

Hospitality Employees' Mental Health Issues: A Review

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Abstract

Mental health issues have become a serious concern in many organizations, where this problem might lead to negative outcomes for both employees and employers. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, untreated mental health problems got worse, which had the worst effect on a person's life and work that could happen. One of the key environments that affect employees' mental health is the workplace. People are becoming more aware of and cognizant of the role that work can play in promoting or impeding mental wellness. The majority of mental health professionals concur that the workplace environment can have a considerable impact on a person's mental and physical well-being, despite the fact that it is difficult to measure the effect of work alone on a person's sense of self, self-esteem, and social recognition. (World Health Organization, Department of Mental Health) The National Health and Morbidity Survey, which was conducted every four years, was the most exhaustive survey ever conducted on a national scale. The main objective of this research is to explore the awareness and factors that influence mental health issues among hospitality employees. Findings from this review may help future researchers develop a mental health

framework that can be used as a reference by managers and policymakers at the workplace among hospitality employees.

Keywords: Mental Health, Hospitality Employees, Turnover Intent, Burnout, Job Satisfaction, Job Engagement, Job Security

Introduction

It is argued that, in contrast to physical health, mental health does not receive the same level of attention and importance from the general public (Breslin et al., 2017). Since quite some time, it has been widely acknowledged that the mental health of employees can have a negative impact on their work performance, and enlightened companies have even realized that the workplace can aid in the detection and treatment of mental health disorders. Yet, little is known about how work influences mental health or maybe leads to the onset of mental disease or mental disorders. (European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being, 2008).

Culturally, working in a hospitality industry is commonly linked with negative connotations such as low income, long hours, menial tasks, a lack of benefits, physical exhaustion, and underappreciation. (Nasyira et al., 2014). As a result, what manifests from these views often creates a job image, whereas working in the hospitality field is all about being "servant" to others, which causes a lack of interest for people to work in the industry. Employers are struggling to retain current employees with high turnover rates, and it is hard to interest new potential hires. Despite being one of the largest sectors, there is a scarcity of research on the mental health issues that plague the hospitality industry, both locally and globally. Occupational health and wellness among employees in the labor-intensive hospitality industry are essential to the overall health of the industry and the economy as a whole. (Zhang et al., 2020; Memish et al., 2017). The employment of various hospitality-related businesses has been connected with a high degree of stress, a high rate of employee turnover, non-traditional work schedules, and lower levels of compensation, among other things. (Zhang et al., 2020; Cleveland et al., 2007; Iverson and Deery, 1997).

Literature Review

What causes and effects mental health problems among employees at the workplace? Generally, there are many factors associated with mental health issues, such as psychological and environmental factors, for example, being neglected and experiencing a stressful environment (Mental Health Handbook, 2019). The ineffective management of stress brought on by one's employment was a contributing element in terms of both psychological and environmental aspects that led to concerns with one's mental health. When stress becomes severe and persists, the likelihood of mental health issues increases, making them more difficult to control. Stress at work is frequent in many different fields, and the hospitality business is not an exception to this trend. The fact that workers in the hospitality business are expected to make significant time and financial commitments contributes significantly to the high levels of stress they experience on the job. It is expected of employees that they will work in shifts, have long working hours, have little or no weekend time, perform repetitive work, deal with unpleasant customers, and operate under inefficient management (Amran et al., 2019; Alyssa et al., 2020).

As the hospitality industry expands, more hospitality businesses will open, necessitating the hiring of a large number of people. For instance, in Malaysia the growth of the restaurant industry also reflects the continuous growth of employees in this hospitality industry (Ghazali

& Asmawi, 2020). This industry employed more people, with the number of people working in food and beverage services increasing by 6.7 percent year on year to 891,616 (The Star, 2017). Many employees are needed to work in this industry to meet the demand from customers. To meet consumer demand, this industry needs a large number of employees. One of the major duties of restaurant employees is to serve customers directly and deal with various types of customers, including those who are fussy, loud, and critical. All of this could put employees in a stressful situation at work.

So, long-term stress makes it more likely that employees will have mental health problems if they are not treated well. Therefore, the main objective of this review is to explore the awareness and factors that influence mental health issues among hospitality employees. Studies on mental health issues are not widely explored in the hospitality industry, in particular, and no framework has been developed to explore the problem yet. Mental health issues could lead to critical issues if not treated early. Untreated mental health issues in the hospitality industry might lead to negative outcomes for both employees and employers. In the worst-case scenario, the consequences of employees' untreated mental health could lead to serious emotional, behavioural, and physical health issues, as well as suicidal thoughts.

On the other hand, the consequences of mental health issues lead to other negative outcomes such as poor job performance, lower productivity, engagement with work, and, in the worst-case scenario, actual turnover, which has a negative impact on hospitality establishments such as direct replacement costs like advertising, head-hunter fees, and personnel development, and indirect opportunity costs like missed revenue, poorer productivity, and customer defections that are considered opportunity costs. Previous studies found that work stress was high in the industry, which led to high turnover of employees (Wang et al. 2020; Ghazali et al. 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). According to the News Straits Times (2019), employees in Malaysia are overworked and sleep deprived, with 51% of them feeling at least one aspect of work-related stress and 53% of them getting less than seven hours of sleep over the course of a 24-hour period. Since the Malaysian hospitality industry is a people-oriented industry that provides a large number of job opportunities and contributes to the Malaysian economy, it is crucial to investigate mental health awareness and issues among employees.

Methodology

Participants

The population of interest for the study consisted of individuals engaged in the hospitality industry.

Information Sources

A series of literature search strings was utilized using several online database providers such as Scopus, Emerald, Science Direct, Ebscohost, and Google Scholar. The search was carried out using keywords and terms utilized with the Boolean operators, which include "mental health", "well-being", "work stress", "work pressure", "work happiness", "employee satisfaction", "hospitality employee", "restaurant employee" "hospitality," and so on. The author was responsible for the initial evaluation of the titles, which was carried out under the close supervision of the senior researcher. The abstracts of the articles were read thoroughly before being accepted.

Data Collection

Following a predetermined format was necessary for the data extraction. The following categories of information were gleaned from the study: (1) Participants (including nationality, sample size, type of organization, work type, and controls); (2) Exposure (type of organizational change); (3) Type of outcome measure (mental health problems using a validated scale or other type of diagnostic tool); and (4) Study aims and design, follow-up time, statistical analysis used, adjustments, bias, and conclusions or results. 37 studies were selected from the screening for final reviews.

Table 1

Samples of articles selected for review

	Author (Year). <i>Journal</i>	Population	Sample	Method
1	Amran et al. (2018) <i>Modern Trends in Social Sciences</i>	Restaurant workers from different stores in Klang Valley.	620	Quantitative
2	Bloisi et al. (2008) <i>Hospitality Management</i>	Chefs across United Kingdom.	-	Quantitative
3	Bufquin et al. (2021) <i>Hospitality Management</i>	Restaurant workers and former workers in restaurant industry in United State.	585	Quantitative
4	Chu et al. (2012) <i>Hospitality Management</i>	Hospitality employee across east coast of United States.	285	Quantitative
5	Ning-Kuang Chuang et al. (2009) <i>Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Working chefs in 25 major casinos in Las Vegas.	152	Quantitative
6	Gursoy et al. (2011) <i>Hospitality Management</i>	Hospitality students at a Southwestern University in Turkey.	595	Quantitative
7	Hancer et al. (2003) <i>Hospitality & Tourism Research</i>	Employees of regional restaurant chain.	1620	Quantitative
8	Hight et al. (2018) <i>Hospitality Management</i>	Restaurant employees in the U.S.	632	Quantitative
9	Jung et al. (2011) <i>The Service Industries Journal</i>	Hotel employees in hotels in Seoul.	316	Quantitative
10	Jung et al. (2014) <i>Hospitality Management</i>	Employees of family-style restaurants in Korea.	338	Quantitative
11	Karatepe et al. (2009) <i>Hospitality Management</i>	Employees of five-star hotels in Nigeria.	300	Quantitative
12	Kim et al. (2009) <i>Hospitality Management</i>	Subway store employees in the northwestern United States.	187	Quantitative
13	Kitterlin et al. (2014) <i>Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Employee in the foodservice industry in South Florida, U.S.	30	Quantitative

14	Lee et al. (2014) <i>Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Hotel employees in the Southern region of U.S.	178	Quantitative
15	Murray-Gibbons et al. (2016) <i>Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Working chefs in Northern Ireland.	150	Quantitative
16	O'Neill et al. (2011) <i>Hospitality Management</i>	Hotel employees across United States.	164	Quantitative
17	Rosemberg et al. (2021) <i>Occupational and Environmental Hygiene</i>	Foodservice workers in pre-selected stated in the United State.	27	Quantitative
18	Yu et al. (2021) <i>Marketing & Management</i>	Hotel employees during COVID-19	13	Qualitative
19	Zerden et al. (2022) <i>Workplace Health & Safety</i>	Workers in foodservices and other low-wage workers in the U.S.	20	Quantitative
20	Zopiatis et al. (2016) <i>British Food Journal</i>	Food and beverage professionals in Cyprus.	1000	Quantitative
21	Haldorai et al. (2019) <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Hotel employees across Malaysia	308	Quantitative
22	R. Murray-Gibbons & Gibbons (2007) <i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Working chefs in Northern Ireland Chef and Cooks Association & Northern Island Tourist Board's database	40	Quantitative
23	Kuruu"zu"m et al. (2007) <i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Managers in four- and five-stars hotels in major tourist destination of Turkey	139	Quantitative
24	Giousmpasoglou et al. (2018) <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Head chefs in Britain and Ireland	54	Quantitative
25	Gordon et al. (2018) <i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Employees in select-service hotels in the Midwest, USA.	234	Quantitative
26	Hight & Park (2018) <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Restaurant employees in USA	376	Quantitative
27	Kim et al. (2006) <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Hotel employees across USA	191	Quantitative
29	Pienaar & Willemse (2008) <i>International Journal of Tourism Management</i>	Foodservice employee in the city of Potchefstroom in the North-West Province, Africa	150	Quantitative

30	Brown et al. (2015) <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Gen X and Y employee in hospitality industry	107	Quantitative
31	Qiu et al. (2014) <i>Journal of China Tourism Research</i>	Supervisory employees from a hotel in Shenzhen	13	Qualitative
32	Robinson & Beesly (2010) <i>International Journal of Tourism Management</i>	Chefs working in community clubs in southeast Queensland	196	Quantitative
33	Shani et al. (2014) <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Hospitality employees in Israel	35	Qualitative
34	Choi (2006) <i>Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research</i>	Hotel employees in five, four- and three-star hotels in Busan.	500	Quantitative
35	Lippert et al. (2021) <i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i>	Restaurant employees in Chicago, Illinois.	16	Qualitative
36	Silva et al. (2021) <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Foodservice employees within Sao Paulo and the Limeira macro-region in Sao Paula State, Brazil	202	Qualitative
37	Chang & Busser (2019) <i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Hospitality employee in USA	300	Quantitative
38	Ghazali et al. (2023) <i>International Journal of Human Resource Studies</i>	Employees in Fast-food Industry in Malaysia	161	Quantitative

Discussion

The analysis uncovered several elements that play a role in the development of mental health problems. According to the findings of the reviews, there are four primary factors that contribute to the prevalence of mental health problems in the hospitality industry. In addition to this, a discussion regarding the connections between mental well-being and mental health are also highlighted.

Factors Influence Mental Health

Employees working in the hospitality industry are at greater risk for depression, substance abuse, and anxiety than the general population. As part of the job, you have to deal with risks like unpredictable hours, working in a fast-paced environment, and dealing with rude customers. Unwanted behaviours such as bullying, intimidation, and less than ideal working circumstances are not (Basar, 2018). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are a variety of risk factors for mental health that might be present in the workplace. The bulk of the risks are associated with the interactions that occur between the type of work being done, the organizational and managerial environment, the skills and competencies of

employees, and the assistance that is provided to employees so that they can carry out their jobs. (Harvey et al., 2017; Joyce et al., 2017; La Mont et al., 2014). As an example, a skilled worker with extended knowledge of the job scope and the capability to perform those scopes may not be able to do so due to workplace restraints such as limited resources, unsupportive management policies or negative organization or managerial cultures.

On the other hand, there are risks of occupational hazards at the workplace, especially when employees were given tasks that was unsuitable or inappropriate against the job scope or job training, rendering the employee actual skills and knowledge less useful and not fully utilized as it should (Modini et al., 2016). Some jobs have greater risk of causing mental health issues that may carries dangerous effects of mental disorders which in some cases includes abuse of alcohol and psychotropic drugs. The likelihood of suffering an injury is likely to be higher in situations in which there is little social support or cohesiveness within the team (Modini et al., 2016; Sledge & Lazar, 2014; Rothermund et al., 2017).

Bullying and psychological harassment, which is sometimes called "mobbing," are two of the most common types of work-related stress that employees report. Those who are bullied or harassed in this way are at risk for their physical and mental health. In the past, they have been associated with a variety of problems, both psychological and physical (Memish et al., 2017; Harvey et al., 2017., Joyce et al., 2016). Because of the nature of the contact (for example, having conversations with customers, handling the customers' personal belongings, and other similar activities) that occurs throughout the process of servicing clients, employees experience psychological pressure and emotional stress. These characteristics have also been found to be reliable predictors of long-term illness absence from the workplace as well as disability leave.

In contrast to physical illness and injury, poor mental health results in longer durations of time away from work. (Lee et al., 2017; Driesen et al., 2010; Wedegaertner et al., 2013). The situation is particularly critical when new outbreaks, such as COVID-19, appear on the scene (Yu et al., 2021). Because of the negative effects on employees' health, businesses may experience costs in the form of lower levels of production and increased rates of employee turnover. COVID-19, which was caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, was found in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. It is a virus that affects the respiratory system. After spreading rapidly around the world, the number of infected cases reached 210 million people worldwide, with more than 4.4 million deaths, and more than 4.5 million infected individuals with a mortality rate of more than 32,000 in Malaysia by the end of August 2021, according to WHO estimates. (Gorbalenya et al., 2020). It has resulted in a large number of deaths and tremendous economic ruin, and it has led the world economy to come to a grinding halt virtually overnight. (UNWTO, 2020).

Because of the recession, the hospitality industry has been hit especially hard. Most establishment had to cut back on on-site services, which has led to a big drop in the number of workers (Gursoy & Chi, 2020). The rest of the employees, on the other hand, said that the new rules and restrictions put in place because of the pandemic made them feel worse and made them less productive at work (Bufquin et al., 2021).

Physical Work Environment

Workplace settings, whether physical or mental, have an impact on employees' physical and emotional safety, health, and well-being, all of which can be recognized by their human or electronic senses. The building itself, the air the tools, the furniture, the goods, the chemicals, the materials, and the processes that happen or are present in the workplace are all part of

this. Some of these things could affect the health and safety of worker, as well as their mental and physical well-being. The tools, the furniture, the products, the chemicals, and the materials are some of the things that falls under this category (Burton, 2010). Different studies have shown that the workplace is one of the best places to think creatively and keep that thinking going (Halbinger, 2018)

Doorley and Witthoft (2012) hypothesized that the physical work environment can be used as a tool to inspire creativity by being purposely constructed to do so. Workplaces in the fast-food industry are more prone to accidents because the working environment is typically cramped with heavy machinery and the employees are expected to perform well in a fast-paced environment at all times (Memish et al., 2017). Other risks include handling utensils in noisy places, being exposed to radiation and excessive heat, not moving in an ergonomic way, handling mechanical items, and so on (Burton, 2010).

Psychosocial Work Environment

When people talk about the psychosocial work environment, they are talking about how work is set up and the culture of the company. Organizational culture refers to the attitudes, values, beliefs, and practices that are displayed on a daily basis in the business or organization and that have an effect on the mental and physical well-being of employees. Risks associated with psychological well-being are among the most difficult issues facing policymakers in the field of occupational safety and health today (European Commission, 2017; ILO, 2016; Leka et al., 2015). A great great of scientific study has been done on psychological hazards in the workplace, which has also shown that these risks are bad for the health of people who work in these places. The demand-control-social support model by Karasek-Theorell-Johnson-Hall and the effort-reward model by Siegrist have been used the most to investigate psychosocial work environment and how it affects health (Gilbert-Ouimet et al., 2014; Landsbergis et al., 2013). A lot of different types of bad health effects have been linked to the psychosocial work environment. These include mental problems (Harvey et al., 2017; Theorell et al., 2015; Kivimäki and Kawachi, 2015). Collectively, these situations cause "workplace stress" which can cause workers to go through emotional or mental pain that can be life-threatening (Burton, 2010). Poor work organization, terrible organizational culture (lack of policies or practices), a lack of consultation or negotiation, a lack of two-way communication, and other factors are examples of a poor psychosocial environment.

Lack of Enterprise Community Involvement

The term "enterprise community involvement" (ECI) refers to the activities, expertise, and other resources that a business does or gives to the social and physical community or communities where it operates and that have an effect on the physical and mental health, safety, and well-being of its employees and their families. ECI is also known as "corporate social responsibility" (CSR). Not only does it encompass activities performed in the immediate local area, but it also involves expertise and resources that are made available to the greater global environment. Businesses shape the communities in which they operate as well as being a part of and having an impact on those communities. Considering that workers live in communities, their physical and social environments have an impact on their health (Burton, 2010). Concerns about bad air and water quality, a lack of regulations to protect workers' rights, no health care coverage for people at work, and no infrastructure or facilities to encourage people to be active while at work are just a few of the things that could happen at

work. From the reviews, there was very little to no discussion about enterprise community involvement in every establishment studied.

Lack of Personal Health Resources

"Personal health resources" refers to the supportive environment, health services, information, resources, opportunities, and flexibility that an organization gives its employees to help them improve or maintain healthy personal lifestyle habits and to monitor and support their ongoing physical and mental health. Personal health resources in the workplace are also known as "wellness resources in the workplace". Personal health resources in the workplace are defined as follows: "A lack of information in the workplace refers to an atmosphere in which employees have little to no knowledge, which may or may not improve their capacity to perform more efficiently" (Burton, 2010). Employees who work in poor conditions may find it difficult to adopt a healthy lifestyle, or at the very least, to maintain their current level of health. For instance, in fast food operations, the working hours are long, there is a lack of scheduling flexibility, and there are long shifts that reduce resting time at home, all of which result in decreased productivity, and so on. Other industries have similar challenges (Burton, 2010).

Relationship between Mental Health and Mental Well-Being

The World Health Organization (2004) defines "mental health" as "a state of well-being in which a person knows his or her own strengths, can deal with the normal demands of life, can work successfully and fruitfully, and can contribute to his or her community." In general, "mental health" is a neutral term that refers to how a person is feeling in his or her mind. When someone has good mental health, they are said to be in good mental health (Malaysia's National Strategic Plan for Mental Health (2020-2025)). The quality of one's mental health is extremely important to one's overall well-being and productivity (Sindu et al., 2021). Psychological well-being is a reliable indicator of overall health and well-being in the working population (Pham et al., 2021; Shields, 2003), and mental health is one of these indicators. According to the findings of a study on employee well-being, increasing awareness of employee well-being has a positive impact on a variety of factors, including mental health, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work-life balance, among others. This is one of the key takeaways from the study on employee well-being (Baptiste, 2008; Sirgy & Lee, 2016). Psychological well-being at work doesn't get nearly enough attention and that there is a gap between knowledge, policies (where appropriate), and real-world practice that has to be identified and managed (Sivris & Leka, 2015). Employees' psychological well-being and distress have been studied in the past, but no such studies have been undertaken amid global economic and sanitary crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, as has been the case in this study. However, only a small amount of research has been conducted on these connections in the hospitality industry, which has faced the most severe economic consequences from the pandemic since it began (Bufquin et al., 2021).

Conclusion

This study has provided a comprehensive review of mental health issues faced by hospitality employees, especially during the COVID-19 outbreak. The findings suggest that the psychological well-being of hospitality employees has been adversely impacted by ranges of issues, such as extended work hours, insufficient breaks, limited time with family, and inadequate assistance from higher-level executives. These conditions have contributed to a

worrisome trend of mental health problems among these employees. The epidemic has worsened pre-existing mental health problems among employees in the hospitality industry. This review revealed that the psychological well-being of these employees was already declining before the pandemic because of extended work hours and insufficient assistance, but the additional stressor and uncertainties were introduced by COVID-19.

The primary variable that contributes to mental health issues among hospitality employees are the absence of support from top-level management, excessive workloads, and an unfavorable work environment. These factors contribute to heightened stress, exhaustion, and a deterioration in general mental health. Both the tangible and social aspects of the work environment have significant impacts on the mental well-being of employees. The physical setting, frequently characterized by limited space, and the usage of large equipment, can lead to physical exertion and psychological tension. The psychosocial environment, which is marked by scarce resources, unsupportive leadership, and unfavorable organizational cultures, worsens mental health problems.

Organizational interventions are essential for effectively addressing mental health issues. The interventions should strive to establish a constructive and encouraging work environment, acknowledge and commemorate the efforts of employees, guarantee equitable distribution of tasks, and offer significant acknowledgment. Implementing such methods can effectively mitigate mental health issues and promote the overall well-being of employees. It is also imperative for the government and health organizations to form a collaborative effort to aid hospitality employees who are experiencing mental health problems. Urgent interventions are necessary to tackle these issues before the mental health and well-being of employees deteriorates. This includes the provision of mental health resources, counselling services, and the establishment of a workplace atmosphere that is more conducive and conducive to offering support.

Hospitality organizations must offer sufficient assistance to their employees. This encompasses frequent assessment, provisions for mental well-being, and fostering an open discourse on matters pertaining to mental health. Apart of that, organizations should endeavor to equitably allocate responsibilities among employees to mitigate burnout and stress. By implementing a flexible schedule system and ensuring staff are given sufficient rest periods, it is possible to reduce impact of mental health problems. Organizations should also create and maintain a favorable work atmosphere that fosters employee involvement and contentment. This entails acknowledging the endeavor of employees, offering avenues for professional advancement, and cultivating a climate of assistance and recognition. Finally, there should be a collaborative partnership between the Ministry of Health and other pertinent hospitality organizations to offer mental health assistance. This encompasses providing counselling services, delivering mental health training to management, and formulating policies that foster mental well-being in the workplace.

Limitation and Recommendation

The conclusions of this review are significantly constrained, mostly because of the low number of relevant research studies that have been published. There are confinements in the concept of mental health, which limit the amount of data on mental health among workers in the hospitality industry in comparison to workers in other industries. More study of mental health issues is needed in the future. Apart from current workers in hospitality organizations, it is

suggested for future researchers to identify past employees who used to work in hospitality industry to understand their leaving decision and the contributing factors. Further empirical studies are needed to validate the mental health issues among hospitality employees.

To tackle the issues of mental health in the workplace, organizational interventions are very important for both employees and employers. Interventions can help to create a positive and supportive work culture, help management understand potential causes, recognize and celebrate staff, make sure the organization doesn't overwork employees, help staff find meaning in their work, identify proactive prevention measures and interventions, and create a systematic shift.

The Ministry of Health Malaysia, through the Mental Health Services and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) team, will always collaborate with various agencies and ministries in addressing the problem of mental health issues and taking appropriate action to prevent this problem from continuing to occur. Assistance and counseling will always be extended to any individual in need.

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