and the mediation effect of leader-member-exchange in the relationship between ethical leadership and organisational commitment.

The fourth chapter presents the research methodology and consists of several sections, which include the research design, sampling design, data collection, questionnaire design, measurement scale, pre-pilot research and pilot research, and data analysis. The fifth chapter discusses the data analysis and the results. Sampling design identifies the population and sample of the hotel industry, location of the data collection, expected sample size, and sampling techniques to be applied. Following that, the data collection section discloses the format of the questionnaire, followed by the method of distributing the questionnaire and collecting data. The questionnaire design clarifies the structure of questionnaires in the hotel industry, while the measurement of scales and variables explains the instruments to be used in measuring each construct and its scale items. The results of the pre-pilot and pilot study are determined through tests of validity and reliability. In the last section, the data analysis briefly proposes the analytical methods to be adopted in analysing the collected data.

The fifth chapter includes the information on the questionnaire response rate, validity and reliability analysis, descriptive analysis, discussion on structural equation modeling, and the main findings of the analysis. The reliability and validity tests were conducted to ensure internal consistency while the intentions of the measurements were met. The collected data were tested with the assumptions of the SmartPls application to analyse the measurement model. Consequently, the profile of respondents and variables were examined in the descriptive analysis. Lastly, the data were tested to provide answers to research questions and test of hypotheses using structural equation modeling. A summary of findings is drawn at the end of this chapter.The sixth chapter is the final chapter of the thesis, which presents the discussion, implications of research, limitations of research, directions for future research, and conclusion. The last chapter of the thesis demonstrates how the objectives of the research are fulfilled and illustrated the

recommended model in the discussion section. Following that, the implementations of research, limitations, and directions for future studies are discussed. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusion.

1.11   Chapter summary

In summary, the first chapter presents the introduction to the research, contributing to the knowledge gained regarding the importance and purpose of conducting this research. In this chapter, some information was provided, such as research background, statement of the problem, and research contributions that demonstrate the importance and necessity of this research. The next chapter is the literature review, in which the findings of previous and relevant studies would be discussed to improve the understanding of the available information regarding the area of the current research. The information provided and discussed in this chapter (Chapter 1) is highly related to what will be discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 2). A review of related past studies will be discussed in (Chapter 2), and the information from literature will be used as a foundation that further assists the researcher in providing answers to the questions formed in this chapter.

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142

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144

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