INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY AND SPIRITUALITY ON JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG EMPLOYEES FROM THE HOTEL INDUSTRY IN PENANG: THE ROLE OF GENDER AND ETHNICITY

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by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA   Analysis of Variance

COVID-19   Coronavirus Disease 2019

FFM   Five Factor Model

HREC   Human Research Ethics Committee

IPIP   International Personality Item Pool

JDS   Job Diagnostic Survey

MAH   Malaysian Hotel Association

MBTI   Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

MSQ   Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

NTP   National Tourism Policy

SAWS   Spirit at Work Scale

TIPI   Ten-Item Personality Inventory

USM   Universiti Sains Malaysia

PENGARUH PERSONALITI DAN SPIRITUALITI KE ATAS KEPUASAN PEKERJAAN DAN KOMITMEN TERHADAP ORGANISASI DALAM KALANGAN PEKERJA INDUSTRI PERHOTELAN DI PULAU PINANG : PERANAN GENDER DAN ETNIK

ABSTRAK

Tret personaliti dan spiritualiti mempunyai mempunyai pengaruh positif terhadap kepuasan kerja dan komitmen organisasi. Banyak kajian tentang kepuasan kerja dan komitmen organisasi telah dijalankan, namun kajian yang memfokuskan kepada hubungan antara tret personaliti dengan spiritualiti masih kurang, terutamanya dalam industri perhotelan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan sama ada personaliti dan spiritualiti meramal kepuasan pekerjaan dan komitmen terhadap organisasi dalam kalangan pekerja industri perhotelan di Pulau Pinang. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk menerokai sebarang perbezaan jantina dan etnik dalam tret personaliti, spiritualiti, kepuasan pekerjaan dan komitmen terhadap organisasi. Kaedah kuantitatif dengan desain keratan rentas digunakan dan 300 pekerja dari hotel tiga, empat dan lima bintang di Pulau Pinang direkrut menggunakan pensampelan rawak berstrata. Peserta diberikan soal selidik melalui jabatan sumber manusia untuk dijawab. Soal selidik ini terdiri daripada empat instrumen yang merangkumi *Mini International Personality Item Poll, Spirit at Work Scale, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire* dan *Affective Organizational Commitment*. *Standard multiple regression* menunjukkan bahawa spiritualiti serta tret personaliti *extraversion* dan *agreeableness* merupakan peramal signifikan bagi kepuasan kerja manakala, *extraversion, conscientiousness* dan spiritualiti meramal komitmen terhadap organisasi secara signifikan. I*ndependent samples t-tests* pula menunjukkan

bahawa pekerja lelaki melaporkan *extraversion*, kepuasan pekerjaan dan komitmen terhadap organisasi yang lebih tinggi dan signifikan daripada perkerja perempuan. Namun, *agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experience* dan spiritualiti tidak menunjukkan sebarang perbezaan jantina yang signifikan dalam kalangan pekerja. *One-way analysis of variance* (ANOVA) pula menunjukkan bahawa terdapat perbezaan etnik yang signifikan dalam *conscientiousness* dan spiritualiti. Pekerja India melaporkan *conscientiousness* yang lebih tinggi daripada pekerja Melayu dan Cina. Pekerja Melayu pula melaporkan spiritualiti yang lebih tinggi daripada pekerja Cina dan India. Selain itu, kepuasan pekerjaan dan komitmen terhadap organisasi tidak menunjukkan perbezaan etnik yang signifikan dalam kalangan pekerja industri perhotelan di Pulau Pinang. Dapatan kajian ini dapat membantu dalam memahami pengaruh personaliti dan spiritualiti ke atas kepuasan pekerjaan dan komitmen terhadap organisasi. Selain daripada itu, hasil kajian ini boleh memberi manfaat kepada industri perhotelan dalam menurunkan kadar pusing ganti kerja melalui pemupukan spiritualiti dan pengenalpastian pekerja yang sesuai, berdasarkan personaliti, untuk industri ini.

INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY AND SPIRITUALITY ON JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG EMPLOYEES FROM THE HOTEL INDUSTRY IN PENANG: THE ROLE OF GENDER AND ETHNICITY

ABSTRACT

Personality traits and spirituality have a positive influence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Many studies on job satisfaction and organizational commitment have been conducted, yet studies focusing on the relationship between personality traits and spirituality are still scarce, especially in the hotel industry. Therefore, the present study aimed to determine whether personality and spirituality predict job satisfaction and organizational commitment among employees from the hotel industry in Penang. It further aimed to explore whether there are gender and ethnic differences in personality traits, spirituality, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The quantitative method with a cross-sectional design was used and 300 employees from three, four- and five-star hotels in Penang were recruited by stratified random sampling. The participants were given a questionnaire to fill out via their human resource department. The questionnaire comprised four instruments including Mini International Personality Item Poll, Spirit at Work Scale, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, and Affective Organizational Commitment. Standard multiple regression revealed that spirituality and personality traits of extraversion and agreeableness were significant predictors of job satisfaction. On the other hand, extraversion, conscientiousness, and spirituality significantly predicted organizational commitment. Independent samples t-tests indicated that male employees had significantly higher extraversion, job satisfaction, and organizational

commitment than female employees. However, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experience, and spirituality did not show any significant gender differences among employees. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated significant ethnic differences in conscientiousness and spirituality. Indian employees reported higher conscientiousness compared to Malay and Chinese employees. Malay employees reported a higher level of spirituality compared to Chinese and Indian employees. On the other hand, job satisfaction and organizational commitment did not show any significant ethnic differences among employees working in the hotel industry in Penang. The findings of this study could assist in understanding the influence of personality and spirituality on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In addition, the results of this study would benefit the hotel industry to reduce the turnover rate by fostering spirituality and identifying suitable employees, according to personality, for this industry.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

In today's competitive world, employees are important assets of an organization. All levels of employees are an essential part and their full participation plays an important contribution to an organization. However, choosing suitable employees and retaining quality employees is quite challenging nowadays. (Shahreki et al., 2021). It is important to evaluate the employees' personality characteristics in order to find suitable candidates and achieve the required quality of service at the workplace.

The most important classification of features, characteristics, or traits of personality results in five big personality dimensions which are neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to new experiences (Rosli & Zainal, 2021). The five personality dimensions of employees are vital determinants of a person's behavior within the working environment. Generally, differences in personality traits lead to different individual behaviors and attitudes. Therefore, knowing the personality characteristics of employees is very important as we could use their knowledge, skills, and abilities to achieve the well-being of the organization (Bello & Bello, 2021).

In addition, employees who are experienced with a high level of knowledge and skills contribute to the foundation of a successful business. In organizations, employees offer services and the quality of such service is related to the specific and personalized quality of work that eventually contributes to the company's goal and success. The suitable employees will begin to look beyond career success to achieve

personal fulfillment. They tend to search for meaning and purpose in every single achievement (Afsar & Badir, 2017). This also allows them to express themselves as a whole and be fulfilled. Once the employees feel the expression of the human experience at its deepest, spirituality enhances work performance and promotes higher work quality.

Spirituality is perceived as the outward expression of the pursuit of meaning and the effort to connect oneself with the external world (Rezapouraghdam et al., 2019). Spirituality enables the individual to express the inner life by executing meaningful work in the context of a community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). As stated by Fanggidae (2017) employees seek spirituality at the workplace where they can find value, support, and meaning in their work and personal life. Moreover, spirituality at the workplace can beneficially mold individuals' behavior from the inside out. It can also lead employees in identifying and understanding the meaning in their lives which will help them to have a brighter career (Petchsawanga & Duchon, 2009).

In general, research findings stated that people who rate themselves high on spirituality tend to have some personality traits (Irshad & Naz, 2011). Differences in personality traits lead to a variety of work productivity and satisfaction among employees. Differences in personality traits give personal satisfaction at work and vitalize spiritual employees to be efficient. Thus, it intrinsically motivates the employee to be committed to their employers and give excellent performance (Abbas et al., 2020).

Job satisfaction is explained as an individual's appraisal or assessment of his or her job and its context. It is an evaluation of perceived work characteristics, work setting, and emotional experience at the workplace (Hee et al., 2019). An employee

with high job satisfaction delivers positive results such as high-quality job performance and thus decreases negative outcomes such as absenteeism, low levels of work commitment, and reduced overall quality of life. Moreover, when employees are given a chance to use their talents on the job, they are satisfied at the workplace, thus they tend to be more productive, innovative, and loyal to their company (Muda Ismail et al., 2019).

Job satisfaction encourages employees to stay committed to their organization. Organizational commitment is explained as a psychological state where there is a bond between the employee and employer (Loan, 2020). Moreover, it is the engagement of employees in the organization as an ongoing process to attain benefits for both parties. Employees with a strong commitment to the organization will intend to stay and give the fullest performance. Highly committed employees tend to put in extra effort at work, resulting in improved organizational performance and success (Mahmoud et al., 2020).

Although numerous studies have been conducted on job satisfaction and the organizational commitment of employees, studies focusing on the relationship between personality traits and spirituality are still scarce. There are very limited researches that have been carried out in the Eastern context, especially in the tourism industry.

In Malaysia, tourism is now the third-largest contributor to the national economy and recorded 3.6 million employments in the tourism industry in 2019 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). The tourism industry has grown rapidly and increasing tourist arrivals to Malaysia encouraged the industry to expand its businesses (Tourism Malaysia, 2021). However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Malaysian

tourism industry was severely impacted by the pandemic. To reform and confirm the continuity of the country's tourism industry, the Government has inaugurated the National Tourism Policy (NTP) 2020-2030 to make Malaysia a preferred tourist destination globally (National Tourism Policy 2020-2030, 2020).

Predominantly, Penang is one of the major contributors to tourism in Malaysia. The tourism industry is associated with the hotel sector and works based on giving service and contact with customers to fully satisfy customers' needs for goods or services (Miah & Hafit, 2019). However, to sustain itself in the competitive business environment, the hotel industry needs to play its part in selecting the right candidates, generating creative performers, providing quality service providers, and retaining talented employees (Rosli & Zainal, 2021).

Most researchers have found personality traits and spirituality to have a positive influence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Fanggidae et al., 2016; Zaman Khan & Chandrakar, 2017; Kawiana et al., 2018). It is found that personality traits and spirituality at the workplace improve job commitment, creativity, satisfaction, and team performance of employees (Jaichitra & Srinivasan, 2018; Chandrasekara, 2019). This promotes a high level of personal fulfillment and morale, resulting in improved performance through increased financial achievement.

However, research on personality traits and spirituality has been scarce, especially on the influence on workplace attitudes. To address this research gap, the present study focuses on the influence of personality traits and spirituality on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the hotel industry in Penang. Additionally, the present study also contributes to the extant literature by focusing on

the role of gender and ethnic differences among personality traits, spirituality, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Although relationships between gender and other variables have been reported in the literature, little discussion can be found concerning the role of gender and ethnic differences or in exploring gender and ethnicity as a moderator in the hotel industry of Malaysia. This is an important limitation to the organizational literature, given the focus on the role of gender and ethnicity in the parallel literature related construct of behaviors, particularly in developmental and social psychology. That being the case, this study has attempted to bridge this particular gap found in literature as both could play important roles in affecting work-related behaviors and spirituality. Moreover, this study tends to shed light on the important contribution to research and knowledge in local human resources and corporate organizations from psychological perspectives.

1.2   Problem Statement

High turnover is one of the major challenges encountered by the hotel industry. A high turnover rate is an accruing problem in the hotel industry and the rate is higher compared to other sectors (Abo-Murad & Abdullah, 2019). The high turnover rate affects the overall growth, development, and sustainability of the tourism industry of Penang as well as Malaysia's economy. Moreover, turnover is extremely costly especially in the hotel industry as the industry depends solely on employees as part of the product and service process. It negatively affects productivity and performance beginning from the bottom to upper-level workers.

Past studies have proven that turnover is linked to employees' satisfaction (Olawale et al., 2016). The nature of working in the hotel industry such as long working hours, night shifts, weekend schedules, low salary, challenging duties and responsibilities, no personal time, lack of motivation, and coworkers' attitudes affect

hotel employees' work satisfaction levels. These lead to problematic behavior such as unproductive, absenteeism, and lower level of attention on the job. Overall, it affects the performance of the employee and subsequently influences satisfaction, which in turn influences turnover in the hotel industry (Cho et al., 2018).

One of the main antecedents of turnover in the hotel industry is employees' organizational commitment. It is found that employees' commitment to the organization influences their productivity and performance. Employees tend to deliver poor work quality, tardiness, and negative effects on performance when their level of commitment is low. This subsequently leads employees to have thoughts of leaving the organization which later leads to actual turnover.

Based on the literature, it is suggested that turnover is caused by a lack of job satisfaction and commitment to the organization among employees (Miah & Hafit, 2019). As an improvement in job satisfaction and organizational commitment level is able to decrease turnover, it is predicted that personality and spirituality would influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment level.

However, very few studies exist in regard to identifying the relationship between the two variables although extensive research has been carried out on personality traits and spirituality. Furthermore, previous studies have not dealt with identifying the influence of personality traits and spirituality on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Additionally, previous research studies have mostly been concerned with the outcomes of work performance, rather than the conditions or the context that motivates workplace behaviors. Thus, to address this research gap, the present study was carried out to determine whether personality traits and spirituality can influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Besides that, there is a lack of studies relating to personality traits and spirituality in Malaysia in comparison with those of Western countries. More importantly, it should be noted that there is a limited number of studies to examine the influence of personality traits and spirituality on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the hotel industry, especially in the Eastern context. Therefore, the present study attempted to study the influence of personality traits and spirituality on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among employees from the hotel industry in Penang.

The role of gender and ethnicity may vary in personality traits, spirituality, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment levels. However, the hotel industry especially, expects the same level of performance from both male and female employees in assigned tasks and duties. Thus, female employees usually are more often face several barriers and challenges including motherhood, discrimination, and stereotyping (Iimura & Taku, 2018). The problems become magnified as the nature of work requires extra working hours and a high degree of mobility. The desire of female employees for career advancement becomes more challenging because of the traditional role expectations that deter them from developing their professions in the hotel industry. Thus, these barriers may cause varying levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment among male and female employees (Jadoo, 2020).

Malaysia is a multicultural country; each ethnic group has different cultural backgrounds, traditions, religions, languages, and experiences (Bani Hasan & Lee, 2017). The differences in ethnic groups may be reflected in different attitudes to the organization and their profession as well. Therefore, it would be important to study whether employees of different ethnic groups would have differences in job satisfaction and organizational commitment level in the hotel industry.

Unfortunately, there have been very few studies in Malaysia linking personality, spirituality, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment to identify the role of gender and ethnicity. Although some studies have explored the relationships among socio-demographic variables, there have been mixed empirical results concerning these variables. Therefore, the present study includes them for further analysis to explore the role of gender and ethnicity in personality traits, spirituality, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among employees from the hotel industry.

1.3   Research Questions

Following are the research questions that the researcher attempts to answer in the present study.

1.   What is the role of gender and ethnicity in personality traits, spirituality, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among employees from the hotel industry in Penang?

2.   Do personality traits and spirituality significantly predict job satisfaction and organizational commitment among the employees from the hotel industry in Penang?

1.4   Research Objectives

1.   To identify the role of gender and ethnicity in personality traits, spirituality, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among employees from the hotel industry in Penang

2.   To determine whether personality and spirituality significantly predict job satisfaction and organizational commitment among the employees from the hotel industry in Penang

1.5   Significance of the Study

The study of personality and spirituality is applicable to the workplace. The findings from the present study will contribute to addressing the research gap on whether personality traits and spirituality can influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

With the aim to achieve organizational competitive advantage and long-term growth, most employers are concerned about their personnel. Knowing the personality characteristics could help in choosing the personality types that will suit those jobs (Bello & Bello, 2021). Therefore, recognition of personality traits is crucial in matching employees to the different types of assignments and jobs assigned to them.

Other than having an in-depth knowledge of the job requirement, well-matched employees tend to be engaged and strive to complete it with full satisfaction, thus able to work within a team framework (Fatima et al., 2017). The differences in personality traits may lead to different behaviors and a variety of job performance levels among employees. Therefore, the finding of this study will provide a significant contribution towards discovering the employees' personalities which will be essential in determining the career prospect, the type of training, and motivational programs to improve job performance, satisfaction, and commitment level.

Furthermore, findings from the present study may emphasize the importance of spirituality in the workplace in increasing job satisfaction and organizational

commitment. Highly spiritual employees tend to experience a well-balanced life with meaning and purpose (Rezapouraghda et al., 2019). They may feel satisfied at work, which may also encourage fulfillment in work and personal life. Spirituality at the workplace may lead to productivity and commitment to the organization.

On another note, the findings of the present research will be beneficial and important for human resource practitioners. In regard to this matter, human resource practitioners can identify the personality traits and spirituality of the employees as it could assist in selecting employees and contribute to the development of an efficient and effective labor market.

Moreover, the findings from the present study also will provide a remedy to the gap in the literature by describing the roles of gender and ethnicity in personality traits and spirituality. There is limited research conducted in Malaysia on the roles of demographic variables on personality traits and spirituality. Thus, the findings of the research can help human resource practitioners to understand the role of gender and ethnic differences in order to create a balanced and healthy workplace.

Above all, the field of Industrial and Organizational Psychology could benefit from this study by understanding the influence of personality and spirituality on job satisfaction and organizational commitment at the workplace. The findings will add to the literature by expanding the knowledge of the influence of personality and spirituality on workplace behaviors. Moreover, the findings also can contribute by expanding both personality traits and spirituality studies within the Malaysian context.

1.6   Scope of the Study

This research study focused exclusively on three-, four- and five-star hotels in Penang. Particularly, this study focused on hotels from Penang as it is one of the popular tourism and attraction spots in Malaysia. It included city and business hotels as well as beach and resort hotels in Penang. The participants in this study were employees from the hotel industry of Penang. These employees were from different departments and include managers, supervisors, administrative professionals, support staff, and others. Participants from different levels of hotels were recruited to obtain a representative sample for the study. Moreover, this study focused on employees who had been employed or had work experience in the hotel industry for at least one year. Casual workers, part-time workers, and internship students were excluded since they did not have direct contact with the guests. In addition, only Malaysian employees were included in this study and non-Malaysian employees were excluded from participating in this research.

1.7   Definitions of Terms

Throughout this study, the following terms are referred to frequently:

Personality is defined broadly as an individual's organized set of values that influences cognition and behavior (Allport, 1962). Personality as an expression of the uniqueness of an individual refers to how people reflect, adjust or strive to master their environment. Cattell (1995) refers to personality as psychological and physical behavioral patterns that appear in a variety of situations and persist over time.

Personality traits are dimensions of the personality that influence a person's consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (McCrae & Costa, 2003).

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Personality traits are broad concepts that are ranked or ordered by the degree to which people show these traits over time as well as across situations (McCrae & Costa, 2003).

Spirituality refers to human belief in a relationship with and progress toward a higher purpose from which a sense of purpose, consciousness, interconnectedness, and destiny, from which a basis for action can be obtained (Swift, 2003). Ashmos and Duchon (2000) define spirituality at the workplace as an acknowledgment of inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that occurs in the context of community. Karakas (2010) defines spirituality at the workplace as a sense of purpose and meaning as well as a sense of interconnectedness and community.

Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state that results from assessing one's job or experiences. Job satisfaction is also explained as the contented feeling a person has towards his or her job and at the same time, attaining and enhancing their job values (Locke, 1969).

Organizational commitment is described as a psychological state that characterizes the employee's desire to stay with, emotional attachment to, involvement in, and identification with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Organizational commitment can also be defined as an individual's belief in and the acceptance of the company's objectives and values. It also refers to employees' willingness to exert effort toward accomplishing the company's goals and a strong desire to stay with the present organization (Mathews & Shepherd, 2002).

1.8   Operational Definitions

The operational definitions of the variables used in the present study are presented below:

Personality refers to the personality traits of employees such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism that are assessed by the 20-Item Mini International Personality Item Pool.

Spirituality at the workplace refers to the experience of spirituality at work by employees who focus on finding meaning and fulfillment through work (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004). Spirituality at the workplace is measured by Spirit at Work scale (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006).

Job Satisfaction refers to the degree to which people are satisfied with their jobs. Job satisfaction is a concept that includes intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction components. Intrinsic satisfaction emphasizes on an employee's satisfaction on the job, and extrinsic satisfaction emphasizes on an employee's satisfaction with the pay structure, benefits, and promotion opportunities. Job satisfaction of participants in the present study is measured by items on the short form of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, which has been designed to assess two job satisfaction factors: intrinsic and extrinsic (Weiss et al., 1967).

Organizational Commitment refers to the extent to which employees show attachment to and involvement in the organization. It explains the relationship between employees and the organization and has implications on their choice to remain in the organization (Meyer et al., 1993). Organizational commitment of participants in the present study is measured by Meyer and Allen's (1997) Affective Organizational Commitment Questionnaire.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Overview

This chapter analyses relevant literature to contextualize the present study. First, personality, spirituality, and religiosity are reviewed followed by spirituality in the context of work, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the hotel industry in Malaysia. Finally, theories such as Person-Job Theory and Person-Organization Fit Theory are described and a conceptual framework for this study is proposed.

2.2   Personality

Personality is defined as the set of characteristics that distinguishes us from others and guides us to behave consistently across situations (Akanni & Oduaran, 2017). In other words, personality is also described as the collection of thoughts, feelings, and behavioral patterns based on a set of traits that are indicators of actions and attitudes (Klaas-Jan,2020). Personality traits define people and make them unique, recognizable, and predictable across time. As a wide range of personality definitions are currently in use, numerous scales have been created to measure personality traits appropriately (Kırcaburun,2016). One of the widely used dimensions to explore personality traits is the Five-Factor Model of Personality. It includes the big five personality traits known as openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

Extraversion is a kind of positive emotion where people who are highly extroverted tend to be confident, leading, dynamic, and thrill-seeking (Mirjam et al.,

2021). Extraversion is also characterized by the ability to project energy, be ambitious, and have loquacity. It also relates to strong and frequent interpersonal communications, active and positive. The traits of extroverted people include liveliness, warmth, sociability, and dominance of empathy (Canagasuriam & Roulin, 2021). Extraversion indicates the level to which someone is social and communicative whereas introverted, unsociable, reserved people are less disposed to enter social interaction. In the work context, highly extroverted employees are less likely to encounter outrage. They are good at working with others and able to get along with others at ease.

Alessandro et al. (2021) defined agreeableness as commiserating, loving, and caring. It additionally refers to a feeling of sensitivity to others selflessly. Agreeableness is also perceived as a tendency to be kind and supportive rather than doubtful and aggressive toward others. Havill et al. (1998) described agreeableness as the capability to hinder unfavorable inclinations. Agreeableness has also been associated with orienting sensitivity, which is linked with associative sensitivity as well as sensitivity to inside, emotional, and outside perceptions. Organ and Lingl (1995) stated that agreeableness includes getting in conjunction with others in a charming and fulfilling relationship. The term agreeableness represents the individual differences concerned with social support and harmony; they are considerate, friendly, generous, supportive, and cooperative.

Conscientiousness is a propensity to show self-discipline, be organized, and aim for accomplishment more than expected. It is comprised of various characteristics related to self-regulation. Conscientiousness is a dimension that has on one side reliability and confidentiality, and on the other side uncertainty and distrust (Alessandro et al., 2021). A conscientious person has characteristics such as obedience

to rules, perfectionism, and systematic (Shofia et al., 2021). Conscientiousness additionally determines one's behavior in the pursuit of a goal. Organ and Lingl (1995) claimed that conscientiousness has to be associated with work satisfaction as it denotes a general work involvement propensity, which increases the likelihood of receiving satisfying work rewards, both formal such as compensation, career advancements, and informal such as acknowledgment, respect, feelings of personal achievement.

Openness to experience is a tendency to have wide interests, creativity, and intuition. It also seeks out new experiences and is able to think abstractly (Tapas & Umakanta, 2021). It is related to scientific, artistic creativity, and also divergent thinking. Openness to new experiences is a personality dimension that, on the one hand, has features such as creativity, novelty, inquisitiveness, imagination, unconventionality, and a risk-taking tendency. On the other hand, a person who lacks this trait is reserved, conventional, conservative, unimaginative, and fearful of risk. Openness to experience indicated that the person who is more inventive and visionary has a curiosity in trying new things because of the feeling of inquisitiveness. Deary et al. (2003) indicated that employees with greater openness to experience personalities were more likely to experience emotional fatigue.

Neuroticism is linked to an individual's emotional stability. People who have a high neuroticism score are more likely to feel one specific negative emotion, such as anxiety, misery, anger, or despair, but they are also more likely to experience many of these feelings at the same time. Emotionally reactive people have high scores on neuroticism (Xiaowen et al., 2020). Neuroticism is defined as the propensity to feel negative reactions such as outrage, uneasiness, sadness, or vulnerability. It moreover encounters a variety of emotional distress including unrealistic thoughts and troubling needs (Shrestha & Jena, 2021).

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2.2.1 Gender Differences in Personality

Gender differences in personality traits are frequently described based on gender scores. This means that the gender which scores high on a trait will exhibit psychological states related to that trait more often and to a greater extent than the gender which scores low on that trait. Previous research showed that women showed higher extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism traits than men (Furnham et al., 2005). For example, women are more agreeable than men because women tend to be more nurturing, tender-minded, and selfless compared to men. The differences in personality traits between genders lead to predictable differences in leisure behaviors, occupational preferences, and health-related outcomes (Weisberg et al., 2011).

As mentioned earlier, openness to experience reflects imagination, resourcefulness, intellectual inquisitiveness, and appreciation of esthetic experiences. There are no significant gender differences between males and females (Schmitt et al., 2008). Due to the divergent content of the trait, there is no significant difference shown between men and women. Therefore, both genders tend to display more or less similar intellectual inquisitiveness in the workplace. They are equally imaginative, and innovative and can perform at a similar pace. However, this is different for conscientiousness which is related to self-discipline, indicating the ability to exert self-control in order to adhere to rules or achieve objectives (Furnham et al., 2005). Past research indicated that women had higher scores than men in conscientiousness. Conscientiousness trait is characterized by determination, orderliness, punctuality, and diligence. Therefore, women tend to be more cautious and hard-working as compared to males in the workplace.

On the other hand, Iimura and Taku (2018) stated that men tend to be more extroverted compared to women. As described earlier, extraversion reflects

friendliness, confidence, and positive emotionality that are linked to sensitivity to rewards. Women are more likely to score high on warmth, sociability, and positive emotions, whereas men are more likely to score high on boldness and thrill-seeking behavior. Therefore, women tend to socialize and make connections in the workplace. They are able to handle customers in the hospitality environment and maintain relationships. Whereas, males are good at seeking bold situations they are able to handle conflicts and stress while dealing with others. Moreover, males tend to also score higher in introversion as compared to females. Therefore, they are also able to work in the back office and handle other responsibilities.

Agreeableness includes traits relating to unselfishness, such as compassion and humanity. It involves the tendency toward cooperation, unity, and caring. Female employees consistently score higher than male employees on agreeableness (Weisberg et al., 2011). It means that females are generally more supportive and cooperative by nature. This makes them be better at working in and leading teams as compared to males. They are able to understand customers and co-workers better than males. They are also good at showing care, compassion, and being attentive toward the needs of others as these are crucial characteristics to work in the hospitality industry.

Last but not least, neuroticism has been found to be higher in women than in men when assessed using the Big Five Personality test. Women are more likely to experience negative emotions and related processes in response to perceived risk and punishment which include worry, unhappiness, annoyance, and self-consciousness than men (Weisberg et al., 2011). They are emotional beings who face emotional instability most of the time. Therefore, this would hinder their day-to-day work as the hospitality industry requires a lot of mental and emotional strength. Males are better

at handling emotions and thus would be able to control them in the working environment.

Based on the literature review, there are gender differences in personality traits. Therefore, analyzing gender differences could develop a better understanding of the personality traits of the employees in the context of work. This contributes to other work behavior and thus is important to be studied. Moreover, Bajwa et al. (2017) stated that there are very few studies on the relationships between personality and gender in Malaysia. The present study explores gender differences further to identify their association with personality.

2.2.2 Ethnic Differences in Personality

Culture and ethnicity have an undeniable influence on the way our personality is shaped. Some might believe that personality development is completely under our control, but this is an arguable statement as environment and culture could play a vital role in altering our personality. Therefore, quite a wide range of ethnic differences could be found in both the Western as well as Eastern contexts.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic nation with a total population of 31.7 million. Its ethnic composition is 68.6% Malays, 23.4 % Chinese, and 7.0% Indians with the remaining 1.0% having other ethnic affiliations (Department of Statistics, 2021). Several studies show that Malaysian ethnic groups have different personality traits related to their ethnic and religious value preferences or cultural orientations from a socio-cultural perspective (Cohen, 2007; Fontaine et al., 2002). The personality traits differ from those in Western and other Eastern countries as well.

Studies have found that the Malays in Malaysia are generally more reserved just as expected by their society's ethics and values which encourage one to be shy

(Hamidon, 2009). According to Hamidon (2009), the Malays' values and traditions teach them to be polite, courteous, and respectful. Therefore, they would score more in agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness. In addition, the fundamental measures of the five factors can characterize distinct behavioral variations in the work setting (Chandrasekara, 2019). This means that their nature could influence the way they respond and behave in the organization as well.

Moreover, past studies have also mentioned that there is a significant difference between ethnic groups and their personality. Malaysians tend to score higher in agreeableness but low in extraversion and openness as compared to Americans. This shows that Malaysians are usually able to succeed at work and receive more emotional support from coworkers for that matter. However, they are still less confident and less energetic due to low scores in extraversion.

The working environment in our country requires employees to interact regularly with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge and understand people from different cultures because it helps in bringing out the best in individuals for the benefit of the organization. Understanding different personalities and differences among various ethnic groups would assist in having efficient and effective interactions (Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2009). The above discussion somewhat outlines the gender and ethnic differences on the personality of an individual in general.

2.3   Spirituality versus Religiosity

Many researchers often associate spirituality with religiosity (Howard, 2002). Therefore, it is important to carefully define both religiosity and spirituality to avoid misconceptions or research bias (van Tonder & Ramdass, 2009).

Harlos (2000) describes religion as a set of beliefs and practices of an organized religious institution where these beliefs are shared. Religiosity is a reflection of a person in pursuit of particular worship of faith and defined him or herself to be religious. Adeyemo and Adeleye (2008) explained that religiosity consists of trust in and worship for God as well as joining in activities such as attending worship frequently and joining in other social events within one's religious community.

Many researchers stated that religion is the root of spirituality and can give spirituality depth and discipline (Theodora & Nikolaos, 2021). Heaton et al. (2004) described spirituality as inner consciousness which is the state of wakefulness as its purest form, unmixed with images, judgements, emotions, or any other objects of perception. Moreover, Marques et al. (2005) illustrated that spirituality is knowledge and awareness of a higher power operating in the life of an individual. Spirituality is about being spiritual where souls need nourishment.

Spirituality and religiosity are two different concepts that are interdependent. A spiritual person can be religious however a religious person is not always spiritual (Duffy, 2010). However, most of the authors who conducted research on spirituality within organizations proposed that the concept of spirituality at the workplace is different from religious concerns. Thus, based on this relationship between spirituality and religiosity, it is vital to stress that the present study focused on spirituality in the organizational context.

A variety of definitions have been proposed to define the term spirituality. Iqbal and Wihuda (2020) define spirituality as a sense of meaning and fulfillment and a feeling of connectedness with others. Another view from Theodora and Nikolaos (2021) explained that spirituality seems to point to the instinctive, non-rational,

meditative side of ourselves, which tries to have inner and outer connections and a sense of wholeness.

Other authors refer to spirituality in the terms of how people understand their lives regarding their ultimate meaning and value and an experience of interconnectedness and trust among them (Mirjam et al., 2021). Miller and Miller (2002) defined spirituality as the state of being connected to the source of creation and the fundamental nature of life, both physical and transcendent, and aids in the search for the inner path of an individual.

In a similar way, Karakas (2010) explained spirituality as a journey in the search for a sustainable, genuine, and meaningful understanding of life. Spirituality is also perceived as the capability to experience connections and to create meaning in one's life (Fry, 2005). Spirituality has been identified as a person's core and a part of their well-being (Clark et al., 2007). The term spirituality is described by some authors and scholars as energy, meaning, and knowing (Klenke, 2003).

Few studies have been conducted to establish the linkage between spirituality and religiosity. For example, Villani et al. (2019) conducted exploratory research that investigated the effect of religiosity and spirituality on subjective well-being by recruiting 267 participants. The findings indicated that religiosity and spirituality have significant positive predictors of subjective well-being. This particular study has broadened the knowledge in the field of spirituality and religiosity by not only certifying the past studies but also by corroborating that spirituality is more important than religiosity in influencing employees' involvement, satisfaction, and commitment.

In summary, religiosity is explained as a set of beliefs and practices in the context of organized religious institutions whereas spirituality is the experiences and

feelings toward meaning and purpose in life. Thus, the concept of spirituality is different from religiosity, and the present study focuses on spirituality in the organizational context.

2.4   Spirituality at the Workplace

The significant variations that explain the definitions of spirituality are compounded by applying the construct to the workplace (Giacolone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). In the organizational definition of spirituality, Giacolone and Jurkiewicz (2003) explained spirituality at the workplace as the framework of organizational value. It enhances employees' experiences at work by aiding their sense of connectedness which nurtures complete feeling and fulfillment. In a similar way, Ashmos and Duchon (2000) explained spirituality in the workplace as an understanding of an employee as a spiritual being at work which fulfills the necessity of nourishment, a sense of purpose and meaning, and a sense of connectedness with others in the workplace community.

Employees who eagerly try to search for meaning and a connection with something greater contribute more to the quality of work life. The desire to seek fulfillment and find meaning and purpose has resulted in developing a deep interest in spirituality at the workplace (Fry, 2005; Karakas, 2010). In addition, Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2004) expressed that spirituality at work is an experience shared by enthusiastic and passionate employees in search of meaning and purpose in their way and at the same time feel connected to complete selves at work.

Spirituality at the workplace creates enthusiasm in the workplace which leads towards the success and growth of both individuals and organizations (Canagasuriam & Roulin, 2021). It is driven by an inner power to achieve a sense of purpose, high ethical standards, acceptance and belief thus creating an atmosphere of improved

group performance, growth opportunities, and unity. It gave an opportunity for the employees to understand the power of inner strength in order to satisfy outer life which brings positive behavior to the organization.

However, the research linking to spirituality at the workplace is very limited. Very limited studies have found the relationship between spirituality and work attitudes (Lowery et al., 2014). Several studies have been carried out to explore the connections of spirituality at the workplace. The past studies consistently showed a significant correlation between spirituality and organizational performance, organizational commitment, job involvement, emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, employee performance, organizational effectiveness, work value, work ethics, and social justice (Milliman et al., 2003; Rego & Pina e Cunha, 2008; Karakas, 2010). Besides the positive results from the relationships between spirituality and a variety of psychological and organizational effects, the studies also revealed that lower levels of spirituality in employees negatively correlated with negative phenomena such as loneliness, negative feelings, suicidal ideation, and end of life despair. The findings pointed out the positive role of spirituality in an individual's psychological well-being (Joelle & Coelho, 2019).

Several studies explored the possible connections between spirituality and work attitudes. For instance, a study has been carried out by Fanggidae et al. (2016) to investigate the effect of workplace spirituality on commitment to the organization and job satisfaction. The result has shown a positive relationship between the variables. Other than that, Coelho (2017) conducted a study to discover the influences of workplace spirituality on employees' attitudes and individual performance using a sample of 273 participants. The results of the study discovered workplace spirituality influences job resourcefulness and affective commitment. On the other hand, Mousa