

Workplace Social Support Among Tourism Professionals In Davao City

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ABSTRACT. The main objective of the study was to determine the workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City. Questionnaires were distributed among 227 tourism professional respondents, wherein the data gathered were treated statistically utilizing Frequency Count, percentage, mean, t-test, and ANOVA. As tourism professionals, it is fitting that the level of their workplace social support is high; and the perspectives of the Tourism professionals concerning workplace social support are almost in the same level indicating no significant difference even if analyzed by age, sex, civil status, and length of service. The implication of the study is directed to the theoretical knowledge of the tourism professionals regarding workplace social support, which should be given emphasis during the on-the-job training of the graduating students, wherein, they will be taught at the same time theoretically in the classroom atmosphere concerning the mechanics of workplace social support.

Keywords: Workplace Social Support, Tourism Professionals and Davao City

INTRODUCTION

Workplace social support has multiple sources, such as supervisors, coworkers, and employing organizations. In addition, they distinguished workplace social support by different types of support such as content general or content specific. Social support is widely-known and well-studied; yet it remains a complex construct in psychological research and practice (Moura, Orgambidez-Ramos, & Jesus, 2015). Workplace social support might be a critical factor in determining an individual's subjective well-being; the latter refers to satisfaction with one's life and the more frequent experience of pleasant than unpleasant emotions and to a state in which individuals are relatively free of strain, applicable to the younger and older employees (Kelly, Moen, Oakes, Fan, Okechukwu, Davis, & Mierzwa, 2014).

Allen & Finkelstein (2014) pointed out that reducing work performance, lowers job satisfaction and self-esteem, increases the risk of absenteeism and accidents results from the lack of workplace social support and negatively affects employees' health. Different people may respond differently to the same stress conditions. It is important to gain a better understanding on work stress and its effects on employee job satisfaction. Job stress is defined as the physical and emotional responses that happen when the employee's capabilities and resources cannot satisfy their job demands and requirements. Therefore, it is understood that job stress is a serious issue that some solutions should be applied to diminish it at workplaces because it leads to negative outcomes for the employees (Lai, Singh, Alshwer, & Shaffer, 2014).

An organizational event becomes stressful when it is appraised by an individual as a threat to his/her level of well-being. If social support increased from supervisor or organization and control acts as moderation between social support and job stress, the negative outcomes of job stress will vanished easily (Woodhead, Northrop, & Edelstein, 2016). So, providing sufficient emotional support and resources are some solutions to decrease job stress in order to achieve the objectives of an organization (Sripada et al., 2015).

In Davao City, studies covering the topic of workplace social support are scarce, particularly pertaining to tourism professionals in the tourism industry. This study would attempt to fill the research gap and provide a thorough study what would determine the workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City.

The study was conducted to determine the workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions: 1. What is the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City in terms of Tangible Support, Belonging Support; and Self-esteem Support?; and Is there a significant difference in the level of social support among tourism professionals when analyzed by profile?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Social Support

Verbal and non-verbal communication between recipients and providers that reduces uncertainty about the situation, the self, the other, or the relationship, and functions to enhance a perception of personal control in one's experiences is the definition of social support. According to social psychology literature, social support is often seen as critical in making social environments less stressful, healthier, and more conducive to effective adaptation to stress in one of three ways (Mikkola, Suutala, & Parviainen, 2018). Socio-emotional coping refers to esteem support and social companionship in times of stress; informational support refers to the transfer of pertinent information designed to help cope with a particular stressor; and, instrumental support involves the transfer of services or goods (Ness & Vroman, 2014).

Information and communication technology (ICT) development showed the boundary of social support is expanding from traditional face-to-face communication context to computer-mediated communication context prevalent not only among the same sexes but also with opposite sexes. Particularly, it is suggested that social networking sites can facilitate social interactions and social support and that social networking sites characteristics make them an alternative to the traditional support networks within the face-to-face environment (Sripada et al., 2015). Through participating in online groups, some people found means to deal with various life problems. As social networking sites can eliminate barriers related to time and distance and draw more number of participants than the traditional face-to-face communication, social support is being enhanced by social networking sites (Woodhead et al., 2016).

Workplace Social Support

Individuals' belief that one is loved, valued, and the well-being is cared about as part of a social network of mutual obligation is called workplace social support. Others have viewed social support as involving perceptions that one has access to helping relationships of varying quality or strength, which provide resources such as communication of information, emotional empathy, or tangible assistance and it does not matter if one is older or younger, camaraderie inside the workplace crosses age boundaries (Moura et al., 2015). General work support is the extent to which employees perceive that supervisors or employers care about their global well-being on the job through providing positive social contact or resources. The degree to which employees perceive supervisors or employers care about their ability to experience positive work-family relationships and demonstrate care by providing helpful social interaction and resources. Content-specific sustain involves perceptions of care and the provision of resources to reinforce a particular type of role demand (Aliasgar, 2017).

Tangible Support. It is the provision of financial assistance, material goods, or services. Also called instrumental support, this form of social support encompasses the concrete, direct ways

people assist others. Social support is conceptually defined as the assistance and protection given to others, especially individuals. Assistance may be tangible or intangible and protection involves shielding others from the adverse effects of life stress. Inherent to the conceptual definition of social support is the notion of reciprocity that involves exchanges of resources between at least two individuals (Moura et al., 2015).

Belonging Support. Belonging support gives someone a sense of social inclusions. This can be seen as the presence of companions to engage in shared social activities. People are influenced by their relationships with others; this relationship should also influence decisions that are consequently made about the innovation. Therefore the social relationship between people may be instrumental in the decision that is made (Kelly et al., 2014).

Self-esteem Support. It involves providing employees with appreciation and admiration that they can use to help themselves. Examples of self-esteem support include praising their work, mentioning their contributions, and thank them for their effort. The relevance of the source and types of support is dependent upon the persons involved and the kind of support required by them. It is the provision of advice, guidance, suggestions, or useful information to someone. This type of information has the potential to help others problem-solve, particularly the married employees whose life is laden with problems (Chiang, Birtch&Cai, 2014).

Kelly et al. (2014) mentioned that the social interaction between an employee and his/her immediate supervisor is the primary determinant of an employee's outlook and behavior at workplace, wherein the report of the supervisor would be forwarded to the management to measure the quality of performance of the employees. Supervisor support depends on the interpersonal skills of supervisors and is displayed in terms of trust, respect, friendship and a deep concern for their subordinates' needs. coworkers can be a key source of resources for employees. On condition that coworkers are willing to listen to job-related problems, are helpful in assisting with the job, can be relied upon when things become difficult on the job and share worries and concerns with each other, work group cohesion is enhanced and all these appear to be effective in buffering responses toward job-related stress.

Related Studies

The study of Chou (2015) about subjective well-being at an individual level in order to understand the inner working of affecting subjective wellbeing during organizational change shows that both perceived supervisor support and perceived co worker support contributes directly to subjective well-being and indirectly via self-efficacy. In other words, workplace social support is related to subjective well-being because it provides positive social relationships and confident.

The study of Jang (2012) showed that tangible support can be explained more effectively in the context of particular situations such as elderly people dealing with physical or psychological illnesses, or unemployed individuals but it was found out that resilience was considered in a general situation rather than a specific situation. Therefore, it was difficult to explain the effect of tangible support on resilience in this particular study in the context of workplace social support.

The study of Kossek et al. (2011) that clearly shows both general and work-family-specific supervisor support relate to work-family conflict via perceptions of work-family organizational support indicating a sense of belongingness on the part of the employee.

The study of Perrewe & Carlson (2002) found out that women seem to benefit more than do men from both work and family social support. These results shed light on the importance of social support in the well-being of today's working men and women.

The above-cited literature provided a clearer understanding of the study based on comparison and contrasting discussions; it aided the researchers in determining the workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City.

This study was based on Rosabeth Kanter's structural Theory of Power in Organizations. According to Kanter (1993), workplace behaviors and attitudes are determined by social structures in the workplace, not personal predispositions. She claims that workers are empowered when they perceive that their work environments provide opportunity for growth and access to power needed to carry out job demands. When these conditions are lacking, employees experience powerlessness. This threatens organizational productivity since powerless individuals are more susceptible to burnout and reduced job satisfaction. Power is defined as the capacity to mobilize resources to accomplish work, and identifies structural characteristics within an organization that influences an individual's ability to access and mobilize the resources of job-related empowerment.

Kanter's theory has proven to have measurable impact on employee empowerment and job satisfaction as well as organizational morale and success, especially in healthcare settings (Wagner, Cummings, Smith, Olson, Anderson, & Warren, 2010). It has also been noted that retention rates of healthcare professionals improve when empowerment principles such as decreased work pressure, greater peer cohesion, support from supervisors, and staff autonomy are put in place (Lautizi, Laschinger, & Ravazzolo, 2009).

The study is also anchored to Stress and coping social support theory developed by Cohen and McKay (1984). It dominates social support research and is designed to explain the buffering hypothesis. According to this theory, social support protects people from the bad health effects of stressful events (stress buffering) by influencing how people think about and copes with the events (Lakey, Orehek, 2011). The perceived availability of separate functions of support as well as providing and overall support score are, self-esteem support, belonging support, and tangible support. Tangible support refers to perceived availability of material aid; self-esteem refers to the perceived availability of a positive comparison when comparing one's self to others; belonging refers to the perceived availability of people one can do things with; appraisal support refers to perceived availability of someone to talk to about one's problems (Cohen & McKay, 1984).

METHOD

The study made use of descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey attempts to establish the range and distribution of some social characteristics, such as education or training, occupation, and location, and to discover how these characteristics may be related to certain behavior patterns or attitudes (FluidSurveys Team, 2014). This design was fitting in determining the workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City.

The respondents of the study were the tourism professionals who are currently working in various tourism related business establishment in Davao City. They are called professionals for the main reason they are all college graduates and working in the tourism establishments. Convenience sampling technique was utilized in the study choosing respondents who were willing to participate and answer the questionnaire. The criteria in choosing the respondents were as follows: They have been working as tourism professionals for at least more than 1 year and they are residents of Davao City. The study was conducted during the 1st semester of this coming January 2018.

Table 1. *Profile of Respondents*

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
21-30 years old	136	59.9
31-40 years old	58	25.6
41-50 years old	33	14.5
Total	227	100.0%
Sex		
Male	141	62.1
Female	86	37.9
Total	227	100.0%
Civil Status		
Single	124	54.6
Married	103	45.4
Total	227	100.0%
Years of Service		
1-5 years	138	60.8
6-10 years	61	26.9
11 years and above	28	12.3
Total	227	100.0%

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents break down into age, sex, civil status, and years of service with an overall frequency of 227. Most respondents taken are those coming from the age bracket 21-30 years, male tourism professionals, singles, and have been working for 1 to 5 years. This means that majority of the respondents are within 21-30 years old, males, singles, and have been working for 1 to 5 years.

The researchers adapted a questionnaire from Cohen and Hoberman (1983). The preliminary draft was forwarded to the research adviser for comments and relevant suggestions, afterwards panel of experts were consulted for validation of the questionnaires making sure the instrument is valid and reliable. The first part of the questionnaire tackled the demographic profile of the respondents consisting of age, sex, civil status, and years of service. The second part dealt with the workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City, which was measured through the indicators tangible support, belonging support, and self-esteem support.

The researchers made use of the following statistical tools in analyzing the data. *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)*. This was used to determine the significant difference on the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City when analyzed by age, and years of service. *Frequency Count*. This was used to determine the exact number of respondents taken for the study based on their respective demographic profile. *Mean*. This was used to determine the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City. *Percentage*. This was used to determine the percentile of the respondents taken for the study based on their respective demographic profile. *T-test*. This was used to determine the significant difference on the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City when analyzed by sex and civil status.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Workplace Social Support among Tourism Professionals

Table 1 shows the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City with an overall mean score of 4.15 categorized as high. The respondents gauged the indicator tangible support very high (4.36) described as the willingness of the employees to help and assist each other's, caring for sick co-workers, and aiding each other financially,

covering each other's job, lending tools even to the extent of helping each other's job at home. This means that tangible support is very much evident among the tourism professionals in Davao City. This implies that the tourism professionals working in various tourism businesses in Davao City are socially supporting each other through tangible manner.

Table 2. Workplace Social Support among Tourism Professionals in Davao City

Indicator	Mean	Descriptive Level
Tangible Support	4.36	Very High
Belonging Support	4.09	High
Self-Esteem Support	4.00	High
Overall	4.15	High

The result contrasted the study of Jang (2012) showed that tangible support can be explained more effectively in the context of particular situations such as elderly people dealing with physical or psychological illnesses, or unemployed individuals but it was found out that resilience was considered in a general situation rather than a specific situation. Therefore, it was difficult to explain the effect of tangible support on resilience in this particular study in the context of workplace social support. However, it confirmed the statement of Moura, Orgambidez-Ramos, and Jesus (2015) who reiterated that the provision of financial assistance, material goods, or services encompasses the concrete, direct ways employees assist other employees.

Significant Difference on the Level of Workplace Social Support among Tourism Professionals in Davao City when Analyzed according to the Profile of Respondents

Table 3 shows the significant difference on the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City when analyzed by age. All the indicators, namely tangible support, belonging support, and self-esteem support showed no significant difference with the p-values of .520, .818, and .620 respectively resulting to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

The overall computation yielded an F value of .357 and the p-value of .700 is greater when compared with the level of significance of 0.05 showing no significant difference and the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This means that the respondents with various age levels showed the same level of evaluation on workplace social support. This is an indication that there is no significant difference on the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City when analyzed by age. The findings is in accordance with the study of Macdonald and Levy (2016) that it would be beneficial for organizational policies to continue to focus on reducing age discrimination as well as reducing anxiety about aging in the workplace. Kossek et al. (2011) added that social support is viewed as involving perceptions that one has access to helping relationships of varying quality or strength, which provide resources such as communication of information, emotional empathy, or tangible assistance.

Table 3. Significant Difference on the Level of Workplace Social Support among Tourism Professionals in Davao City when Analyzed by Age

Variables	Age			F-value	p-value	Decision on H ₀
	21-30	31-40	41-50			
Tangible Support	4.38	4.29	4.43	.656	.520	Accept
Belonging Support	4.07	4.10	4.15	.201	.818	Accept
Self-Esteem Support	4.02	3.95	3.96	.479	.620	Accept
OVERALL	4.16	4.11	4.18	.357	.700	Accept

Table 4 shows the significant difference on the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City when analyzed by sex. Indicators showed no significant difference in the two indicators, except self-esteem (P-value=.018>0.05) which means that male and female differ with their perception, which implies that male tourism professionals gave less self-esteem to themselves compared to women. This finding implies that male tourism professionals are a little bit inferior of themselves compared to females in dealing with sophisticated customers.

Table 4. *Significant Difference on the Level of Workplace Social Support among Tourism Professionals in Davao City when Analyzed by Sex*

Variables	Sex		t-value	p-value	Decision on H ₀
	Male	Female			
Tangible Support	4.35	4.37	.266	.790	Accept
Belonging Support	4.09	4.09	-.055	.956	Accept
Self-Esteem Support	3.89	4.06	2.377	.018	Reject
OVERALL	4.11	4.17	1.098	.273	Accept

Overall computation showed that the t-value yielded 1.098 while the p-value of .273 is greater than the level of significance of 0.05 indicating no significant difference resulting to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This means that male and female tourism professionals displayed an almost the same level social support. It could be surmised therefore that there is no significant difference on the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City when analyzed by sex. The outcome is in congruent with the study of Perrewe & Carlson (2002) who found out that women seem to benefit more than do men from both work and family social support boosting their self-esteem. These results shed light on the importance of social support in the well-being of today's working men and women.

Table 5 displays the significant difference on the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City when analyzed by civil status. All the indicators showed no significant differences showing the p-values of tangible support, belonging support, and self-esteem support with p-values of .906, .326, and .465 respectively greater than the level of significance of 0.05 accepting the null hypothesis.

Table 5. *Significant Difference on the Level of Workplace Social Support among Tourism Professionals in Davao City when Analyzed by Civil Status*

Variables	Civil Status		t-value	p-value	Decision on H ₀
	Single	Married			
Tangible Support	4.36	4.38	-.118	.906	Accept
Belonging Support	4.06	4.13	-.984	.326	Accept
Self-Esteem Support	4.02	3.97	.731	.465	Accept
OVERALL	4.14	4.15	-.219	.827	Accept

Overall computation shows a t-value of -.218 while the p-value of .827 is greater than the level of significance of 0.05, an indication of no significant difference and the acceptance of the null

hypothesis. This could only mean that there is no significant difference on the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City when analyzed by civil status.

Table 6 displays the significant difference on the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City when analyzed by length of service. All the indicators showed greater p-values (.652, .526, and .529 respectively) compared to 0.05 level of significance indicating no significant differences and the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Table 6/ Significant Difference on the Level of Workplace Social Support among Tourism Professionals in Davao City when Analyzed by Length of Service

Variables	Length of Service			F-value	p-value	Decision on H ₀
	1-5 years	6-10 years	11 years above			
Tangible Support	4.34	4.36	4.46	.429	.652	Accept
Belonging Support	4.07	4.16	4.03	.645	.526	Accept
Self-Esteem Support	4.00	4.01	3.89	.639	.529	Accept
OVERALL	4.14	4.18	4.13	.199	.820	Accept

The overall computation showed an F-value of .199, the p-value of .820 is greater than the level of significance of 0.05 indicating no significant difference and the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This means that the tourism professionals with various length of service displayed an almost the same level of assessment on the workplace social support. It could be declared therefore that there is no significant difference on the level of workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City when analyzed by length of service.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, drawn are the conclusions as follows:

The result of the depicted the existence of workplace social support experienced by tourism professionals in their respective organizations; the level of their workplace social support among tourism professionals in Davao City was found out to be high.

Generally, tourism professionals concerning workplace social support are almost in the same level indicating no significant difference even if analyzed by age, sex, civil status, and length of service.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

The Davao City government may promote seminar workshops for all the tourism professionals working hand-in-hand with the Tourism department emphasizing the importance of close relationship within an organization as well as each employee will have high self-esteem and feel that they belong that would contribute to the efficiency of the organization. Emphasis as well should be given to the male tourism professionals by augmenting their self-esteem to be at par with the of female tourism professionals to boost the productivity of the organization.

The tourism-related business owners should be a catalyst in promoting social support system within organization by taking the initiative to provide monthly outings for the employees so that they can build rapport and become efficient in their function to the system as well as train them to be confident with themselves in doing their jobs and enhance their self-esteem.

The future researchers may conduct another study, particularly factors influencing tourism students to precede their carrier on Tourism Industry in the future.

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