

**SERVICE-ORIENTED ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP  
BEHAVIOUR IN MALAYSIAN UPSCALE HOTELS: THE ROLE  
OF ORGANISATIONAL RESOURCES, JOB RESOURCES,  
PERSONAL RESOURCES, AND WORK ENGAGEMENT**

**By**

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**GELAGAT KEWARGANEGARAAN ORGANISASI BERORIENTASIKAN  
PERKHIDMATAN DALAM HOTEL BERSCALA TINGGI DI MALAYSIA:  
PERANAN SUMBER ORGANISASI, SUMBER PERKERJAAN, SUMBER  
PERIBADI DAN KETERLIBATAN KERJA**

**ABSTRAK**

Gelagat kewarganegaraan organisasi berorientasikan perkhidmatan (SO-OCB) adalah satu bentuk gelagat kerja yang melebihi deskripsi kerja formal dalam organisasi perkhidmatan. Mengandungi tiga dimensi iaitu, OCB kesetiaan, OCB perkhidmatan penghantaran, dan OCB penyertaan, SO-OCB adalah penting kepada organisasi berasaskan perkhidmatan seperti hotel bagi meningkatkan kualiti perkhidmatan dan kesetiaan pelanggan. Berdasarkan kepada *Conservation of Resources Theory*, kajian ini meramalkan wujudnya hubungan positif dan signifikan di antara tiga asas sumber (organisasi, pekerjaan, dan peribadi) dengan SO-OCB. Sumber berasaskan organisasi merupakan amalan pengurusan sumber manusia yang terdiri daripada latihan perkhidmatan, ganjaran perkhidmatan, penilaian prestasi, dan perkongsian maklumat; sumber berasaskan kerja terdiri daripada kejelasan peranan, sokongan penyelia dan sokongan rakan sekerja, manakala sumber berasaskan peribadi merujuk kepada kecerdasan emosi yang mengandungi penilaian emosi diri, penilaian emosi individu lain, penggunaan emosi, dan kawalan emosi diri. Selain itu, dengan menggunakan elemen *Job-Demands Resources Model*, kajian ini mengandaikan bahawa hubungan di antara ketiga-tiga sumber tersebut dengan SO-OCB dapat dihubungkan melalui keterlibatan kerja. Hubungan yang disarankan diuji berdasarkan analisis daripada 438 soal selidik urus sendiri yang diperoleh daripada 34 hotel berskala tinggi di Malaysia

menggunakan pendekatan *Partial Least Squares*. Daripada itu, dapat disimpulkan bahawa: (1) di antara sumber berasaskan organisasi, hanya penilaian prestasi mempunyai hubungan positif dan signifikan dengan semua dimensi SO-OCB, manakala latihan perkhidmatan dan perkongsian maklumat hanya meramalkan dimensi tertentu dalam SO-OCB; (2) sumber berdasarkan kerja (kejelasan peranan dan sokongan penyelia) hanya meramalkan beberapa dimensi dalam SO-OCB; (3) kebanyakan dimensi kecerdasan emosi (kecuali penilaian emosi diri) mempunyai hubungan positif dan signifikan dengan SO-OCB; dan (4) keterlibatan kerja menjadi pengantara hubungan dengan penilaian prestasi, kejelasan peranan, sokongan penyelia, penggunaan emosi, kawalan emosi diri dan SO-OCB. Hotel yang ingin meningkatkan SO-OCB harus lebih fokus ke atas penilaian prestasi, kecerdasan emosi, sokongan penyelia, kejelasan peranan dan juga keterlibatan kerja pekerja yang mempunyai hubungan dengan pelanggan. Penyelidikan pada masa hadapan boleh merangkumi sumber dalam bentuk lain bagi meningkatkan kefahaman mengenai keterlibatan kerja dan SO-OCB.



**SERVICE-ORIENTED ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR IN  
MALAYSIAN UPSCALE HOTELS: THE ROLE OF ORGANISATIONAL  
RESOURCES, JOB RESOURCES, PERSONAL RESOURCES, AND WORK  
ENGAGEMENT**

**ABSTRACT**

Service-oriented organisational citizenship behaviour (SO-OCB) is a form of extra-role behaviour that goes beyond formal work descriptions in a service organisation. Consisting of three dimensions, loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB, SO-OCB is important to service organisations, such as hotels in improving its service quality and customer loyalty. This study grounded in the Conservation of Resources Theory, posited a positive and significant relationship between three bases of resources (organisation, job, and personal) and SO-OCB. Organisational-based resources are HRM practices which consists of service training, service rewards, performance appraisal, and information sharing, job-based resources comprise role clarity, supervisor support, and colleague support, and personal-based resources are emotional intelligence, which consists of self-emotion appraisal, other's emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion. Also drawing on elements of the Job-Demands Resources model, this study postulated that the relationships between three bases of resources and SO-OCB are mediated by work engagement. Testing the proposed relationships was based on analysis of 438 self-administered questionnaires from 34 upscale Malaysian hotels using the Partial Least Squares approach. From this, it can be concluded that: (1) among the organisational-based resources, only performance appraisal has a positive and significant relationship with all dimensions of SO-OCB, as

service training and information sharing only predicted certain dimensions in SO-OCB; (2) job-based resources (role clarity and supervisor support) only predicted several dimensions of SO-OCB; (3) most of the dimensions of emotional intelligence (except self-emotion appraisal) had a positive and significant relationship with SO-OCB; and (4) work engagement mediated the relationship between performance appraisal, role clarity, supervisor support, use of emotion, regulation of emotion and SO-OCB. Hotels wishing to improve staff SO-OCB should focus on performance appraisal, emotional intelligence, supervisor support, role clarity as well as work engagement of customer-contact employees. Future research could incorporate other forms of resources to shed more light on the relationship of work engagement and SO-OCB.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the background of the study, issues that are related to the hotel industry in Malaysia, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, definitions of the key terms, summary, and organisation of the thesis.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

As the Malaysian economy develops and the nation moves towards its goal of being a developed nation, the services sector begins to assume a greater role. In 2012, the services sector contributed 54.6 percent of Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and is forecast to reach 65 percent by 2020 (Ministry of International Trade and Industry, 2013).

In terms of tourism, Malaysia was the ninth most visited country in the world in 2011 (Grossniklaus, 2013), making it one of the most dynamic economic services sectors within the service industry. According to Mazumder, Ahmed, and Raquib (2011), the tourism industry creates a high multiplier effect and enhances inter-sector linkages to Malaysia's economy. In addition, tourists' expenditure not only directly benefits tourism related sectors, but also others sectors such as retail, real estate, and wine and soft drinks (Mazumder et al., 2011). In terms of the contribution to Malaysia's GDP, revenue from the tourism industry has contributed as much as 7.6 percent in 2010, up from 6.1 percent in 2005 (Economic Planning Unit, 2012). This



contribution was attributed to the rise in inbound tourist arrivals and tourist receipts. The arrival of tourists soared from 16.43 million in 2005 to 25.72 million in 2013 (Tourism Malaysia, 2014). In accordance to this, tourist receipts rose from RM32 billion in 2005 to stand at RM65.44 billion in 2013 (Tourism Malaysia, 2014).

Recognizing the potential in tourism, the Malaysian government has listed the tourism industry as one of the industries in The New Key Economic Area (NKEA) under the 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan (2011-2015). Within this five-year plan, the Malaysian government is targeting to place Malaysia to be within the top 10 in terms of global tourism receipts with the estimated arrival of 36 million tourists and RM115 billion in global tourist receipts (Economic Planning Unit, 2010). To realize the 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan, the focus of Malaysia government is to attract a larger share of high-end travellers and on capturing a higher share of the high-traffic segments, particularly from Russia, India, China and Middle East (Ministry of International Trade and Industry, 2011).

The hotel sector is a critical part of the tourism industry (Ekiz, Khoo-Lattimore, & Memarzadeh, 2012; Zailani, Hj Din, & Abd Wahid, 2006). Data from 2007 to 2010 show that accommodation is the most important element in tourism receipts. Particularly, accommodation takes up approximately 31 percent of total tourist spending (Tourism Malaysia, 2011). Extrapolating this to the broader economy, Mazumder et al. (2011) demonstrated that one additional Ringgit spent by inbound tourists in hotels and restaurants would generate RM0.848458 of household income to Malaysian residents. In the same study, Mazumder et al. (2011) reported that the income from the hotels and restaurants sectors has the highest multiplier effect compared to other tourism related sectors.



To support the increase in tourist arrivals, there has been rapid development and construction of hotels in Malaysia. The number of hotels in Malaysia increased from 2296 units in 2005 to 2724 units in 2012 (Tourism Malaysia, 2014). The number of rooms increased from 155,356 units in 2005 to 195,445 units in 2012 (Tourism Malaysia, 2014). Market analysts are expecting that the number of Malaysian hotels will grow at the rate of 4 percent over 2014 (Grossniklaus, 2013). The increasing number of hotels and rooms has intensified competition for market share, since customers now have more choice, they want better value for money, and demand a higher level of service (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000).

As hotels are service-oriented organisations, they offer less tangible products than many other industries (Ip, Lee, & Law, 2012). In striving to differentiate themselves from their competitors, hotels are often constrained by the limitation of strategies (Kandampully & Hu, 2007). Generally, the strategies hotels adopt for competitive advantage are either, (1) low cost leadership through price discounting, or (2) developing customer loyalty. Scholars opt for the later strategy given that price-reduction strategy reduces hotel income and puts hotel profitability at risk in the long-run (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). Alternatively, developing customer loyalty brings more benefit to the hotels and guests. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) reported that every five percent increase in customer loyalty equals 25 to 85 percent increment in profitability. In addition, Dolors (2012) suggested that developing customer loyalty is a strategy more suited to the service industry given that services offer more opportunities for such development to take place. Hence, it is better for the hotels to develop their customer loyalty than relying on price discounting strategies. Accordingly, in developing customer loyalty, an abundance of empirical studies have evidenced that providing outstanding service quality is the prevailing

point (Chen & Hu, 2012; Chu, Lee, & Chao, 2012; Dolors, 2012; Kandampully & Hu, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Kang, 2011b; Ma & Qu, 2011).

The success of the hotel industry is therefore reliant on its service quality (Amin, Yahya, Ismayatim, Nasharuddin, & Kassim, 2013; Ariffin, Nameghi, & Zakaria, 2013). In particular, service quality among upscale hotels has become a prevailing issue given that the tourism ministry of Malaysia is targeting high spending tourists to realize the goal to be in top 10 of global tourism receipts (Economic Planning Unit, 2010). To achieve this aim, the Chairman of Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, Datuk Dr. Victor Wee, called upon Malaysian hotels to boost their service quality in order to attract high-spending customers (Wong & Lim, 2011). Nevertheless, in a study that examined customers' perceptions of service quality in Malaysian upscale hotels, Lau, Akhbar, and David (2005) revealed that the service quality in Malaysian upscale hotels is still below customers' expectations. Among the common complaints made about upscale hotels were arrogant staff, slow food service and check-in/out, failure to respond to customers complaints, wrong food served in restaurants, wrong billing, and so on (Ekiz et al., 2012). To address these shortcomings, scholars have urged upscale hotel's operators to improve their service quality (Ekiz et al., 2012; Lau et al., 2005; Liat, Mansori, & Huei, 2014). In summary, the poor service quality offered by Malaysian upscale hotels has alarmed hotel authorities and scholars. Failing to provide quality services results in negative word-of-mouth and poor customer loyalty, which reduces the number of hotels guests and the hotel withers away and finally exits the market (Nik Mohd Masdek, Abdul Aziz, & Awang, 2011).



Hotels are a highly labour-intensive industry, with a wide range of service staff interacting with and serving hotel customers (Hanzaee & Mirvaisib, 2013; Medlik, 1994; O'Fallon & Rutherford, 2010). To a certain extent, hotel staff, or human resources, have been regarded as the hotel's "software" (Qiu & Lam, 2004). Scholars are of the opinion that hotels must capitalize on its "software" to reach levels of service quality expected by its guests (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2009; Maroudas, Kyriakidou, & Vacharis, 2008; Nik Mohd Masdek et al., 2011). Specifically, for service organisation such as hotels, its customer-contact employees are serving as the referral point for its customers (Nik Mohd Masdek et al., 2011; Yavas, Karatepe, & Babakus, 2011a), acting as the first and primary contact between the organisation and customers (Nik Mohd Masdek et al., 2011; Wang, 2009b), and have frequent face-to-face or voice-to-voice contact with customers (Chang, Gong, & Shum, 2011; Nik Mohd Masdek et al., 2011). As such, customer-contact employees are the most crucial human resources in hotels that could help to elevate hotel service quality (Di Mascio, 2010; Karatepe, 2013; Nik Mohd Masdek et al., 2011; Yavas et al., 2011a; Yeh, 2013).

Given the critical role of customer-contact employees, hotels that place greater attention in managing customer-contact behaviours, especially extra-role behaviours, are likely to achieve better service quality, which in turn establishes stronger customer loyalty. In particular, previous literature has suggested that the discretionary and extra-role behavioural of customer-contact employees have a remarkable positive impact on customer's perception of service quality (Bienstock, DeMoranville, & Smith, 2003; Morrison, 1996). Organ (1988) termed these extra-role behaviours as organisational citizenship behaviour (hereafter labelled as OCB),

and defined OCB as discretionary behaviours that have a significant, positive impact on organisations but fall outside of the formal role of an employee.

Consistent with Organ's (1988) reporting of OCB discretionary behaviours, Bettencourt, Gwinner, and Meuter (2001) hold that service-oriented organisational citizenship behaviours (hereinafter labelled as SO-OCB) are a more appropriate measure of OCB for customer-contact employees. The construct of SO-OCB termed by Bettencourt et al. (2001) consisted of three dimensions, namely loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB. In loyalty OCB, customer-contact employees act as the advocate to promote the products, services and the positive image of the service organisation to customers. In service delivery OCB, customer-contact employees behave in a conscientious manner in performing their duty. In participation OCB, customer-contact employees take the initiative to communicate to the organisation and co-workers on how to enhance their service delivery.

Another researcher, Wang (2009b), acknowledged that the three dimensions of SO-OCB conceptualized by Bettencourt (2001) are more suitable for customer-contact employees in the service organisation than other measures of OCB. This is because customer-contact employees are the primary interface between the service organisation and customers and they represent the service organisation to deliver the services to its customers. Wang (2009b) also opined that the measures of SO-OCB are the key ingredients for service organisations to improve customers' perceptions of service quality and customers' satisfaction. The first measure, loyalty OCB, is where employees help develop a positive image of the organisation among its customers, ultimately leading to customers loyalty (Hu, Kandampully, & Juwaheer, 2009). Service delivery OCB warrants the quality of service delivery, and reduces



the potential of mistakes/service failures (Ekiz et al., 2012; Wang, 2010), and the third measure, participation OCB, enables the organisation to continue innovating and improving its services quality (Bettencourt et al., 2001; Chang et al., 2011). In short, researchers believe that SO-OCB is important for the survival and prosperity of service organisation (Wang, 2010).

As the importance of SO-OCB in determining service quality and customer loyalty is more widely recognised by employer, it is expected that organisations will assist customer-contact employees to accomplish their formal work goals effectively. When formal work goals are readily achieved, customer-contact employees have more time and energy to perform SO-OCB discretionary behaviours, which largely fall outside formal work descriptions. To support employees' achievement of work goals, the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) holds that the presence of resources are important. Hence, it suggests that organisations should equip customer-contact employees with sufficient resources to encourage them to display SO-OCB behaviours. As such, the current study intends to examine the effect of resources (derived from the organisation, job, and personal) on SO-OCB.

Apart from OCB behaviours, scholars have noted that the attitude of customer-contact employees has an impact on customers' perceptions of service quality (Ackfeldt & Wong, 2006; Chang et al., 2011). Derived from the tenet of COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), the Job Demands-Resources Model (hereinafter labelled as JD-R Model) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) contends that the availability of resources elicits positive attitudes at work, such as work engagement (being more energetic, dedicated, and happy at work). The JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) articulates that the availability of resources helps employees reduce their job

demands, and enhance their capability in achieving their work goals. This means that resources can develop employees' positive attitude at work such as being engaged in their work. The JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) further assumes that engaged employees are more likely to exhibit positive work behaviours favourable to the needs of the organisation. In line with this view, this study seeks to examine the role of resources (derived from organisation, job, and personal) in stimulating positive attitudes (work engagement) among customer-contact employees, which in turn promotes positive behaviours that favour the needs of the organisation (in the form of SO-OCB).

It is relevant to understand the predictors of SO-OCB among customer-contact employees in upscale Malaysian hotels because of their critical role in determining service quality and customer loyalty (Karatepe, 2013; Mohd Noor, Kasim, Scarlat, & Muhamad, 2012; Yavas, Karatepe, & Babakus, 2011b). Second, the hotel sector plays a significant role in generating income and contributing to Malaysia's GDP (Tourism Malaysia, 2012). In particular, upscale hotels assume a pivotal role since the Malaysian government is targeting high spending tourists to realize the 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan (Ministry of International Trade and Industry, 2011). Therefore, the focus of the present study is to examine the effects of resources from three bases (organisation, job, and personal) on SO-OCB as well as the intervening role of work engagement between these relationships among customer-contact employees in Malaysian upscale hotels.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Generally, organisational citizenship behaviour is defined as "individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward



system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organisation” (Organ, 1988, p. 4). A review of the extant literature indicates that a considerable number of studies have focused on the generic form of OCB using a five-dimensional model proposed by Organ (1988) (i.e., Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Chuang & Liao, 2010; Kim., O'Neill, & Cho, 2010; Krishnan, Omar, Ismail, Alias, Hamid, Ghani, & Kanchymalay, 2010; Ramachandran, Jordan, Troth, & Lawrence, 2011; Rezaiean, Givi, Givi, & Nasrabadi, 2010; Shahzad, Rehman, & Abbas, 2010; Wei, Han, & Hsu, 2010). Nevertheless, Motowidlo and Borman (2000) assert that some types of OCB are probably more appropriate for certain types of organisations than others. For a service organisation, Bettencourt et al. (2001) suggest that SO-OCB, which comprises three dimensions - loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB, as the more appropriate form of OCB for customer-contact employees due to nature of business for service organizations and the fundamental “boundary-spanning” role played by the service employees.

The display of SO-OCB among customer-contact employees is important for a hotel’s long-term success. Customer-contact employees are the contact point between the hotel and its customers (Nik Mohd Masdek et al., 2011; Yavas et al., 2011a). Thus, having customer-contact employees who are able to generate goodwill, which reflects loyalty OCB, would be advantageous for hotels. This is because when the hotel’s image is perceived as positive by customers, their loyalty will be greater (Liat et al., 2014). Likewise, hotels have been known to have diverse customers (Nik Mohd Masdek et al., 2011; Tang & Tang, 2012). These customers with different cultural values and norms would results in varied service expectations (Ramachandran et al., 2011). Hence, having customer-contact employees who are able to deliver their service conscientiously, which reflects service delivery OCB,

can help reduce mistakes and service failures and ultimately enhance customers' satisfaction (Ekiz et al., 2012). Lastly, customers have a wide range of preferences and expectations which are continuously changing (Chang et al., 2011). As asserted by Amin et al. (2013) these demands impose a great challenge for hotels. Therefore, having customer-contact employees who are willing to contribute ideas and suggestions for service improvements, which reflects participation OCB, would assist hotels to cope with this issue

Nevertheless, SO-OCB, a relatively new construct introduced in 2001, lacks a body of empirical studies (Sun, Aryee, & Law, 2007; Wang, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Yang, 2012). The paucity of research on SO-OCB was the main trigger for this researcher to embark on the particular construct, but there are several other reasons that prompted the researcher to study SO-OCB within the Malaysian upscale hotel context. First and foremost, it is undeniable that SO-OCB among customer-contact employees is crucial for hotels to enhance their service quality, which in turn results in greater customer loyalty (Tang & Tang, 2012; Tsaur & Lin, 2004; Wang, 2009b). However, the extent to which customer-contact employees in Malaysian hotels are exhibiting this specific form of OCB is still unknown.

There are some observations derived from the hotel industry on the working conditions that underlie the plausible deficiency of SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB) among customer-contact employees in Malaysian hotels. First, the hotel industry suffers from the issue of high employee turnover (Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilhan, & Buyruk, 2010), and to some extent, employee turnover has become the culture in the hospitality industry (Ma & Qu, 2011). In the context of the Malaysian hotel industry, the annual average employee



turnover rate was 32.4 percent, which almost double than the average turnover rate of 17 percent in others industry (Malaysian Employer Federation, 2011). Due to the high employee turnover in the hotel industry, customer-contact employees often work in difficult conditions, either understaffed or with new and inexperienced employees. In the meantime, they need to battle with timely completion of customers' demands, as well as giving customers their attention. Because of time pressures, they may neglect to promote the hotel's products, services and image to customers (Chan & Kuok, 2011; Humborstad, Humborstad, & Whitfield, 2007). Specifically, in their qualitative study conducted among 320 customers of Malaysian four and five star hotels, Ekiz et al. (2012) reported that customers perceived employees to be arrogant. This negative perception would ultimately tarnish the image of the hotels. Therefore, a study on cultivating SO-OCB, especially the loyalty OCB, among the customer-contact employees in upscale hotel is needed as it supports the goals of the upscale hotel industry to improve its image with customers.

Besides high employee turnover impeding SO-OCB development, the stressful nature of customer-contact job in hotels is also a factor (Karatepe, 2011a). Customer-contact employees need to fulfil the organisation's expectations as well as customers' demands (Ramachandran et al., 2011; Terje, Göran, & Sander, 2011). As a result, customer-contact employees are often challenged with role conflict and role ambiguity, and both are the stressors in work (Kath, Stichler, Ehrhart, & Sievers, 2013). Obviously, stress in work is detrimental to employees work behaviours, and has been specifically found to slow employee's reaction to responses (Veldhuizen, Gaillard, & de Vries, 2003). Ekiz et al. (2012) revealed that 91 customer complaints were about poor delivery by service employees, such as late or wrong room service and long check-in/out time. In a similar study, Ekiz et al. (2012) also demonstrated

that 77 complaints were related to customers being over-charged for parking, internet, gym and so forth. All these complaints point to the deficiency of service delivery OCB among customer-contact employees in upscale hotels. Since this form of extra-role behaviour assists hotels in boosting service delivery quality, knowledge of how to enhance service delivery OCB among customer-contact employees in upscale hotels is needed.

In addition to turnover and job stress, Asian values such as orderliness, respect to others, and conformity, are highly preserved in society (Chow, 1995) and may impact the development of SO-OCB behaviours. In particular, Malaysians are considered as shy people and concerned about saving “face” (Abdullah, 1992). As such, Malaysians would feel loss of “face” if their ideas or suggestions are rejected or critiqued (Chow, 1995). In addition, by suggesting something new to their organisation, employees fear that they may upset their interpersonal relationships with colleagues (Van Dyne, Cummings, & Parks, 1995). Therefore, the concept of participation OCB may be difficult for customer-contact employees in Malaysian hotels, who can be quite reserved in providing their suggestions, ideas, and opinions in order to protect themselves from losing face or upsetting the relationships with their colleagues (Abdullah, 1992). Nevertheless, participation OCB, especially from a hotel’s customer-contact employees, is necessary as they are closest to customers which enables them to have fresh ideas and thoughts on improving service delivery quality as asserted by Chang et al. (2011). Overcoming this dichotomy is important for hotel authorities; they need to understand how to induce participation OCB among customer-contact employees to improve its service quality.



The absence of research on SO-OCB within the Malaysian context, coupled with the observations discussed above, highlights the need to find out how to enhance SO-OCB among customer-contact employees in Malaysian upscale hotel industry. Unfortunately, the review of previous studies that focus on SO-OCB revealed several shortcomings. First, the predictors used in the studies were disseminated across a variety of bases, such as organisational-related, job-related, and personal-related. The organisational-based variables studied are perceived organisational support and human resources management practices (e.g. González & Garazo, 2006; Nasurdin, Ling, & Fun, 2011; Sun et al., 2007; Tang & Tang, 2012; Tsai & Su, 2011; Wang, 2009a, 2009b; Yang, 2012). Job-based variables that have been studied are work values (Chen & Kao, 2012), and personal-based variables include disposition (e.g. service orientation, empathy, positive affectivity), intellectual ability (e.g. customer knowledge, emotional intelligence), demographic factors (e.g. employment status), attitude factors (e.g. job satisfaction, affective commitment) (e.g. Bettencourt et al., 2001; Chen & Kao, 2012; González & Garazo, 2006; Payne & Webber, 2006; Suazo, 2009; Wang, 2009b; Yang, 2012). Therefore, this study hopes to extend the literature in SO-OCB by examining a set of predictors from three bases, namely organisational-based, job-based, and personal-based.

The literature review found that the research on SO-OCB heavily relies on social exchange theory (Zellars & Tepper, 2003). Specifically, Zellars and Tepper (2003) called upon researchers to consider complementary, theoretical perspectives that relate to OCB so as to enhance the theoretical understanding regarding this topic. With this in mind, this study decided to investigate SO-OCB through the lens of conservation of resources (COR) theory proposed by Hobfoll (1989).

According to the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), resources are something that individuals value since they assist in the achievement of work goals. Accordingly, individuals strive to protect the loss of their own resources, and try to accumulate more resources. In harmony with the connotation of the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), it can be assumed that customer-contact employees who possess more resources are more capable to effectively complete their job. As a result, they would have more resources (e.g., time, energy) to invest in other forms of behaviours. In this regards, employees may go beyond the call of their formal duty to engage in SO-OCB, which generates more resources for themselves (i.e., liking from colleagues and superiors, recognitions and rewards from the management, and self-esteem) (Zellars & Tepper, 2003). However, empirical research of the role of resources from these three bases (organisation, job, and personal) in predicting each dimension of SO-OCB is rather limited. Therefore, an examination on the effect of resources from three bases (organisation, job, and personal) on each dimension of SO-OCB would enrich the theoretical understanding of OCB.

In addition, a review of past literature also shows the scarcity of research examining the relationship between employees' attitudinal responses and each dimension of SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB). Wang (2009b) specially urged for more research to address this issue. Derived from the tenet of COR theory, the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) holds that resources facilitate employees' achievement of their work goals and lessen their work demands. Accordingly, when work goals are likely to be achieved, employees are likely to develop a positive attitude at work, such as being energetic, dedicated, and immersed in their job. This is characterized as work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Several studies have demonstrated the mediating role of work



engagement in predicting various positive work behaviours (Armier & Buckley, 2009; Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Hakanen, Perhoniemi, & Toppinen-Tanner, 2008a; Moliner., Martí'nez-Tur, Ramos, Peiro' Jose', & Cropanzano, 2008; Saks, 2006). However, to the best knowledge of the researcher, the mediating role of work engagement between resources from various bases and each dimension of SO-OCB remained unexplored. Acknowledging the call from Wang (2009b), as well as recognizing the dearth of research regarding the mediating role of work engagement on each dimension of SO-OCB, this study attempts to address this vacuum as well as seeks to examine the relationships between employees' attitudinal responses and each dimension of SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB).

Last but not least, the research review found little study on the hotel industry, most SO-OCB research sampled transportation, hair salons, agriculture, restaurants, retailing, bank, education, police, and sales settings (Bettencourt et al., 2001; Chen & Kao, 2012; Ladebo, 2004; Nasurdin et al., 2011; Tsai & Su, 2011; Wang, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Yang, 2012). To the researcher's knowledge, studies in the hotel industry are scanty except for those by González and Garazo (2006), Sun et al. (2007), and Tang and Tang (2012). However, these studies were conducted in Spain (González & Garazo, 2006), China (Sun et al., 2007), and Taiwan (Tang & Tang, 2012). Given that Malaysia is a multicultural country, with a unique national culture and social outlook (Ministry of Information Communications and Culture, 2011), findings in those studies may not be to generalizable to the Malaysian context. These reasons support the necessity to initiate a study that relates to SO-OCB within the Malaysian context.

Unfortunately, the study SO-OCB within the Malaysian context is still in its infancy. In particular, only one study, conducted by Nasurdin et al. (2011), assessed the effect of human resources management practices on SO-OCB. However, the study was confined to a sample of customer-contact employees working in air freight forwarding companies in Penang. With the tourism and hotel industry being a significant contributor to the Malaysian economic outlook, a study on SO-OCB among customer-contact employees from the Malaysian upscale hotel context is warranted. In addition, this attempt would help to broaden the database in this research stream, especially for the Malaysian context.

Based on the above discussion, this study seeks to examine the effects of employee's resources, from various bases (organisation, job, and personal), on SO-OCB, and the indirect effect of these resources on SO-OCB via the mediating role of attitude (in the form of work engagement) among customer-contact employees working in Malaysian hotels.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

Based on the discussion above, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the direct relationship between organisational-based resources (human resource management practices which comprised service training, service rewards, performance appraisal, and information sharing) and SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB).
2. To examine the direct relationship between job-based resources (role clarity, supervisor support, and colleague support) and SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB).

3. To examine the direct relationship between personal-based resources (emotional intelligence which comprised self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion) and SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB).
4. To examine the indirect relationship between organisational-based resources (human resource management practices which comprised service training, service rewards, performance appraisal, and information sharing) and SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB) via the mediating role of work engagement.
5. To examine the indirect relationship between job-based resources (role clarity, supervisor support, and colleague support) and SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB) via the mediating role of work engagement.
6. To examine the indirect relationship between personal-based resources (emotional intelligence which comprised self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion) and SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB) via the mediating role of work engagement.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

Based on the objectives mentioned above, this study endeavours to answer the following research questions:

1. Do organisational-based resources (human resource management practices which comprised service training, service rewards, performance appraisal,



- and information sharing) have a direct relationship with SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB)?
2. Do job-based resources (role clarity, supervisor support, and colleague support) have a direct relationship with SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB)?
  3. Do personal-based resources (emotional intelligence which comprised self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion) have a direct relationship with SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB)?
  4. Do organisational-based resources (human resource management practices, which comprised service training, service reward, performance appraisal, and information sharing) have an indirect relationship with SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB) via work engagement?
  5. Do job-based resources (role clarity, supervisor support, and colleague support) have an indirect relationship with SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB) via work engagement?
  6. Do personal-based resources (emotional intelligence which comprised self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion) have an indirect relationship with SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB) via work engagement?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study hopes to provide significant theoretical and practical contributions to the area of SO-OCB, work engagement, organisational-based resources, job-based resources, and personal-based resources. In particular, this study focuses on SO-



OCB among customer-contact employees within the context of the Malaysian hotel industry.

### **1.5.1 Theoretical Contributions**

This study examines the direct relationship between resources from three bases (organisation, job, and personal) and SO-OCB, as well as the indirect relationship between resources from three bases and SO-OCB through the intervening role of work engagement. From a theoretical perspective, this study enhances the understanding of OCB by examining specific forms of OCB of customer-contact employees in service organisations, namely SO-OCB. This work corroborates the views from previous researchers (Bettencourt et al., 2001; González & Garazo, 2006; Wang, 2009a, 2009b, 2010) who have acknowledged the scarcity of research in this specific form of OCB.

Second, most of the past studies that examined the predictors of SO-OCB (e.g. Tang & Tang, 2012; Wang, 2009a, 2009b) over-relied upon social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) (Zellars & Tepper, 2003). This view is based upon the assumption that social exchange theory has limitations since the social exchanges are governed by reciprocal relations (Zafirovski, 2005), and are contingent on the rewards from others (Emerson, 1976). By implication, once reciprocity is violated, the relationship is not able to be sustained. In addition, willingness to display SO-OCB by customer-contact employees in hotels requires not just motivation, but also access to resources (such as time, energy). For instance, promoting products, services, and image of the hotel, delivering their services with extra-care, and offering suggestions to hotels for service improvement. Having this in mind, this

study tenders a new perspective about the motivational role of resources from three bases (organisation, job, and personal) in promoting SO-OCB. Specifically resources help employees deal with their job demands, which ultimately enables them to have resources (such as time, energy) to display SO-OCB (loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB). In addition, this attempt answers the call by Zellars and Tepper (2003) who suggest future researchers need to consider complementary, theoretical perspectives in the study of OCB.

Third, the deficiency of theoretical understanding on the predictors of SO-OCB has longed been recognized by scholars (e.g. Sun et al., 2007; Wang, 2009a, 2009b; Yang, 2012). By combining the theoretical view of the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), this study offers an understanding on the mechanism on how resources from three bases (organisation, job, and personal) are linked to SO-OCB via the intervening role of work engagement.

### **1.5.2 Practical Contributions**

Given that organisational-based resources, job-based resources, and personal-based resources can have a direct impact on the SO-OCB of customer-contact employees, findings of this study provide information to hotel management on how to elicit SO-OCB among its customer-contact employees. The development of SO-OCB among customer-contact employees is deemed important given that this form of behaviours would lead to greater service quality (Bell & Menguc, 2002; Wang, 2009b), customer satisfaction (Bordia, Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2010), and customer retention (Webber & Klimoski, 2004), all of which are beneficial to the success of

Malaysian hotel industry. In particular, scholars asserted that delivering a higher degree of service quality to their customers should be a main concern for upscale hotels (Baker & Huyton, 2001; Maroudas et al., 2008; Medlik, 1994). This is because customers who check into upscale hotels expect to receive better service quality to commensurate the amount of money they have spent (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). Therefore, promoting SO-OCB among customer-contact employees in Malaysian upscale hotel is essential.

Second, this study seeks to provide an understanding to hotel management on the mechanism principle on how SO-OCB can be developed via the intervening role of work engagement. This study highlights the important role of work engagement among hotel customer-contact employees. Specifically, engaged customer-contact employees are more inclined to exhibit SO-OCB. Therefore, the results of this study can assist hotel management to boost the work engagement of customer-contact employees by strengthening organisational-based resources, job-based resources, and personal-based resources.

Additionally, upscale hotels in Malaysia play an important role in Malaysia's economy since the government is targeting high spending tourists to realize the goal of being in the top 10 in term of global tourism receipts by 2015 (Economic Planning Unit, 2010). In addition, under the third Industrial Master Plan, Malaysia is striving to receive 36 million tourist arrivals and generate RM168 billion tourist receipts by 2020 (Ministry of Information Communications and Culture, 2011). Thus, findings of this study could help enhance the service quality of Malaysian upscale hotels, which in turn may attract more visitors to Malaysia. Ultimately, the tourism sector will flourish, leading to increased investment in the hotel sector, more employment



opportunities for Malaysians, and greater Gross National Income (GNI) for the country.

## **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

This section provides the operational definitions used in this study:

### ***Service-oriented organisational citizenship behaviour (SO-OCB)***

In line with Bettencourt et al. (2001), service-oriented organisational citizenship behaviour in this study is conceptualized as discretionary behaviour performed by customer-contact employees in hotels that are not recognized by the formal reward system. SO-OCB are characterized by loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB, and participation OCB. Specifically, loyalty OCB refers to the behaviour of customer-contact employees in promoting the hotel's products, services, and image to outsiders; service delivery OCB refers to the behaviour of customer-contact employees in behaving conscientiously when deliver their service to customers; participation OCB refers to the behaviour of customer-contact employees in taking individual initiative to improve the service delivery by the hotels.

### ***Work Engagement***

Following Schaufeli, Salanova, González-romá and Bakker (2002), work engagement in this study is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Specifically: vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience while working; dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and challenge; and absorption refers to fully concentrated and happily



engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work.

### ***Organisational-based Resources***

Based on the definition given by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001), organisational-based resources in this study refer to resources that are derived from the organisation that function to facilitate the achievement of work goals; reduce job demands and their associated physiological and psychological cost; and stimulate individual growth, learning and development. In this study, organisational-based resources comprised human resource management practices.

### ***Human Resource Management Practices (HRM Practices)***

Following Lepak and Gowan (2010) and Tanke (2001), this study defines human resource management practices (hereinafter labelled as HRM practices) as practices used by the hotel to attract, motivate, reward and retain its employees to meet its goals and operational objectives. In this study, HRM practices is one form of resources derived from the organisation, which include service training, service rewards, performance appraisal, and information sharing in accordance to previous scholars (Liao, Toya, Lepak, & Hong, 2009; Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Tang & Tang, 2012).

### ***Service Training***

Following Karatepe, Yavas, and Babakus (2007), service training in this study refers to the extent to which customer-contact employees perceive that their hotel has conducted programs to improve their task-related and behavioural skills and enhance their capability to deal with varying customer needs, personalities and circumstances effectively.

### ***Service Rewards***

In line with Boshoff and Allen (2000), this study conceptualizes service rewards as the extent to which customer-contact employees perceive that their hotel offers appropriate rewards to motivate them for the delivery of quality service.

### ***Performance Appraisal***

Consistent with Liao, Toya, Lepak and Hong (2009), this study conceptualizes performance appraisal as the extent to which customer-contact employees perceive that their hotel has conducted performance appraisal that emphasizes the delivery of quality service to customers.

### ***Information Sharing***

In harmony with Zacharatos, Barling and Iverson (2005), this study conceptualizes information sharing as the extent to which customer-contact employees perceive that management disseminates the information regarding financial performance, strategy and operational measures to them and they are comfortable to share information regarding their work activities with the management.

### ***Job-based Resources***

Following Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001), job-based resources in this study refer to the resources derived from job that function to facilitate the achievement of work goals; reduce job demands and their associated physiological and psychological cost; and stimulate individual growth, learning and development. In this study, job-based resources comprised role clarity, supervisor support, and colleague support.