

Testing a structural equation model of polychronicity

Moderating role of organization mission fulfilment

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to explore the role of ethical climate as an antecedent of polychronicity, then in turn the effect of polychronicity on frontline employees' service innovative behaviours (SIBE) and error strain and the moderating role of organization mission fulfilment in these relationships in a hotel job context in Penang, Malaysia.

Design/methodology/approach – In the current study, the data were collected from 312 frontline employees in the survey premises. A partial least square approach of the structural equation modelling technique (PLS-SEM) was used to test the associations among study variables.

Findings – The study findings reveal that ethical climate had positive impact on polychronicity. Significantly, polychronicity made positive influence on SIBEs and negative influence on error strain. Organization mission fulfilment was found to boost the influence of ethical climate on polychronicity. Finally, while organization mission fulfilment was found to boost the positive influence of polychronicity on SIBEs, on the other hand, buffers the negative impact of polychronicity on error strain.

Practical implications – The present study procures implications for practitioners in terms of establishing ethical climate in work environment and maximizing the frontline employees' SIBEs while minimizing error strain. In addition, this research procures valuable implications to apply efficient managerial tools and improve job results in the lodging industry context of Peninsular Malaysia.

Originality/value – This study by investigating the untested associations such as the influence of polychronicity on frontline employees' SIBEs and error strain contributes to the related literature.

Keywords Hotel, Polychronicity, Ethical climate, Organization mission fulfilment, Error strain, Service innovative behaviours, Hotels

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Within the specific condition of lodging industry jobs, frontline employees (FLEs) are usually confronted with a range of uncertain occasions such as consisting of discontented visitors, unique demands, non-standard orders, and the like (Daskin and Kasim, 2015). These employees are not just anticipated to finish these jobs all at once, however additionally present outstanding service performance and service delivery on time simultaneously (Grobela, 2018; Karatepe *et al.*, 2008).

Hereof, a strategic act of determining the time in a highly demanding workplace might impact the success of their objectives and inevitably their general effort. The variable that describes exactly how staff members regard time management is called "POLY" which describes the level to which individuals like to be participated in two or even more jobs or occasions all at once and think that their choice is the most effective means to perform tasks (Bluedorn *et al.*, 1999). Polychronic staff members are problem-focused and possess the ability to efficiently handle difficult service experiences (Karatepe *et al.*, 2013). So, they must



have the ability to finish given jobs in a certain amount of time. Jang and George (2012) reported that polychronic people have favourable attitudes and behaviours.

Nonetheless, according to Arasli *et al.* (2014) and Karatepe *et al.* (2013), a minimal variety of academic study performed on POLY and its results in the hospitality literary works. In view of this fact, further research studies needed to discover the attributes of FLEs because of their broad and differed duties in the hotel jobs. The characteristics of the hotel jobs call for frontline placement owners to take part in a variety of jobs in difficult service experiences of a company. This is not unusual, since FLEs reflect the first impression for a hotel company and are anticipated to supply high-grade guest support and efficiently take care of guest grievances and expectations (Kim *et al.*, 2009). Under these situations, it appears vital for hotel organizations to accumulate a talented pool of FLEs who can show precise initiatives and complete numerous jobs at extremely requiring workplaces (Cetinel *et al.*, 2009; Grobelna, 2018).

Presenting the value of POLY for this industry, it is apparent that changing behaviours amongst work responsibilities are often called for, thus, POLY as a possible personality type could be an essential agent in obtaining far better business results and additionally it remains important for researchers to check out the probable determinants of POLY.

Rationale of the study

The rationale for adding ethical climate (ETC) as an antecedent of POLY is that due to the increasing number of ethical matters in the working environments, most of the business firms establish ethical rules and regulations in order to institutionalize. In this regard, the international institutions like Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations (UN) and World Tourism Organization (WTO) have just put effort to revise their ethical codes and regulations and requirements for economic activities. National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations (NASDAQ) seeks to catalogue the business organizations that have written codes of ethics (Paine *et al.*, 2005). Along the same line, the past research recommended that the emplacement of ethical values make positive impacts on employees' attitudes and behaviours (Daskin, 2016; Dimitriou and Ducette, 2018; Elci and Alpkan, 2009; Jung *et al.*, 2010; Mulki *et al.*, 2008). Secondly, the people-oriented characteristic of service industry inevitably opens door for service failures (Lee, 2018). Recently, the hotel guests and visitors are more knowledgeable and expect more than it is before (Kim *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, this situation specifically requires the FLEs to become error-oriented, exhibit extra service performance and use initiative (Lewis and McCann, 2004). This is mostly regarding the level of commitment that employees actually willing to take on extra liabilities. Error strain (ESTR) is a type of negative attitude which is described as to be afraid of committing errors. In this regard, Guchait *et al.* (2018) and Rybowski *et al.* (1999) asserts that the business organizations should have positive approach towards errors, if they want to be more innovative, action-oriented and empiric. Obviously, error-orientation is highly needed personal capital for demanding hotel working environments. Under the circumstances, polychronic employees should undertake a significant role in recovering service errors and successful delivery. Karatepe *et al.* (2013) contended that the employees who possess polychronic characteristic tend to be more problem-focused and successfully handle demanding service encounters.

On the other hand, severe competition, expeditious technological advances, globalization, and high demands and requests from sophisticated customers have created extraordinary hardships for the lodging industry organizations and their service innovation capability improvement has become a hot topic for both practitioners and scholars (Dhar, 2016; Edghiem and Mouzoughi, 2018). Employees' service innovative behaviour (SIBE) is verified

in the hospitality literature for better fertility and competitive capacity (Pivcevic and Prancevic, 2012), and qualification (Rogerson, 2013). However, there is paucity of research related to the essence of the hotel employees' act in triggering innovation and determinants of their SIBE (Edghiem and Mouzoughi, 2018). Hotels should specially work to examine the possible drivers to enhance their employees' SIBE. There is empirical evidence that polychronic employees have capability to exhibit higher service excellence and better creativity (Conte and Gintoft, 2005). In hotel work environments, FLEs are expected to shape a service experience in excellent way and even recover service failures instantly, so POLY is essential personal characteristic for FLEs (Arasli *et al.*, 2018). In this regard, the current study assumes that polychronic individuals may exhibit better SIBE. Relatively, the aforementioned reality of the lodging industry requires organizations to employ polychronic FLEs as a human resource strategy for developing destinations like Malaysia. Along with this, the globalization together with new customer trends in the marketplaces increases competitiveness among hotels and as a result it stays critical to have more innovative and adaptable employee profile.

Against this backdrop, the current study purposes to investigate the role of ETC as an antecedent of POLY, then in turn the effect of POLY on FLEs' ESTR and SIBE, and the moderating role of OMF in these relationships within a hotel job context in Penang, Malaysia. The current study benefits the hospitality literature by firstly exploring the aforementioned relationships in the context of Asia Pacific country.

Theoretical background and hypotheses

Context and conceptual model

Malaysia has actually ended up being an eye-catching tourism location over the last 20 years. Nonetheless, the service studies in Malaysia have actually accentuated high personnel turnover, absence of proficient workers that causes inadequate service quality, labour force variety, negative working climates and service failures as the industry's primary challenges (AlBattat and Som, 2013a; Daskin and Kasim, 2015; O'Mahony *et al.*, 2011; Salleh *et al.*, 2010). According to Awee *et al.* (2014), fifty per cent of the staff members think about leaving their works as a result of their leaders' incapability and they are demotivated by their managers' activities. Majority of the workers complained that they are not involved into the decision-making mechanism in their organizations. Under the scenarios, it might not be feasible to construct a workplace where staff members are completely satisfied and inspired to supply cutting-edge service innovative performance. Hereof, these contextual drawbacks call for Malaysian accommodation establishments to embrace even more moral working climate in a manner and give preference to hire polychronic FLEs as a prominent human resource strategy without a doubt. The main cause is that polychronic FLEs are anticipated to remain much longer with the company and show far better SIBE ever if the working environments are gruelling. Hence, the requirement of the current study in a Malaysian accommodation context is highlighted by this prominent individual quality.

Measurement variables are associated in the next sections to discover an underpinning psychological and behavioural output towards a company. Particularly, the theoretical structure (see Figure 1) checked out the underlining mechanism whereby the variables affect FLEs' SIBE and ESTR.

Impact of ethical climate on polychronicity

An organization's ETC is described as "a composite of organizational perceptions of the ethical values and behaviours supported and practised by organizational members" (Schwepker and Hartline, 2005). Elci and Alpan (2009) stated that ETC is one of the essential components

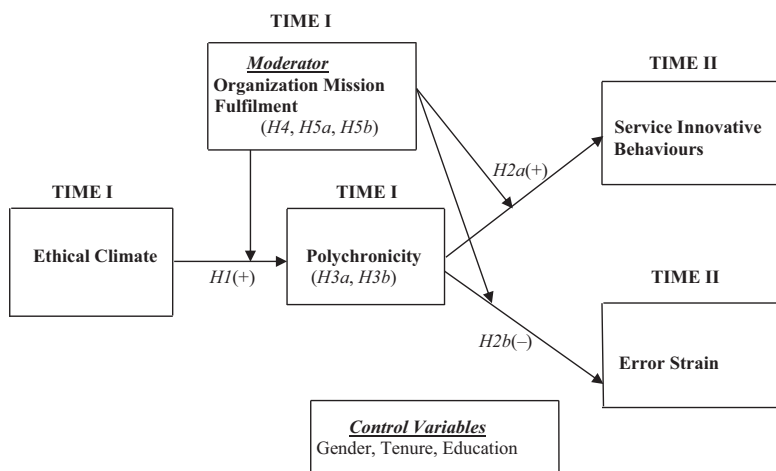


Figure 1.
Conceptual model of
polychronicity

designating intra-organizational relationships and shaping staff attitudes. Dimitriou and Ducette (2018) and Trevino *et al.* (1998) reported that the ethical conditions of work environment may impact the attitudes and behaviours of staff. Mulki *et al.* (2008) contended that the availability of ETC is highly correlated with company rules, regulations and policies leading to moral outcomes. ETC makes a positive influence on job embeddedness (Karatepe, 2013) and work engagement (Verbos *et al.*, 2007) which are typical features of polychronic employees who are ambitious, highly involved in their job, and capable to spend their full potential in their job to handle challenges. The moral norms and FLEs' job-related actions in hotel jobs are necessary factors of the organizational process and guest service experience (Wong, 1998). An empirical study conducted in Malaysian hotel context by Daskin (2016) found that ETC positively impact intrinsic motivation and service recovery performance.

Additionally, a planning process for business ethics by a firm (e.g. organizational missions, ethics training, and ethical codes) may lead to positive manner (Chiang and Hsieh, 2012). When ETC is prevalent to design organizational principles, policies and process, employees feel more motivated to exhibit extra-role behaviours (multitasking behaviours) as an act of reaction (Leung, 2008). Specifically, ETC that promotes pro-social behaviour commonly tends to be related with superior job effort (Ehrhart and Raver, 2014). Despite this realization, academic studies concerning the drivers of POLY such as perceived ethical work climate lacks in hotel work context. Thus, the paucity of survey evidence in the related literature shows a need for empirical study concerning the relationship among ethical work climate and POLY using data collected from FLEs in a Malaysian service context. Depending on the information above, the current research submits the following hypothesis:

H1. ETC is positively associated to FLEs' POLY.

Impact of polychronicity on service innovative behaviours and error strain

Amo and Kolvereid (2005, p. 8) defined innovative behaviour as "an initiative from employees concerning the introduction of new processes, new products, new markets or combinations of such into the organization". Innovative behaviour is a crucial dimension of the customer loyalty for the organization that achieved with their frontline staff who

internalized the polychronic skills and abilities. Unlike many other sectors, hospitality sector overwhelmingly relies on the human interactions which requires the service employees to be prepared for unexpected conditions that are not stated in their job description.

According to the past research, employees with polychronic skills are more productive (Conte and Gintoft, 2005), demonstrate significant creativity and improve the overall success of the organization (Grobelna, 2018; Madjar and Oldham, 2006), further most of these employees are called as an A type personality who can illustrate compatibility with any circumstance (Conte *et al.*, 1999). As an empirical study administered in Northern Cyprus hotels shows that there is indirect influence of POLY on job performance and extra-role service behaviours among the FLEs (Karatepe *et al.*, 2013). Arasli *et al.* (2018) supports the linkage between these two constructs. Similarly, Rich *et al.* (2010) found that polychronic FLEs show higher degree of guest service and working effort by examining their cognitive and physical level of power via work engagement. Hui *et al.* (2010) suggest that polychronic employees are success-driven people who have multitasking potential in order to succeed more objectives. Employees with more levels of success orientation are expected to spend effort on innovative works and set superior objectives.

On the other hand, ESTR is dealing with the mishaps and described as “being strained by making errors and therefore fearing the occurrence of errors or reacting to errors with high emotions” (Rybowiak *et al.*, 1999). However, there is need to clarify whether being strained by the occurrence of the error is a source of declining in the performance or not. Polychronic people possess goal orientation that allows them to fix the error hastily. These individuals have greater amount of self-confidence to adopt and engage themselves in conditions where the possibility of error occurrences is high. Polychronic individuals should have less ESTR because they possess higher amount of tolerance regardless of whether error occurred or will be occurred (Schell and Conte, 2008). Thus, ESTR might be another particular error orientation associated to POLY. In order to learn from errors, it is critical to exhibit initiative to errors rather than abstinence (Frese, 1995; Guchait *et al.*, 2018). Obviously, error orientation among job tasks are generally called for, in this regard POLY as an individual characteristic could be essential component to exhibit initiative to errors. An empirical research conducted by Daskin (2016) supports that such employees’ choice properly matches with hotel job climates and frequently recovers service errors in the flow of work. Particularly, Jang and George (2012) contend that polychronic workers are challenge-focused and possess ability to accurately handle demanding service occurrences. Similarly, Kantrowitz *et al.* (2012) and Kinney (2007) found a positive correlation among POLY and stress tolerance. These findings show that FLEs who possess POLY can be able to overcome strain and exhibit active approach to errors. To the best of author information, though the aforementioned significance of POLY for the frontline work areas, there is no empirical survey studied to show the influence of POLY on SIBE and ESTR in the lodging industry where the higher degree of guest contact and multitasking jobs are available. Nevertheless, based on the presented literature above, it might be reasonable to suggest the hypotheses below:

H2a. POLY has a significant positive influence on FLEs’ SIBE.

H2b. POLY is negatively related to FLEs’ ESTR.

Mediating effect of polychronicity

Specifically, there is empirical evidence to show direct effect of ETC on employees’ attitudes and behaviours. For example, outcomes of the research performed by Dhar (2016) illustrated that there is relation between ethical leadership and SIBE using the leader-member

exchanges as mediated effect in a hotel setting. An empirical research studied by [Wong and Li \(2015\)](#) in Chinese hotel context, reported that the unethical behaviours exhibited by hotel management cause job dissatisfaction among hotel personnel. Unsatisfied FLEs are not expected to exhibit SIBE in such working conditions. People-oriented policies and strategies and perceived justice in the job environment were found to be drivers of employee performance-related behaviour ([Chuang and Liao, 2010](#); [Schwepker and Hartline, 2005](#)).

Furthermore, according to [Saini and Martin \(2009\)](#), employees are assumed to securely take responsibility and initiative in the working environments generous with ETC, because they less worry to encounter with the penalties of their organizations' rules and regulations. [Ashill et al. \(2015\)](#) and [Lau et al. \(2017\)](#) notified that ETC increases proactive customer service performance. Apparently, error orientation among job tasks is commonly needed in hospitality works, thus POLY as an individual quality might be essential for FLEs to exhibit proactive actions to errors far from passive approaches. So, POLY is anticipated to mediate the indirect influence of ETC on ESTR. But, to the best of author knowledge, there is no academic research that polychronicity mediates the influence of ETC on SIBE and ESTR. Thus, the current study aimed to examine these relationships in a service setting and proposed the following hypotheses:

H3a. POLY mediates the influence of ETC on SIBE.

H3b. POLY mediates the influence of ETC on ESTR.

Moderating effect of organization mission fulfilment

Mission is an essential agent in the process of strategic management ([Morphew and Hartley, 2006](#)). A mission statement gives motivation to all stakeholders and generates the tenet for the strategic management steps: formulation, implementation and evaluation ([Bart et al., 2001](#)). Generally, most of the organizations identify their reason of occurrence through mission statements which give messages to the company stakeholders regarding basic aims and character. According to [Iseri-Say et al. \(2008\)](#), mission statement is accepted to be an efficient managerial tool by more than 84 per cent of managers. Management style has great influence on the employees' job satisfaction and organizations' overall successful operations in terms of succeeding the aims and mission of the organization to respond the minimum requirements, desires and needs as a result of demonstrating caring, approval and respect to the employees ([Karatepe and Aga, 2016](#)). Moreover, the company's commitment to its mission is likely to induces work engagement and thus job performance ([Karatepe and Aga, 2016](#); [Mullane, 2002](#)). In a service context, [Suh et al. \(2011\)](#) proposed a conceptual model that OMF influenced important job results regarding motivation, social identity, and emotional resources. Similarly, [Bart and Baetz \(1998, pp. 838-842\)](#) reported a significant positive relation among mission statements and higher effort. Although the mission's basic role in the management process and success of companies, it is not much known about employees' perceptions of missions and how these perceptions associate to other employee job outcomes such as POLY, SIBE and ESTR. To the best of author's information, there is no academic research performed to show the moderating role of OMF in these relationships. Even so, depending on the aforementioned literature, it might be highly reasonable to come up with the following hypotheses:

H4. OMF moderates the effect of ETC on POLY.

H5a. OMF moderates the effect of POLY on SIBE.

H5b. OMF moderates the effect of POLY on ESTR.

Methodology

Sample and data collection

The frontline staff members who work in four- and five-star hotels in George Town, Malaysia were selected as sampling of the present research. The reason of selecting George Town as the research premise for the current study is to be able to reach data as much as possible, because this place is one of the developing tourism destinations in Malaysia. It is known as "street food city" and the rate of hotel accommodation establishments is rising by the time. Based on the tourism data ([Hotel Guide Penang, 2015](#)), there were 15 four- and five five-star hotel organizations in George Town. First, these organizations were contacted via the phone and in face-to-face meetings to communicate the significance of performing this survey for their administration effort and take toleration for conducting the research. Because of data collection challenges, four hotel companies (three four-star and one five-star) were not included in the research. Administration of each hotel organizations charged a manager (frontline senior supervisor in some hotels) to assist the research team for the data collection process.

Method variance is known as potential matter for the research studies due to their self-reporting nature. Therefore, the current study employed the following precautions, including the reverse-keyed questions, to eliminate the common method bias risk. First of all, supervisors (managerial staff) were also included in this survey. According to [Spector \(1987\)](#), for the self-report data, acquiescence bias is the mostly encountered one as the source of method variance. As second precaution to reduce single-source method bias, the research questionnaire in the current survey was segmented into different parts by dividing the independent (Time I) and dependent constructs (Time II) ([Podsakoff et al., 2003](#)). In this regard, [Srivastava et al. \(2010\)](#) adopted the same procedural approach in the current literature. Third, information about confidentiality and anonymity issues took place on the cover page of each questionnaire. This also warranted participants that there were no right or wrong responds to items. Consequently, the Time I survey instrument consisted of ETC, OMF, and POLY scales and items regarding the participants' profile such as education, gender, and tenure. The Time II questionnaire composed of the SIBE and ESTR questionnaires.

There was no official record about the specific number of FLEs in the regional hotels, but the nearly half of the staff is accepted as FLEs based on the participant hotel managers' notification. The research team got chance to distribute the survey instruments individually to 500 willing FLEs. The survey questionnaires were distributed together with notification about the respondents' confidentiality and anonymity that would be under guarantee during the survey period. Generally, in order to shorten process time, the respondents were kindly asked to answer questionnaires and bring them to the research team at the shift ends. Some amount of survey questionnaires were not returned, so the survey team visited the hotels where the participant ratio was not much satisfactory and the research team requested the responsible personnel to make their employees to fill-out the questionnaires and leave in the drop-boxes left by the survey team. In the following week, the remaining amount of survey questionnaires was gathered from the drop-boxes. In the current research, it was figured out that 316 questionnaires were collected in total, but four were omitted for further step due to the high level of missing information. As a result, the utilizable questionnaires was 312 and the percentage was calculated as 62.4.

Questionnaire development and measures

Various theoretical backgrounds were used in designing the questionnaire for the current study. At the first step, items of the survey for Time I and Time II were organized in English

and after that interpreted into Malaysian applying the back-translation procedure (McGorry, 2000). The research questionnaire applied in the present research was consisted of two sections. The beginning section composed of 31 items that associated with ETC, POLY, OMF, SIBE and ESTR.

For the current study constructs, the existing scales were adopted from the comprehensive theoretical background review. ETC was measured using six-item scale from Schwepker (2001). In particular, OMF is a recent scale evolved by Suh *et al.* (2011). Appropriately, six questions derived from this scale were utilized to measure OMF. Eight items adopted from Bluedorn *et al.* (1999) for the measurement of POLY. SIBE was appraised by a six-item scale derived from Hu *et al.* (2009) that is a revised form of the measure generated by Scott and Bruce's (1994). Finally, ESTR was tested using five-item scale from Rybowskiak *et al.* (1999).

Each measurement applied a Likert-type scale that arrayed from "5"="strongly agree" to "1"="strongly disagree". The demographic items such as gender, tenure and education incorporated in the latter section of the questionnaire. Additionally, two various pilot studies applied with six FLEs in order to test the content of Time I and Time II questionnaires. These pilot tests concluded that the participants did not have any problem comprehending items of the survey scales.

Data analysis

The model of the present study (Figure 1) was tested by Partial Least Squares (PLS) (Chin, 1998). It was cultivated by Wold (1982, 1985) and is seen as a second generation structural equation modelling (SEM) method. It functions compatible with structural equation models that comprise latent constructs (MacKenzie *et al.*, 2001). First, the confirmatory factor loads were checked in order to analyze the dimensionality, convergent and discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Determining the convergent validity, average variance extracted (AVE) was evaluated and at the same time reliability was tested in terms of composite reliability. To test the associations among the model variables (Figure 1), multiple regression analysis was applied. Also, Baron and Kenny (1986)'s guidelines was adopted to test moderation and mediation hypotheses.

Results

Profile of the respondents

The participants in the present research were mostly females (52.5 per cent). Nearly the three quarters of the participants were highly young under 34 years old (64.7 per cent) and again most of them were degree holders (70.6 per cent). In addition, the majority of participants had more than three years of work experience (70.4 per cent).

Psychometric properties of the measures

First of all, the evaluation of convergent validity, discriminant validity and reliability for adequacy of a measurement model is essential. Table I depicts that the reliability scores for the constructs were over the threshold level of 0.70 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), which signals that internal consistency was appropriate and the items were free from random error. Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to calculate factor loadings for each indicator. Again, Table I depicts that each indicator loaded on particular latent variable excluding one from POLY variable due to its inadequate loading. Factor loads were higher than 0.60 that recommends acceptable convergent validity. Further, AVE was found to be above the cut-off value of 0.50 for each construct in the model (Chin, 1998; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The current study

Scale items	Standardized loadings	α	AVE
<i>ETC</i> (Schwepker, 2001)		0.75	0.67
ETC1	0.68		
ETC2	0.74		
ETC3	0.65		
ETC4	0.75		
ETC5	0.70		
ETC6	0.66		
<i>OMF</i> (Suh et al., 2011)		0.78	0.68
OMF7	0.64		
OMF8	0.73		
OMF9	0.75		
OMF10	0.64		
OMF11	0.76		
OMF12	0.69		
<i>POLY</i> (Bluedorn et al., 1999)		0.81	0.71
POLY13	0.65		
POLY14	0.73		
POLY15	0.59		
POLY16	0.55		
POLY17	0.64		
POLY18	0.83		
POLY19	0.80		
<i>SIBE</i> (Hu et al., 2009)		0.85	0.74
SIBE20	0.83		
SIBE21	0.80		
SIBE22	0.76		
SIBE23	0.85		
SIBE24	0.77		
SIBE25	0.84		
<i>ESTR</i> (Rybowiak et al., 1999)		0.74	0.65
ESTR26	0.66		
ESTR27	0.70		
ESTR28	0.74		
ESTR29	0.67		
ESTR30	0.75		

Table I.
Scale items,
reliabilities and
confirmatory factor
analysis results

Notes: All items are measured on five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. All loadings are significant at the 0.01 level or better. All internal reliability estimates are above the 0.070 cut off value

conducted the foregoing statistical ways to eliminate the possible common method bias problems. Similarly, there are empirical studies used confirmatory factor analysis as a procedural solution for common method bias (Brockman and Morgan, 2006). According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), the basis of conducting this test is that method bias generates threat if a single latent indicator constitutes higher than 50 per cent of the total variance of the scales. Yet, there was no such a problem encountered in the present research.

Table II demonstrates the correlational results between the study variables together with the square root of the AVE on the diagonal. It seems that correlations ranked from -0.22 (SIBE and ESTR) to 0.55 (ETC and POLY).

The indicators respective to each latent variable were totalled and averaged to take a compound number that stands for that latent variable. Because no correlation coefficient was above 0.90, which shows that the study variables were different from each other and stands for particular variables (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). In addition, the scales are also evaluated based on appropriate discriminant validity when the square root of the AVE for every latent variable is higher than the association among the variable and any other variable in the research model (Chin,1998; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table II demonstrates that every diagonal score were over the inter-construct correlations, so provided appropriate discriminant validity. Particularly, Table II depicts high significant correlation between ETC and POLY ($r = 0.55$; $p < 0.01$). There was positive correlation among POLY and SIBE ($r = 0.44$; $p < 0.01$), but then, POLY made negative impact on ESTR ($r = -0.43$; $p < 0.01$). Table II also depicts the scores for means and standard deviations.

Model test results

PLS-SEM technique was applied in order to analyze the hypothetical relationships. Testing for the path significance and *t*-statistics, a bootstrapping method (with 500 samples) was applied (Chin, 1998). Table III demonstrates the regression weights, their significance, and the R^2 scores of endogenous constructs. The relationships among independent and dependent constructs are indicated by the path coefficients while the quality of the model is indicated by R^2 value. Also, Baron and Kenny (1986)'s guidelines was adopted to test moderation and mediation hypotheses.

As portrayed in Table III, ETC positively impacts FLEs' POLY ($\beta = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, *H1* is accepted. As depicted in Table III, POLY has meaningful positive impact on SIBE ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$), but it has negative influence on ESTR ($\beta = -0.39$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, *H2a* and *H2b* are also approved. Again in Table III, the indirect impacts of ETC, through POLY, on SIBE ($t = 3.84$, $p < 0.05$) and ESTR ($t = 3.02$, $p < 0.05$) are both significant. Jointly, these findings depict that POLY partially mediates the influence of ETC on SIBE and ESTR. Thus, both *H3a* and *H3b* are accepted. Education as control variable demonstrates significant impacts on SIBE in Step 2. Particularly, employees who possess better education exert more SIBE.

The findings of moderated path analysis to measure the moderating effects of OMF presented in Table IV, V and VI. *H4* portrays that OMF boosts the positive influence of ETC on POLY. As depicted in Table IV, the interaction of ETC and OMF exert maningful impact on POLY ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$) and makes a meaningful R^2 increment for POLY ($\Delta R^2 = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, *H4* is approved. There is no relationship found between the control variables and latent variables.

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
1. ETC	0.71				
2. OMF	0.14	0.74			
3. POLY	0.55**	0.30**	0.68		
4. SIBE	0.36**	0.25**	0.44**	0.70	
5. ESTR	-0.32**	-0.21*	-0.43**	-0.22*	0.65
Mean	3.24	3.40	3.05	3.67	2.95
SD	1.22	1.14	1.26	1.08	1.30

Notes: $n = 312$. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; *correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. Correlation without any asterisk is insignificant. Square root of AVE in the diagonal

Table II.
Correlations, means
and standard
deviations of
composite measures
of constructs

Independent variables	Dependent variables and standardized regression weights							
	POLY		SIBE			ESTR		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
<i>(I) Control variables</i>								
Gender	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.05
Education	0.03	0.04	0.09*	0.09*	0.08*	-0.04	-0.05	-0.05
Organizational tenure	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05
(II) ETC		0.49**		0.35**	0.34**		-0.25**	-0.27*
(III) POLY		-			0.38**			-0.39**
<i>F</i>	2.05	0.58**	5.20**	1.43	47.31**	2.23	1.56	0.55**
<i>R</i> ² at each step	0.02	0.23	0.05	0.5	0.15	0.6	0.6	0.20
ΔR^2	-	0.19	-	0.00	0.09	-	0.00	0.12
<i>Sobel test for</i>								
ETC → POLY → SIBE	3.84*							
ETC → POLY → ESTR	3.02*							

Table III.
Regression results:
direct and mediating
effects

Notes: Organizational tenure and education were measured using five-point scales. Higher scores indicated longer tenure and more educated. Gender was coded as a binary variable (0 = male and 1 = female). The results regarding variance inflation factors did not demonstrate any problems of multicollinearity; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Independent variables	Dependent variables and standardized regression weights			
	Step 1	POLY Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<i>(I) Control variables</i>				
Gender	0.04	0.05	0.02	0.03
Education	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.05
Organizational tenure	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.05
(II) ETC		0.49**	0.45**	0.30**
(III) OMF			0.27**	0.25**
(IV) ETC * OMF				0.34**
<i>F</i>	8.10**	31.65	57.53**	24.40**
<i>R</i> ² at each step	0.07	0.31	0.24	0.34
ΔR^2	-	0.24	0.07	0.10

Table IV.
Regression results:
OMF as a moderator
of the effect of ETC
on POLY

Notes: Organizational tenure and education were measured using five-point scales. Higher scores indicated longer tenure and more educated. Gender was coded as a binary variable (0 = male and 1 = female). The results regarding variance inflation factors did not demonstrate any problems of multicollinearity; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

H5a reveals that OMF boosts the positive influence of POLY on SIBE. As presented in [Table V](#), the interaction of POLY and OMF exert substantial influence on SIBE ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$). There is also a meaningful improvement in R^2 of the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.08$, $p < 0.01$). Consequently, *H5a* is approved. The control variables do not make any substantial impact.

H5b reveals that OMF buffers the negative influence of POLY on ESTR. As indicated in [Table VI](#), the interaction of POLY and OMF make meaningful influence on ESTR ($\beta = -0.31$, $p < 0.01$). There is also a substantial rise in R^2 of the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.07$,

Table V.

Regression results:
OMF as a moderator
of the effect of POLY
on SIBE

Independent variables	Dependent variables and standardized regression weights			
	Step 1	SIBE Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<i>(I) Control variables</i>				
Gender	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.04
Education	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05
Organizational tenure	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.03
(II) POLY		0.38**	0.36**	0.24**
(III) OMF			0.24**	0.22**
(IV) POLY * OMF				0.26**
<i>F</i>	9.21**	65.75	42.95**	29.18**
<i>R² at each step</i>	0.05	0.22	0.18	0.26
<i>ΔR²</i>	–	0.17	0.04	0.08

Notes: Organizational tenure and education were measured using five-point scales. Higher scores indicated longer tenure and more educated. Gender was coded as a binary variable (0 = male and 1= female). The results regarding variance inflation factors did not demonstrate any problems of multicollinearity; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table VI.

Regression results:
OMF as a moderator
of the effect of POLY
on ESTR

Independent variables	Dependent variables and standardized regression weights			
	Step 1	ESTR Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<i>(I) Control variables</i>				
Gender	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.03
Education	–0.04	–0.05	–0.04	–0.04
Organizational tenure	–0.05	–0.05	–0.07*	–0.07*
(II) POLY		–0.39**	–0.36**	–0.28**
(III) OMF			–0.21**	–0.24**
(IV) POLY * OMF				–0.31**
<i>F</i>	6.78**	102.21**	77.11**	32.54**
<i>R² at each step</i>	0.08	0.24	0.20	0.27
<i>ΔR²</i>	–	0.16	0.04	0.07

Notes: Organizational tenure and education were measured using five-point scales. Higher scores indicated longer tenure and more educated. Gender was coded as a binary variable (0 = male and 1= female). The results regarding variance inflation factors did not demonstrate any problems of multicollinearity; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

$p < 0.01$). Hence, *H5b* is approved. Organizational tenure demonstrates meaningful effect on SIBE in Step 3 and 4. Especially, employees who possess more tenure perceive less ESTR.

Discussion and conclusions

Conclusions

Recently, the number of empirical research regarding POLY is increasing. But, not much known regarding its drivers and outcomes and much more academic survey needed in various working contexts in order to find out exactly how this personality trait may support to explain employee attitudes and behaviours. The present research supports to further

define and explore its relationship with different organizational variables. First, the current study aimed to explore the direct impact of ETC as an antecedent on POLY, then in turn the effect of POLY on employees' SIBE and ESTR. Second, the indirect effect of ETC on SIBE and ESTR through the mediating role of POLY and lastly the moderating influence of OMF in these relationships in a hotel job context in Penang, Malaysia. The findings of the present work approved the all proposed hypotheses.

The result regarding the impact of ETC on POLY was positively significant and concordant with the suggested hypothesis of the current research and the extant research (Chiang and Hsieh, 2012; Daskin, 2016; Leung, 2008; Schwepker and Hartline, 2005). This result is a recent empirical proof in the hospitality literature and asserts that perceived ETC promotes employees' POLY. Therefore, ETC in a Malaysian service setting may be evaluated as a stimulating agent for POLY.

Based on the study results, there is meaningful positive relationship between POLY and SIBE. This finding was concordant with the suggested hypothesis of the current study and the extant literature (Daskin, 2016; Karatepe *et al.*, 2013). This finding lends a recent and valuable support for the related literature and contends that FLEs who possess POLY exhibit better SIBE.

The finding of the path analysis also shows that POLY is a meaningful antecedent of ESTR. This finding was concordant with that of Jang and George (2012) and the suggested hypothesis of the current research. Again, this outcome provides worthwhile support for the hospitality management literature and recommends that FLEs who possess POLY perceive less ESTR.

Moreover, the results of the present study concern the indirect effect of ETC on SIBE and ESTR through the mediating role of POLY. The study results conclude that POLY partially mediates the impact of ETC on SIBE and ESTR. These findings were consistent with the introduced hypotheses of the current work. Multitasking hotel environments are open for unexpected problems, variety of customer complaints and requests, unpredictable tasks and so on. ETC in a Malaysian hotel context, when matched to various service settings such as travel agency, can be a better motivating agent for polychronic FLEs who will, in turn, exhibit better SIBE and perceive less ESTR.

Regarding the interaction effects, the regression results reveal that OMF plays a moderating role in the relationship between ETC and POLY. This result is an important proof that the presence of OMF in the job environment increases the influence of ETC on POLY. This finding was concordant with the suggested hypothesis of the current research. Finally, other important findings of this study are that OMF boosts the positive impact of POLY on SIBE, on the other hand, the interaction of POLY and OMF mitigates ESTR. These findings are also recent and meaningful contributions to the related literature and recommends that when polychronic FLEs perceive management commitment to organizational mission, they feel motivated, engaged and less strained by their work. This was concordant with that of Karatepe and Aga (2016) and Suh *et al.* (2011).

Regarding the control variable effects, the findings show that education as control variable demonstrates significant impacts on SIBE. Particularly, employees with more education may possess more confidence in their capabilities and exhibit better SIBE in the workplace. Second, organizational tenure as a control variable demonstrates significant effects on ESTR. FLEs who possess longer tenure perceive less ESTR which shows that they are able to overcome ESTR in the workplace and this can be referred to the reality that while tenure grows, employees experience how to overcome ESTR.

Theoretical implications

Extant literature shows that the majority of empirical surveys regarding POLY was studied in the USA and other Western work settings other than hotels (Arasli *et al.*, 2018). The

existing research regarding the drivers and outcomes of POLY still lacks in the hotel job settings (Grobelna, 2018; Karatepe *et al.*, 2013). Particularly, as slightly is known related with the influences of personal traits on FLEs' job outcomes in the related literature, the present study has tried to pave the way for responding to the question of how this dispositional trait may associate with FLEs' service achievement. So, the present research by being performed in a lodging work setting in Malaysia (Asia Pacific nation) endeavoured to extend this scope of survey in a dissimilar sociocultural working environment where more ethical working conditions required having potential FLEs with appropriate traits in order to cope with challenging work conditions. Furthermore, this study sustains the outcomes of the extant research from hospitality studies which performed in various geographical work contexts, including USA (Kantrowitz *et al.*, 2012), Poland (Grobelna, 2018) or Northern Cyprus (Arasli *et al.*, 2018). This research broadens the results to a new territorial setting of the hotel industry in Malaysia that lends support for their validity in another sociocultural background.

This study proves that, in a more ethical working environment supported by mission statement, hotel employees exhibit better POLY which in turn improves their job attitudes and behaviours. Specifically, this study attempted to add untried relationships into its model such as the influence of ETC on POLY. This is progressive and has not been performed previously in the hospitality management literature, and as such, this study lends further addition to the literature and also procures many useful implications for hotel organizations to be adopted in their specific working environments.

Practical implications

The results of the current study present implications for both hotel industry practitioners and researchers. It is understood that the employees who work in an environment where ethical attitudes and behaviours are prevalent engage in polychronic actions towards demanding situations. Therefore, in order to create more ethical working environments in Malaysian hotel context, necessary actions should be developed by the hotel managers. First of all, the ethical issues should take place in strategic plan. Codes of ethics should be clearly written for organization and communication and understanding of the ethical codes should make sense for the organization itself and all stakeholders. In addition, these codes should have potential to create a corporate value and finally the ETC is established. Grojean *et al.* (2004) states that a stable ETC exists when management actually "walk-the-walk" and show commitment to the ethical codes and behaviours. Hotel organization's ethical codes and expectations should be clear and should give the right messages to each employee and manager, for example, sanctioning a reward system for the expected attitudes and behaviours make them to adopt the codes in short time span. Then, such attitudes and behaviours will be emulated by the entire workforce.

Malaysian hotel organizations should provide training to their members about what the organization expects them to do and not to do. Every job specification should be written based on organization's ethical codes and they should understand the importance of fulfilling their responsibilities. It stays critical to create an organizational structure that supports ethical conduct and encourages complying with ethical codes. For example, recovering a service failure requires them to show extra performance to see the problem and find just in time solution. However, this is more possible in the work environments where the employees happy and motivated in their jobs. The employees who work in more ethical places could be more prone to stay with their jobs. That means ethical values and guidelines make them feel good in their jobs and create organizational trust and meaningful. Therefore,

this climate gives nourishment to employees and can make them to act together for organizational objectives.

The current study reported that OMF moderates the relationship between ETC and POLY. Globalization, technological developments, contemporary managerial understanding and customer expectations, and a harsh competitive environment has made the strategic management implementation a necessity. Organizations should understand strategic mission and vision so that they can implement the management process properly. Management should generate an effective mission statement which is able to give message to business stakeholders for corporate aims. Involvement of employees into the process is highly important in hotel organizations where their attitudes and behaviours cannot be underestimated in terms of service success. Hotel organizations may deliver guidelines (small booklet) that include business vision and missions, ethical codes, goals, and policies etc. By doing so, employees may better learn what the organization requires and expects them to do or not to do. However, this process should be reciprocal and employees' expectations should also be met. For instance, hotel executives may place reward system for superior service standards, build confidence among personnel, provide career advancement, and entrust with authority to promote FLEs' POLY, which in turn alleviates ESTR and increases their SIBE.

Furthermore, this study has actually revealed that POLY is just one of the predictors of SIBE and ESTR. The present research study stands for a preliminary effort to examine POLY as a psychological attribute in the lodging industry jobs which require multitasking initiatives. The multitasking, demanding, and time restriction features of hotel service works recommend that polychronic-orientated people could be one of the most matched to frontline positions in the industry. It is, as a result, vital for hotel management to successfully examine the distinctive capacities of possible applicants and maintain they can effectively meet the needs of a provided task within a frontline workplace. Or else, monochronic FLEs might not have the capacity to exhibit additional initiative to recuperate service errors and might have ESTR.

Organizations can apply a comparable scale to employment applicants to estimate the polychronic positioning. Supervisors ought to exchange polychronic-orientated staff members in the locations where guest communication is high, such as, in a resort dining hall that generally calls for multitasking abilities. This rotation can be really important in increasing error prevention. The job rotation strategy might be among the managerial tools in order to recognize those applicants' potentials and place them in a proper department. This might additionally protect monochronic FLEs against ESTR assumptions in the workplace. Human resource unit may conduct behavioural interviewing methods which ask applicants to assess what they really experienced in the former employment.

In addition, organizations might plan creating and executing training activities to improve staff member multitasking abilities. They need to arrange training programs of handling time for staff members either independently or in consolidated groups. These workers need to be recognized, sustained, correctly handled depending upon their particular workplace climates and time perceptions. Each certain job requires a working environment and initiative to be finished in a proper way, consequently, their effort must be followed, educated and compensated for preferable organizational outcomes.

On the other hand, it needs to be kept in mind that the substantial relationship among POLY and FLEs' proposed work results does not always show that monochronic people are inadequately fit for jobs in this industry. That is to say, human resource team must have the abilities to create ideal task summaries, hire proper applicant, and place people to suitable vacancies; consisting of those jobs that are best fit to that individual's distinct capability.

For instance, polychronic-orientated workers can be positioned in departments like hotel reception where multitasking is generally expected. On the other hand, monochronic-orientated staff members can be selected for positions, such as accounting, where guest communication is at minimum and multitasking is not needed.

Consequently, analyzing staff members' degree of POLY and role and responsibility design remains important for such companies. Are workers operating in a monochronic climate or a polychronic climate? Staff members might take advantage from being alerted of their polychronic characteristic. This might assist them to be much more conscious about just how they respond to various stress factors and demanding work situations, and this might permit them to perform effectively and overcome ESTR. Accommodation companies can take advantage of this understanding with analysis of their workers' polychronic alignments and job anxiety experiences. By concentrating on what is valued within a specific hotel company, the inspirational methods and opting tools used by administration can be readjusted correspondingly. Nowadays, workers are a varied team of individuals that originate from a selection of various social backgrounds. Researches identifying precisely where each person drops on the POLY continuum, whether because of specific choices or social impacts, can aid to minimize ESTR in the working environment, also boost SIBE amongst workers.

Limitations and future research

As many other empirical research works, this study has also a few limitations. The first limitation was cross-sectional design, which generates barrier for researcher to find out causative outcomes. Using a longitudinal design for the further research could be supportive in understanding cause-effect linkages. The current study was not able to adopt a qualitative method. Further studies may purpose to apply interviews and observations to better understand about outcomes and antecedents of POLY. In addition, collecting data from a single source (FLEs) may commonly cause common method bias, though such a problem was not encountered related with the present survey instrument. For the further research studies, applying longitudinal data from various sampling sources could be effective in minimizing these apprehensions. In approving the results of present research and also to extend the scope and make generalizations, more empirical works regarding FLEs in Malaysian context are necessary. This empirical work used hotels as a context to test its proposed hypotheses. Multiplication of this research in various hospitality contexts such as restaurants, travel agencies and airlines could be effective in cross validating the current results. Finally, including individual resources like culture and situational agents like reward into the survey for further research endeavours could ensure more insights into the drivers or moderators of POLY.

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