

Is Career In The Hospitality Industry Suitable For The Muslim Student In Community College?

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ABSTRACT: Career selection is a critical process which has an impact on the future achievement of an individual. The selection was made based on the impetus factor in selecting career areas especially the hospitality industry. However, statistics continuously show that there is a very big manpower shortage in the hospitality industry. Is it true that the hospitality industry is not a primary choice of graduates due to religiosity factors and issues involving religious sensitivity to be a deterrent factor in making career selection? This concept paper discusses the relationship between religiosity factors and Community College graduates career choice towards hospitality industry.

KEYWORDS: Career Choice, Religiosity, Hospitality Industry

I. INTRODUCTION

Hospitality industry has evolved rapidly and is one of the leading contributors in the world tourism industry. The industry is also the second largest contributor to the income of a country in terms of exchange of foreign currency rates into the country. This is evident as the industry has grown rapidly for over six decades, and become the largest sector in the world (Langford & Weissenberg, 2018)[1].

Similarly, Malaysian hospitality industry has grown in line with the development, and this has contributed to the Malaysian economy which has recorded an increase of 14.9 per cent from 2005 to 2017 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018) [2]. Although the industry is able to generate a sustainable economy, the industry strongly requires a major support not only in terms of capital contribution but also human resource needs.

The human resource requirement is made up of prospective graduates from public and Private Institutions of Higher Learning. This includes graduates from the Malaysian Community College whose significance for getting a place and attention from the industry is increasing due to their potential in building career in the hotel industry (Utusan Online, 2015) [3].

However, there are factors affecting graduates during the process of making career choices such as parents and family (Abrahams, Jano and Lill, 2015) [4], teachers (Zhang, Yuen and Chen, 2018) [5] as well as religiosity factor (Kirdok & Harman, 2018) [6]. The existence of religiosity factor is perceived to have an impact on one's life especially during the decision making process. Religiosity is a way of life that consist the ability in determining a person's life from various perspectives such as banking perspective (Abu-Youssef, Kortam, Abou-Aish, El-Bassiouny, 2015)[7], education perspective (Afiouni, 2014) [8], health (Šimunović, et al., 2016)[9], and many more aspects that contribute to the global life.

This paper attempts to discuss the influence of religiosity towards career choice in the hospitality industry among the Community College students who are about to graduate. It is a great concern that there is still a lack of interest among graduates to work and build their career in the hospitality industry. The Malaysian government has developed Community College since 2002 with the main purpose of providing students with the specific skills needed to cater for the industrial needs. However, the statistical report issued by the Malaysian Association of Hotels shows that a total of 1700 employees are required to fulfill job positions in the hotel sector in Melaka (Malaysia active, 2016) [10]. Yet, this is the statistic for only one state in Malaysia.

There are several factors contributing to the problem taken from current issues in the hospitality industry. These motivational factors certainly influence graduates whether to work in the field of hospitality. The factors are expected to invite negative perceptions of hospitality industry indirectly. Among them is the issue of work practices or work environment in the industry that is not compatible with their religious beliefs. It is said to be one of the reasons why many graduates do not stay in the industry (Yaacob & Ramli, 2004) [11]. This statement was reinforced by Zahari, Hanafiah, Othman, Jamaluddin and Zulkifly (2010) [12] who found that salary factors, career growth and even the working environment were driving hotel workers to leave this industry.

Among the work environment that does not meet the requirements of practice in the religious teaching of Islam is such as the rules, specifically staff uniform set by hotel employers which prohibits Muslim female workers from wearing hijab during their working hours. Ahmad, Rashid and Shariff, (2014) [13] discovered that one of the reasons graduates leave the hotel industry is because of the industry's incompatibility with Muslim women's code of ethics.

A disclosure made by the International Trade Union Network of Malaysia (Uni-MLC) found that Muslim women working at the front office department were directed by hotel management to remove the hijab during their working hours. Harian Metro (2018) [14] revealed that there have been more than 100 complaints from 20 hotels regarding the issue of the prohibition on wearing hijab while on duty. This issue happens not only to industrial workers but also occurs to the hospitality course students who wish to have industrial training at the hotel (Astro Awani, 2018) [15]. Not only are female workers prohibited from wearing hijab, they are also forbidden to perform prayers when they are involved in a late-night event (Kosmo Online, 2017) [16].

Serving and selling liquor by Muslims at five-star and international hotels is the next issue that led to the rejection of hotel jobs among Muslim graduates. As the result, the number of potential Muslim workers in the hospitality industry is further decreased. Ironically, most four and five-star rated and international hotels offer alcoholic beverages as one of the income generating menu items at their restaurant. The issue of alcoholic beverages has been widely discussed since 2005. This issue does not only concerns food services but also food production. As an example, alcoholic beverage is used as an ingredient in dishes as well as an additive to enhance the taste of food (Jamaludin & Ramli, 2011) [17].

The issue of worker safety involving promiscuity between men and women has been a hindrance for Muslim graduates in choosing a career in this field. This is because this issue will open up an opportunity for sexual harassment among them. According to Ali and Said (2014) [18], 53 percent of hospitality workers experienced sexual harassment while at work. Among the attempts were being touched, slapped on the buttocks and being offered lucrative rewards as an exchange for sexual intercourse.

In the hotel industry, sexual harassment may come from colleagues, superiors or hotel guests. One of the cases reported involved 4 female employees at the Copthorne Orchid Hotel housekeeping department in Penang. They have been the victim of sexual harassment by a German hotel manager who purposely stroked their hair, hugged and kissed them, and pinched their cheeks and buttocks while uttering obscene words (Women Center for Change, 2017) [19]. The court case between Shamani Devi Chendra Chekheren against Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts is an example of sexual harassment that occurs between female workers and male supervisors (Donovan & Ho, 2017) [20]. This is followed by another court case between Ahmad Ibrahim Dato Seri Mohd Ghazau against August Land Hotel Sdn Bhd. The accused is August Land hotel customer who touched the lips and slapped the buttocks of a staff member who worked as a cashier in the Food and Beverage Delivery Department (Hassan & Lee, 2015) [21].

These issues are seen as the factors contributing to the difficulty of graduates in choosing the hospitality industry to build their career. The issues are intolerable and they deeply affects religious sensitivity among the Muslim (Yaacob & Ramli, 2004) [10]. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to confirm whether it is true that this factor of religiosity has a significant impact on graduates in choosing a hospitality career.

II. RELIGIOSITY

Generally, religiosity derived from the word of religious obedience. According to Dewan Bahasa Pustaka Online (2017) [22] defined religiosity from the ground word of “life” in arabic terms. While the religiosity also can be described as a process of exploring something in depth through listening, observing and understanding (Ismail, Ahmad, & Mansor, 2010) [23]. Particularly, the term of religiosity is different based on the practice of each religion in this world such as the Christianity and Islamic religious perspectives.

Religiosity from a Christianity perspective is religious activities carried out in daily life involved emotion, knowledge and practice (Cornwall, Albrecht, Cunningham, & Pitcher, 1986) [24]. While Allport and Ross (1967) [25] and Holdcroft (2006) [26] clarified religiosity is a form of commitment and belief in a religion that seeks to lead and encourage a person to a form of goodness. That goodness is meant to be driven by a belief in God in line with the rules set by God (McDaniel & Burnett, 1990) [27]. Levin, Taylor and Chatters (1995) [28] enlighten the meaning of religiosity as a complex and consists of various dimensions that include values and cognitive beliefs, spirituality and behavior such as praying and attending church. The behavior is the degree to which an individual makes a commitment to the religion and doctrine (Johnson, Jang, Larson, & Li, 2014) [29]. This is because, every commitment and behavior practiced will affect person's personal.

From the Islamic perspective, religiosity is a concept of making Islam as a way of life or *Syumul*. The lifestyle, according to Ismail, Ahmad and Mansor (2010) [22], is known as a process in implementing religious practices based on the order of Allah and the teachings of Islam. These practices and activities do not only involve physical practice only but have a spiritual activity (Ahmad & Ismail, 2010) [22]. While according to the Al-Qardhawi and Jerlun (1984) [30], religiosity can be defined as a condition of a person in appreciation of Islamic religious values and strive to practice such values. Then, when a value is practiced as a whole, it will create a calm and peaceful soul. This is because this values covers various aspects of human life (Zin, Nurfaahratul, & Rohaya, 2018) [31].

1. Aqedah

Faith is the belief that exists between the individual and the creator (Ismail, 2012) [32]. This belief is a bond of trust without any hesitation and prejudice. Ani and Hashim (2016) [33] defined Aqedah as an agreement between man and Allah S.W. T which as a servant they will always obey with every messenger that has been commanded by Allah S.W. T without any hesitation. Further strengthened on the sense of Aqedah by Mydin (2003) [34] which defined Aqedah as an Islamic belief based on Al Quran and Al Sunnah.

Generally, Aqedah is a compulsory matter that is allowed by the heart that create a peaceful soul (Ibrahim, 2013) [35]. As a result, this peace will contribute to a very strong belief and confidence in something. For example, a person who has a strong faith in one religion will not easily change and convert to another religion.

Specifically, Aqedah is seen as an individual's firm grip on something that cannot be seen with the human eye but is believed with hearts such as believers in God, believers in angels, believers in Prophet, believers in holy scriptures, believers in judgement day, and believe in qada and qadar without the slightest doubt in the heart. In addition, a person who does not have a firm belief in his life can be easily influenced by bad or negative things. Whereas individuals with strong levels of faith produce people and individuals who are positive about each incident and what happens to them.

2. Shari'ah

Shari'ah is defined as an Islamic law that is based from the teachings of the holy Quran and Hadith (the sayings and practice of prophet Muhammad S.A.W). It serves as the rules and guidance in the Muslim daily life (Mydin 2003) [34]. Ani and Hashim (2016) [33] defines the Shari'ah as a law covering all aspects of human life such as personal, family, community, banking, political and business life with a wide range of wisdom, justice and grace.

According to Rahman (2011) [36], the Shari'a aims to preserve the purity of Islam, safeguard personal safety, preserve the purity of mind, protect dignity and honor, and protect property and wealth. For example, from the aspect of financial management in everyday life especially in Malaysia, every Muslim consumer will go through the process of choosing between conventional and Islamic banking. Based on finding conducted by Abou-Youssef, Kortam, Abou-Aish, & El-Bassiouny (2015) [7] consumer prefer to use Islamic banking services. This is because, theoretically a Muslim has been advised that conventional banking services contain elements of *Riba* which is the service charge is very high compared to the Islamic Banking.

3. Akhlaq

Akhlaq can be defined as a person's moral character, ethics and behavior (Indra, 2019) [37]. Suhid (2009) [38] describe akhlaq as a mannerism characteristic existed in human personality naturally or as an outcome from their efforts. Contrasts with Suhid (2009) [39] who argues that Akhlaq is a naturally existed either good behavior or bad behavior. In particular, Akhlaq is defined as a positive attitude and behavior performed in accordance with the Quran and Hadith (Yahya & Nasrun, 2016) [40].

4. Relationship Between Religiosity And Career Choice

Career choice can be influenced by internal factors such as their beliefs and thoughts as well as external factors such as the level of knowledge and information about the career that graduates or students wish to choose (Kirdok & Harman 2018). These factors can influence a person's during the process of decision making especially during the career selection process. This is because, due to the lack of knowledge and information regarding to the career choice, graduates tend to make a mistake during that process. However, one of the strong factors that influence graduates during career selection process eventhough there is enough information and knowlegde is religiosity factor (Kirdok & Harman 2018). Reinforced by the findings from Hamid, Ishak & Hashim (2015) [41] which is religiosity plays an important role in choosing career in the field of entrepreneurship.

Besides that, religiosity is capable of increasing individual's confidence level during the process of making career choices (Duffya & Blustein 2005; Peng & Chen 2014) [42,43]. Afiouni (2014) [8] points out that spiritual strength or inner strength of religion can inspire individuals in career choice. For career satisfaction, it is important to align spiritual needs with social needs such as responsibility towards family. This is in line with the religious principles that prioritize family institutions.

IV. CONCLUSION

Career is viewed as an occupational enhancement activity in one's life that can contribute to employee job satisfaction, and it indirectly increases productivity and creates a sense of enjoyment in life. Those who do not have a career will go through a process known as the career selection process; which involves various factors that can affect the individual life.

Overall, this paper aims to identify factors that influence career choice among graduates in the hospitality industry. Is religiosity one of the influential factors? From this point of view, the findings of this research are expected to benefit various stakeholders such as Institutions Of Higher Education, graduate students and the hospitality industry.

IV. REFERENCES

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