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**EMPLOYEE INTENTION TO LEAVE A JOB:  
A CASE OF MALAYSIAN FAST FOOD  
INDUSTRY**

By  
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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
**Doctor of Philosophy**

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# Abstract

This thesis explores the determinants of employees' turnover intentions in the fast food industry of Peninsular Malaysia and uses as determining variables items related to 'job stressors', 'job stress', 'job satisfaction' and 'commitment'. This thesis also created one additional variable, 'Job feeling' which was designed to include items relating to Malaysian's cultural context such as the practice of religion at the workplace. Data derived from a self completed questionnaire comprises the major part of this thesis, and this was distributed to employees working in Peninsular Malaysia's fast food industry. In addition, the interviews were completed with Managers at the Head offices and ten employees were also interviewed to gather information on job stress issues. The analysis of survey was done using SPSS 14.0 while interviews were translated and transcribed manually.

The sample comprised 806 respondents from major international fast food chains operating in Malaysia, and the research is restricted to these companies and does not cover hawkers who also provide fast food in the market places and alleys of Malaysia. As in other countries, the workforce is generally young and it is recognised that not all wish to pursue a career in the fast food industry.

Yet even so, on evidence derived from the managers at head offices, the labour turnover rates exceed 100 percent, and thus the issue of labour turnover is one of significance. The results of this thesis indicated that among the determinants, scores on job stress items provides evidence that permits a prediction of employees' intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry as based on data derived from multiple regression statistical techniques. Further, results found a 'feeling of being burnt-out' had the strongest correlation with employee intention to leave. These employees have thought of leaving their present job because they felt stress that, it is thought, arose from factors such as frequent customers' contact and work pressure. In terms of correlations with socio-demographic variables, the overall results suggest that there were few significant differences between stressors, stress, feeling about the job and satisfaction and commitment, and where statistical significant findings emerged, it was found that, in absolute terms, the differences were minimal and generally derived from the same part of the scale (e.g. there existed a tendency to agreement or disagreement with items. The role of gender, age, marital status or length of employment appears therefore to be a minor discriminating factor. On the other hand the findings suggest that managers could pay attention to features of peer group adherence within the young employees, as some findings suggest that even workers who have few complaints might think more often of leaving their job if members of their 'crew' are of that opinion.

From a managerial perspective, this study shed light by providing information about employees' intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry. As this study is the first such study in the Malaysian context, the findings, it is hoped will help the managers at the Head offices to better monitor their employees before they actually leave. The results from this study potentially may identify characteristics of those who may be susceptible to having a higher intention to leave. From a conceptual perspective, the study shows that many of the findings found in the literature derived from the English speaking world are applicable to Malaysia, but in part this may be because current management practices tend to respect Islamic beliefs and thus this did not emerge as an issue. However, the attention to peer groups has not been generally picked up in that literature that does exist with reference to labour turnover in the fast food industry.

The limitations that exist within the study that inhibit possible generalisation relate to not only the geographical restriction to Peninsular Malaysia, but also primarily to the fact that the sample were all currently working within the industry. A lack of resources and time might be highlighted that it was not possible to address questions to those who had already left the industry, but it might be claimed that management are primarily concerned with current rather than past employees.



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To my husband and son

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*Ihtisham Akid*

To our newborn twins

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*Hariez Rayyan Juani*

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# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This purpose of this chapter is to outline the thesis, its background, issues and organisation. This chapter helps readers understand the main ideas and thoughts of the author relating to employee intention to leave a job in the Malaysian fast food industry.

## **1.1 Background to the research**

The fast food industry is enormous and the success of some fast food companies cannot be doubted. The Malaysian fast food industry has grown rapidly since the 1960's and there are now more than 1000 fast food outlets in Malaysia. The expansion of the fast food industry can be evidenced by the increased number of outlets. The rapid development of the Malaysian fast food industry may have also been influenced by a new and faster pace of life in major cities and the need to combine meal-times with time engaged in other activities such as shopping, work or travelling (Jekanowski, Binkley & Eales, 1997). Certainly Noor (2002) argued that the fast food industry has added to the change of food consumption patterns in Malaysia.

However, although the fast food industry plays a vital role in contributing to Malaysia's economy, human capital problems have consistently occurred in this industry but has often been neglected by researchers. As the industry has more than 100,000 employees, recruitment and retention of employees are among the most

important challenges it faces. Therefore, an understanding of employees and the possible causes why they leave is important to better prevent labour turnover from happening. The causes of labour turnover have not, to date, been substantially documented for the Malaysian fast food industry. In addition many turnover studies which deal with other industries may not be of relevance due to unique features specific to the Malaysian fast food industry. Even though labour turnover can be expected, the fast food industry has rates considerably above average. Although no systematic report on exact turnover rates in the Malaysian fast food industry has been published, a figure of an annual rate of over 100 percent was personally obtained from the human resource managers interviewed for this study. Based on such information, annual turnover rates for one of the fast food major companies reached were as high as 93 percent for non-managers and 30 percent for managers. Similarly, burger companies reported about 111 percent annual turnover for non managerial staff.

Furthermore, in a global perspective, for decades, employee turnover has been continuing problem faced by many businesses around the world. According to Joseph, Pierrard and Sneessens (2004) in an OECD report (1996), job turnover was relatively high in countries like Belgium, (15%), France (24.4%), Germany (16.5%), Italy (21%), Netherlands (15.4%) and United States of America (18.6%). Additionally, high turnover rates have been viewed as one of the most serious problems in the hospitality industry and it continues to be contentious issue (Lashley, 2000, Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2006). Studies show that high turnover rates in the hospitality are not country specific and this is a worldwide epidemic. As noted, high turnover in the

hospitality industry is not solely confined to the USA, even though many studies emanate from that country and it impacts on an entire industry (Gustafson, 2002). Employee turnover has had a detrimental effect for many major organizations and Malaysia, as one of the developing countries, is not excluded (Khatri, Fern & Budhwar, 2001).

As the hospitality industry, is a service and labour-intensive industry, it is common to suffer turnover rates higher than other sectors. What then is an appropriate level of turnover for an organization? It is generally accepted turnover rates are better kept under 10% or 15%. As cited by Wildes (2005) in Ebbin (2000), studies show the median annual turnover rate of all restaurant servers in the USA is 117%. On the other hand, a study conducted by the Institute of Personnel and Development within the United Kingdom found that the employee turnover rate in restaurant and catering were 42% but as high as 300% in the fast food sector in both Europe and the USA (Wildes, 2005). In Turkey, one study showed that turnover rates have a significant negative impact on a hotel's performance and profitability (Aksu, 2004). The same exists in the Hong Kong hospitality industry where turnover was as high as 55% with a range of 30% to 180% (Lam & Zhang, 2003). Whereas in Malaysia, as mentioned above, turnover rates for year 2006 for managerial level is at 15% and non-managers is at 93% (personal communication, January, 10, 2007).

This reality has a great impact on the hospitality industry. Why does it occur? How to help the industry solve the problem? Due to the impacts of employee turnover in the

hospitality industry there exists a need for management to monitor and measure turnover in order to take remedial action.

## **1.2 Significant of the study**

The exorbitant turnover rates that exist in the hospitality industry warrant that research should be conducted, prompting this study. Observing the Malaysian fast food industry and its critical problems with regard to employee turnover thus led the researcher to develop this specific study. There exist typical statements when dealing with the employee turnover problem in the hospitality industry (Gustafson, 2002; Carbery, Garavan, O'Brien & McDonnell, 2003). As commented by Zeffane (1994), "despite significant research progress there still remains a great deal of confusion as to what might actually cause employees to leave or to remain in their organizations" (p.23). As cited by Morell, Loan-Clarke and Wilkinson (2004) in Lee and Mitchell's (1994) study, there is no standard account for why people choose to leave an organization. This turnover phenomenon is epidemic in the industry and this study is designed to fill a gap in the hospitality and fast food literature. Additionally, this is the first such study of the Malaysian fast food context and will significantly contribute to the literature on the importance of intention to leave determinants to predict turnover.

## **1.3 Main Research Purposes**

Consequently, the main objective of this study is to investigate variables that may predict an intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry.

Despite the growth in the fast food industry in many countries, studies on fast food are often neglected. This study used consistent and frequently mentioned variables identified in the turnover literature, which are stressors, job stress, job satisfaction and commitment. Stressors refer to the factors that may influence one's stress and are often associated with role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload. Stress at the workplace refers to employees' feeling burnt out and having anxiety and somatic complaints. Job satisfaction and commitment refers to employees' emotional states resulting from their job experiences. Finally, the author has also created one variable named 'Job Feeling' to further understand employees' feelings about work in the Malaysian fast food industry. The 'Job feeling' variable in this study refers to cultural perspectives that include, for example, practice of religion and dress. In addition, this study aims to find out the direct effect of those variables on intention to leave a job. Previous studies have examined other factors such as dispositional, environmental or organizational mediation on employee intention to quit (Firth, Mellor, Moore & Loquet, 2004; Brough & Frame, 2004).

While there are issues with the selection of items in a questionnaire as a proxy for employee turnover, there are advantages. For example, it would have been difficult, if not impossible to obtain from the fast food companies a list of recently departed employees. Bluedorn (1982) suggested research on the intention to leave a job rather than actual turnover behaviour is appropriate because it is relatively less expensive to collect data on turnover cognition than actual turnover.

It appears that the majority of research into the fast food industry has been done in the United State of America (USA) and other Western contexts. The extrapolation of theory to the Malaysian cultural context has not been widely explored. Hofstede's (1980) well known model of national cultural characteristics indicates that there are cultural differences between societies in Americas, Asia and Europe. This itself is a significant justification for this study, although it is also recognised that there is also, possibly, a fast food operational culture common to all cultures.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

As mentioned above, the primary objective of this study is to identify determinants of employees' turnover intention. This study will use both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The author will argue that intention to leave a job is a strong surrogate to predict actual turnover.

The fast food industry is a service and people oriented business. To be successful in a competitive market, it is important that the fast food employers know how their employees feel at work and what they want. The fast food industry has been identified as one facing high labour turnover rates. This is a costly and by and large an undesirable phenomenon. Studies done in the fast food industry have mostly focussed on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employees' perceptions and consumers' perceptions. In addition the fast food industry requires long working hours, has less than competitive pay rates, a repetitive job nature and arguably low security of employment (Lam & Zhang, 2003).

## 1.5 The structure of the thesis

Taking into consideration the purposes of the project, the thesis has an underlying *leitmotif* which is based around the themes that:

- a) A positive relationship exists between feelings of being burnt out and intention to leave a job;
- b) A negative relationship exists between feelings of work group support on the one hand and feeling burnt out on the other, that is, if a respondent feels that they are working within a supportive social setting this reduces the intention to leave a job;
- c) Those with least experience and younger years may be more likely to show uncertainty as to job commitment than those with more experience;
- d) Age and gender should not be a discriminating variable when considering intention to leave or feeling burnt out;
- e) Perceived differences between the roles of being an employee and family related responsibilities may lead to higher intentions to leave because of the nature of shift work in the industry; and
- f) The higher the level of positive managerial recognition of employee contribution, the higher is self esteem, and thus the lower is an intention to leave.

The thesis is subsequently developed along the theme of assessing psychometric and socio-demographic variables as potential determinants of the formation of an intention to leave a job currently held in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry.

The chapters that follow therefore discuss the following:

## **Chapter two** – *Literature Review*

As indicated by the title, the chapter reviews the literature relating to an intention to leave a job. It identifies three scales existing in the literature, job stressors, job stress and satisfaction and commitment to a job within various models of an intent to leave a job. In addition to these psychometric measures it also reviews the possible role of socio-demographics. The chapter also provides a summary of past research into the fast food industry and describes features pertaining to Malaysia.

## **Chapter three** – *Research Design*

This chapter commences with a brief discussion of the research paradigms as a means of justifying the pragmatic mixed methods approach adopted in this thesis. The research comprised of three components – interviews with managers and employees to generate qualitative data and ideas for the construction of a questionnaire, and third, the application of a self completed questionnaire by 806 respondents.

## **Chapter four** – *Descriptive results and interviews quotations*

Essentially this chapter sets out the nature of the sample and descriptive statistics combined with quotations derived from interviews with managers. In doing this the emergent themes as to the sources of forming an intention to leave a job become clear and the chapter begins to identify the key variables that are subjected to analysis in the following chapters.

**Chapter five** – *Role of socio-demographics*

Given that the literature identifies socio-demographics as possessing importance an analytical approach is adopted whereby a comparative static analysis of potentially important variables is undertaken. The first group of such variables are the socio-demographic ones of gender, age, education, ethnicity etc. These are related to some of the attitudinal variables.

**Chapter six** – *Factor Analysis and composite factors.*

Following the results derived in chapters four and five this brief chapter takes the scales, subjects them to factor analysis and describes the aggregate factor scores.

**Chapter seven** – *Psychometric variables and the intention to leave a job – an initial exploration*

The chapter builds on chapter six by undertaking an analysis of the relationship between the factors derived from the psychometric measures and the formation of an intention to leave a job. It continues the theme of a comparative static analysis as, at this stage, only the attitudinal items are considered.

**Chapter eight** – *Cluster analysis*

Sustaining the same approach, the psychometric data are then subjected to a cluster analysis using a k-means approach. Cluster membership is then cross-tabulated with the intention to leave a job and at the very least a consistency of data is found in that those with a high intention to leave their job are found in clusters of those who

experience high job stress. However the clusters based on job feelings indicate the potential importance of social groups, especially that of friends.

### **Chapter nine - *Linear multiple regressions***

Given the apparent importance of peer groups the thesis now uses multiple regression to examine the relationships between both psychometric and socio-demographics. Given this involves a mix of ordinal and nominal data use is also made of multinomial logistic regression. However, issues of multi-collinearity emerge and thus groups of items have to be assessed together. It is concluded though that for some a sense of job stress and burn out are key determinants of the formation of an intention to leave a job.

### **Chapter ten – *Summary, discussion and conclusion***

Given that perceived job stress emerges as an important determinant of the intention to leave a job, other questions arise such as what is it that gives rise to this perception, and what can management do about it. The role of peers also needs to be examined. In many ways the research project raises even more questions than were envisaged at the commencement of the research, and thus suggestions for future research are also made.

# **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature relevant to this study. The first part of the chapter begins with a review of literature on labour turnover. The second examines the most consistently intention to quit antecedents. Then, the third part describes the labour turnover scenario in the hospitality and fast food industries. The chapter concludes by presenting a theoretical framework for the concept of turnover intention in a fast food industry setting.

## **2.2 Definition of turnover**

Turnover can be defined as the movement of labour out of and into a working organization (Lashley, 2000). Another definition may be simply stated as when an employee leaves an organization for whatever reason/reasons. Turnover can take several forms. It can be voluntary or involuntary, functional or dysfunctional, avoidable or unavoidable. In voluntary turnover, an employee leaves the organization of his own free choice with some of the possible reasons being: low salary, job dissatisfaction or better job opportunities elsewhere whereas involuntary turnover takes effect when the organization makes the decision to remove an employee due to poor performance or economic crisis (Aksu, 2004). In addition, Price (2001) said that voluntary turnover can be termed as 'avoidable' turnover and involuntary turnover as

‘unavoidable’ turnover. However, most studies have focused on voluntary rather than involuntary turnover (Wright, 1993). This suggests that voluntary turnover is a critical issue for both employees and organizations.

### **2.3 Suggested conceptual models of employee turnover**

One of the earliest and perhaps most influential integrative models of employee turnover was introduced by March and Simons (1958). They studied turnover in relation to factors affecting perceived desirability and ease of movement within the labour force. Subsequently, the study of turnover in various contexts and the development of turnover models has burgeoned (Price, 1977; Mobley, 1977, Mobley, Griffeth, Hand & Meglino, 1979; Jackofsky, 1984; McBey & Kawakowsky, 2001). As early as 1977, Price published an extensive review and codification of the turnover literature. He presented a model of the determinants and intervening variables associated with turnover. Price (1977) defined the primary determinants of turnover as pay level, integration, instrumental communication, formal communication and centralization. In the same year, Mobley (1977) developed his intermediate linkages model that drew attention to a number of critical sources of influence. His model focuses on turnover as a process and questions the role of satisfaction as the immediate precursor of turnover. Then, in 1979, Mobley expanded his model of the employee turnover process. His amended model suggests that there are four primary determinants of intentions to quit and subsequently result in turnover: (i) job satisfaction-dissatisfaction: (ii) positive expectation about future role in the

organization: (iii) expectation of finding an attractive job external to the present organization and (iv) non-work values and contingencies. In 1982, Mobley again produced a simplified model of turnover determinants. He used the term 'determinant' in a generic sense to describe any variable potentially related to turnover which could be direct, indirect, causal or correlational. The determinants identified were organizational variables, external economy, individual non-work and work related variables. In 1984, Jackofsky further contributed to the literature with his integrated process model of turnover. He reviewed previous research on labour turnover and integrated job performance in the process of turnover. Hom and Griffith (1995) studied turnover using a meta-analysis model. However, regardless of which turnover model is considered, much of the research has drawn attention to four sources of influence on turnover (McBey & Kawakowsky, 2001). The four influences highlighted are: (i) work-related attitudes (push factors), (ii) external environment factors (pull factors), (iii) individual characteristic factors, and (iv) job performance factors. This turnover model has continued to shape the thinking of the turnover literature today.

It can thus be seen that the causes and correlation of employee turnover have been studied from many different perspectives. Researchers have consistently linked a number of variables to turnover. Previous research has established a positive relationship between absenteeism and voluntary turnover and a negative relationship between job performance and turnover (Morrow *et al.*, 1999). Among the probable causes of turnover, pay was often cited as the reason for leaving (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Rowley & Purcell, 2001; Luna-Arocas & Camps, 2008 ).

## 2.4 Consequences of turnover

The impact of turnover can be either positive or negative, or both for an organization. According to Carbery *et al.*, (2003), from the perspective of the employer, turnover is viewed primarily as a negative phenomenon and from the view of employee, it is often viewed in a more positive way. For the employer, perhaps the most obvious positive organizational consequences are the potential replacement of a former employee with one who is better. In terms of negative impact, from a managerial perspective, it would seem apparent that the organizational consequences of turnover are closely associated with the additional cost of recruitment and training and potentially lower profitability. According to Mobley (1982), the most frequently studied organizational influence of turnover is monetary cost. The cost, both direct and indirect, can be vary substantially between and within organizations (Rothwell, 1980).

Many researchers found high turnover rates might have negative effects on the profitability of organizations (Kaak *et al.*, 1998; Aksu, 2004; Hinkin and Tracey, 2001). Kaak *et al.*, (1998) studied 130 hotels' food service employees and revealed that the total annual cost of turnover was \$34,760 or about \$270 per employee. Aksu (2004) found that the cost of turnover for five star hotels in Turkey, is between \$721 and \$5,371 (for a housekeeper with 2 years experience), and for a reservation chief (with 1 year experience) it is between \$619 and \$4,832. For a food and beverage manager of 3 years of experience the cost of turnover is between \$3,906 and \$11,526. Hinkin and Tracey (2001) revealed that for a front-desk employee the cost of

individual turnover was approximately 30 percent of the annual salary. For a front-desk with 30 employees, an hourly wage of \$12.00 and 50 percent turnover, the total annual cost of turnover for that position could exceed \$150,000. As cited by Mok and Luk (1995) in Hong Kong, hotel payroll cost rose 19 percent in the 1980's to 30 percent in 1993 due, in part, to labour turnover issues.

What is clear from these studies is that turnover is expensive (Mobley, 1982). It affects organizational profitability because in measuring turnover three major costs are included; (i) separation cost, (ii) replacement cost and (iii) training cost. Johnson (1981) viewed turnover as problematic for the industry, affecting the quality of products and services and incurring considerable replacement and recruitment costs. He further said that labour turnover acts as an obstacle to increased productivity and efficiency, a view maintained in more recent literature. For example, the issue of quality cannot be ignored when dealing with employee turnover. Curtis and Wright (2001) stated that “high turnover can damage factors such as quality and customer service which provide competitive advantage, thereby inhibiting business growth or even causing a decline in the level of business”. It is often said that the people who leave are those who are most talented (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). The issue of quality is highlighted when someone unfamiliar with the tasks takes on the vacant position. It takes a long time to learn a new job and ranges from 54 to 80 days to reach an acceptable level of competence (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000).

Contrarily, a positive impact could be seen for an employee who quits a job being/ feeling motivated by expectations of greater net positive consequences in a new post (Mobley, 1982). This may be in the form of higher rates of pay or career development. However, the negative consequences of turnover also exists for employees who misjudge the organizations that they are about to join. Unrealistic expectations of the new organization, for example, about better benefits or working conditions may lead to a negative impact. Other possible negative consequences may involve loss of seniority, co-workers or boss (Mobley, 1982). There are the costs (financial, social and psychological) of moving to a new post that have to be borne regardless of any increase in salary or seniority.

## **2.5 Definition of intention**

Intention is an act or instance of determining mentally upon some actions or result or the end or object intended, purpose (Oxford dictionary, 2006). Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) described the definition of intention in detail where they refer to an intention approach as “a theory of reasoned action”. According to this theory, a person’s intention is a function of two basic determinants: one personal in nature and the other reflecting social influence. In terms of personal factor, it is the individual’s positive and negative evaluation of performing the behaviour which can be termed as attitude towards the behaviour. In other words it is referred to the person’s judgement to perform a good or bad behaviour. The second determinant of the intention is a personal perception of the social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour in

question. This factor is termed as the subjective norm since it deals with perceived prescriptions.

## **2.6 Turnover intention**

Turnover is very difficult to predict and questions remain unanswered as to why actually the employees left. Turnover intention refers to an individual's estimated probability to leave his or her current organization at some point in the near future (Brough & Frame, 2004). It is argued that intention to quit is a strong surrogate indicator for actual quitting behaviour (Firth *et al.*, 2004). Price and Muller (1981) recommended the use of turnover intention over actual turnover because the latter is more difficult to predict as there are many external factors that affect turnover behaviour. According to Moore (2002), while actual quitting behaviour is the main focus of interest to many researchers, intention to quit is argued to be a strong surrogate variable. Additionally, turnover intention can be a better barometer of management practices than actual turnover. Khatri *et al.*, (2001) gave the example that it is possible that despite high turnover intention, actual turnover may be low due to high unemployment in an industry. Again, Firth *et al.*, (2004) stated that intentions do not equal behaviour and therefore all reported intentions to quit are really little more than 'talk' until they are acted on. But Greenhaus (1992) agreed that intentions to quit may be the best predictor of actual quitting behaviour.

Additionally, Brough and Frame (2004) in their study identified job satisfaction and organizational commitment as variables that seem to influence turnover intentions. Job dissatisfaction stimulates the thought of quitting which elicits assessments of the utility of seeking other employment.

However, studies on employee intent to leave a job in the catering industry and specifically in the fast food industry have not been well documented. Indirect evidence from previous research has been completed in the hotel and tourism industries. The fast food industry research has been of a different context or non-empirical in nature. Thus it provides the opportunity for this study. Further, it is a response to the editor of *International Journal of Hospitality Management* (Pizam, 2008), who called upon academicians to research 'depression' issues in the industry. This study addresses a similar topic, which is to study the factors that cause depression among catering industry employees in general, and more specifically the food service employees, and provide suggestions to reduce the problems. Work-related factors such as work stress can cause burnout, which in turn can lead to depression.

Previous literature indicates the relationship between role stressors and intention to leave are rather indirect. In most studies, role stressors produce an intention to leave through mediator variables. For example, previous studies have examined the effect of role stressors including role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload on anxiety and commitment (Glazer & Beehr, 2005); and the impact of role stressors (mediated by job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion) on turnover intention (Hang-yue, Foley

& Loi, 2005). In this present study, the author focuses on the most consistent and frequently used antecedents in turnover literature which are stressors, job stress, job satisfaction and commitment. It is worth noting that this study focuses on the direct influence on these variables towards intention to leave a job. Reviews of those concepts are presented below.

## **2.7 Stressors (Role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload)**

Stressors can be referred to as job or organizational conditions that may threaten an individual's well-being. Stressors are the element of stress. Stranks (2005) stated that the causes of stress are diverse but it normally includes three aspects that are environmental, occupational and social. A number of researchers have studied workplace stressors in a variety of industries. Workplace stress that includes role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload have been discussed in comprehensive reviews in the occupational stress literature.

According to Jex (1998) a role can be defined as a set of behaviours that are expected of a person occupying a particular position. In social systems such as organizations, role plays an important part in coordinating an individual's behaviour. Every organization needs roles to function effectively as employees in organization received role-related information through both formal and informal sources (Jex, 1998).

In terms of role ambiguity, Cooper and Marshall (1978:85), stated that ambiguity exists when “an individual has inadequate information about work role and where there is lack of clarity about the work objectives associated with the role, about colleagues’ expectation of the work role and about the scope and responsibilities of the job”. Ideally, in most cases workplace role-related information should be clearly communicated to employees and it should be consistent. If the role-information is not clear to the employee, this situation may lead to role ambiguity. Jex (1998) further explained that role ambiguity may occur for several reasons. First, it is from the organizational perspective where poorly written job descriptions and lax monitoring exist. Second, some roles are simply more difficult to define and this causes employees to have difficulty in understanding the role. This mostly happens for managerial positions. For instance, in some organizations, managers are expected to achieve a certain level of sales but due to little guidance and lack of experience this is not achievable. Environmental change is identified as the third common cause of role ambiguity. This happens when the content of many organizational roles is linked to factors and events outside the organization. In addition, role ambiguity also happens to employees who have a complex description or where a job requires multi-tasking. To avoid job ambiguity, an employee has to acquire multiple skills to perform all related tasks. Above all, Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn and Snoek (1968), in their study, found that men who suffered from role ambiguity experience lower, job satisfaction, high job related tension, greater senses of futility and lower self-confidence. This implies the importance of clear role definitions at the workplace to avoid unintended consequences to employees.

Role conflict occurs when an individual has different expectations of roles to those of higher management or other stakeholders as to performance of a given task. Role conflict could be a problem for fast food employees because they need to interact with groups of customers who may have different expectations and demands. They also need to perform roles as outlined by the Head Office and if they do not fulfil the roles expected of them, they are more likely to experience role conflict. Sigler (1988) stated that when an individual holds various overlapping roles or the behaviour expected is inconsistent, this can cause role conflict. Kahn *et al.*, (1968) found that men who suffered more work conflict had lower job satisfaction and higher job related tension. Thus, it is suggested that role conflict increases job dissatisfaction and in turn, increases quitting behaviour.

With regards to role overload, Cooper, Dewe and Driscoll (2001) refer to the sheer amount of work required for a role to be completed. It occurs when an employee has been pressurised to do more and finish the work within a normal work day hours (Glazer & Beehr, 2005). Role overload is one of several factors that can impact on job satisfaction. According to Galinsky, Kim & Bond (2001) about two thirds of managers and professional employees and one third of other employees felt overworked. Gryna (2004) stated one reason for work overload is customer expectations. This can be viewed in the fast food industry where customers expect faster and faster service. She further explained the consequences of work overload that include reduced job satisfaction, and which ultimately leads to turnover behaviour. Work overload also causes errors in products and services. Findings and correcting these errors reduces productivity and increases costs.

In addition, Gryna (2004) stated that the overload of front-line employees who deal face to face with customers can result in unpleasant encounters with customers. Also, frustration sets in when employees at all levels observe the poor quality of work. Work overload causes errors that can result in injuries to employees and to customers. It's not just an accident on the job, but it is also the accident that occurs when an overworked employee drives home from work. One might shudder when one reads about injuries caused by overworked healthcare workers. She suggested doing a self-assessment on work overload. The assessment is within the workload, the job itself and the organization. The employee has to rate how often each given situation occurs to her/him at the workplace. The item scale used is '0 to 6' with '0' meaning 'almost never' and '6' meaning 'almost always'. To get the overall score, an employee has to add up the item scores. From a score of 0 to 32, there is 'Moderate Overload' but an employee has to take preventive action to keep work overload from getting worse. From 33 to 64 means 'Serious Overload' and an employee has to take steps to substantially reduce work overload within the next few months and from 65 to 96 means 'Critical Overload' which means that if an employee thinks work overload cannot be substantially reduced within the next few months, s/he has to immediately search for another position.

On the other hand, Law and Woods (1995) investigated job stressors experienced by 102 front-line employees in 14 Australian tourist settings. They found 10 categories of stressor most frequently mentioned. Management is found to be the first of work stressors followed by arrogant people, being very busy, people not listening/noticing, crowds out of order, job insecurity, feeling bored, tourist satisfaction, repetition and

weather. From this result it can be concluded that stressors found in this study were more related to organizational commitment but not towards the job as a whole. Similarly, Carbery and Garavan (2003) have done a study on hotel managers' turnover cognitions. Their results show that psychological contract breaches, perceived contractual and managerial violation, organizational commitment; career and expectations, perceived managerial competencies, job satisfaction, career identity and satisfaction, demographic and human capital characteristics and organization characteristics were found to be significant as predictor variables of turnover intention.

## **2.8 Job stress**

Stress is a term that can be viewed differently by different people and there is no single definition of the term (Stranks, 2005). If 100 people were asked for a definition of stress, 100 different definitions would probably result. Ivancevich and Ganster (1987) agreed that there is no specific definition that has been universally accepted as the final view of what stress entails. Law, Pearce and Woods (1995) stated four criteria that can be useful in demonstrating stress. They believe that: 1) stress can be positive and negative; 2) stress can be caused by a wide variety of things; 3) it is not so much the event but human reaction to the event which causes stress and 4) stress is a demand made on our capacities and it is these capacities which determine our response to the demand.

In the case of employees at work, they would worry potentially about many things such as too much or too little work, inefficient management, excessive working hours, job security, and pressure on or conflict with job demands (Stranks, 2005). These sorts of things can result in stress at the workplace. According to the Health and Safety Executive (1999), workplace stress is now becoming one of the fastest growing causes of absence from work. Some key facts about job stress can be found on the job stress website (<http://www.jobstresshelp.com//FF.htm>). The website revealed that forty percent of worker turnover is due to job stress. A 1992 U.N report called job stress “The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Epidemic” and the World Health Organization called stress a “World Wide Epidemic”.

Stress at the workplace also happens in the hospitality industry. The examples of stress observed are derived mainly from job overload such as understaffing, temporary staff shortages, unrealistic task criteria and also bullying (Rowley & Purcell, 2001). Even though research on stress has been an extremely active field for many years, job stress in the hospitality industry it was claimed that it had not been widely investigated (Zohar, 1994). Birdir, Tepeci and Saldamli (2003) agreed that it is a real surprise that stress has not been studied as much as one would expect in the hospitality and tourism industry. The hospitality industry is a people and service industry. Thus, there is every indication that job stress would be a significant factor (Zohar, 1994). Kim, Shin and Umbreit (2006) stated that hospitality jobs require customer contact around the clock 7 days a week, which work situation has been reported to be stressful for hospitality workers. Gill, Flaschner and Shachar (2006) also mentioned, generally, that hospitality or customer-contact service employees

(CCSEs) are subjected to dynamic, multi-national, multi-lingual and many times unplanned or unforeseen peaks in their working condition which in turn contributes to high level of work-related stress. They further explained that job stress and burnout from stressful working conditions are not only the province of “white collar” employees but extends to lower levels in the organizational hierarchy as well.

Krone, Tabacchi and Farber (1986) in their study of hotel food-service managers also described stressful working conditions that lead managers to burnout. They exhibited a wide range of physiological symptoms of stress from headaches to heart attacks, from indigestion to stroke, from fatigue to high blood pressure and from dermatitis to bleeding ulcers. Kim (2007) reported that such symptoms are not uncommon in the hospitality industry where the front-line employee frequently encounters demanding and difficult customers, and need to treat customers promptly to gain more competitive advantage. In the case of the fast food industry, the frontline employee has to offer fast, efficient and professional service to customers. Therefore, it is no surprise that frontline employee job stress can result from frequent customer contact (Kim, Shin & Swanger, 2009).

In addition increasing workloads and long hours can also cause stress to employees. These factors can upset an employee’s work-life balance and indirectly increase feelings of helplessness. Birdir *et al.*, (2003:378), stated in “the hospitality and tourism industry, where long working hours, low pay, slow advancement and supervisory challenge all have been common realities and characteristics for many decades, stress is a major problem and [an] important concern for success of

hospitality and tourism firms.” They also added (p.386) employees in the hospitality are more prone to job stress due to four reasons:

- 1) High customer contact and the real time nature of service delivery means that service personnel face high demands from multiple sources;
- 2) Uncooperative and unhappy co-workers and dissatisfied customers are usually stress-inducing factors on the job;
- 3) The high levels of staff turnover in the industry results in higher training costs and create an extra load on employees and cause serious problems; and
- 4) Autocratic management style and introduction of frequent new methods of management practices create stressful work environment

Certainly, Brymer (1984) agreed that the hospitality industry is a very stressful environment where the demands are never ending, the pace is extremely rapid and there are never enough hours in a day.

## **2.9 Job satisfaction and commitment**

Job satisfaction can be described in a variety of ways and it is an expression of an individual’s evaluation of his or her job. On this basis, Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from one’s job or job experiences. Robbin and Coulter (1996) stated that job satisfaction is an employee’s general attitude towards his or her job. In other words, when people talk of employee’s job attitude, most employees are likely thinking about their job

satisfaction at the workplace. Job satisfaction also can be referred to as a subjective emotional response made by an individual, consciously or unconsciously, to specific aspects of the job. These responses are related to intrinsic or extrinsic factors. In another theory of job satisfaction, Herzberg (1966) suggested job satisfaction consists of intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic refers to factors that consist of work dimensions of autonomy and responsibility (Herzberg, 1966) while extrinsic refers to work environment. Similarly, Smith, Gregory and Cannon (1996), stated that employees obtain job satisfaction from both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, and Capwell (1957) differentiated these two elements and found that intrinsic factors more towards to job satisfaction and extrinsic factors were related to job dissatisfaction. To summarise, job satisfaction is whenever people feel happy or satisfied with their jobs and other aspects of the workplace. Tony and Cathy (1995) highlighted the importance of extrinsic rather than intrinsic factors that can motivate employees in the hospitality industry. To summarise, job satisfaction is whenever people feeling happy or satisfied with the jobs and other things at workplace. Tony and Cathy (1995) highlighted the importance of extrinsic factors more than intrinsic factors to motivate employees in the hospitality industry.

Job satisfaction has a significant association with several variables such as work performance and organizational commitment. Lam and Zhang (2003) suggested that job satisfaction is associated with organizational commitment. In their study of unmet expectations of new employees and the relationships between unmet expectation, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the Hong Kong fast food industry they found that job characteristics, training and development affected job satisfaction and

organizational commitment among new employees. Carmeli and Freund (2004) suggested job satisfaction is associated with organizational commitment. In their study, they argued it made sense that an employee who is committed to the organization is the one who is satisfied with his or her job. One who feels dissatisfied with the job will be the one who is less committed in the job and is most likely to leave his or her current job. Allen and Meyer (1990) also stated employees who are strongly committed are those who are least likely to leave the organization.

Research into job satisfaction, commitment and intention to quit has been found across a range of industries. For example Lam and Baum (2001) in their study of managers in Hong Kong Chinese restaurants found that managers with lower satisfaction levels tended to have a higher intention to leave their job. The managers were dissatisfied with factors related to rewards, work environments and the job itself. Elangovan (2000) in his study added that commitment had a very strong negative effect on turnover intentions. In other words, the lower the employee commitment, the higher the propensity for the employee to leave.

## **2.10 Feeling about the job**

Job feeling is tied in an employee's mind with accompanied positive, neutral or negative evaluations. An employee's feeling about the job is about their own view on what he or she thinks about the job. 'Good' feelings refer to an individual's emotion that makes the employee feel happy at the workplace such as being surrounded by good co-workers and having their own specific areas of responsibility. Generally,

having a job that the employee personally chose means the employee is happy with things at work. The good feeling towards the organization usually rubs off on perceptions about the organization because the organization has a role in assigning an employee to a job. If the employee does not feel satisfied with the job, s/he will blame the organization and thus possess a lower commitment to the job (Ahuja, Katherine, George, Kacmar and McKnight, 2002).

## **2.11 Socio-demographic determinants**

The literature also highlights a number of demographic variables that may influence the intention to leave a job. A review of the variables is presented below.

### **2.11.1 Age**

Age has been identified as a factor that may influence quitting behaviour. For example Elangovan (2001) suggested age affected job attitudes and turnover intention. According to Hellman (1997), an older employee was more likely to possess a lower degree of mobility. He further explained older employees were more concerned with the formal and informal benefits at a workplace than their younger counterparts. Bloomme *et al.*, (2008), in their study on psychological contract and turnover intention among highly educated employees in the hospitality industry, commented that not much attention has been paid to the relation between age and related phase in the life course.

There are three stages of adulthood and Bloomme *et al.*, (2008, p.11) stated:

“The early adulthood stage (22-32 years) can be described as the age in which founding a family and building a career are the main themes. In the middle adulthood stage (33-44 years), more attention is given to family life and the education of children. The value of having a career decreases, and the importance of work pleasure, social recognition and self-actualization grows. In the late adulthood stage (45 – 65 years), besides work pleasure, the balance between autonomy and interdependency becomes more important”

In other cases, Wood (1997) mentioned that in the hospitality industry and specifically in hotels, experience is important to obtain promotion. Therefore, it is common for younger employees to move frequently between hotels to accumulate experience. To summarise, a younger employee is more likely to have a higher intention to leave the job when compared to older employees.

### **2.11.2 Gender**

Findings of the studies on the relationship between gender and turnover are mixed (Khatri *et al.*, 2001). Weisberg and Krischenbaum (1993) and Cotton and Tuttle (1986) found females were more likely to leave companies than males. Similarly, Brough & Frame (2004) stated that female employees generally have higher turnover levels than males. Arnold and Feldman (1982) suggested that a female is more likely to leave the organization because they have more sporadic work histories, lower tenure and lower pay. On the other hand, Miller and Wheeler (1992) reported no relationship between gender and turnover. In a study of turnover decision and gender status, Mano-Negrin and Kirschenbaum (2000) highlighted that the decision about staying or leaving in one organization is interdependent on the spousal conditions of

employment. They further explained that the decision to leave a post not only involves employees' families or economic status but can also be dependent on employee work-related factors.

In the hotel industry scenario, Carbery *et al.*, (2003), stated male employees tend to be dominant because they play an important role when compared to females as providers for the family, which in turn is reflected in a low intention to leave. However Khatri *et al.*, (2001) used the same argument to state that males are more likely to quit than females because the traditional belief that males are the breadwinner for the family still persists. Khalid, Jusoff, Ali, Ismail, Kassim and Rahman (2009) in their study of organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and turnover intention in 63 hotels in Malaysia found that female employees moderated better the relationship between behaviour and intention than males.

### **2.11.3 Marital status**

Marital status also plays some role in predicting an employee's intention to leave a job. However, there is inconsistent evidence on the influence of marital status in explaining turnover intention. Hom and Griffeth (1995) stated managers who are married showed a lower intention to leave a job compared to an unmarried manager. The primary reason for this is that being married usually increases manager's financial requirements, thereby serving as a situational constraint. The other reason was due to locational considerations. In general, a married employee chooses to remain in the same company rather than move to a different location because they do

not want to force their spouse to move. On the other hand, inter- role conflict between work and family may influence turnover intention (Hom & Kinicki, 2001). Married employees have to balance work and family commitments with family and a lack of time and energy to participate in family activities may also encourage an employee to leave his/her job.

#### **2.11.4 Presence of children**

There is no published literature on the influence of children on the intention to leave a job. The author speculates that employees with young children tend to have a higher intention to leave a job compared to employees with an absence of children. This is due to the commitment to look after young children. The nature of the fast food industry that requires employees to work for a long hours and involves shift work is presumably not suitable for married employees with children. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that in the Malaysian scenario, married male employees with young children may not find it too difficult to work in the fast food industry as the traditional belief is that parenting is more often left to females.

#### **2.11.5 Education background**

According to Carbery *et al.*, (2003), employees with lower educational attainment have relatively less turnover intention than more educated employees. Wong et al (1999) agreed with this when they stated educated employees are better informed of the alternative opportunities in the labour market. The other reason educated employees tend to quit more often compared to less well educated ones is because

educated employees are often more demanding and critical about their jobs. Cotton and Tuttle (1998) suggested the more educated are the employees, the higher is the frequency of them considering leaving their present job.

### **2.11.6 Length of employment**

The length of employment also plays an important role in shaping employee attitude towards leaving their present job. Some employees prefer to stay in one company because they want to keep the benefits offered. In the event of the long serving employee leaving, he or she would often not get the full benefits and welfare payments provided by the company. In most cases, the longer an employee works in one company, the longer will the employee tend to stay and in turn this minimises any intention to leave a job. In short, long stay employees become locked into benefits, financially and with reference to status, while additionally such long service also indicates possible commitment to the industry (Khatri *et al.*, 2001). In other cases, Griffeth *et al.*, (2000) found employee tenure was negatively related to turnover (-0.20) suggesting that an employee who stayed longer in one organization were less likely to quit.

### **2.12 The employee turnover scenario in the hospitality industry**

Study about employee turnover is not a new research area and has been undertaken from many different perspectives. For its part, the hospitality industry has been identified as having high employee turnover (Lee-Ross, 1999; Pizam & Thornburg, 2000). Much research on employee turnover has focused on cost (Simons & Hinkin,

2001, Aksu, 2004). Additional research has highlighted causes and correlates (Wood, 1998; Pizam & Thornburgh, 2000; Birdir, 2002, Aksu, 2004). Other studies have investigated employee intention to quit (Ghiselli, Lopa & Bai, 2001). However, much research on employee turnover in the hospitality industry has focused on the managerial perspective (Ross, 1995; Machattton, Dyke & Steiner, 1997; Gustafson, 2002; Carbery, Garavan, O'Brien & McDonnel, 2003). This is because managers are located as the most important person to identify and assess probable determinants of turnover in the organization as well as having to design, implement policies, practices and programs for effectively dealing with that turnover (Mobley, 1982).

For their part, Woods *et al.*, (1998) conducted a study of turnover and diversity in the lodging industry, surveying almost 5000 general managers of hotel properties. Findings from this research highlighted the five most cited internal causes of turnover as rate of pay, communication problems, lack of advancement opportunities, lack of recognition for a job well done and conflict with management. And the five most cited external causes of turnover were better pay elsewhere, increases of pay in other industries, low unemployment, a strong local or regional economy and low quality of employee overall. Pizam and Thornburgh (2000) completed a survey among 62 hotel human resource managers in Central Florida hotels. The results from their survey indicated that a combination of work-related and personal characteristics were the factors that affect employee voluntary turnover. A study on root causes of general manager turnover has been done in Turkey and found that management conflict, problems between property owners and career moves were reasons for managerial turnover (Birdir, 2002).

In 2004, Aksu expanded research on employee turnover in Turkey. His sample comprised five-star hotels and revealed that under Turkey's working conditions, the main reasons for personnel turnover are low wages, bad relationship between subordinates and superiors, long working hours, lack of social life and limited job guarantees. In his study on turnover of private clubs in the USA, Gustafson (2002) found that compensation and opportunities for better pay was the largest contributor to turnover. He suggested that to improve employee retention and reduce employee turnover, there were five factors to be practised by managers; (i) fill in for hourly employees, (ii) clubs hold social events for employees, (iii) employee promotion, (iv) flexible scheduling, and (v) create high club loyalty with the result that little concern emerges over labour shortage.

Cho, Woods, Jang and Erdem (2006) in their study on HRM impact on lodging and restaurants industries found that some HRM practices had significant effects on the turnover rate of non-managerial employees but no statistical evidence was found for managerial employees. Other factors that could lead to employee turnover in hospitality can be drawn from Wildes (2005). In her research focusing on perceived stigmas of low status in food service work, she revealed that food service employees who feel stigmatised because of their work not only leave the restaurant industry but also will not recommend a job in that industry to a friend or family member. The result of this study showed that 70 percent of employees under the age of 36 years intended to leave the restaurant industry within two years of the interview date.

Some researchers have investigated the relationship between turnover and job satisfaction. Increasing employee satisfaction and thereby reducing employee turnover is critical. Jones and Crandall (1991) conclude that "...jobs which are very routine, or where little training is provided, or which are closely supervised tend to lead to job dissatisfaction ... which contributes to increased turnover". Rust, Stewart, Miller & Pielack (1996) held the same opinion and stated that employee turnover is the highest among employees who are not satisfied with their jobs.

In the hospitality industry, the level of turnover is different by the size and type of the establishments. Turnover rates vary widely from hotel to hotel even within the same geographic region (Hinkin and Tracey, 2000). Wood (1998) argued that larger properties had lower turnover rates than smaller properties and upscale hotels had lower turnover rates than economy hotels. Lynn (2004) in his study found that turnover declined as sales increased among high-volume restaurants but not among low-volume restaurants. In addition, a better understanding of the causes of turnover would help restaurant operators to take appropriate actions to reduce turnover at their restaurants (Lynn, 2002).

On the other hand, even though there are a number of studies available pertaining to employee turnover, one question raised is why employee turnover still prevails in many industries, especially the hospitality industry. A further issue that is raised is the reason why the problem cannot be solved. Does the industry's nature lead to employee turnover? Is it because of the organization's characteristics? Or is it because of individual attitudes? Boella and Goss-Turner (2005) stated that some

factors influencing employee turnover in the hospitality industry are: (i) the nature of the industry; (ii) the nature of individual units; (iii) the nature of individual managers and (iv) the high proportion of workers from the secondary labour market. Aksu (2004) supported Boelle and Gross-Turner's statement. He noted that one of the realities of the hospitality industry is that it does not always offer attractive work conditions. Thus, he agreed that daily realities in the hospitality industry together with job stress, naturally lead people to re-evaluate their positions in the organization.

Considering this phenomenon, it is reasonable to argue that the Malaysian fast food industry is having a problem in employing and retaining their employees. Thus, this study is aimed to identify the antecedents that lead to employee intent to leave a job in the fast food industry and provide recommendations to solve the turnover problem. Lynn (2002) mentioned that a better understanding of the causes of turnover would help restaurant operators to take appropriate actions to reduce turnover at their restaurants. Certainly the researcher in this present study believes that prevention is better than cure and knowing and understanding employee intention to leave his or her present job is better than treating the actual turnover. Likewise, Wildes (2005, p.13) agreed and suggested that “faced with the reality that turnover is not going away, and will likely get worse, savvy hospitality industry leaders should work together to combat attrition and promote service as a viable career choice. This is a challenge”.

## **2.13 The fast food industry**

The growth of the fast food industry started back in 1940s. Carl N. Karcher was claimed as one of the fast food industry's pioneers (Schlosser, 2001). Karcher started selling his hotdog burger on a cart in Los Angeles and eventually the number of leading fast food chains such as McDonald and Taco Bell spread in the United States of America (USA). Fast food is now a common place and can be found easily at restaurants, drive-through, stadiums, airports, zoos, high schools, universities and hospitals (Schlosser, 2001). It is acceptable to claim that the fast food industry has been the world's fastest growing industry in the post Second World War period. The extraordinary growth of the fast food industry is across cultural, national and geographical frontiers. And the fast food industry is enormous and influential and one can find identical environments with the same products at thousands of different locations (Ritzer, 2006).

The fast food industry has been known for its success for increasing outlets, food varieties and turnover in terms of volume and value. The success of fast food is not restricted to any one country but is a worldwide phenomenon (Ball, 1996). Many people consume fast food in their home countries and when travelling abroad. Fast food has been defined in a variety of ways with no single definition or interpretation gaining a consensus. The fast-food restaurant segment of the hospitality industry is characterized by food which is supplied quickly after ordering and by minimal service. Food purchased may or may not be eaten quickly and the timing of the service is an important aspect (Lane & Dupre, 1997). Spears & Gregoire (2007)

stated that fast food, also referred to as limited-service, limited menu or quick service, was designed to provide a limited number of food items to a customer in a relatively short period of time. The aim is to provide fast service with the minimum of waiting time.

Usually, customers order food at counter and pay the order before eating. In general, customers queue up to be served at a counter or order through the window for drive-in/through service. Some researchers have concluded that the attributes that matter most are low price, speed of service, consistency and convenient location (Knutson, 2000). Davis, Lockwood, Pantelidis and Alcott (2008) also agreed that although fast food companies differ from one another in certain aspects, they share common characteristics. They offer limited menu range and operations tend to focus on one product, namely burgers, pizza or chicken. Schlosser (2001) agreed that the fast food chains demonstrated identical environments and it sell the same products at thousands of different locations. Datamonitor (2006:7) defined the fast food industry as “the sale of food and drinks for immediate consumption either on the premises or in designated eating area shared with other foodservice operators, or for consumption elsewhere”. Spears and Gregoire (2007) proposed that fast food restaurants are targeting working professionals and parents who want to have a meal served quickly at a low price. Further they explained that many fast food companies have created a new concept referred to as ‘fast/casual,’ ‘adult fast food,’ or ‘quality quick service’ where it combines the speed and convenience of fast food with food quality and exciting décor at a price between the fast food and ‘high cuisine’ restaurants – for example various chains based on steaks.

Fast food outlets generally have air-conditioning and a modern internal décor (Jones, 1985). The colours used are also bright and unique to a chain. For example, McDonalds use bright red and yellow colours to identify themselves. The design for the chairs and table are simple but modern. One advantage is that they are easy and quick to clean. Most fast food companies succeed in attracting young customers because of the existence of a children's playground.

In addition, one of the important aspects of the fast food industry is good visibility into the kitchen area (Jones, 1985). Customers can see 'what is happening' at the back-of the house and this is one of the distinguishing feature of the fast food industry. There is not only an emphasis on the quality of the products, but also on visible cleanliness.

On the other hand, the industry profile done by Datamonitor (2006) stated that the Asia-Pacific fast food market has seen an impressive growth in its value for the last five years when compared to the Japanese market alone. The Asia-Pacific fast food market also generated total revenue of \$18 billion, an increase of 3% per annum which is somewhat similar to the European market. This rise in the fast food market has contributed significantly to employment in different countries. Ball (1996); Lam & Zhang (2003); Allan, Bamber & Timo (2006) stated that the fast food industry is a significant contributor to government income, economic growth, the balance of payments and an important area of employment. The industry acts as a provider that offers jobs opportunity and a good source of employment. The majority of the workers in the industry are young. Various studies have proven that the fast food

industry employs many young workers (Allan *et al.*, 2006). Curtis and Wright (2001) also mentioned that the fast food industry needs young staff for the sake of their corporate image.

## **2.14 Shift work**

According to Aminuddin (2005) shift work involves hours of work that include hours outside the 'normal' or traditional 8 to 4 or 9 to 5 patterns. The most popular starting and finishing times for double shift are from 7.00 am to 3.00pm and from 3.00pm to 11.00pm. Shift work is common in the fast food industry because of the nature of the service offered. But work which regularly takes more than forty-eight to fifty-six hours in a week is potentially harmful. Shift work is potentially stressful because it causes: 1) severe disturbance of circadian rhythms, 2) physical and psychological ill-health, and 3) social and domestic disruption. Shift work disrupts the body by affecting blood temperature, blood sugar levels, metabolic rate and general mental efficiency.

## **2.15 Employment**

The fast food industry plays a big role in many countries and it is well accepted that the fast food industry offers many job opportunities. According to Gabriel (2001), employment in the fast food has become the first 'real' work exposure for increasing numbers of young people. The basic realities of employment in USA fast food industry are that the large numbers of people employed in the fast food restaurants account for over 40 percent of the approximately 6 million people employed in

restaurants of all types (Ritzer, 2006). And almost two-thirds of fast food employees in the USA are women and nearly a quarter are non-white.

The fast food industry relies heavily on teenage employees where almost 70 percent of employees are 20 years of age or younger. It is estimated that the first job for one of every 15 workers was at a McDonalds outlet in the USA. This implies that one in every eight Americans have worked at McDonalds at some time in his or her life. Similarly, McDonald's in New Zealand employs over 6000 staff and is one of the largest first-time employers in the country (Report on the golden arches NZ facts, 2008). The majority of employees are part-time workers with an average of 29.5 hours being worked weekly (Ritzer, 2006). Ritzer further explained that only slightly more than half the employees stay in the fast food industry for a year or more. Fast food jobs are low-paid occupations with many earning the minimum wage or slightly little more.

On the other hand, even though many companies were about to lay off staff during the recession that commenced in 2008, the fast food industry still continued to recruit employees (Waikato times, April 7, 2009). In New Zealand, the demand in the fast food industry still grew because local people substituted eating out to save money and became more interested in fast food to consume on the premises (e.g. burgers) or for home delivery (e.g. pizzas).

However, on the inverse side, employee turnover in the fast food industry has been identified as being critical for product service, profitability and labour enhancement.

In this industry, employee turnover becomes a critical issue because the rates may be as high as 300 percent (Jerris, 1999). While a large proportion of its employees are young people, not all share the same motives. Some seek money to supplement their income and others are looking for work that will be their sole source of income (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2006). Thus, a key issue is to what degree are young employees seeking a career, or simply short-term work to earn money for short-term needs? As cited by Rosa (2005:17), "... most people who take a job at a fast food restaurant don't plan to make a career there, preferring to stay only while strictly necessary, which translates into high turnover and low staff loyalty". Allan et. al (2006) also mentioned "most students attending university, or intending to attend, are unlikely to envisage fast-food work as a longer-term career option and may not even consider this type of work as a 'proper job' ". Thus, this could be one answer as to why the turnover rate is high in the fast food industry. Ghiselli et. al (2001) and Aksu (2004) also stated the industry employs many young workers who tend not to stay long with the organization.

In other cases, Mueller and Kleiner (2004) argued that part time workers aged between 16-24 years have lost interest in work in the fast food industry due to the minimum wages offered. Lam and Zhang (2003) in their study on the Hong Kong fast food industry agreed with this. In Hong Kong, employees are hired on a temporary basis and paid by the hour. While in the United Kingdom (UK), even though service employment plays an important role in the UK economy, unemployed job seekers are reluctant to work in the fast food industry (Lindsay & McQuaid, 2004). They further stated that these job seekers did not consider working in the fast food industry in a

longer term because it is perceived as a de-skilled and entry-level service job that offers poor pay and conditions. It is due to this, they suggest, that the industry is unable to attract new longer-term entrants, particularly young employees. They recommended the fast food industry should offer competitive wages or fringe benefits to compete with other sectors of the hospitality industry for quality new entrants. Conversely, a study carried out in the USA found that turnover fell by 30% among fast food employees who could expect scheduled wage increases, paid holidays, health and life insurance and Christmas bonuses (Prewitt, 1999).

Allan *et al.*, (2006) also noted the high labour turnover in the fast food industry. They conducted research focusing on McDonalds in Australia. They explored young people's perceptions of work and found that fast food workers were generally dissatisfied with the industrial relations and work organisation aspects of their jobs but were much more satisfied with the human resource management and social relations aspects of their jobs. From the study they highlighted:

'There is high turnover in the fast-food industry and most enterprise-level studies tend not to capture fully the views of those disgruntled employees who were dissatisfied and quit. The fast-food industry is weakly unionised. This restricts the opportunities for employees to voice their grievances. Exiting the enterprise seems to be the main option employees have when they are dissatisfied or jaded for whatever reason.' (Allan *et. al*, p.406).

On the other hand, the nature of fast food employment is different to other industries. Work in fast food has been so routinised that employee decision making has almost been eliminated from jobs (Allan *et. al*, 2006). It requires employees to follow strictly the pre-set guidelines and procedure which make them feel bored (Lam & Zhang, 2003). Making the nature of the job so routinised means that departures from the

script become welcomed (Jones, 2006). However, in most cases, an employee is not permitted to practise his/her own personal skill as a standard operating manual is given to them to follow.

## **2.16 The Malaysian fast food industry**

The Malaysian fast food industry consists of various food outlets offering a variety of dishes ranging from local to international, but ‘traditional’ fast food meals that include a burger, fries or chips and a sugar-sweetened beverage are common (Brindal, Mohr, Wilson & Wittert, 2008). Generally, fast food is associated with international brand names such as McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). This is probably because these two have been in the industry for many years and have set up many outlets in many countries. Akbay, Tiryaki & Gul (2006) agreed that American and European companies have played the central role in the development of fast food outlets in other countries. It is worth mentioning that this study will not focus on fast ethnic foods as found in markets such as hawker stalls but will completely focus on the fast food outlets that operate under an international chain. Among the major players in the Malaysian fast food industry are McDonalds, Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), A & W, Burger King and 1901 Hot Dog.

### **2.16.1 History of fast food industry in Malaysia**

A & W was identified as being the first fast food restaurant in the Malaysian market. In 1963, the A & W franchise holders, Mr. and Mrs. Lie Boff from USA opened the

first outlet in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman. Then, ten years later, KFC also opened its first outlet in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman. McDonalds Malaysia is operated by the Golden Arches Restaurants Sdn Bhd (GARSB). This company was incorporated in Malaysia in December 1980 and has the license to operate McDonald's restaurants in Malaysia from McDonald's Corporation, USA. The first McDonald's Malaysia was opened at Jalan Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur on 29 April 1982. The 1901 Hot Dog was first established in July 1997 and operates under a company called Nineteen O One Sdn. Bhd. The fast food industry in Malaysia had a sizzling growth throughout most of the 1990's (Noor, 2005). The estimated total sales were RM 1 billion (US\$ 263 million) in 1997 increased to RM 1.3 billion (US\$ 263 million) in year 2000.

The historical evidence shows that the fast food industry is growing and expanding in Malaysia. It also can be proven by the number of outlets available in the industry. For example, to date, McDonald's Malaysia has 185 outlets located nationwide and is currently expanding at about 10-15 restaurants annually ([www.McDonald.com.my](http://www.McDonald.com.my)). According to the KFC website (2004), the total number of outlets increased from 336 to 350 outlets and in a year period, 15 new outlets were opened and 3 were relocated. There are 185 Pizza Hut outlets in Malaysia and it is believed the number will keep increasing ([www.pizzahut.com.my](http://www.pizzahut.com.my)). Likewise, A & W has 33 outlets nationwide and the 1901 Hotdogs now has 74 outlets throughout the nation.

The growing numbers of fast food outlets in Malaysia are also evidenced by the expansion of the retail industry. Modern retail stores such as supermarkets and

hypermarkets are mainly located in cities and are expected to continue growing (Shamsudin & Selamat, 2005). Many Malaysians prefer to shop at these stores because these large retail stores offer a wide range of sophisticated food and beverage products. In conjunction with that, fast food outlets can be easily found in many hypermarkets, supermarkets, shopping complexes or malls. For example in the hypermarkets such as Giant, Tesco and Carrefour various fast food outlets are available. It is worth noting that shopping complexes like KLCC, Berjaya Times Square Mega Mall, Mid Valley Klang, SOGO, and Jaya Jusco have contributed to the expansion of the fast food industry in Malaysia. The existence of fast food outlets also can be found at the international and low cost carrier airports.

On the other hand, one of the distinguishing features of the Malaysian fast food industry is that of Halal certification. Wong (2007) stated fast food franchise business such as KFC, McDonalds, A & W, Burger King and so forth, are gazetted under Malaysian law to serve only “Halal” food and non-alcoholic beverages. As Malaysia is an Islamic country and the official religion is Islam (Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board 2006), it is a compulsory for food businesses to obtain the Halal certificate endorsed by JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia). Mohsin (2005) agreed that the presence of Halal food is important in Malaysia. A Halal certificate means the total absence of pork product and the food complies with Islamic Law Shariah.

In a more detailed explanation, Amat (2006) stated,

Halal is a description of things or actions permitted by Shariah law without punishment imposed on the doer. Halal food means food permitted under the Shariah law and fulfils the following conditions:

2. . Does not contain any parts or products of animals that are non-halal to Muslims or products of animals which are not slaughtered according to Shariah law;
- b) Does not contain any ingredients that are najis according to Shariah law;
- c) Is safe and not harmful;
- d) Is not prepared, processed or manufactured using equipment that is contaminated with things that are najis according to Shariah law;
- e) The food or its ingredients do not contain any human parts or its derivatives that are not permitted by Shariah law; and
- f) During its preparation, processing, packaging, storage or transportation, the food is physically separated from any other food that does not meet the requirements stated above, or any other things that have been decreed as najis by Shariah law.



Figure2.1: Halal Logo in Malaysia

Vignali (2001), in his research on McDonalds, found that in Malaysia McDonald's underwent rigorous inspections by Muslim clerics to ensure ritual cleanliness. The

first fast food restaurant to receive a Halal certificate was a McDonald restaurant. Additionally, ACE for the Canadian High Commission of Kuala Lumpur (2000) added that since the majority of the population are Malays and Muslims, processed food ingredients must follow the guidelines of *The Koran* which prohibits consumptions of “non halal” food, pork and alcoholic drinks. Consumption of meat products is greatly influenced by religion, which affects individual consumer purchasing and dietary habits. Malaysian-Chinese tend to eat more pork. Indians like mutton and Malays consume halal processed meat, especially beef. Poultry is the most popular meat and is consumed by all ethnic groups. Hence cultural issues are also integrated into the fast food industry. For example, cultural sensitivity has typically been directed to product specifications. For example in India, Big Macs are prepared without beef and in China Burger King offers rice as a menu staple (Becker & Murrmann, 1999).

According to ABC News (2008), Malaysia is one of the most religious countries in the Muslim world. The separation of work and religion does not exist in a Malaysian’s life as much when compared to others. For example, Western countries believe that there has to be a separation of state from religion which therefore promotes a secular approach to development (Abdullah, 2001). She further explained that religion is not an important factor to be considered in one’s daily work as it is a personal matter. In contrast, religion can be practised at the workplace in Malaysia. Khalid (2002), mentioned that “Islam cannot ordinarily be described as a religion and that it prescribes a way of life that goes beyond the performance of rituals”. Wong (2007) added that Islam sets the tone of life and serves as one of the principal sources

and marker identity. However, it is worth noting that even though Islam is the official religion in Malaysia, other religions are allowed to be practised. A Muslim is obliged to perform prayers 5 times in a day. It is expected that employers will recognise these religious obligations.

In term of dress code, specifically for women, generally, Muslim women wear a headscarf to cover their heads. In popular definition, *Tudung* means “head cover and modest dress for women” among Muslims, which most Islamic legal systems define as covering everything except the face and hands in public (Wikipedia, 2009). In Malaysia the headscarf is known as *Tudung* and the *Tudung* does not cover the face. As described by Islamic conventions, the headscarf is a symbol of Muslim women and it represents the modesty of a womanly way. Most Muslim women in Malaysia wear *Tudung* to show obedience to the teachings.

In terms of employment, it is reported that the services sectors will be the largest contributor to employment and it is expected to create 693,400 jobs during the 2006-2010 period (Ninth Malaysian Plan, 2006). McDonalds’ Malaysia employs more than 7,000 local people with 120 support staff at its headquarters managing the day-to-day operations of the McDonald’s business. KFC now has more than 10,000 staff working in full-time and part time positions.

## **2.17 Understanding Malaysian workforce: Key observations**

With a population of 27 million, Malaysia consists of various ethnicities with three major groups; Malay, Chinese and Indian. Malay combined with other indigenous ethnic groups (Orang Asli in the Peninsular Malaysia, Iban, Bidayuh, Orang Ulu in East Malaysia predominantly in Sarawak, Kadazan Dusun, Bajau and Murut mainly in Sabah) are identified as ‘bumiputra’, which literally means ‘sons of the soil’ and have a special privileged position as enshrined in the constitution (AllMalaysia.Info-Ethnicity & Religion, 2006). They comprise 58 percent of the entire population as the majority ethnic group in the country and are also the most homogenous (Wong, 2007). The second largest ethnic group is Malaysian Chinese with 26 percent of the population and the smallest of the three main ethnic groups is Malaysian Indians who make up 7 percent in total. The remaining percentages belong to other European and Middle Eastern descent (MY-Malaysia.Info-Demographics, 2006).

As Malaysia is very much a multi-racial society, its workforce is influenced and shaped by multicultural forces which makes it unique and different from the workforces in other countries. According to Abdullah (2001), employee behaviours in the Malaysia workplace are influenced by the cultural values acquired from their home environment and schools.

She further explained,

‘.....these values have to be recognised and understood by managers when they interact with employees in their day-to-day work. To bring out the best in the workforce, managers have to be sensitive to different cultural nuances, beliefs and traditions and harness them into common bonds of solidarity. When these are upheld through shared practices, a unique Malaysian work culture can evolve to support the goals and objectives of the organization.’ (Abdullah 2001, p. 27).

Therefore, managers have to understand the pervasive influence of ethnic values and their roles in building a strong and productive workplace. Abdullah (2001) proposed six guidelines for managers in Malaysia in dealing with their employees: (1) build relationship, (2) focus on the group not the individual, (3) respect elders and use honorific, (4) be sensitive to religious matters, (5) maintain workplace harmony and (6) take care of “face”/ status.

Moreover, in managing the Malaysian workforce, the manager also needs to know and understand the significance of ethnic values before trying to introduce any new management practices. Managers who are sensitive to the significance of these values can create a work climate that make employees feel appreciated and have a sense of belonging. Abdullah (2001) highlighted that ethnic values of Malaysians are quite different from Westerners and any attempts to introduce managerial practices that have evolved in a Western setting will need to consider its underlying assumptions as well as how members of a particular culture relate to nature, people and God. Figure 2.2 below reveals a list of common values among managers from the main ethnic groups in Malaysia.

**Figure 2.2: Understanding Malaysian workforce**

<b>A: Malays</b>		
Respect for elders	Friendliness	Not aggressive
Spirituality	Politeness	Cooperation
Humility	Harmony	Good manners
Face	Loyalty	Faith in God
Tact	Apologetic	Family oriented
Generosity	Formalities	Obedience
Caring	Accommodating	Fairness
Patience	Trustworthiness	Sincerity
Feelings	Discipline	Courtesy
Honesty	Teamwork	Self-respect
Rituals	Indirect	Sense of appropriateness
Budi (tacit system of reciprocal obligations)		
<b>B: Chinese</b>		
Food	Money	Gambling/ risk taking
Hard work	Perseverance	Filial piety
Success	Harmony	Respect for hierarchy
Diligence	Face	Integrity
Education	Thrift	Modesty
Wealth	Meritocracy	Honesty
Generosity	Family oriented	Entrepreneurship
Happiness	Prosperity	Pragmatic/practical
<b>C: Indians</b>		
Fear of God	Participation	Sense of belonging
Loyalty	Hard work	Karma
Brotherhood	Security	Champion of causes
Family	Filial piety	Harmony
Modesty	Face	
<b>D: Western (mainly Americans)</b>		
Individualism	Achievement	Independence
Success	Hard Work	Freedom of speech
Punctuality	Privacy	Informality
Equality	Competition	Innovation
Assertiveness	Directness	Frankness, openness

Source: Understanding the Malaysian workforce, guidelines for managers (2001,p.13)

To summarise, Malaysians regardless of their ethnic groups, observe a set of values that form clear and uncompromising statements about what is important to them (Abdullah, 2001). She stated that Malaysian behaviours are based on the value they acquired from their parents and significant elders and lists 13 of them as follows:

- Non-assertiveness
- Respect seniors and preserving face/avoiding embarrassment to others
- Loyalty, respect for authority
- Collectivism (“we” orientation), cooperation
- Harmony and face
- Preserving face
- Status, good manners and courtesy
- Respect for hierarchy
- Harmony and non-aggressiveness
- Trust and relationship building
- Third party and preserving face
- Intermediary in establishing trust and goodwill
- Tolerance and respect for differences

Based on survey findings from 443 Malaysians and 56 Anglo Saxon managers, results show generally, most Malaysian regardless of ethnicity are group-oriented. Abdullah (2001) stated the dimension of ‘I-We’ is more significant for the Malays who believe that a person has no real identity unless he belongs to a group. Therefore, to maintain their sense of identity to a particular group, obligations to family members, close relatives and friends are very important. The relationship-orientation adopted by Malaysians is more than task orientation, which in turn may create difficulties in separating business and private lives.

## **2.18 Human resource management**

The role of a Human Resource Management (HRM) department is very important to each organization. All organizations, whether in the private or public sectors employ people and this is the reason why HRM is needed. Human Resource Management is the development and implementation of systems in an organization designed to attract, motivate and retain a productive employee (Aminuddin, 2005). On that basis, the success of a HRM department could be measured by turnover rates, labour productivity and return on asset. Cho et. al (2006) indicated that companies which implemented HRM practices such as labour-management participation program incentive plans and pre-employment tests are more likely to experience lower turnover rates.

In the hospitality industry, HRM departments are often criticized for being responsible for or causing of employee turnover. This is because personnel recruitment and selection procedures directly affect the quality of employees that are recruited (Chien & Chen, 2006). Rowley and Purcell (2001) highlighted that turnover was the consequence of poor management practices that includes weak HRM strategies. However, according to Cho *et al.*, (2006), despite the hospitality industry's unique feature of labour intensity, only a few studies have investigated the impact of HRM practices on organizations such as a reduction of turnover rates. HRM play an important role in most organizations where recruitment, selection and hiring are done by the HRM department. Keeping employee turnover low begins with hiring an employee who is a good match for the practice and position. Capko (2001), agreed

that one organization may be able to reduce turnover by finding out how the organization's practice looks through the eyes of employees.

In a Malaysian context, Aminuddin (2005) further explained that it is difficult to describe existing Malaysian HRM practices in detail due to two factors. Firstly, there is little or no research to provide basic data and from the little information available, it is not proper to make generalizations and secondly, companies differ widely in their human resource management systems and no one system maybe necessarily better than another. Denvir and McMohan (1992) agreed that varying practices exist with regard to recruitment, selection, induction and training.

Nonetheless a generalised description on non-managerial employment in Malaysia can be drawn from Aminuddin's (2005) book. One can start full-time adult employment after the age of 17 years. Prior to that, young persons aged 14 to 16 years old, are restricted to working in light work that does not involve the use of machinery and the maximum is 7 hours in a day. They also cannot work between 8.00 pm to 6.00 am while children under 14 years can only be engaged in light work in their family's business. The labour department of Malaysia has created the Children and Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996 to prevent exploitation of child labour. On the other hand, the maximum working hours written in the Employment Act, section 60 (A), stated that an employee cannot work more than 8 hours in a day or more than 48 hours in a week. Employees are also not allowed to work more than 10 hours in a day when a spread-over period is involved and lastly, employees are not permitted to work more than 5 consecutive hours without a 30 minutes break.

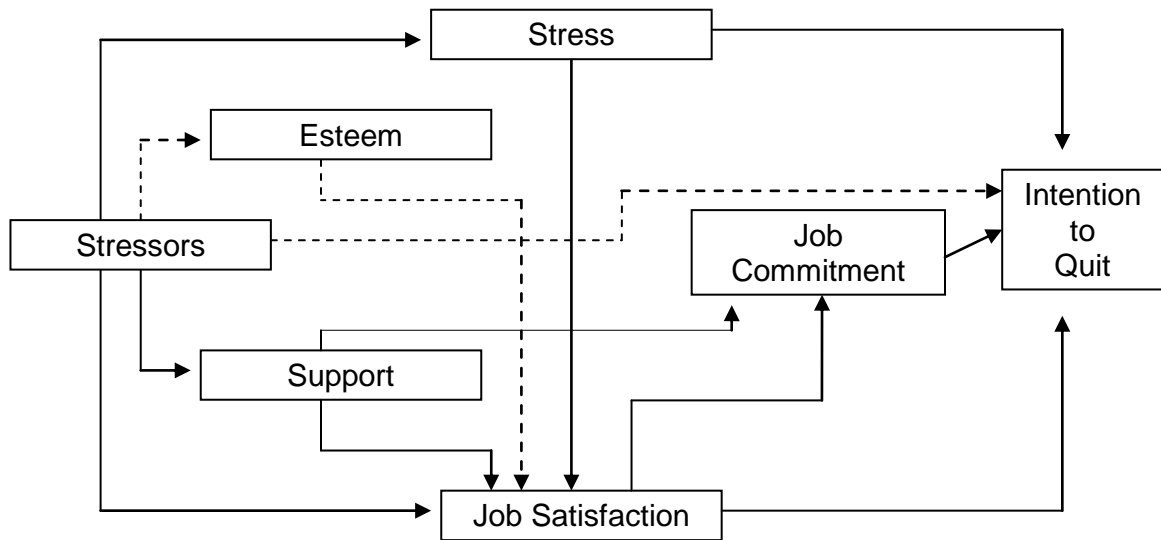
However, the exception to the working hours is that when an employee is required to work less than one day, s/he can request to work more hours the following days to a maximum of 9 hours in that day (Aminuddin, 2005).

How to attract, motivate and retain good employees becomes a vital issue which has drawn wide attention from both industry and academic researchers. Thus, it is important to hire the right person and retain them. As suggested by MacHatton *et al* (1997), it is worth investing more time and money in the selection process as it can play a major role in reducing employee turnover. Lankau and Chung (1998) also suggested that a mentoring program could encourage employees to stay in the organization thus reducing turnover. Varoglu and Eser (2006) applied the internal marketing concept and proposed a problem-based model of three focal points: the organization, the job and the employee. Their model is aimed at solving the dysfunctional turnover and retention problems in the hospitality industry. It can be argued that an understanding of turnover intention among the Malaysian fast food employees will help human resource and training managers at the Head office to better manage their employees, increase commitment and in turn minimise intention to leave a job.

## **2.19 Proposed conceptual framework and development of research questions**

After reviewing some journal articles on turnover intention, the author of this study found that studies on employee intent to leave a job in the hospitality industry and especially in the fast food industry have not been well researched and documented, while other industries such as manufacturing have actively researched on turnover or intention to leave. The hospitality industry in general has been largely left out of such research (Zohar, 1994) and this is specifically true of the Malaysian fast food industry. Therefore, the current study uses theory from managerial psychology and human resource management. Many scholars have attempted to answer the question of what determines people's intention to quit their job (e.g. Bluedorn, 1982; Kalliath and Beck, 2001; Kramer *et al.*, 1995), but to date there has been little consistency in findings. This is due to the diversity of constructs included by the researchers, lack of consistency in measurements and heterogeneity of sampled populations. Despite these limitations, Firth, Mellor, Moore and Loquet (2004), in agreement with previous scholars, suggested that variables consistently found to relate to intention to quit are job stress, job related stress (stressors), lack of organizational commitment and job dissatisfaction. All these variables can be mediated by personal, environmental and organizational factors.

## 2.20 Intentions to Leave a Job Model



Source: Firth *et al.*, (2004)

In this model Firth *et al.*, (2004) investigated variables that may predict an intention to leave a job in the retail industry. Authors investigated the effect of job stressors on job engagement (that include job satisfaction, commitment and feelings of job stress) and related all these variables to intention to quit. They also investigated whether people's dispositional factors (that include locus of control, self esteem and social supports) were mediators of intention to quit. Lastly, they aimed to provide a comprehensive model of intention to quit. Results in their study show there was no direct relationship between job stressors and intention to quit. It shows that job stressors impacted upon intention to quit through perceived support from supervisors and through the job engagement factors of job satisfaction, commitment and job stress.

## **2.21 Conceptual framework for this study**

Conceptual framework for this study was based on Firth *et al.*'s (2004) model with the aim to answer the four research questions. Firth *et al.*, (2004) focused on the variables that may be predictive of intentions to leave a job, and tested a model that includes a mediating variable for sales people in the retail industry. However, in this study, the researcher used their model to look at the role of each variable such as stressors, job stress, job satisfaction and organizational commitment to assess turnover intention among employees who are working in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry. Koh and Goh (1995) noted that the use of an overall satisfaction measure conceals the vital effects of different job facets on turnover. Therefore, this study uses a series of items to identify potential causes of the formation of an intention to leave a job in the Malaysian fast food industry as is described in chapter three. It is worth noting that the previous study used these determinants to look at the role of these variables to assess turnover intention. In the current study a series of items such as 'At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines' and 'Job related problems keep me awake all night' were used to identify formation of an intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry while Firth *et al.*, (2004) included techniques such as confirmatory factor analysis to prove or disprove their model. However, it is contended that the use of each item can provide meaningful findings and one possible implication for managerial practice is that individual items can be used as a proxy to predict intent to leave. As this study is exploratory in nature, it also seemed feasible to relate each item with an intention to leave a job and assess the strength of those relationships. In the Malaysian context it is easy to select

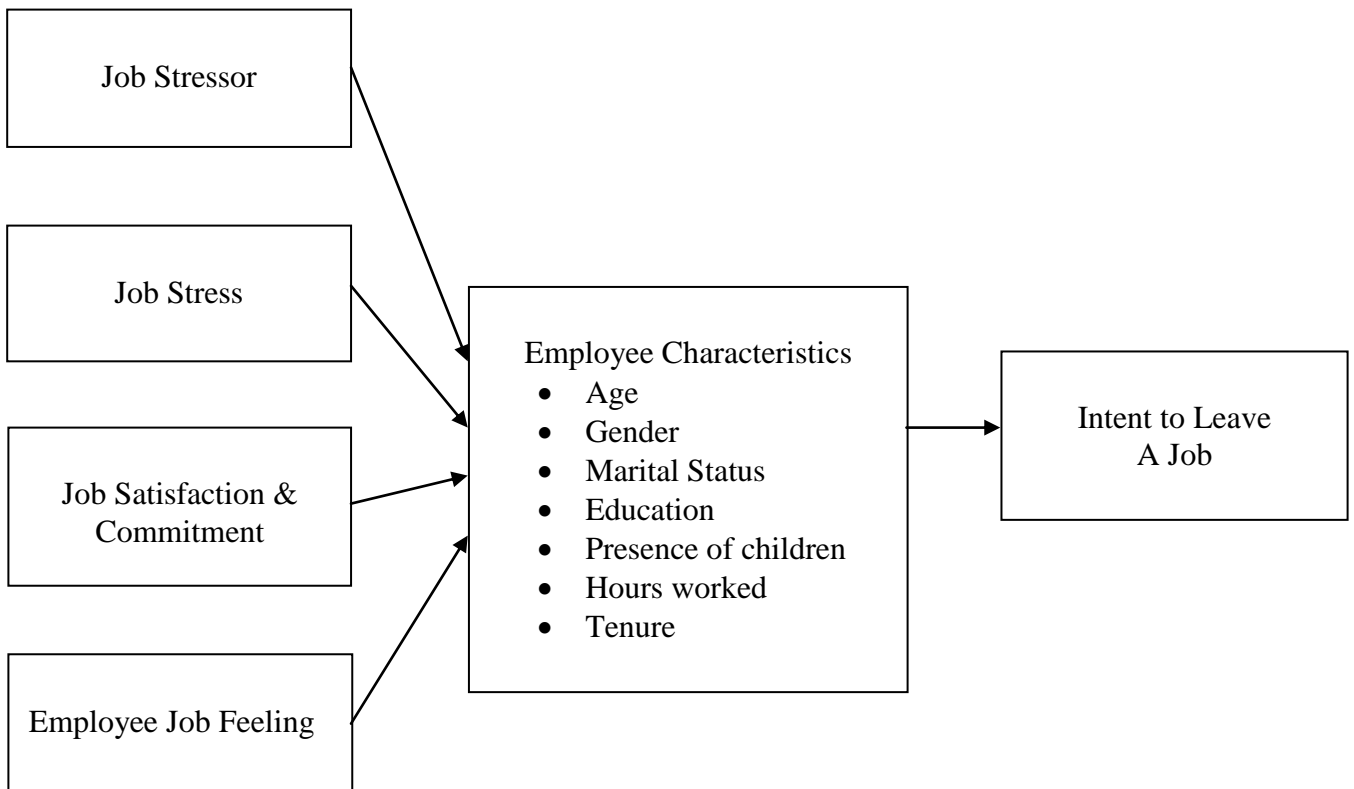
an individual item, for example – employee response or disagreement to the item ‘I am given time to perform prayer during working hours’. Therefore, from the response given, the manager can predict that this item could be a potential factor as to whether an employee will leave the fast food industry. In this current study, job stressor consists of role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload. For job stress, it includes job burn-out, somatic and anxiety complaints and job satisfaction, and commitment consists of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The proposed model illustrates that job stressor, job stress, job satisfaction and commitment, and job feeling may directly influence an employee to quit their job. This proposed model also created one additional variable named ‘Job feeling’ which was designed to include items relating to Malaysian’s cultural context such as the practice of religion and dress code at the workplace.

Additionally, the researcher investigated the role of socio-demographics to predict the formation of an intention to quit. It is well accepted that employee characteristics or personal background may influence the decision to leave or stay at the workplace. For example, a married employee who has children and who works in the fast food industry seeks to balance the need for income and child care and might be more likely to feel stress and consequently may have a higher intention to leave the job than an unmarried, single employee.

As previously noted, this study is believed to be the first involving employee’s intention to quit in Peninsular Malaysia. The fast food industry was chosen as an example because it is a unique industry in terms of its global nature and the

opportunities it offers for employment and contributes to Malaysia's economy. The findings of this study aim to shed light on employee turnover intention in this unique fast food industry.

**Figure 2.3 Proposed conceptual framework for this study**



The specific research objective the researcher wants to tackle in this thesis is to identify and analyse employee's intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysian fast food industry. To address this problem the following research questions are raised:

- What are the potential determinants of employee intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry?
- What are the relationships between Job Stressor, Job Stress, Job Feeling, Job Satisfaction and commitment and intention to leave the job?
- What are the roles of socio-demographics in influencing employees' intention to leave?
- How can managers predict employee's intention to leave in the fast food industry of Peninsular Malaysia?

## 2.22 Literature review summary

Topic	Relevant literature
2.1 Turnover	Lashley (2000); Aksu (2004); Price (2001); Wright (1993)
2.4 Consequences of turnover	Carbery et al., (2003); Mobley (2003); Rothwell (2003); Kaak et al.,(1998); Aksu (2004); Hinkin & Tracey (2001); Mok & Luk (1995); Mobley (1982); Johnson (1981); Curtis & Wright (2001); Hinkin & Tracey (2000)
2.5 Intention	Oxford dictionary (2006); Fishbein & Ajzen (1975)
2.6 Turnover intention	Brough & Frame (2004); Firth et al., (2004); Price & Muller (1981); Moore (2002); Khatri et al., (2001), Greenhaus (1992); Pizam (2008); Glazer & Beehr (2005); Hang-yue et al., (2005)
2.7 Stressors	Stranks (2005); Jex (1998); Cooper & Marshall (1978); Kahn et al., (1968); Sigler (1988); Cooper at al., (2001); Glazer & Beehr (2005); Galinsky et al., (2001); Gryna (2004); Law & Woods (1995); Carbery & Garavan (2003)
2.8 Job stress	Stranks (2005); Ivancevich & Ganster (1987); Law et al., (1995); Zohar (1994); Birdir et al., (2003); Kim et al., (2006); Gill et al., (2006); Krone et al., (1986); Kim (2007); Kim et al., (2009); Birdir et al., (2003); Brymer (1984)
2.9 Job satisfaction and commitment	Locke (1976); Robbin & Coulter (1996); Herzberg (1966); Smith et al., (1996); Herzberg et al., (1957); Tony & Cathy (1995); Lam & Zhang (2003); Carmeli & Freund (2004); Allen & Meyer (1990); Lam & Baum (2001); Elangovan (2000)

2.10 Job feeling	Ahuja et al., (2002)
2.11.1 Age	Elangovan (2001); Hellman (1997); Bloomme et al., (2008); Wood (1997)
2.11.2 Gender	Khatri et al., (2001); Weisberg & Krischenbaum (1993); Cotton & Tuttle (1986); Brough & Frame (2004); Arnold & Feldman (1982); Miller & Wheeler (1992); Mano-Negrin & Kirschenbaum (2000); Carbery et al., (2001); Khalid et al., (2009)
2.11.3 Marital status	Hom & Griffeth (1995)
2.11.5 Education background	Carbery et al., (2003); Wong et. al., (1999); Cotton & Tuttle (1998)
2.11.6 Length of employment	Khatri et al., (2001); Griffeth et al., (2000)
2.12 Turnover scenario in the hospitality industry	Lee-Ross (1999); Pizam & Thornburg (2000); Simons & Hinkin (2001); Aksu (2004); Wood (1998); Birdir (2002); Ghiselli et al., (2001); Ross (1995); Machatton et al., (1997); Gustafon (2002); Carbery et al., (2003); Mobley (1982); Woods et al., (1998); Cho et al., (2006); Wildes (2005); Rust et al., (1996); Hinkin & Tracey (2000); Lynn (2002); Boella & Goss-Turner (2005)
2.13 Fast food industry	Schlosser (2001); Ritzer (2006); Ball (1996); Lane & Dupre (1997); Spears & Gregoire (2007), Knutson (2000); Davis et al., (2008); Datamonitor (2006), Jones (1985); Lam & Zhang (2003); Allan et al., (2006); Curtis & Wright (2001)
2.14 Shift work	Aminuddin (2005)
2.15 Employment	Ritzer (2006); Jerris (1999); Kotler et al., (2006); Rosa (2005); Allan et al., (2006); Ghiselli et al., (2001); Aksu (2004); Mueller & Kleiner (2004); Lam & Zhang (2003); Lindsay & McQuaid (2004); Prewitt (1999); Jones (2006)

2.16 The Malaysian fast food industry	Brindal et al., (2008); Akbay et al., (2006)
2.16.1 History of fast food industry	McDonald website (2006), KFC website (2004), Pizzahut website (2006), A & W website, Noor (2005); Shamsudin & Selamat (2005); JAKIM website, Mohsin (2005); Amat (2006); Wong (2007); Vignali (2001); ACE for Canadian High Comm of KL(2000); Wikepedia (2009); Ninth Malaysian Plan (2006)
2.17 Malaysian workforce	AllMalaysia info (2006); Wong (2007);MY-Malaysia info (2006); Abdullah (2001)
2.18 HRM in hospitality	Aminuddin (2005); Cho et al., (2006); Chien & Chen (2006); Rowley & Purcell (2001); Aminuddin (2005); Denvir & McMohan (1992); MacHatton et al., (1997); Lankau & Chung (1998)

# **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN**

## **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter briefly describes the research paradigm chosen, methodology and methods used in this study. First, this chapter discusses the selected paradigm and provides a justification for its use. Then, it explains the paradigm used for this study. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative methodology and methods are briefly discussed.

## **3.2 The research paradigm**

The term paradigm has a variety of meaning in the literature (Guba, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 2003). Some researchers see it as a comprehensive belief system, world view or framework to guide research and practice in a field or metatheory (Willis, 2006; Creswell & Clark, 2007; Punch, 2006). According to Kuhn (1970), paradigms are models, intellectual frameworks or frames of reference. It is a shared framework of assumptions and it could be within a discipline, sub-discipline or a school of thought within a discipline (Veal, 2005). It also means how we view the world and go about conducting research. A research paradigm depends on the way that you think about the development of knowledge (Saunders *et al.*, 2003) and it has been argued that all research work is based on a certain vision of the world which it employs as a

methodology and proposes results aimed at predicting, prescribing, understanding or explaining (Seville *et al.*, 2001).

Guba (1990) further argued that paradigms can be characterized by the way their proponents respond to three basic questions, which can be characterized as the ontological, the epistemological, and the methodological questions. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) agreed that each paradigm is distinguished by certain ontological assumptions, then followed by epistemological assumptions and in turn result in methodological assumptions and methods of inquiry. Jennings (2001) summarised the terms and definitions for theoretical paradigm in the manner shown in table 3.1.

<b>Table 3.1 Definitions of research components</b>	
<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Paradigm	A set of beliefs
Ontology	The nature of reality
Epistemology	The relationship between the researcher and the subjects / objects
Methodology	The set of guidelines for conducting research
Method	The tools for data collection and analysis

Source: adapted Jennings (2001)

Ontology is concerned with the questions ‘what is the nature of the “knowable”?’ It refers to how individuals view the outside world and what the nature of “reality” is. A *realist* ontology views reality as absolute and based on facts whereas a *relativist* sees reality as an individual socially structured reality. Epistemology is concerned with what we can know about reality. It is also concerned about the nature of the

relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable). Methodology tries to answer how the inquirer should go about finding out knowledge. In other words, methodology is the entire process of the research and how research should be undertaken (Saunders *et al* 2003). Finally, method is the tools or techniques used to obtain and analyse research data, for example questionnaires, interviews and statistical or non-statistical techniques (Saunders *et al* 2003).

### **3.3 Post-positivist research**

Post positivism is also known as post-empiricism (Willis, 2006) and is characterized as a modified version of positivism. Historically, post-positivism has developed, matured and evolved over the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In an early dialogue of paradigm, Guba (1990) explained that ontologically, post positivism moves from what is recognised as a “naïve” realist posture termed as *critical realism*. Even though the real world is influenced by the existence of the real natural causes, it is impossible for humans truly to perceive it with their imperfect sensory and intellectual mechanism. Reality exists but can never be fully apprehended. It is driven by natural laws that can be only incompletely understood.

To a post positivist, *epistemologically* objectivity remains a regulatory ideal but it can only be approximated with special emphasis placed on external guardians such as the critical tradition and the critical community (Guba, 1990:23). In discussing methodology in post positivism, the emphasis rests on critical multiplism by

undertaking inquiry in more natural setting. In some cases, by using more qualitative methods, it depends more on grounded theory and re-introducing discovery into the inquiry process (Guba, 1990).

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, post positivism research has further evolved. It involves six basic steps (Willis, 2006):

1. Find an idea you want to research.
2. Develop or select theory about the area you want to research.
3. Develop specific, testable hypotheses.
4. Design a scientific study.
5. Analyse the data.
6. Report your work.

To a post-positivist, knowing the ‘idea’ of research is a must and the idea of research can come anywhere, it can come from the individual’s own experiences, from qualitative data or from previous study. A post-positivist develops or selects a theory and it can be meta-theory or mid-level theory. A post positivist develops or selects the area of interested research derived from theory and establishes hypotheses or research questions. A scientific study is traditionally designed to objectively gather quantitative data under controlled conditions that allows one to draw conclusions about the hypotheses. The data are analysed using standard statistical techniques and results are interpreted using guidelines of the scientific method. Finally, the work is reported in an objective manner.

Table 3.2 The elements of Post- Positivism	
Worldview Element	Post positivism
Ontology (What is the nature of reality)	Singular Reality (e.g., researchers reject or fail to reject hypotheses)
Epistemology (What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?)	Distance and impartially (e.g., researchers objectively collect data on instruments)
Axiology (What is the role of values)	Unbiased (e.g., researchers use checks to eliminate bias)
Methodology (What is the process of research)	Deductive (e.g., researchers test an a priori theory)
Rhetoric (What is the language of research)	Formal style (e.g., researchers use agreed-on definitions of variables)

Source: adapted from Creswell and Clark (2007)

Creswell & Clark (2007) stated that post-positivism is therefore often associated with quantitative approach. They further explained that researchers make claims for knowledge based on (a) determinism or cause-and-effect thinking; (b) reductionism, by narrowing and focusing on select variables to interrelate; (c) detailed observations and measures of variables; and (d) the testing of theories that are continually refined. Table 3.2 describes Creswell's and Clark's (2007) views of the elements in post positivism.

On the other hand, post positivists argue that you can never be sure that the next research study will not be the one that shows your theory is wrong. Consensual truth is gained in positivism through replication of findings, but if one study produces data that contradicts existing theory, it is enough to falsify the theory (Willis, 2006). Most

researchers who work in the post positivism tradition have adopted modified objectivism to justify falsification; in which the results may be contextually bound by factors such as place, time, culture or society.

Post-positivists agreed that research can never truly represent what occurs in the social world. Research exists but can never fully apprehend reality. It is driven by natural laws that can only be incompletely understood. Jennings (2001) stated that post-positivism asserts that there is no one truth that describes social phenomena as all phenomena are different. She further argues that the world is chaotic, one with patterns and differing predictabilities without linkages to the past or to the future.

### **3.4 Paradigm used for this study**

This study will apply a post-positivistic approach to answer the proposed research questions. Review of the previous literature in turnover reveals that most studies of labour turnover used this approach. Positivist research uses precise, objective measures and is usually associated with quantitative data (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2000). Quantitative methods were a popular method used in labour turnover studies in the hospitality industry (e.g., Deery & Shaw, 1998; Mc Bey *et al.*, 2001; Birdir, 2002; Gustafon, 2002), but a limited numbers of studies use the qualitative or mixed methodologies (Leidner, 1991, 1993; Reiter, 1997).

For this study, the application of a post-positivistic approach was encouraged by the approach adopted by Willis (2006). Willis (2006) emphasised five major issues in post-positivism: nature of reality, purpose of research, acceptable methods and data, meaning of data and relationship of research to practice. In this study, the nature of reality in post positivism meant the researcher needs to know precisely what is to be studied and how the research will be conducted. Post-positivism assumes that all meaningful problems can be framed in clear-cut, unambiguous ways. This study applies a post-positivist approach with the aim to better understand the determinant that may influence employee intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry. Additionally, this approach is chosen to provide recommendations to enable the fast food restaurant operators to reduce employee intention to leave their job. Within post-positivism, the researcher has to develop a specific research questions to be answered.

Creswell (2003) associated post positivism with determination, reductionism, empirical observation and measurement and theory verification. More recently, Creswell and Clark (2007) have argued how a worldview provides a foundation for mixed methods research. Pragmatism is typically associated with mixed method research. The focus is on the consequences of research, on the primary importance of the question asked rather than the methods, and multiple methods of data collection inform the problems under study. Thus it is pluralistic and oriented toward ‘what works’ and practice. Table 3.3 compares the post positivistic and pragmatist approaches.

3.3 Post-Positivism and Pragmatism	
Post positivism	Pragmatism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determinism</li> <li>• Reductionism</li> <li>• Empirical observation and measurement</li> <li>• Theory verification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consequences of actions</li> <li>• Problem centered</li> <li>• Pluralistic</li> <li>• Real-world practice oriented</li> </ul>

Source: adopted from Creswell and Clark (2007).

### 3.5 Quantitative research methodology

Quantitative research methodologies emphasise the collection of data, measurement of variables and analysis of causal relationships between variables. They imply assumptions of meaning for the phenomenon as well as the examination of the distribution of its occurrence by asking specific, narrow questions and generally through numerical data collection. According to Creswell (2005) the causes of an occurrence can be explained through objective measurement and analyzing the distribution of its occurrence by using statistics.

### 3.6 Quantitative research methods

This section discusses the methods for data collection and analysis used in this study. A survey method is the favoured tool of many of those engaged in research. It can often provide a cheap and effective way of collecting data in a structured and manageable form (Wilkinson & Birmingham (2003).

### **3.6.1 Survey method**

Data collection is a process of discovery and invention that requires an epistemological position on the part of the researcher, but, however, which is often not explicitly stated by the researcher (Baumard & Ibert, 2001). In this study the primary method for data collection was the survey method. Such a procedure can be used to collect data from individuals that can include beliefs, opinions, attitudes, etc. as well as factual data. Saunders *et al.*, (2003) stated surveys require each respondent to reply to the same set of questions and it provides an efficient way of collecting responses from a large sample prior to statistical analysis, while retaining a high degree of homogeneity within the sample set.

Consequently a survey often involves lower costs and is less time consuming as well as possessing geographic flexibility when compared to alternative methods of data collection (Saunders *et al.*, 2003), and often involves collecting data from large numbers of respondents (Lancaster, 2005). Creswell (2005) adds that a survey is more concerned with providing information about a population but is not really concerned with the characteristics of individuals as an individual. The researcher basically uses a survey to test theories to support or refute the relationship statements in a theory or model (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Generally, there are two types of questionnaire: open or closed ended questions. A researcher can, of course, mix open and closed questions in her questionnaire.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) highlighted nine strengths of questionnaires;

- Good for measuring attitudes and eliciting other content from research participants
- Inexpensive (especially mail questionnaires and group-administered questionnaires)
- Can administer to probability samples
- Quick turnaround
- Can be administered to a group
- Perceived anonymity by respondents is possibly high
- Moderately high measurement validity for well-constructed and well-tested questionnaires
- Low loss rate for close-ended questionnaires
- Ease of data analysis for closed-ended items

### **3.6.2 The development of the questionnaires**

This research used seven-point Likert-type items. Likert scales are acknowledged to be one of the most common accurate methods of gathering respondents' opinions (Brown, 1996). Emory and Cooper (1991) agreed that a properly constructed scale can contribute efficiently to the accuracy of responses. Thus, this scale is used to enable respondents to make clear and quick judgements and at the same time, to achieve accurate measurement. A structured questionnaire was used because it provides a straightforward way of obtaining information, and allows systematic comparison between cases on the same characteristics (de Vaus 2002). The development of the questionnaire for this current study followed that done by Firth *et al.*, (2004). The purpose was to assess possible determinants that may influence

employees' intention to leave a job in the retail industry. There were fifty one items asked in Fifth *et al*'s questionnaire organised into eight sections.

Section A was about demographic profiles and the researcher adopted all five questions asked. Section two asked how much you agree or disagree with statements related to the respondent's job. Of twelve questions asked, nine were adopted and three were modified to meet the researcher's objectives. One further question was added. Section three was omitted but all items in section four were adopted except for one. Section five asked how satisfied or dissatisfied respondents were with various aspects of their job and all eight items were taken and reworded. No items were taken from section six. All questions from section seven and eight were taken but reworded to meet the context of the Malaysian fast food industry.

Consequently, the questionnaire was adapted, adopted, and modified in design for the fast food industry in Malaysia. Section A of the final questionnaire included the statements related to employees' job stressors. Job stressors in this study comprise of role ambiguity, work-family conflict and role conflict. Thirteen items are listed and nine questions were taken from Firth *et al.*, (2004) study. To answer this section, employees circled their responses on a 7 point Likert- type scale where '1' equals "very strongly disagree" and '7' equals "very strongly agree". Section B asked about employee attitude towards stress at workplace. There were eight items asked within the stress context which includes job burn-out, anxiety and somatic complaints. The second part asked about employees' feelings about the job and seventeen questions were asked in this section. The questions were modified by the researcher to fit a

Malaysian context and culture. The same 7-point scale was used to indicate levels of agreement with the statements.

Additionally, section B also assesses statements related to employee intention to stop working in this industry. A 7 point Likert- type scale was again used for the questions where ‘1’ equals “Not at all” and ‘7’ equals “Very often”. Two questions were adapted from Firth *et al.*, (2004) and six questions were from previous studies reviewed in chapter two. In section C, questions were asked to indicate job satisfaction and the same 7-point scale was employed. There were twenty three questions asked and fourteen were taken from the Firth *et al.*, (2004) study. The remaining 9 questions were developed by the researcher. In section D, demographic data were collected and included gender, age group, ethnic group, and religion, level of education, marital status and tenure of working. Table 3.4 below shows the variables, items and reliability (alpha). On the other hand, table 3.5 highlights items used in the questionnaire and related literature review.

Table 3.4 Items used in questionnaire		
Variables	Items	Reliability (alpha)
Job Stressor	13	0.730
Job Stress	8	0.871
Job Satisfaction	23	0.960
Intention to leave	8	0.741
Job Feeling (Developed for this study)	17	0.768

Table 3.5 Items used in questionnaire and related Literature

Items used in Questionnaire	Related Literature Review
<i>Job stressor</i> – refer to the factors that may influence one’s stress and often associated with role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload	Law & Woods (1995); Carbery & Garavan (2003); Hang-yue et al., (2005); Firth et al., (2004); Glazer & Beehr (2005); Ngo et al., (2005); etc
<i>Job stress</i> – refer to one’s feeling burnt-out and having anxiety and somatic complaints	Zohar (1994); Birdir et al., (2003); Rowley & Purcell (2001); Firth et al., (2004); Krone et al., (1986); Kim (2007); Kim et al., (2007); Kim (2009); etc
<i>Job satisfaction and commitment</i> – refer to one’s emotional states resulting from the job experiences	Brough & Frame (2004); Firth et al., (2004); Lam & Zhang (2003); Carmeli & Freund (2004); Lam & Baum (2001); Elangovan (2001); etc
<i>Intention to leave a job</i> – refer to employee intention to search a new job or to quit his current job for whatever reasons	Firth et al., (2004); Price & Muller (1981); Moore (2002); Khatri et al., (2001); Greenhaus (1992); Bloomme et al., (2008); etc

For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was also modified based on the results of a pilot test. The questionnaire was translated wholly into Malay language by the researcher and certified by a qualified Malay – English translator using a reverse translation. On the other hand, seven points were selected on the basis that they were easily understood when labelled and permitted discrimination for statistical testing. The items were derived from previous studies and were:

**a) Job stressor variable**

Role ambiguity

- 1) My job responsibilities are well-defined
- 2) My job objectives are well-defined
- 3) It is clear what my fellow worker expect of me at my job
- 4) At my job, I practice teamwork

Role conflict

- 1) To satisfy someone at my job, I have to upset others
- 2) At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines
- 3) It seems that I have more work at my job than I can handle
- 4) My job require continuous hard work

Work-family conflict

- 1) My job schedule does not interferes with my family life
- 2) My job makes me too tired to enjoy my family life
- 3) My job give me enough time for family activities
- 4) My job does give me enough time to socialize

Role/ work overload

- 1) I am given enough time to do what is expected of me at my job

**b) Job stress variable**

**Job burn out**

- 1) I feel burnt-out at my job
- 2) I feel frustrated at my job
- 3) I feel tense at my job
- 4) I feel stigmatized at my job

**Anxiety & somatic complaints**

- 1) I lose my appetite because of my job-related problems
- 2) Job-related problems keep me awake all night
- 3) Job-related problems make my stomach upset
- 4) Job-related problems make my heart beat faster than usual

**c) Job satisfaction & commitment variable**

**Satisfaction**

- 1) My job is very secure
- 2) Physical condition at my workplace are very good
- 3) The benefits (uniform, insurance, etc) given to me are excellent

- 4) The welfare (accommodation, staff meals, etc) given to me are excellent
- 5) I receive a good pay rates for my work
- 6) My working hours are adequate
- 7) I get a good recognition when I do a good job
- 8) I have a freedom to do my best at my job
- 9) Career advancement at my current job is very good
- 10) I am enjoying my current job
- 11) I am satisfied with the location of the outlet that I have been assigned to work
- 12) My supervisor's style in managing staff is excellent
- 13) I have been provided excellent training since I started to work here

**Commitment**

- 1) I am prepared to work harder than I have to in order this outlet to be successful
- 2) I am proud to work for this outlet
- 3) I am happy working in this outlet
- 4) I feel loyalty to this outlet
- 5) I really care about the fate of this outlet
- 6) I would recommend this outlet to work
- 7) I feel this outlet offers attractive work conditions
- 8) I hope I can work in this industry until retirement

**d) Intention to leave a job**

- 1) How often do you think of leaving your present job?
- 2) How often do you think to work in some other industry?
- 3) How often do you think of better-paid position?
- 4) How much do you think that this is the best outlets to work for?
- 5) How often you care about the future of this outlet?
- 6) How often your spouse/families influence your job choice?
- 7) How often you feel satisfied working in this industry?

Below are the items developed by the author to find out how the employees felt about working in the Malaysian fast food industry.

**Job feeling**

- 1) I feel my educational background is suited to my current job
- 2) I work to satisfy my parents
- 3) I work here because I want to work in this industry
- 4) I work here because it was easy to get this job
- 5) I work here on a temporary basis to earn some extra money
- 6) I do consider this type of work as a proper job

- 7) I am given time to meet my religious obligation during working hours
- 8) I am allowed to wear Tudung during working hours
- 9) This job gives me opportunity to meet new people
- 10) I work here because I enjoy it
- 11) I work here because I enjoy the company of my co-workers
- 12) I spend times with my co-workers for social life outside of workplace
- 13) I get well on with my supervisors
- 14) I would like to make a career in the fast food industry
- 15) I would like to get promotion in this company
- 16) I work here to support my study
- 17) I work here to support my family

In term of job satisfaction and commitment, 9 items were also developed in the questionnaires.

#### **Job satisfaction and commitment**

- 1) My working hours are adequate
- 2) I am satisfied with the location of the outlet that I have been assigned to work
- 3) My supervisor's style in managing staff is excellent
- 4) I have been provided excellent training since I started to work here
- 5) I am happy working in this outlet
- 6) I talk about this outlet to my friends as a great place to work
- 7) I would recommend this outlet to work
- 8) I feel this outlet offers attractive work conditions
- 9) I hope I can work in this industry until retirement

### **3.7 Pilot study**

According to Bourque and Fielder (1995), all questionnaires should be pre-tested or pilot tested. Pilot studies collect data to serve as a guide for the larger study and rigorous standards as to sample size and representative mixture do not apply (Zikmund 2000). The purpose of the pre-test is to check whether the ideas in each question are clear to respondents. The pilot study should be piloted with a reasonable

sample of respondents who came from the target population and a pilot study of 30 respondents is common (Cavana *et al.*, 2000).

For this study, a pilot study was conducted among fast food employees in fast food outlets in Kuala Lumpur. Three outlets participated and questionnaires were given to the manager on duty. The number of pilot study questionnaires distributed was fifty with outlet A, where nineteen questionnaires completed. In each of outlets B and C, fifteen questionnaires were distributed. One week was given to complete the questionnaires. Respondents were asked to check for wording, layout and comprehension. After one week, thirty one questionnaires were returned. Thirteen were from outlet A, eleven from outlet B and six from outlet C. Nineteen employees did not return the questionnaires because they refused to participate. Subsequently, some changes were made in order to make sure the questionnaires would be clear to the employees.

The information gathered from the pilot test was as follows:

- The manager informed the researcher that many of the staff / crew in the outlet did not understand the questions written in English;
- The manager also added that an additional question was needed, namely “how long have you been working in this industry”

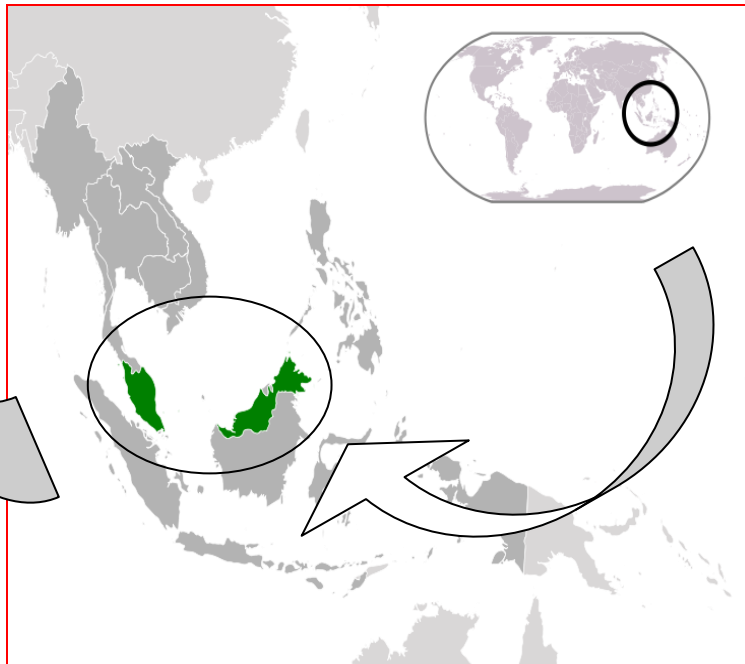
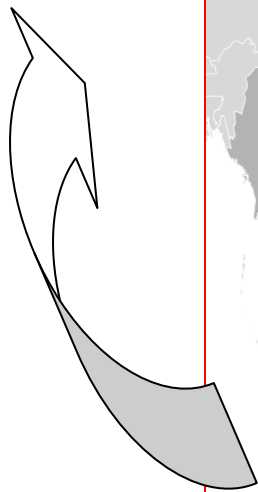
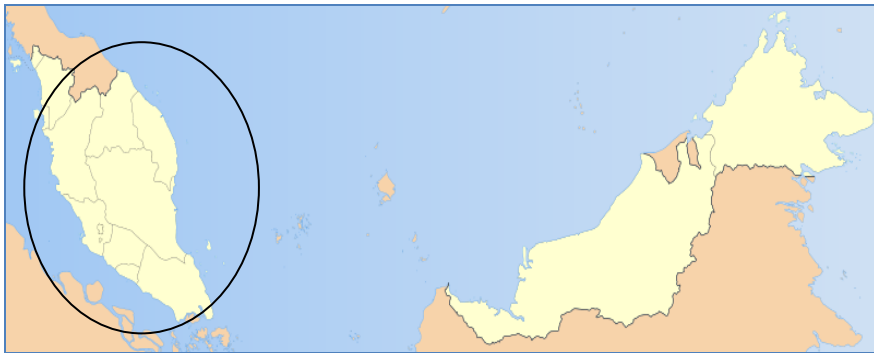
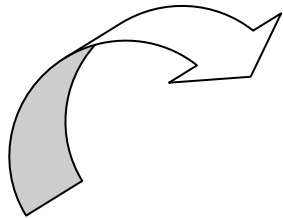
The following changes were made based upon pilot test:

- Even though it can be said Malaysians can understand and write English well, the questionnaire was translated wholly into Malay by the researcher and certified by a qualified Malay – English translator using a reverse translation.
- One question was added “How long have you been working in this industry” because the manager mentioned that some employees had been working quite some time in the industry but were probably new to a particular outlet

Even though, the questionnaire seemed long most employees agreed that it was not too-time consuming. The layout of the questionnaires was considered well organised and encouraged them to participate (Saunders *et al.*, 2003). Finally, the questionnaire was reviewed several times by this study’s supervisors before being distributed to employees in the fast food industry.

### **3.8 Population**

The population for this study comprised all fast food major operators in Peninsular (West) Malaysia. Malaysia has thirteen states and is divided by 2 distinct parts, namely first Peninsular Malaysia which is located north of Singapore, south of Thailand and second, eastern Malaysia Peninsular Malaysia consists of Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Johor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Selangor, Perak, Pulau Pinang, Kedah and Perlis. East Malaysia is located on the island of Borneo and borders with Brunei and Indonesia. East Malaysia consisted of Sabah and Sarawak. Figure 3.1 gives a clearer view of Malaysia’s geography.



In addition, Peninsular Malaysia which is also known as West Malaysia, accounts for the majority of Malaysia's population and is more developed when compared to East Malaysia. To avoid the idea that the West and East Malaysia are separate, the term Peninsular is commonly used within the country.

It perhaps needs to be clearly stated that this study did not focus on fast ethnic foods as found in market stalls, but was solely focussed on the fast food outlets that operate under branded chain franchise/names. This is because local fast food business only covering local food such as fried noodle, fried rice, traditional dessert, etc and in most cases it is family oriented business.

Six companies were willing participated in this study. For the purpose of this thesis and confidentiality reasons, the researcher created fictitious names to give them identity and personality. They account for the major players in the Malaysian fast food industry and the chosen names were Golden Chicken, Big Burger, The fastfood, Hot hot Dog, Homemade Pizza and ABC Fast.

### **3.9 Sample selection**

In this study the sample were fast food employees chosen from all the fast food outlets identified above and working in the different capacities of part-time, full-time, managerial or non managerial level. All had an equal chance to participate in this study. Peninsular Malaysia was selected because more fast food outlets were based

here than in East Malaysia, while it was also impracticable to study the whole of Malaysia because of budget and time constraints (Saunders *et al.*, 2003). The sample is more fully described when commencing an analysis of the results.

### **3.10 Research methods used in this study**

Mixed method research involves both collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data and is commonly used within the confines of a single study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This study used a mixed methodology approach (quantitative and qualitative). Creswell & Clark (2007:33) stated,

“When only one approach to research (quantitative or qualitative) is inadequate by itself to address the research problem, mixed methods research is preferred design. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data provides a more complete picture by noting trends and generalizations as well as in-depth knowledge of participants’ perspectives. Situations in which this might occur are when a potential exists that one form of evidence (qualitative or quantitative) might contradict the other form of evidence (quantitative or qualitative).”

The main reason for using a mixed method approach was to better answer the research questions and to provide more rich data. Additionally, as quantitative data form the major dataset in this study, qualitative data were used to help define the items used in the questionnaires. The use of mixed method is also encouraged by Denzin and Lincoln (2003). They argued that “quantitative researchers are seldom able to capture their subjects’ perspectives because they have to rely on more remote, inferential empirical methods and materials” whereas qualitative researchers think they can get closer to the individuals through detailed interviewing and observation.

The other reason for using mixed methodology was that in many cases the quantitative method only answered questions of ‘what’ whereas a qualitative method could probe the questions deeper by asking questions ‘why’ and ‘how’.

Creswell & Clark (2007) highlighted four major types of mixed methods design; a) triangulation; b) embedded; c) explanatory and d) exploratory design. However, the most common and best-known to mixed methods is triangulation design. This study primarily implements an exploratory design. It is a one-phase design in which researcher uses quantitative and qualitative methods during the same timeframe. It means the collection of data, analysis and interpretation are done at approximately at the same time. Cross-checking helps the researcher to understand the research problem even though in some cases it involves the concurrent but separate, collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

In this study, the quantitative approach is the major part of the research. This is in line with Creswell & Clark’s (2007) argument that a post-positivist world view calls for a quantitative study as a priority. The main objective of this study was to identify determinants that influence the intention to leave a job in Peninsular Malaysian fast food industry. However, while the main dataset was gathered from the employees’ perspective, qualitative data was sought for a managerial perspective. Additionally, employees were also interviewed to better answer the issues on stress at workplace. According to Lam *et al.*, (2001) employees might suppress their negative feelings and not disclose their dissatisfaction in the survey (Lam *et al.*, 2001). The process of interviewing employees was also done to probe for deeper answers (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2003). Finally, the researcher merged the two data sets by bringing the separate results together in the interpretation.

### **3.11 Quantitative data collection methods**

Participants were selected by a convenience sampling technique from chains of the fast food restaurants identified above within Peninsular Malaysia. The desired sample size was 1200 fast food restaurants employees. The survey was conducted from June to September 2007.

Initially, the researcher tried to approach the six fast food head offices to participate in this study. The researcher explained via a telephone call the purpose of this study and invited those companies to participate in this study. After the phone calls made, the author followed up with an official letter on the university's letter head to further support the application. The researcher confirmed that data gathered would be kept confidential and used for academic research only.

However, only two Head Offices were willing to participate in this study. Similarly, Allan *et al.* (2006) in their study had difficulties of researching the fast-food industry as employers are often reluctant to allow researchers access to their operations. The managers at head office do not allow third party to survey their staff because they do not want any interruption during their business time. In other cases, other scholars have avoided the difficulty of securing research access from the employers and relied

instead on interviews with fast-food employees away from the workplace (Schlosser, 2001; Tannock, 2001).

The two companies were very cooperative and helpful. They provided a formal letter stating that they had given consent to allow the researcher to conduct research fieldwork at their outlets. Lists of the outlets were also given so that the researcher could contact them easily before distributing the questionnaire. In addition, the companies reminded the researcher to ensure that data collection process did not interrupt their daily operations.

Data were collected from the remaining 4 chains through contacts at branch level generated by the researcher in her professional capacity as an academic in foodservice and hospitality at a Malaysian university. Eventually, permission was obtained from the head offices of two companies, and from branch managers of the other companies after personal calls were made. Finally, the researcher went to the outlets to distribute the questionnaires. Questionnaires accompanied by a covering letter approved by the Head Office explaining the purpose of this study was presented to managers on duty. The researcher gave questionnaires to managers in each outlet to distribute among his/her staff. Two to three weeks time was allowed for the data collection. After that, the researcher herself collected the completed questionnaires from the manager. To ensure that responses were not seen by employers and to protect employees' anonymity, envelopes were given with the questionnaire so those completed could not be seen by other people.

### **3.12 Qualitative research methodology**

A qualitative approach can lead to a much greater of understanding of the meaning, context of behaviour and the process that takes place within observed patterns of interrelated factors (Brannen, 1992). Creswell (2005) agreed that in qualitative research methodology, the researcher relies on the opinion of individuals, asks broad, general questions and data collection consists largely of words or texts. According to Ryan (1995), qualitative research can be divided to main categories; field research and open-ended interviewing techniques. He further explained that qualitative research is not limited in its use to answering questions of a descriptive concern, but also considers issues of a causal nature.

### **3.13 Qualitative research methods**

The interview is one of the favourite methodology tools for a qualitative researcher. It is one of the more common and powerful ways to understand individuals (Fontana & Frey in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). They further explain that an interview is not only a conversation but requires the art of asking questions and listening where the interviewer creates the reality of the interview situation. An interview is where the researcher “speaks” to the respondents directly, asking questions and recording answers (Hair *et al.*, 1998) and it is influenced by the characteristics of the interviewer and respondents including race, class, ethnicity and gender. In social science, there are three major forms of doing interviews- structured, unstructured and open-ended (Fontana & Frey in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Interviews can be conducted in a variety of ways (Creswell, 2005) and have a variety of forms and a multiplicity of uses. Fontana & Frey (1998) identified four types of interview: individual (face-to-face) interviews, group interview (focus group), mailed and telephone surveys. It also can be structured, semi structured or unstructured. Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003) highlighted ten advantages of doing interviews as being;

- Good for measuring attitudes and most other content of interest
- Allow probing by the interviewer
- Can provide in-depth information
- Allow good interpretive validity
- Low loss rate for closed-ended interviews
- Very quick turnaround for telephone interview
- Moderately high measurement validity for well-constructed and well-tested interview
- Can use with probability sample
- Relatively high response rates often attainable
- Useful for exploration and confirmation

For this study, qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with Human Resource Managers/ Personnel Managers and Training Managers of the selected fast food outlets. There were 7 managers from the six companies who were willing to be interviewed. Semi- structured interviews were used to generate a spontaneous situation where questions could be asked in any sequence or order dependent on responses made.

Initially, the interviews were contacted via telephone to invite participation. A formal letter was provided requesting interview participation. After a week, the initial letters

were followed up and the researcher calling the respective managers to confirm participation and interview meeting. Of 12 managers to be interviewed, only seven gave consent for participation. The remaining five were not interested in participating due to their company's policy and time constraints. As agreed by the managers, the interview took place at their offices except for two cases. The manager from the Big Burger preferred having an interview at her home whereas the manager for Fastfood preferred to have the interview at his store/ outlet. The interviews were started with the consent verbally stated and recorded by the managers. The interviews were based on semi-structured questions and lasted from 30 minutes to an hour.

The interview was conducted in English and interviewees did not have any language or other problems during the interview process. The interviews were recorded on digital MP3 and were conducted with the following semi-structured questions.

- How many branches do you have in Malaysia? And in Kuala Lumpur only?
- How many employees do you have in each branch?
- What is your business operation time? And how many shifts do you have?
- Number of employee recruited by states and branch?
- How do you recruit and select prospective employee?
- How effective are your recruitment and selection procedure?
- What is your turnover rate for managerial and non-managerial employees?
- Is the turnover rates is high in your branch?
- (If the answer is “no”) How do you keep the turnover rate low?
- (If the answer is “ yes”) Why the turnover rate is high in your branch?
- How effective is your training programme?
- How many staffs you trained in one time?
- How do you manage unhappy staff?
- How do you reduce employee intention to quit?

- What is the minimum wages for hourly staff?
- What is the employee benefit and welfare offered to staff?
- Roughly, how many customers come to your branch everyday?

The results of these discussions are discussed more fully in the next chapter. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were also done to gather information on job stress, burnt-out or job tense. Ten employees were willing to participate and the interviews were taken about 30 minutes at their preferred place. Due to personal reasons some of employees requested the interviews not to be recorded. But they were aware that the researcher has to write down the conversation. One of reasons why employees preferred not to record the conversation was because they were afraid that it will affect his/her job if the management knew about the interviews. Similarly, the interviews were conducted in English and no problems arose during the interview process.

The questions asked were as follow:

- What do you understand about job stress or stress at workplace?
- Have you ever felt stress/ burnt-out/tense/ frustrated or stigmatised at workplace?
- Can you give reasons why you felt that?
- How frequently you have felt stress?
- How did you handle or overcome stress?
- How long have you worked in the fast food industry?

### **3.14 Research ethics**

This section discusses briefly research ethics in general as well as research ethics during data collection and data analysis. The research was conducted in accordance with the principles of ethical research as enunciated by University of Waikato guidelines. The researcher abided by the regulations prescribed by the Human Research Ethics Regulations. And the researcher hereby confirms that the research ethics guidelines for the questionnaires distribution and interview process with reference to privacy, informed consent, special consideration and confidentiality were practised.

During quantitative data collection, consent was approved by the Head Offices and the Managers of outlets. An approval letter was showed before conducting surveys and the daily operations of the outlets were guaranteed not to be interrupted. For the qualitative approach, consent was verbally said by the interviewee before interviews taken. To ensure confidentiality, tape and transcribed data are accessible only to the researcher and her supervisors. The files will be destroyed after submission of the thesis in accordance with university regulations.

The researcher also ensured that consents were sought from all participants in both qualitative and quantitative studies. Moreover, all the participants in this research were aware that the data they provided would be for the researcher's PhD thesis and possible academic journal articles and conference papers. Participants' real names

and the companies' names will not be revealed on any of the transcriptions or in any form of published work derived from this research.

# **CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS AND INTERVIEWS QUOTATION**

## **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter briefly describes an analysis of data collected from respondents. First, this chapter reports the respondents' demographic profiles. It includes respondents' age, gender, marital status, presence or absence of children, ethnicity, education background, tenure in the outlets or the fast food industry, hours worked and lastly companies they worked for. The study is based on a total of 806 valid responses and the overall descriptive results are explained in detail below. Qualitative interviews were also utilised to further explain the descriptive results.

## **4.2 Sample characteristics**

A total of 1200 questionnaires were distributed and 806 usable responses were returned for a 67.17 percent response rate. The sample includes a higher number of males (51.2 percent) than female employees (47.3 percent). As indicated in previous literature, most fast food industry's employees are young and unmarried (Allan *et al.*, 2006) and also the industry employs many young people for the sake of their corporate image (Curtis & Wright, 2001). These young people are also needed in the fast food industry because they are more 'energetic' than older people and this industry is associated with fast service. The majority of respondents were between 21 years old to 30 years old (47.7 percent) followed by those aged below than 20 years

old (44.4 percent). Of 410 male employees there were about 191 aged below 20 years, and 197 aged between 21 years to 30 years. The distribution of other age groups is shown in table 4.1. Of 380 female employees, the largest numbers of respondents were those aged 21 to 30 years old. Then, it was followed by 167 employees aged below 20 years old. There were about 24 female employees aged from 31 to 40 years old, 7 aged from 41 to 50 years old and 3 employees were above 60 years old.

Out of the 806 employees who returned the questionnaire, the Malay ethnic group is the largest group working in the fast food outlets comprising 90.3 percent of the sample. These were followed by Indians with 4.6 percent and Chinese and others each accounted for 1.7 percent. Since Malays were the largest group, 90.4 percent employees were Muslim and a small number were Christian, Buddhist, Hindu or others. Based on this current study, about 42.2 percent of Malay employees were aged from 21 to 30 years old and 43.8 percent aged below 20 years old. The second largest group was Indian with 2.0 percent aged between 21 to 30 years old and 1.9 percent aged below 20 years old.

Most respondents' were well educated and 69.2 percent had the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM, Malaysian Certificate of Education), 10.9 percent a bachelor's degree, 9.7 percent a diploma and 6.0 percent identified other qualifications. SPM is a national examination taken by all fifth form students at the age of 17 years old. The SPM is equivalent to the British GCSE, and provides an opportunity for Malaysians to continue their studies to pre-university level. It is unusual to know one without the SPM qualification in Malaysia. The majority of the employees were SPM leavers

who were working in the fast food industry while waiting for their SPM results. The results of the candidates will usually be released after 3 months the candidates sat for the examination.

<b>Table 4.1 Sample profile</b>			
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender	Male	413	51.2
	Female	381	47.3
	Not Applicable/Have No Opinion	12	1.5
	Total	806	100.0
Age Group	Below 20 years	358	44.4
	21 years – 30 years	377	47.7
	31 years – 40 years	41	5.1
	Above 40 years	14	5.5
	Not Applicable/Have No Opinion	16	2.0
	Total	806	100.0
Ethnicity	Malay	728	90.3
	Non Malay	65	8.3
	Not Applicable/Have No Opinion	13	1.6
	Total	806	100.0
Religion	Muslim	729	90.4
	Non Muslim	62	7.7
	Not Applicable/Have No Opinion	15	1.9
	Total	806	100.0
Education background	SPM	558	69.2
	Diploma	78	9.7
	Degree	88	10.9
	Others	55	6.0
	Not Applicable/Have No Opinion	34	
	Total	806	100.0
Marital Status	Single	680	84.4
	Married	109	13.5
	Not Applicable/Have No Opinion	17	2.1
	Total	806	100.0
Children	Yes	72	8.9
	No	688	85.4
	Not Applicable/Have No Opinion	46	5.70
	Total	806	100.0

About 84.4 percent of these respondents were single and only 13.5 percent married.

As the majority of employees were single, the result showed only 8.9 percent employees had children to look after. This may be significant as the need to look after young children might have been a contributing factor to stress at work because of potential conflicts of responsibility.

In addition, two questions were asked to gather information on the length of employment. For the fast food industry itself, the majority of employees had worked in the industry for less than 3 years. There were about 25.6 percent who had worked less than 6 months, 22.6 percent between 6 months to less than 1 year and about 25.2 percent had worked for between 1 and 3 years. Out of 806 employees who participated in this study there were only 22 employees who had worked for than 10 years in this industry. For the outlet itself, frequencies showed that about 32.3 percent employees had worked in their current outlet for less than 6 months.

There was a small percentage (1.6 percent) who had worked in that particular outlet for more than 10 years. The results clearly show that the majority of employees had worked for less than 3 years in any one particular outlet or in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry as a whole. At this stage, the question remains unanswered as to why employees did not want to work in this industry and why only small numbers have worked more than 10 years.

For example, in regards to the age structure of the workforce in the fast food industry, one of the managers at a head office stated:

*“(The) majority of staff working with us are SPM leavers or from at the age of 17 years old and above. The oldest staff is 45 years old and she is the one and only at that age...”*

Human resource manager of Big Burger

A human resource manager at Big Burger held a similar view, stating: “A large proportion of our employees are above 17 years old. But we also have an employee aged 55 years old”

Training manager of ABC Fast

Of the sample, about 63.9 percent of employees worked for more than 40 hours a week and about 30.3 percent worked for less 40 hours a week. The fast food industry is a service-oriented industry and it commonly operates on shiftwork. The observance of shift work was commented upon in interviews with the managers at the head office.

For example:

*“Our business hour is from 10am to 10.30pm and we have 3 shifts which we called opening, middle and closing. But in some cases, we do extend our business operation time. We also have shift work start from 9am to 5pm, 12am to 8pm and start at 4pm to 12pm”*

Restaurant manager of Big Burger

*“We only have 2 shifts which start 10am to 10pm and 7am to 12 midnight. But in certain events we do extend our operating hours”*

Human resource manager of Hot Hotdog

*“We are operating 3 shifts which start at 9am to 10pm, 8am to 4pm and 3pm to 11pm. If we have special event or occasion we will extend our business operation time to 1 o’clock in the morning”*

Training manager of ABC Fast

*“We are operating 24 hours and we have 3 shifts and for the 1<sup>st</sup> shift the business hours commences from 7.30am to 3.30pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> shift start at 3.30pm to 11.30pm and the 3<sup>rd</sup> shift from 11.30pm until 7.30am the next morning”*

Human resource manager of Burger King

The interviews quoted stated the most popular starting and finishing times in the fast food industry is from 9am to 10pm and extension hours are common to these 3 companies. This is a reality in the fast food industry to meet customers’ demand and in turn requires employees to work extra hours. The result was in line with a previous study which showed that working in the fast food industry requires an employee to work for long working hours (Lam & Zhang, 2003). Aminuddin (2005) commented that logically longer working hours could increase fatigue which subsequently leads to more mistakes, more accidents, slower speed of work and ultimately reduced productivity.

<b>Table 4.2 Employees Job Tenure</b>			
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Tenure (Fast Food Industry)	Less than 6 months	206	25.6
	6 months – less than 1 year	182	22.6
	1 – less than 3 years	203	25.2
	3 - less than 5 years	77	9.6
	5 – less than 10 years	73	9.1
	10 years and above	22	2.6
	Not Applicable/Have No Opinion	43	5.3
	Total	806	100.0
Tenure (Outlet)	Less than 6 months	260	32.3
	6 months – less than 1 year	158	19.6
	1 – less than 3 years	239	29.6
	3 - less than 5 years	57	7.0
	5 – less than 10 years	33	4.1
	10 years and above	13	1.6
	Not Applicable/Have No Opinion	46	5.7
	Total	806	100.0
Hours work in a week	Less than 40 hours	244	30.3
	More than 40 hours	515	63.9
	Not Applicable/Have No Opinion	47	5.8
	Total	806	100
	Companies	ABC Fast	406
	The Golden Chicken	68	8.4
	The Fastfood	184	22.8
	Hot HotDog	24	3.0
	Homemade Pizza	61	7.6
	Big Burger	63	7.8
	Total	806	100.0

A convenience sampling method was employed because it is perhaps the best way of collecting information quickly and efficiently (Cavana *et al.*, 2003). Of the sample, 50.4 percent was from the ABC fast company, followed by the Fasftfood (22.8 percent), the Golden Chicken (8.4 percent), the Big Burger (7.8 percent), the

Homemade Pizza (7.6 percent) and the Hot HotDog 3.0 percent. As can be seen in table 4.2, the proportion of companies involved were different due to the nature of the consents received from the head offices. The researcher obtained consent from the ABC fast to distribute questionnaires to all outlets in Peninsular Malaysian. Thus, almost half of employees who participated in this study were from the ABC fast.

### **4.3 Representativeness of the sample**

The desired sample size for this study was 1200 fast food employees. This figure was based on Saunders *et al.*, (2003) and assumes a 5 percent margin of error from the whole population at a 95 percent confidence level because traditionally, past researchers have utilised 95 percent confidence level (Zikmund, 2000). Such a figure would also have permitted greater degrees of reliability for sub-sample sizes. While the current data set is large enough for the total sample to possess a 6 percent margin of error at the 95 percent confidence level, as reported below some sub-samples (e.g. older workers) turned out to be a little smaller than would be really desirable – but this was not recognised until all the data had been both collected and transcribed into SPSS, by which time the researcher was back in New Zealand. Another problem was the lack of specific data about the ‘population’ of fast food workers’.

According to the Malaysian Economic Planning unit, Department of Statistic (2008), employment in the services industry sector in Malaysia is 51.4 percent and this sector generates 1,062,800 jobs (Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006-2010). The population age structure in Malaysia comprise of three major age groups. There is about 32.4 percent

from 0-14 years old, 63.4 percent from 15 – 64 years old and about 4.3 percent of 65 and above. This sample has a large number of people from 15 to 64 years old group. This sample is representing people who worked in the fast food industry only and this is the first such study in the Peninsular Malaysian context that is known to the author. As there is no association or census department to rely on, statistics on numbers of people who are working in the Malaysian fast food industry are not available. However, this sample is thought to be representative and is statistically reliable because the alpha coefficient and Guttman Split Half results for the scale had high reliability coefficients as reported below. Thus, it is appropriate to say that this sample can be further analysed.

#### **4.4 Reliability tests**

Reliability means that a scale should consistently reflect the construct it is measuring. The split half reliability was chosen because this method randomly splits the data set into two and a correlation is calculated based on each half of the scale while alpha coefficients assess internal variance (Field, 2006). The workplace scale consisted of three sections and Cronbach's Alpha and Guttman Split-Half were used to assess the reliability.

##### **4.4.1 Job stressor**

For section A, a scale was used to ask questions that related to an employee's level of agreement towards the job stressors identified as role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload. Although the Alpha for the scale was 0.73, of the total of 13 items, the item-total correlations indicated that two items did not form part of a unidimensional

scale, having low reliability and the two item-total correlations were below 0.30. These two items related to an occasional need to upset others at work in the performance of work functions and being too tired to enjoy family life. However, those two items were not deleted as their values were not negative. The overall alpha in section A was above 0.7 so, the scale can be considered reliable (Pallant, 2005). In addition, Guttman Split-Half Coefficient was also tested and the result showed 0.642 and Cronbach's Alpha for parts 1 and 2 were 0.656 and 0.596 respectively, which is an acceptable result, albeit the split-half coefficient could have been higher.

#### **4.4.2 Job stress**

For section B, the scale was divided into 2 parts. The first asked about employee job stress which includes anxiety and somatic complaints. The second part of section B asked about employee intention to leave a job. The alpha for scale for Job Stress section was 0.871. Even though the Alpha Coefficient was high, the Guttman Split-Half Coefficient was also tested. According to Leech, Barret & Morgan (2008) if the correlation is moderately high, (0.40 and above), the item will make a good component of a summated rating scale. The result of Guttman Split-Half Coefficient was moderately reliable with 0.698. The Cronbach's Alpha for both part one and two was high 0.856 and 0.835. Thus, the scale for 'Job stress' was considered reliable.

#### **4.4.3 Job feeling**

All 18 items in the job feeling section were developed by the author. As discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 3), the development of this variable was based, in part,

on cultural aspects within the Malaysian context. The Cronbach Alpha was high 0.768 and the scale was consistent and reliable. Then, the Guttman Split-Half Coefficient was taken. The results were moderately reliable with 0.578. The Cronbach Alpha for parts one and two were 0.517 and 0.419.

#### **4.4.4 Intention to leave a job**

The last part in section 2 measured employees' frequency of thinking to leave their present job. There were 8 items asked and the Cronbach Alpha was 0.741. The Guttman Split-Half Coefficient was moderately reliable with 0.566 and the Cronbach's Alpha both part was 0.628 and 0.719. Therefore, this scale was acceptable.

#### **4.4.5 Job satisfaction and commitment**

For section C, questions asked to find how satisfied, dissatisfied and committed or not employees were with various aspects of the job. The Alpha for this section scale was 0.960 and none of the 23 items had item-total correlations below 0.30. Thus, all 23 items were retained. To confirm this result the Split-Half Coefficient was tested for the section, with a result of 0.877 and Cronbach's Alpha for part 1 was 0.928 and part 2 was 0.943.

## 4.5 Respondents level of agreement: Mean scores

### 4.5.1 Job Stressor

After confirming the reliability statistics, the next section will discuss the mean scores and standard deviations of items in the questionnaires. Frequency tables will also be provided where necessary. The first section of the questionnaires asked about the level of employee's agreement towards their current job within the contexts of role ambiguity, role and work family conflict. As can be seen in table 4.3, the descriptive results showed that the highest mean score was 5.82 accounted for by the item 'My job responsibilities are clear to me'. The mean score indicates a range of 'strongly agree' and 'agree'. In terms of percentages, most employees agreed that their job responsibilities were made clear to them with 38.6 percent 'very strongly agreeing', 14 percent 'strongly agree' and 37.2 percent 'agree'. Only a small percentage did not agree with this statement (1.1%). In other words, it means employees are not having difficulties in performing tasks because the roles are not clear and not ambiguous. In the fast food industry, the operating manual is well written and employees have to follow the script. The emphasis is demonstrated clearly in this quote:

*"They (staff) have to remember 7 steps while working at the front counter. Firstly, they have to smile, greet and taking orders. Secondly, do suggestive selling. Thirdly, repeat the customers order. Fourthly, total up the orders. Fifthly, cash transactions which mean customer pay the order. Then, assemble the order and lastly, deliver orders and parting peers"*

The restaurant manager of Big Burger (2007)

To summarise, under the job stressors variable, 4 items represent 'role ambiguity' and have high levels of agreement that such ambiguity was largely absent. The item 'At

my job, I practice teamwork' scored 5.75, 'My job objectives are well defined' scored 5.61 and 'It is clear what my fellow worker expect of me at my job' has 5.25. Overall mean scores for these items show the employees agreed that their job responsibilities and objectives were clear and they can work in teams, thereby meeting the fast food industry's requirements to work in a group or 'crew'.

In contrast, there were two items that indicated low level of agreement about job stressor related questions and these 2 items were to assess 'role conflict'. First the item, 'At my job, I find it difficult to follow guideline' for which the mean was 3.74 (which is in the 'disagree' and 'neither agree nor disagree' range). From the frequency table below, the results show about 26.9 percent of the employees agreed that they had difficulty in following guidelines and 48.8 percent disagreed and 22.2 percent were 'neutral'. The second item, 'To satisfy some people at my job I have to upset others', had a mean score 3.54 and was close to midpoint 4. Following an examination of the frequencies table, it can be concluded that about 54 percent have high disagreement, 25.7 percent agreed and 14.1 percent unsure. However, although these 2 role conflict items scored the lowest mean, it should highlighted that the answers were in the range of 'disagreement' and 'unsure'. Taken together the results suggest employees who had worked in Peninsular Malaysia did not 'really' face a conflict of tasks or failed to satisfy their co-workers. Table 4.3 depicts the results.

Table 4.3 Important mean score and standard deviation for employees		
Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
My job responsibilities are clear to me	5.82	1.086
At my job, I practice teamwork	5.75	1.177
My job objectives are well-defined	5.61	1.104
It is clear what my fellow worker expect of me at my job	5.25	1.175
I am given enough time to do what is expected of me at my work	4.98	1.245
It seems that I have more work at my job than I can handle	4.74	1.308
My job requires continuous hard work	4.47	1.506
My job schedule does not interferes with my family life	4.43	1.554
My job makes me too tired to enjoy my family life	4.35	1.466
My job does give me enough time for family activities	4.15	1.503
My job does give me enough time to socialize	4.09	1.457
At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines	3.74	1.554
To satisfy some people at my job I have to upset others	3.54	1.636
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree		

Table 4.4 At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines		
	Frequency	Percent
Very Strongly Disagree	78	9.7
Strongly Disagree	37	4.6
Disagree	278	34.5
Neither Agree nor disagree	179	22.2
Agree	101	12.5
Strongly Agree	64	7.9
Very Strongly Agree	52	6.5
Total	789	97.9
Not Applicable/Have no Opinion	17	2.1
Total	806	100.0

Table 4.5 To satisfy some people at my job I have to upset others		
	Frequency	Percent
Very Strongly Disagree	119	14.8
Strongly Disagree	30	3.7
Disagree	286	35.5
Neither Agree nor disagree	114	14.1
Agree	88	10.9
Strongly Agree	91	11.3
Very Strongly Agree	28	3.5
Total	756	93.8
Not Applicable/Have no Opinion	50	6.2
Total	806	100.0

## 4.5.2 Job stress

Table 4.6 shows that all eight job stress items elicited a high level of disagreement. The lowest mean score ‘I feel stigmatized at my job’ has a mean score of 3.10. This result means that the employees did not agree that they felt stigmatised at their job. The second item ‘I feel frustrated at my job’ had the second lowest mean score which imply that the employees did not agree that they feeling frustrated while and with their work. Overall, the descriptive results conclude respondents tended to skew to moderate levels of disagreement with the lead items at scores below 3.64.

Table 4.6 Mean and standard deviation for employees’ job stress		
Items	Mean	Standard Deviations
Job related problems keep me awake all night	3.64	1.508
Job related problems make my stomach upset	3.59	1.437
I feel burnt-out at my job	3.59	1.381
I feel tense at my job	3.55	1.335
Job related problems make my heart beat faster than usual	3.44	1.360
I lose my appetite because of my job related problems	3.36	1.327
I feel frustrated at my job	3.35	1.276
I feel stigmatized at my job	3.10	1.243
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree		

Tables 4.7 and 4.8 below also reveal the frequencies on items of feeling frustrated and stigmatised. Even though about 42.9 percent employees disagree they were feeling frustrated, still 23.4 percent were ‘unsure’. Similarly, table 4.6 below shows frequencies on employees’ feeling stigmatised, which indicated about 10.7 expressed

some level of agreement with the view. Generally the employees had no anxiety and somatic complaints. To summarise, for the most part management practices and the nature of the work elicited no high overall concern about stress, but, and this is of significance, within the total sample a sizeable minority of 10 to 15 percent (depending on the item) did express scores that indicated an experience of stress.

<b>Table 4.7 I feel frustrated at my job</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Very Strongly Disagree	87	10.8
Strongly Disagree	38	4.7
Disagree	346	42.9
Neither Agree nor disagree	189	23.4
Agree	71	8.8
Strongly Agree	34	4.2
Very Strongly Agree	12	1.5
Total	777	96.4
Not Applicable/Have no Opinion	29	3.6
Total	806	100.0

<b>Table 4.8 I feel stigmatized at my job</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Very Strongly Disagree	114	14.1
Strongly Disagree	41	5.1
Disagree	392	48.6
Neither Agree nor disagree	133	16.5
Agree	54	6.7
Strongly Agree	24	3.0
Very Strongly Agree	8	1.0
Total	766	95.0
Not Applicable/Have no Opinion	40	5.0
Total	806	100.0

### 4.5.3 Job feeling

There were 18 items that asked about employees feeling towards their current job (see Table 4.4). The highest mean score was 5.84 for the item ‘I am allowed to wear *Tudung* during working hours’. As might be expected, Malaysia is a Muslim country and wearing the *Tudung* is allowed at the workplace and is culturally important as a demonstration of obedience to Islamic teachings and practice on the part of females.

The restaurant manager of the Big Burger commented:

*“For the uniform, an employee will be given 2 T-shirt, pants and hat. Even though they (employees) are required to wear a hat, female employees are allowed wearing a scarf. But as the key to this industry is uniformity, only a black scarf is allowed to be worn.”*

In addition, two employees made comments upon dress code:

*“I am happy with the uniform provided by the head office. I remembered, when the first time I joined this company, the colour of the T-Shirt was brown. After 2 years, they changed it to blue colour and just recently they change it to red colour. By doing this, employees won’t feel bored”*

Employee 7

*“I do not have any problems with the uniform. I like the design and colour.”*

Employee 5

However, one employee gave negative comment about the uniform. She said:

*“I am not happy with the uniform. Even though, the policy allows us (women) to wear *Tudung* but they did not allow us to wear ‘arm cover’ which this against the Islamic religion”*

On the other hand, the item 'I am given time to meet my religious obligation during working hours' elicited high levels of agreement (5.60). Employees who worked in the fast food industry did agree that they were given time off to perform their prayers. As mentioned previously, Muslims are required to pray 5 times a day at dawn (fajr), noon (dhuhr), in the afternoon (asr), at sunset (maghrib) and nightfall (isha'a). It is obligatory for all Muslims to pray once they have reached puberty. The high level of agreement on this item reflects a high degree of management sensitivity at the head offices. Furthermore, from the table below, it can be summarised that there are 7 items for which there are high levels of agreement. The items are in the context of religion reasons, family and outlet commitment.

According to one employee, she stated that:

*"I have been working in this industry for more than 5 years and I don't have any problems to perform prayer and the dress code is according to Islamic teachings"*

At the other end of the scale, the lowest mean score was 3.28, which indicated employees did not agree that they worked in the fast food industry simply because of a friend's influence. The item 'I work to satisfy my parent' had a mean score 3.68. Generally employees did not agree they worked in the fast food to satisfy their parents. Overall, these results suggest that employees who worked in this industry did so because they wanted to, and not because of influence from parents or friends or the have been forced to work.

Table 4.9 Mean and standard deviations for employees' job feeling		
Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am allowed to wear ' <i>Tudung</i> ' during working hours	5.84	1.357
This job gives me an opportunity to meet new people	5.78	1.228
I am given time to meet my religious obligation during working hours	5.60	1.378
I work here to support my family	5.55	1.366
I work here because I enjoy it	5.28	1.298
I get on well with my supervisors	5.27	1.265
I would like to get promotion in this company	5.25	1.395
I would like to make a career in the fast food industry	4.99	1.434
I consider this type of work as a proper job	4.72	1.373
I work here because I want to work in the industry	4.69	1.508
I work here because I enjoy the company of my co-workers	4.50	1.469
I work here to support my study	4.37	1.482
I work here because it was easy to get this job	4.26	1.424
I spend times with my co-workers for social life outside of the workplace	4.24	1.493
I feel my educational background is suited to my current job	4.13	1.452
I work here on a temporary basis to earn some extra money	4.00	1.537
I work to satisfy my parents	3.68	1.643
I work here because my friends are working here	3.28	1.396
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree		

In terms of frequencies, table 4.10 shows 50.6 percent of the employees 'very strongly disagree', 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' that they worked in the fast food industry to satisfy their parents. This result indicates even though many of these young people worked in the fast food as their first exposure to work, the reason to decide working in the fast food industry did not come from their parents. Similarly, 58.6 percent disagree they worked in the industry simply because their friends did.

<b>4.10 I work to satisfy my parents</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Very Strongly Disagree	99	12.3
Strongly Disagree	19	2.4
Disagree	289	35.9
Neither Agree nor disagree	115	14.3
Agree	125	15.5
Strongly Agree	37	4.6
Very Strongly Agree	62	7.7
Total	746	92.6
Not Applicable/Have no Opinion	60	7.4
Total	806	100.0

<b>4.11 I work here because my friends are working here</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Very Strongly Disagree	112	13.9
Strongly Disagree	32	4.0
Disagree	328	40.7
Neither Agree nor disagree	126	15.6
Agree	90	11.2
Strongly Agree	31	3.8
Very Strongly Agree	15	1.9
Total	734	91.1
Not Applicable/Have no Opinion	72	8.9
Total	806	100.0

#### **4.6 Intention to leave a job**

An 'Intention to leave' scale was asked and the highest mean score was 5.44. This means that employees who were working in the fast food industry often think of better paid positions. It is well documented in the hospitality and food service

literature that the pay/hourly wages are claimed to be low. For example, Allan *et al.*, (2006) in their study of McDonalds in Australia found that employees received a low hourly wage in this industry. Similarly, in Hong Kong fast food industry the wages found to be not attractive (Lam & Zhang, 2003). About 38.2 percent of employees 'often' thought of a better paid position, 13.9 percent 'fairly often' and 16.5 percent 'sometimes' and only 1.2 percent 'never' thought of it. This is acknowledged by the human resource manager of the Big Burger when she said:

*"How to reduce employee intention to leave- I think the main factor is still salary which can be said as the biggest motivation for the employees. If we give them a good salary which is comparable to the current market right now, they should be staying with us."*

The training manager of ABCFast also added,

*"....in order to reduce employee intention to quit, we are practising an 'open door policy' where employees can come and see us (at the head offices) at any time as they wish. Whenever we came to know that employee had the intention to leave the outlet, we will confront with them and ask why they want to leave...."*

The lowest score was 4.05, rated as from 'sometimes' to 'occasionally' on the item 'How often do your friends influence your job choice?' There are about 17.3 percent employees who very and fairly often 'listened' to friends' advice and suggestions regarding job choice. A further 23.1 percent 'sometimes' considered friends' ideas in finding job. On the other hand, there are only 12.3 percent employees who stated they were never influenced by their friends in finding a job.

In regards to this matter, a manager at the head office commented:

*"Turnover happened because the influence from their friends. Friends told that the Starbuck Coffee company pay better than ABCFast, our staff will definitely follow their friends"*.

<b>Table 4.12 How often your friends influence your job choice?</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	99	12.3
Quite often	18	2.2
Rarely or never	132	16.4
Occasionally	162	20.1
Sometimes	186	23.1
Fairly Often	99	12.3
Very Often	40	5.0
Total	736	91.3
Not Applicable/ Have No Opinion	70	8.7
Total	806	100.0

<b>Table 4.13 Employees Intention to Leave A Job</b>		
Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
How often do you think of a better paid position	5.44	1.666
How often do you feel satisfied working in this industry?	4.93	1.473
How often do you think that this is the best outlet to work for?	4.70	1.402
How often you care about the future of this outlet?	4.66	1.602
How often do you think to work in some other industry	4.47	1.514
How often do you think of leaving your present job	4.37	1.520
How often does your spouse/family influence your job choice?	4.33	1.763
How often your friends influence your job choice?	4.05	1.664
Note : Mean 1=Not at all, 2=Rarely or never, 3=Occasionally, 4=Sometimes, 5=Fairly often, 6=Quite often, 7= Very often ** p<0.001, * p<0.05		

To summarise, these eight questions on intention to stop working for an outlet were in a score range which indicates, (when taking into account the standard deviation), that a number of employees did think of getting better wages, and this in turn arguably influence employees to think of leaving their present job.

#### **4.7 Job satisfaction and commitment**

The last section assessed employee job satisfaction with various aspects of their job. Table 4.5 depicts the results. The highest mean score was 5.27 for the item ‘I have been provided excellent training since I started work here’. This suggests that respondents are satisfied with the training they received since they joined. This result is supported by the following statements made by human resource, training and restaurant managers from three different companies.

The Training manager of ABC fast stated,

*“...our training program is effective. For the managerial level, we have an annual training program twice a year .It is a classroom training and module involved on managing restaurants, running shifts, preventive maintenance, communication, supervision and administration. For the crew level, there are 4 types of training that are on counter, kitchen, preparation and dining”*

The Human resource manager of Hot HotDog mentioned,

*“...we have an in-house training programme for each station or on the job training. The in-house training includes back and front of the house. Back of the house refers to stock preparation, how to make hotdog, to prepare a drink, how to maintain equipment, stock count, etc...front of the house is more on cashiering and customers’ service. We provide a manual which written in English. But the training was conducted both in Malay and English. For the classroom training, we only trained about 5 to 10 staff....”*

The restaurant manager of Big Burger added,

*“...we are doing on-going training as training is a non-stop process. From the 1<sup>st</sup> day staff joined us, we have an orientation. Currently, we are using a system that called PASSPORT. Every new staff has their own passport and it is divided into stations. If the staff does not pass, he or she cannot move on to another station. Every time staff completed one station we will give them questionnaire to answer. If they pass, then they can proceed to other station. They have to remember things like how many grams lettuce or onions there are in one burger. Additionally, in Big Burger, we actually start training from the back-of-the house to the front-of-the-house. Staff have to know the product first before they can proceed to the front counter. For instance, how to make a burger seems easy but staff need to know that we have two types of burger. Beef burger is under the main board station and chicken burger is under the speciality station. At the back-of-house, we have several stations that include broiler, main board, whopper board and preparation...”*

The above quotations are parallel with previous study done by Allan *et al.*, (2006).

They found the majority of employees in the Australian fast food industry said that they were well-trained to do their job, were given a lot of responsibilities and had learned valuable career skills.

Table 4.14 Job satisfaction with various aspects of job		
Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have been provided excellent training since I started to work here	5.27	1.318
I am happy working in this outlet	5.23	1.270
I am prepared to work harder than I have to in order to be successful	5.23	1.269
My supervisor's style in managing staff is excellent	5.15	1.487
I am enjoying my current job	5.15	1.320
I have a freedom to do my best at my job	5.14	1.371
I am satisfied with the location of the outlet that I have been assigned to work	5.14	1.404
I am proud to work for this outlet	5.13	1.317
The benefits (uniform, insurance, etc) given to me are excellent.	5.09	1.387
Physical conditions at my workplace are very good	5.08	1.289
Career advancement at my current job is very good	5.04	1.231
I get a good recognition when I do a good job	5.02	1.462
I feel loyalty to this outlet	4.99	1.356
My job is very secure	4.98	1.396
I would recommend this outlet to work	4.95	1.338
I feel this outlet offers attractive work conditions	4.94	1.319
I talk about this outlet to my family as a great place to work	4.92	1.324
I talk about this outlet to my friends as a great place to work	4.91	1.366
My working hours are adequate	4.88	1.313
I really care about the fate of this outlet	4.88	1.377
Welfare (accommodation, staff meals, etc) given to me are excellent	4.72	1.474
I receive a good pay rate for my work	4.69	1.515
I hope I can work in this industry until retirement	4.24	1.741
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree		

On the other hand, 12 items were rated as ‘agree’ statements which imply that respondents were satisfied and committed to the work in the fast food industry. However, items on loyalty, job security, recommending working in the fast food industry, not an attractive outlet, talking about a great place to work, adequate hours,

care about an outlet's fate, welfare, pay rate and work until retirement all fall within the range 4.24 to 4.99, that is generally just above the mid-point of the 7-point scale, implying a somewhat lukewarm level of agreement on these items.

The lowest mean score was 4.24 which falls between 'unsure' to 'agree' on item 'I hope I can work in this industry until retirement'. The frequency shows there were 15.6 percent disagree, 3.7 percent strongly disagree and 8.8 percent very strongly disagree to work in this industry until retirement. There were about 22.8 percent unsure. It can be concluded that generally respondents did not wish to work in the fast food industry until retirement. In Malaysia, there is no law stating that employees' services be terminated when they reach certain age (Aminuddin, 2005). He further explained that each company is free to set its own policy but the majority of employers follow the practice common in the public sector that sets a retirement age at 55. But at this age employees are permitted to withdraw their savings from the Employee Provident Fund (EPF) which was established as a form of compulsory savings system for workers. Therefore, once an employee retired they would not be impoverished and be wholly dependent on the state (Aminuddin, 2005). An employee is liable to pay monthly contributions to EPF at the rate of 11% of their wages and the employers also contribute 12% to EPF board. But even though, this is the general scenario for the Malaysian work force, the majority of respondents had decided not to work in the fast food industry until they retired. As a large proportion of the fast food labour force comprises young people, not all may have the same goals as the more general work population. Some may seek money to supplement their income while others are looking for work that will be their sole source of income (Kotler, Bowen &

Makens, 2006). Other factors could be digged deeper to find reasons why people do not plan to work until retirement in this growing industry. According to the ABC Fast Training Manager (2007),

*“...Not all staff want to work in this industry for the rest of their life. They want better and new opportunities especially in term of salary.....”*

In this study, the pay rate was identified from ‘unsure’ to ‘agree’ level. This implies that employees who worked in Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry were marginally satisfied with their pay rate. This finding is very interesting because most previous studies stated that one of reasons why employees quit as job was dissatisfaction with pay. The finding of this study was different perhaps due to data gathered from employees who were still working at the time they answered the questionnaire.

#### **4.8 Chapter summary**

This chapter concludes that employees in Peninsular Malaysia’s fast food industry were clear about their job responsibilities, objectives and they participated in teamwork. But employees were not sure about a job that requires continuous work, potentially interferes with family duties and time to socialize with family. Employees did not agree that they had difficulty in following guidelines and were unable to satisfy people at work. The results also imply that the majority of employees did not experience stress at the workplace and they did not agree that their job affected sleep patterns or caused stomach upsets, feeling burnt-out and feeling tense. Employees

also felt happy working in the fast food because they did not have any problem in practicing their Islamic faith and protocols in the workplace such as praying 5 times a day and wearing the Tudung. As for job satisfaction and commitment, again a majority of employees were satisfied with the work conditions offered. For example, employees were given excellent training since the day they joined the company and supervisor's styles in managing staff were highly regarded.

The next chapter will analyse the role of socio-demographics to probe how the employee's characteristics influence employee intention to leave a job within the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry.

# **CHAPTER FIVE: ROLE OF SOCIO- DEMOGRAPHICS VARIABLES**

## **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains in detail the impact of socio-demographic variables on job stressors, job stress, job feeling, job satisfaction and commitment and intention to leave a job in Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry. The selected socio-demographic variables in this study include age, gender, marital status, presence or absence of children, education level, hours worked in a week and length of employment in an outlet and the industry. Generally, it is known that each of these variables may significantly impact employees' intentions to leave a job. It is thus important to assess the roles of the distinguishing variables. Like the previous chapter, this chapter uses interview quotations to support the results.

## **5.2 The influence of gender**

The first such variable examined is gender. Initially, independent sample t-test analysis was undertaken to assess whether gender was a statistically significant variable with reference to job stressors, job stress, job feeling, job satisfaction and commitment. The results show there are no significant differences between gender for job stressors and job stress variables. On the other hand, gender does appear to be a discriminating factor in different degrees of agreement being attributed to feeling

about the job, job satisfaction and commitment items. Of 19 job feeling items, there are 7 items found to be significant with  $p < 0.05$  and these items are shown in table 5.1. Five of the items have negative t values, which mean females tend to attribute lower agreement on these items. The other 2 items show females respondents scored higher than males.

<b>Table 5.1 Gender vs. Job Feeling</b>					
Items		Mean	Std D.	T	Significance
I work to satisfy my parents	Males	3.80	1.654	2.189	0.029
	Females	3.54	1.617		
I work here because it was easy to get this job	Males	4.39	1.434	2.509	0.012
	Females	4.12	1.414		
I am given time to perform my religious obligation	Males	5.50	1.439	-2.060	0.040
	Females	5.71	1.311		
This job gives me an opportunity to meet new people	Males	5.65	1.269	-2.930	0.003
	Females	5.91	1.175		
I work here because I enjoy it	Males	5.15	1.325	-2.882	0.004
	Females	5.42	1.259		
I get on well with my supervisors	Males	5.14	1.296	-2.920	0.004
	Females	5.41	1.226		
I would like to get promotions in this company	Males	5.11	1.452	-3.082	0.002
	Females	5.42	1.286		
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** $p < 0.001$ , * $p < 0.05$					

However, it is worth noting that the mean differences were minimal albeit statistically significant. Salkind (2007) stated the effect size can be small, medium or large. A small effect size ranges from 0.0 to 2.0 means both groups tend to be similar and overlap entirely, a medium effect size ranges from 0.20 to 0.50 and refers to both groups overlapping about 45 percent and having much in common and a large effect size is any value above 0.50 which means both groups are different. With reference to

a relationship between gender and job feeling items, the results imply that males and females were in the same range of ‘disagree’ to ‘unsure’ that they worked to satisfy their parents. The 2<sup>nd</sup> item “I work here because it was easy to get this job” showed males and females employees were in the range that indicated marginal agreement that they worked in the fast food industry because it was easy to get the job. Similarly, the other five sets of mean values indicated both male and female employees had similar feelings on religious obligations, an opportunity to meet new people, work because they enjoy it, can get on well with supervisors and want to get promotion in the fast food industry. An interview with the training manager of the Hot hotdog company elicited the comment:

*“(The) scenario of the fast food industry in Malaysia is different to other countries. It is easy to get a job in the fast food industry. Today you can work with McDonald and tomorrow you can work with KFC”*

Furthermore, ‘easy to get a job in the fast food industry’ can be inferred from another statement by one manager at a head office when the researcher asked questions on recruitment and selection procedure during the interview.

*“Criteria for crew level, of course the staff should be presentable, able to communicate in Malay language and English. **Crew level is not so critical** in terms of criteria as long as at the right age, we do not employ below than eighteen years old, most of them SPM leavers. And of course no criminal report. Normally, in the application form they have to declare that they do not have any criminal record. In term of managerial level, basically of course qualification with minimum diploma level and have working experience in the related field. Those who have a diploma in food and hospitality background can apply for management trainee level and above. Those with working experience will be advantaged. Usually in terms of a higher position, even if they have a bachelor’s degree we will still require at least a minimum experience working in the fast food industry or hotel line. Some of our management trainees are not a degree holder. They do not have any work experience and they have to start at the management trainee level. Management trainee level takes about six months. They can complete the six months probation. Upon completion they will be an assistant restaurant manager”*

The above quotation suggests that anyone who meets the criteria can apply for a job in the fast food industry. There are no strict guidelines that state that once you have worked for one fast food, you cannot join another fast food company. This reflects 'how easy it is to get a job' in the fast food industry and arguably, as a consequence, work in this industry is not associated with prestige and professionalism. This contrasts with other countries and others areas in the hospitality industry. For example in Switzerland, those who worked in the hospitality industry are associated with a prestigious job which requires employees to obtain certain levels of education and skills to be able to work in this industry.

<b>Table 5.2 Gender vs. Job satisfaction and commitment</b>					
Items		Mean	Std D.	T	Sig.
Physical condition at my workplace are very good	Males	4.98	1.334	-2.319	0.021
	Females	5.20	1.232		
The benefits (uniforms, insurance, etc.) given to me are excellent	Males	4.94	1.419	-3.384	0.001
	Females	5.27	1.326		
The welfare (accommodation, staff meals, etc) given to me are excellent	Males	4.58	1.521	-2.793	0.005
	Females	4.88	1.417		
I am enjoying my current job	Males	5.06	1.349	-1.985	0.047
	Females	5.25	1.275		
I am satisfied with the location of the outlet that I have been assigned to work	Males	5.00	1.484	-2.862	0.004
	Females	5.29	1.287		
I feel loyalty to this outlet	Males	4.89	1.350	-2.225	0.026
	Females	5.11	1.341		
I am proud to work for this outlet	Males	5.01	1.341	-2.811	0.005
	Females	5.27	1.268		
I talk about this outlet to my family as a great place to work	Males	4.78	1.359	-3.005	0.003
	Females	5.07	1.258		
I talk about this outlet to my family as a great place to work	Males	4.74	1.388	-3.459	0.001
	Females	5.09	1.308		
I really care about the fate of this outlet	Males	4.72	1.441	-3.196	0.001
	Females	5.04	1.286		
I would recommend this outlet to work	Males	4.83	1.389	-2.498	0.013
	Females	5.07	1.273		
I feel this outlet offers attractive work conditions	Males	4.83	1.370	-2.346	0.019
	Females	5.06	1.243		
<p>Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree  ** p&lt;0.001, * p&lt;0.05</p>					

With reference to job satisfaction and commitment items, 12 items were found to be significant. From table 5.2 it is clearly shows female respondents tend to score significantly higher than males. Although statistically significant relationships existed, large mean differences of gender on job satisfaction and commitment have not been obtained. Male and female employees exhibit little mean difference implying employees who were working in Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry were generally satisfied and committed to the companies in terms of physical conditions at the workplace, the welfare and benefit givens and also the location assigned. Male and female employees were also found to be relatively loyal to the company and they talked about the outlet to their family and friends as a great place to work. They also care about the fate of the outlet and recommended it to others to work for the outlet. Again, however, the standard deviations indicate the presence of those who were ‘the more committed’ and the ‘less satisfied’ with their jobs in the fast food industry.

### **5.3 The influence of marital status**

This section examines the role of marital status in influencing employees’ intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysian fast food industry. It is shown to have a statistical significance only on job feeling items, implying that marital status is not a good predictor for a respondents’ intention to leave a job. Job stressor, job stress, job satisfaction and commitment were not found to be statistically significant. Of 19 job feeling items, only 2 items appeared to be statistically significant with  $p < 0.05$  and these items are ‘I work here on temporary basis to earn some extra money’ and ‘I work here to support my study’. However, again the mean differences were slight

implying single and married employees shared a similar feeling towards reasons working in the fast food industry, and that for married respondents there appeared to be little relationship between work and family lives when compared with their single counterparts.

<b>Table 5.3 Marital status different vs. Job Feeling</b>						
Items		No.	Mean	Std. D	T	Sig
I work here on temporary basis to earn some extra money	Single	647	4.05	1.554	2.099	0.036
	Married	99	3.70	1.460		
I work here to support my study	Single	554	4.44	1.498	2.715	0.007
	Married	84	3.96	1.366		
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05						

Nonetheless, managers at head offices did comment on such issues. For example:

*“Some employees choose to resign because they have personal problem such as getting married”* (it is interesting to note the implication that getting married is a personal problem!).

Human resource manager of Big Burger

*“To me, being a married employee is not suitable for working in this industry because the nature of this industry requires commitment which sometimes involves working during weekends and public holidays”*

Restaurant Managers Golden Chicken

Manager of ABCFast agreed with above statement. She also added;

*“Fast food job maybe not suitable for married employees because most of the time, the leave only available on weekdays. Employees seldom get their leave during weekends”*

In terms of the presence of young children in the family and job feeling variables, it is found that there are no significant differences other than for ‘I would like to make career in the fast food industry’ and ‘I work here to support my study’. A close examinations of the result from table 5.4, reveals slight differences in mean scores between employees with children and without children. The results suggest that several employees want to make a career in the fast food industry while also they work because they want financial support for their studies. Furthermore, based on comments from the managers at the head offices, it appears the fast food industry offers good opportunities for career advancement.

<b>Table 5.4 Presence of children vs. Job Feeling</b>					
Items		Mean	Std. D	T	Sig
I work like to make career in the fast food industry	Yes	4.67	1.351	-2.012	0.045
	No	5.04	1.434		
I work here to support my study	Yes	3.94	1.307	-2.157	0.031
	No	4.41	1.511		
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05					

For example, a manager at the ABCFast mentioned career advancement offered by their company as being very good. She stated:

*“From the crew level, an employee can climb up to team leader position, then SMA (Store Marketing assistant, then Management trainee, after that Assistant Restaurant manager position and finally have a chance to be a restaurant manager”*

The human resource manager of Hot Hotdog also stated:

*“The career advancement in our company is a fast process. From 6 months to 1 year time, where a crew pass an exam, he/she can be promoted to an assistant supervisor”*

In addition, a manager at the Golden Burger highlighted that in his company it is more than just a job and it is about building a career. The role of fast food employee was said to be a challenging one where they have to serve thousand of customers and protect brand image. He also described career advancement as follows:

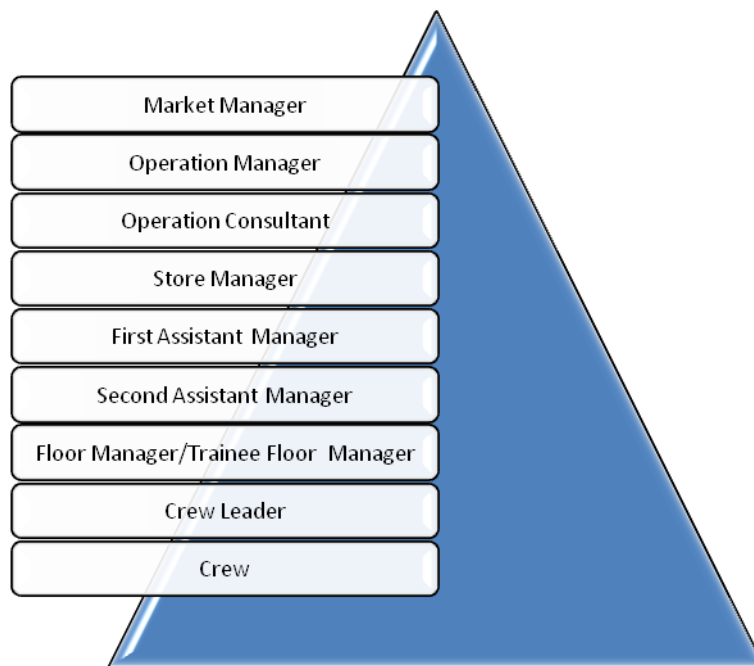


Figure 5.1: Career advancement in one of the fast food operator in Malaysia

The restaurant manager of the Big Burger commented managers at the restaurant have to take responsibilities in educating their employees about career advancement in the fast food industry. In most cases, employees do not know why they are working in the fast food industry. She stated:

*“These (employees) do not have goals or aims working in this industry. When I asked them what make them working in this industry, they just said that they do not know”*

Therefore, managers at the outlet level and head offices should work closely to educate their staff about the career development in the fast food industry. To keep staff is not an easy job. It involves management, working conditions and employees’ personal factors.

Figure 5.1 is derived from one of the fast food operators and it indicates a traditional pyramid of career enhancement, but in practice further research on managerial progression rates would be needed before any statistical linkage with labour turnover, job survival and job stress could be assessed. This is outside of the focus of this thesis.

#### **5.4 The influence of age**

This section examines the relationship between age and job stressor. Age is found to be a significant discriminatory variable. The result of One-way ANOVA shows there were differences. However, although they were statistically significant, the mean differences between the ages group were minimal in absolute scores. The first item is ‘To satisfy some people at my job, I have to upset others’ where older respondents scored higher means than younger respondents. It is suggested that younger employees might not upset their friends because of their friendship bonding, while older counterparts may also adopt more ‘professional’ attitudes in terms of a customer orientation. The Tukey analysis shows employees aged below 20 years had

different scores to those employees aged 40 years and above. The second item 'At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines' is also statistically significant because older respondents agreed that they found it more difficult to follow guidelines. Again, Tukey analysis reveal that employee aged below 20 years old and employees aged more than 40 years were significantly different.

One possible reason for these results is a life-stage affect whereby older employees may have experience and tend to repeat personal pattern of work. The third item 'My job requires continuous hard work' also shows that older respondents thought their job requires hard work. It is thought this is because work patterns and company images requires employees to be energetic and healthy, not only because of physical work but also mental alertness. Employees need to stand for long hours and deal with customers promptly, especially if facing customers' complaints. The last item, 'My job schedule does not interfere with my family life', shows that respondents in younger groups A and B have higher mean scores than older aged groups C and D (see Table 5.5). This result suggests that younger employees agree that their job interfere with their family life.

<b>Table 5.5 Age vs. Job Stressor</b>							
Items	Age Groups				F	Sig	Tukey
	A Below 20	B 21-31	C 31-40	D 41 above			
To satisfy some people at my job I have to upset others	3.37	3.68	3.50	4.31	3.031	0.029	A, D
At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines	3.81	3.66	3.60	4.79	2.758	0.041	A, D
My job requires continuous hard work	4.32	4.60	4.74	4.75	2.661	0.047	NA
My job schedule does not interferes with my family life	4.54	4.28	4.85	4.85	2.990	0.030	NA
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05							

When age was tested against the job stress items (see table 5.6), only 1 item was found to be significant. This was ‘Job related problems make my heart beat faster than usual’. The result indicates that younger employees are more likely to score lower means than older one as indicated in table 5.6. It seems that older employees feel job related problems could affect their emotion and health, which makes the heart beat faster than usual. To be more specific, one factor is that employees need to achieve not only on a daily basis but are also under pressure from the head office to achieve sales targets. The post-hoc test (Tukey) analysis indicates employees aged less than 20 years differed from employees aged 31 to 41 years old and above 40 years old.

The restaurant manager of Big Burger commented that:

*“We do have a daily target sale which is sometimes a burden to us. Even though we know that there will be a reward to outlets that achieve target sales, but it is a pressure to staff”*

<b>Table 5.6 Age vs. Job Stress</b>							
Items	Age Groups				F	Sig	Tukey
	A Below 20	B 21-31	C 31-40	D 41 above			
Job related problems make my heart beat faster than usual	3.31	3.45	3.95	4.38	4.926	0.002	A>B A>D
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05							

This section examines the relationship between age and job feelings. Three items were found to be significant as shown in table 5.7. Interestingly, the youngest and the oldest age groups in this sample had the same pattern of agreement for to satisfy their parents' need. The post-hoc test reveals group A and B had the same mean score. The next item 'I work here on temporary basis to earn some extra money' shows group C scored lower than the other groups. This suggests that employees aged 31 to 40 years old are in the 'disagree' to 'neutral' range about working on a temporary basis to earn some extra money. The post-hoc analysis reveals group B differs from employees aged 31 to 40 years old. The last item 'I am allowed to wear *Tudung* during working hour' shows the younger employees scored higher. The post-hoc test (Tukey) indicates employees aged below 20 years old had different scores compared to employees aged 31 to 40 years old.

<b>Table 5.7 Age vs. Job Feeling</b>							
Items	Age Groups				F	Sig	Tukey
	A Below 20	B 21-31	C 31-40	D 41 above			
I work to satisfy parents	3.85	3.50	3.77	3.85	2.800	0.039	A,B
I work here on temporary basis to earn some extra money	4.09	4.00	3.26	3.77	3.241	0.022	A,B <C
I am allowed to wear Tudung during working hours	5.94	5.85	5.29	5.23	3.430	0.017	A,C
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05							

When considering the relationship between age, job satisfaction and commitment variables, only 1 item was found to be significant. The item ‘I hope I can work in this industry until retirement’, indicates that group C is more likely to score higher than the other groups. The mean of group C is especially high, suggesting that employees aged 31 to 40 years are highly satisfied and thus want to work in this industry until their age of retirement. People at this age are already settled down, and generally not looking for a new job and give more attention to family life and children’s education (Bloomme, *et al.*, 2008).

<b>Table 5.8 Age vs. Job Satisfaction and commitment</b>							
Items	Age Groups						
	A Below 20	B 21-31	C 31-40	D 41 above	F	Sig	Tukey
I hope I can work in this industry until retirement	4.25	4.15	5.05	4.15	3.058	0.028	B>A,C
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05							

## 5.5 The influence of education level

This section examines the relationship between educational attainment and job stressors. Respondents were grouped into 4 different educational levels as shown in table 5.9. There are 6 items showing significance, in which 2 items relate to role ambiguity, 2 are associated with role conflict and 2 correlate with work-family conflict. The results show that employees with a degree attributed higher agreement to the item ‘My job objectives are well defined’ and ‘At my job I practice teamwork’. Albeit in absolute values the differences may have little practical significance in that all scores are above the mid-point of the scale indicating agreement with items. The role conflict items ‘To satisfy some people at my job I have to upset others’ shows that employees with ‘other’ educational levels tend to score low on this item. The items ‘It seems that I have more work at my job than I can handle’, ‘My job requires continuous hard work’ show that degree holder employees again score higher than others.

<b>Table 5.9 Education level vs. Job Stressor</b>							
Items	Education Level				F	Sig	Tukey
	SPM	Diploma	Degree	Others			
My job objectives are well-defined	5.58	5.61	5.95	5.63	2.694	0.045	SPM>Deg
At my job, I practice teamwork	5.79	5.39	5.83	5.60	3.045	0.028	SPM>Dip
To satisfy some people at my job I have to upset others	3.48	3.60	4.15	2.98	6.133	0.000	SPM>Deg Deg>Others
It seems that I have more work at my job than I can handle	4.73	4.32	5.15	4.60	5.406	0.001	SPM>Deg Deg>SPM Dip
My job requires continuous hard work	4.33	4.62	5.22	4.48	8.827	0.000	SPM>Deg Deg>SPM
My job schedule does not interferes with my family life	4.45	3.95	4.72	4.76	4.277	0.005	SPM>Dip Dip<SPM Deg Others
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05							

Although degree holder are statistically significantly different from others the mean differences were minimal in absolute scores, and hence from a practical perspective, while there may be a need to look at these differences, the managerial implications may be less important than it might seem. Table 5.10 show the results.

<b>Table 5.10 Education level vs. Job Stress</b>							
Items	Education Level				F	Sig	Tukey
	SPM	Diploma	Degree	Others			
I feel burnt-out at my job	3.60	3.58	3.80	3.13	2.628	0.049	Deg>Others
Job-related problems keep me awake all night	3.59	3.60	4.05	3.25	3.302	0.020	Deg>Others
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05							

When job feeling items were tested against educational levels, 3 items were found to be statistically significant. The employees from SPM and ‘other’ qualifications groups tend to score higher (4.25 and 4.38) respectively compared to other groups but probably the major finding is that generally respondents feel educationally ‘over-qualified’ for their posts as shown in table 5.11.

<b>Table 5.11 Education level vs. Job Feeling</b>							
Items	Education Level				F	Sig	Tukey
	SPM	Diploma	Degree	Others			
I feel my educational background is suited to my current job	4.25	3.66	3.78	4.38	6.000	0.000	SPM>Dip Deg
I work to satisfy parents	3.69	3.38	3.21	4.17	4.711	0.003	Dip>SPM Others
I get well with my supervisors	5.25	4.96	5.65	5.61	5.170	0.002	NA
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05							

Table 5.12 shows the relationship between education level, job satisfaction and commitment. Of 23 satisfaction and commitment items only 1 item had a significant value with  $p < 0.05$ , namely ‘My working hours are adequate’ which shows that employees with ‘other’ qualifications tend to score higher level of agreement indicating adequate hours worked in a week. However, in reality, some Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry employees demand overtime because they want to get extra money. The training manager of ABCfast commented:

*“The employee is unpredictable. When we asked them to work overtime, they refuse. But when we don’t have overtime, they really want it”*

<b>Table 5.12 Education level vs. Job Satisfaction and commitment</b>							
Items	Education Level				F	Sig	Tukey
	SPM	Diploma	Degree	Others			
My working hours are adequate	4.93	4.59	4.73	5.37	4.273	0.005	Others>SPM Dip Degree
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** $p < 0.001$ , * $p < 0.05$							

In short, results from this study can be compared to the findings of McBey & Karakowsky (2001), which showed that more highly educated workers might work part-time to keep their employment opportunities open, to keep their skills up-to-date, or to remain active in their profession and consequently might actually possess a higher level of commitment than their less educated counterparts.

## 5.6 The influence of hours worked in a week

The next area of analysis dealt with the numbers of hours worked in a week. To assess how hours could impact on job stressor, 2 categories of working hours were developed (above and below 40 hours per week). Employees who worked less than 40 hours tended to higher scores on the items shown in table 5.13.

<b>Table 5.13 Hours worked vs. Job Stressor</b>					
Items		Mean	Std D.	T	Significant
My job responsibilities are clear to me	< 40 hrs	6.05	1.124	-3.953	0.000
	> 40 hrs	5.71	1.054		
My job objectives are well-defined	< 40 hrs	5.76	1.222	-2.289	0.022
	> 40 hrs	5.56	1.057		
To satisfy some people at my job, I have to upset others	< 40 hrs	3.77	1.863	-2.349	0.019
	> 40 hrs	3.46	1.374		
At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines	< 40 hrs	4.13	1.717	-4.603	0.000
	> 40 hrs	3.57	1.595		
My job requires continuous hard work	< 40 hrs	4.85	1.626	-4.342	0.000
	> 40 hrs	4.34	1.437		
My job does not interferes with my family life	< 40 hrs	4.74	1.593	-3.578	0.000
	> 40 hrs	4.31	1.518		
My job does give me enough time for family activities	< 40 hrs	4.39	1.603	-3.012	0.003
	> 40 hrs	4.03	1.459		
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05					

However, while there are significant differences between employees who worked less than 40 hours and more than 40 hours as shown in table 5.14, it is important to note that the mean differences were minimal. The main finding, it is suggested, lies in the

standard deviations that imply, for a minority of the sample, that these are important issues – and these are discussed later in the thesis.

<b>Table 5.14 Hours worked vs. Job Stress</b>					
Items		Mean	Std D.	T	Significant
I feel burnt-out at my job	< 40 hrs	3.92	1.536	-4.357	0.000
	> 40 hrs	3.45	1.290		
I feel frustrated at my job	< 40 hrs	3.55	1.353	-3.047	0.002
	> 40 hrs	3.25	1.224		
I lose appetite because of my job-related problems	< 40 hrs	3.53	1.494	-2.169	0.030
	> 40 hrs	3.30	1.261		
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05					

In regard to the ‘job feeling’ and hours worked, employees who worked less than 40 hours in a week tend to score higher than employees who worked more than 40 hours for 4 items “I work here on a temporary basis to earn some extra money”, “I consider this job as a proper job”, I work here because I enjoy the company of my co-workers’ and “I work here to support my study”. The data are shown in table 5.15.

<b>Table 5.15 Hours worked vs. Job Feeling</b>					
Items		Mean	Std D.	T	Significant
I work here on a temporary basis to earn some extra money	< 40 hrs	4.31	1.621	-3.787	0.000
	> 40 hrs	3.85	1.475		
I consider this job as a proper job	< 40 hrs	5.09	1.593	-4.766	0.000
	> 40 hrs	4.58	1.224		
I work here because I enjoy the company of my so-workers	< 40 hrs	4.79	1.488	-3.094	0.002
	> 40 hrs	4.41	1.453		
I work here to support my study	< 40 hrs	4.66	1.449	-3.452	0.001
	> 40 hrs	4.22	1.487		
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05					

There are 5 job satisfaction and commitment items showing a significant statistical relationship with employees' hours worked in a week. Similar to the above results, these 4 items have a t-test value about  $p < 0.05$  and have a negative value which mean employees who worked less than 40 hours in a week tend to score higher when compared to employees who worked more than 40 hours as shown in table 5.16. However, again, they were statistically significant between 2 groups of hours but the mean differences were minimal.

<b>Table 5.16 Hours worked vs. Job Satisfaction and commitment</b>					
Items		Mean	Std D.	T	Significant
Physical condition at my workplace are very good	< 40 hrs	5.24	1.439	-2.073	0.038
	> 40 hrs	5.03	1.217		
The benefits (uniforms, insurance, etc.) given to me are excellent	< 40 hrs	5.29	1.417	-2.357	0.019
	> 40 hrs	5.03	1.381		
I get a good recognition when I do a good job	< 40 hrs	5.21	1.507	-2.032	0.043
	> 40 hrs	4.97	1.425		
I have been provided excellent training since I started to work here	< 40 hrs	5.41	1.432	-2.118	0.034
	> 40 hrs	5.19	1.266		
I hope I can work in this industry until retirement	< 40 hrs	4.45	1.923	-2.011	0.045
	> 40 hrs	4.16	1.648		
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** $p < 0.001$ , * $p < 0.05$					

One implication that can be drawn from the hours worked data is that employees who worked less than 40 hours in a week appear to have a higher intention to leave, to find other jobs in some other industry and more often think of better paid positions. As a large proportion of the fast food industry work force is comprised of young people, not all have the same goals. Some seek money to supplement their income, others are looking for work that will be their sole source of income, and for others it is

perceived as a short-term stop gap or, as seen from these results, a chance to work with friends. Some who are studying may only work a few hours in week. In short, the data continue to raise almost as many questions as it produces answers, and this will be addressed in the following and final chapters.

### **5.7 The relationship between socio-demographic and intention to leave a job in Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry**

Previous studies have identified the importance of individual characteristics or demographic factors as predictors of employee turnover and among characteristics most commonly examined are age, education, tenure and marital status. Of 6 intentions to leave a job items, only 1 was found to be statistically significant by gender. Males employees tend to score lower agreement on the item ‘How often you feel satisfied working in this industry?’ as shown in table 5.19. Again both genders tend to be similar when thinking of job satisfaction in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry.

<b>Table 5.17 Gender vs. Intention to leave a job</b>					
Items		Mean	Std D.	T	Sig.
How often you feel satisfied working in this industry?	Male	4.80	1.502	-2.567	0.010
	Female	5.08	1.420		
Note : Mean 1=Not at all, 2=Rarely or never 3=Occasionally, 4=Sometimes, 5=Fairly often, 6=Quite often, 7= Very often ** p<0.001, * p<0.05					

<b>Table 5.18 Age vs. Intention to leave a job</b>							
Items	Age Groups				F	Sig	Tukey
	A Below 20	B 21- 31	C 31- 40	D 41 above			
How often do you think to work in some other industry?	4.45	4.43	3.80	4.54	2.682	0.046	A>B
How often do you think of a better paid position?	5.36	5.61	4.81	4.77	3.935	0.008	B>C
Note : Mean 1=Not at all, 2=Rarely or never, 3=Occasionally, 4=Sometimes, 5=Fairly often, 6=Quite often, 7= Very often ** p<0.001, * p<0.05							

In the test of intention to leave a job by age structure, 2 items were found with  $p < 0.05$ . Of the 4 age groups, older employees (aged 31 to 40 years) tend to score lower than other groups. Group B (aged 21 to 31 years old) appear to score the highest on ‘How often do you think of a better paid position?’ and it is suggested that this may relate to changing life stage, for example, getting married. However, the mean values between the age groups are minimal, implying a shared pattern of intent about leaving a job.

With reference to the role of educational attainment and the intention to leave a job, employees with “other” qualifications score lower than the others, while those with degrees tend to express the higher levels of interest in a job change. One possible reason for this because in most cases, an educated employees aware about job opportunities in the labour market (Wong *et al.*, 1999). Equally, however, they also showed the higher level of concern about an outlets future. Table 5.19 show the result in detail.

<b>Table 5.19 Education level vs. Intention to leave a job</b>							
Items	Education Level				F	Sig	Tukey
	SPM	Diploma	Degree	Others			
How often do you think of leaving your present job?	4.37	4.42	4.66	3.64	5.113	0.002	Others>SPM Dip Degree
How often you care about the future of this outlet?	4.60	4.42	5.14	5.00	3.986	0.008	Deg> SPM, Dip

Note : Mean 1=Not at all, 2=Rarely or never, 3=Occasionally, 4=Sometimes, 5=Fairly often, 6=Quite often, 7= Very often  
 \*\* p<0.001, \* p<0.05

The last section examines the influence of hours worked against intention to leave a job. Families and friends can seemingly influence the employees working less than 40 hours a week in shaping their intention to leave or to stay in their current job. Again table 5.20 provides details.

<b>Table 5.20 Hours worked vs. Intention to leave a job</b>					
Items		Mean	Std D.	T	Significant
How often do you think of leaving your present job?	< 40 hrs	4.66	1.385	-3.553	0.000
	> 40 hrs	4.23	1.557		
How often your spouse/families influence your job choice?	< 40 hrs	4.60	1.836	-2.600	0.010
	> 40 hrs	4.23	1.713		
How often your friends influence your job choice?	< 40 hrs	4.27	1.634	-2.128	0.034
	> 40 hrs	3.99	1.658		
How often you feel satisfied working in this industry?	< 40 hrs	5.11	1.552	-1.974	0.049
	> 40 hrs	4.88	1.432		

Note : Mean 1=Not at all, 2=Rarely or never, 3=Occasionally, 4=Sometimes, 5=Fairly often, 6=Quite often, 7= Very often  
 \*\* p<0.001, \* p<0.05

## **5.8 The influence of employees' tenure in an outlet**

This section reports the findings regarding the relationship between job stressor and tenure in the outlet. Tenure in the fast food industry is thought by some as a discriminating variable on the basis that longer serving employees by their behaviour are likely to show higher levels of commitment to the industry, or at least have found the industry acceptable to their needs. On the other hand previous literature, in Singapore, found that an employee who has been working for a long time in one job will start feeling to change his or her job simply because many others are doing so (Khatri *et al.*, 2001).

Results in table 5.21 indicated that job stressors of role ambiguity were found to be statistically significant. Employees who worked more than 10 years in the fast food industry score the highest mean ( $m=6.15$ ) for item "My job responsibility are clear to me". Employees who had worked from 1 to less than 3 years found to rate the highest agreement on item "My job objectives are well defined" and "At my job, I practise teamwork" For two role conflict items, employees who worked more than 10 years again score the highest means (4.50 and 4.23) compared to others. The mean score were above the mid-point of the scale 4.00. However, for the role ambiguity items, it is worth noting that the mean differences between these groups are minimal, and as noted, tend to be positive toward the industry. Table 5.21 shows results in detail.

<b>Table 5.21 Job Stressor vs. tenure in the outlet</b>								
Items	Tenure in the outlet						F	Sig
	< 6 months	6 months to < 1 year	1 to < 3 years	3 to < 5 years	5 to < 10 years	>10 years		
My job responsibility are clear to me	5.85	5.55	5.95	5.75	5.85	6.15	2.932	0.012
My job objectives are well defined.	5.59	5.40	5.76	5.72	5.85	5.69	2.376	0.037
At my job I practise teamwork	5.70	5.66	5.97	5.50	5.55	5.46	2.829	0.015
To satisfy some people at my job, I have to upset others	3.32	3.49	3.88	3.31	3.42	4.50	3.941	0.002
At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines	3.47	3.92	4.03	3.39	3.59	4.23	4.538	0.000
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05								

When job feeling items were tested against employees' tenure in the outlet, 9 items were found statistically significant. Employees who had worked from 1 to less than 3 years in that particular outlet tend to score higher on items: "I consider this type of work as a proper job", "I am given time to meet my religious obligation during working hours", "I am allowed to wear Tudung during working hours" and "I work here because I enjoyed the company of my co-workers". Employees who had worked from 5 to 10 years scored higher mean on items "I feel my educational background is

suited to my job” and “I work here because it was easy to get this job”. Employees who had worked more than 10 years score the highest mean on “I spend times with my co-workers for social life outside of workplace” and “I would like to get promotion in this company”. Again, it is worth noting that the mean differences were minimal albeit statistically significant.

<b>Table 5.22 Job Feeling vs. tenure in the outlet</b>								
Items	Tenure in the outlet						F	Sig
	< 6 months	6 months to < 1 year	1 to < 3 years	3 to < 5 years	5 to < 10 years	> 10 years		
I feel my educational background is suited to my current job	3.95	3.97	4.38	4.29	4.41	4.31	2.827	0.015
I work here because it was easy to get this job	4.34	4.47	3.96	4.31	4.65	4.38	3.347	0.005
I do not consider this type of work as a proper job	4.58	4.54	4.93	4.89	4.63	4.92	2.421	0.034
I am given time to meet my religious obligation during working hours	5.45	5.62	5.83	5.63	5.17	4.92	3.109	0.009
I am allowed to wear ‘Tudung’ during working hours	5.72	5.86	6.06	5.77	5.61	4.82	2.906	0.013
I work here because i enjoy it	5.11	5.22	5.41	5.60	5.39	4.85	2.442	0.033
I work here because I enjoy the company of my co-workers	4.23	4.59	4.70	4.62	4.54	4.31	2.430	0.034
I spend times with my co-workers for social life outside of workplace	3.87	4.36	4.50	4.26	4.50	4.62	5.158	0.000
I would like to get promotion in this company	5.02	5.32	5.41	5.36	5.00	5.46	2.417	0.035
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05								

Regarding the length of employment in the outlet and job satisfaction and commitment, 8 items appeared to have statistical significant differences. The results shown in table 5.23 indicated employees who had worked from 1 to less than 3 years scored higher on 4 items. These results can be seen in table 5.23.

<b>Table 5.23 Job Satisfaction vs. tenure in the outlet</b>								
Items	Tenure in the outlet						F	Sig
	< 6 months	6 months to < 1 year	1 to < 3 years	3 to < 5 years	5 to < 10 years	> 10 years		
Physical condition at my workplace are very good	4.92	5.14	5.30	5.11	5.00	4.77	2.344	0.040
I get a good recognition when I do a good job	4.78	5.05	5.33	5.17	4.45	5.15	4.604	0.000
Career advancement at my current job is very good	4.82	5.12	5.23	5.05	4.90	5.00	2.934	0.012
I am proud to work for this outlet	4.97	5.12	5.33	5.38	4.88	4.77	2.680	0.021
I feel loyalty to this outlet	4.80	5.03	5.21	5.09	4.74	4.67	2.665	0.021
I talk about this outlet to my friends as great place to work	4.73	4.86	5.17	4.91	4.68	4.77	3.111	0.009
I really care about the fate of this outlet	4.60	4.78	5.12	5.00	5.13	4.85	3.931	0.002
I would recommend this outlet to work	4.73	4.95	5.18	4.96	4.73	5.08	2.834	0.015
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05								

## **5.9 The influence of employees' tenure in the fast food industry**

The purpose of this analysis is to understand whether employees' tenure has any correlations attributable to job stressors, job stress, job feeling and job satisfaction and commitment. The results show 6 items with a score possessing statistical significance as shown in table 5.24. The item "At my job, I practice teamwork" indicates employees who had worked from 6 months to less than 1 year scored the highest mean (6.06). This group 'strongly agreed' that they practice teamwork at workplace. For role conflicts items, 4 items were found significant. Employees who had worked from 3 to 5 years tend to 'disagree' that to satisfy some people at my job, I have to upset others'. On the other hand, employees who worked from 6 months to 1 year found it was difficult to follow guidelines and also felt they have more work with which they can cope (4.48 and 5.05 respectively). The only one item on work-family conflict is "My job schedule does not interfere with my family life" reveals that employees who had worked in the fast industry more than 10 years can cope with job and family demands (5.05).

<b>Table 5.24 Job Stressor vs. Tenure in the Industry</b>								
Items	Tenure in the industry						F	Sig
Items	< 6 months	6 months to < 1 year	1 to < 3 years	3 to < 5 years	5 years to < 10 years	> 10 years		
At my job I practise teamwork	5.63	6.06	5.79	5.56	5.79	5.41	3.323	0.006
To satisfy some people at my job, I have to upset other	3.42	3.83	3.58	3.16	3.65	4.25	2.678	0.021
At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines	3.57	4.48	3.63	3.36	3.66	3.95	8.385	0.000
It seems that I have more work at my job than I can handle	4.68	5.06	4.56	4.59	4.96	5.23	3.783	0.000
My job requires continuous work	4.29	4.79	4.39	4.37	4.88	4.73	3.376	0.005
My job schedule does not interferes with my family life	4.41	4.75	4.41	4.14	4.21	5.05	2.687	0.020
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05								

When job stress was tested against the employees' tenure in the industry, 2 items were found to be of statistical significance. Although employees who had worked 5 to less than 10 years scored slightly higher on this item all employees who had worked in the fast food industry from less than 6 months to more than 10 years seem to share a similar feelings about the job stress items. The item "Job-related problems make my heart beat faster than usual" shows employees who had worked more than 10 years tended to score higher than others.

Table 5.25 Job Stressor vs. tenure in the industry								
Items	Tenure in industry						F	Sig
Items	< 6 months	6 months to < 1 year	1 to < 3 years	3 to < 5 years	5 years to < 10 years	> 10 years		
I lose appetite because of my job-related problems	3.24	3.19	3.40	3.64	3.70	3.68	2.673	0.021
Job-related problems make my heart beat faster than usual	3.30	3.26	3.48	3.48	3.82	4.14	3.279	0.006
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05								

In term of job feeling, the results in table 5.26 indicated that there were 6 items showing statistical significance. The main finding however is that respondents tended to disagree with the prompt items, which again raises a need for a discussion that explains as distinct from recording the results.

<b>Table 5.26 Job Feeling vs. tenure in the industry</b>								
Items	Tenure in the outlet						F	Sig
Items	< 6 months	6 months to < 1 year	1 to < 3 years	3 to < 5 years	5 years to < 10 years	> 10 years		
I feel my educational background is suited to my current job	3.91	4.21	4.24	4.06	4.42	4.50	2.244	0.048
I work here on temporary basis to earn some extra money	4.28	4.02	3.95	3.58	3.58	3.52	4.265	0.001
I am allowed to wear Tudung during working hours	5.69	6.14	5.92	5.92	5.71	5.18	2.843	0.015
I spend times with my co-workers for social life outside of workplace	3.95	4.52	4.29	4.20	4.45	4.59	3.293	0.006
I would like to make career in the fast food industry	4.79	5.20	4.85	5.28	5.27	4.86	3.046	0.010
I would like to get promotion in this company	4.97	5.40	5.14	5.65	5.67	5.27	5.126	0.000
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05								

With regards to job satisfaction and commitment, 10 items were found to have differences where  $p < 0.05$ . Interestingly, employees who had worked from 6 months to less than 1 year scored higher on all items compared to others as shown in table 5.27. This result suggests those employees were satisfied and committed within the work place. One possible managerial implication from this finding is that it is from this cohort that the industry may find that its longer-term employees will emerge.

<b>Table 5.27 Job Satisfaction vs. tenure in the industry</b>								
Items	Tenure in the outlet						F	Sig
	< 6 months	6 months to < 1 year	1 to < 3 years	3 to < 5 years	5 to < 10 years	> 10 years		
My job is very secure	4.90	5.37	4.83	5.07	5.08	4.82	2.946	0.012
Physical condition at my workplace are very good	4.97	5.46	5.09	5.04	5.04	4.77	3.078	0.009
The welfare (accommodation, staff meals, etc) given to me are excellent	4.85	4.92	4.46	4.85	4.52	4.59	2.406	0.035
My working hours are adequate	4.88	5.11	4.90	4.51	4.73	5.00	2.350	0.039
I get a good recognition when I do a good job	4.88	5.39	5.08	5.04	4.68	5.24	3.163	0.008
I have a freedom to do my best at my job	4.99	5.52	5.04	5.08	5.28	5.27	3.048	0.010
Career advancement at my current job is very good	4.89	5.45	5.02	4.97	5.03	4.80	3.816	0.002
I have been provided excellent training since I started to work here	5.17	5.57	5.33	5.01	5.24	4.91	2.737	0.018
I am prepared to work harder than I have to in order help this outlet to be successful	5.04	5.49	5.17	5.32	5.36	5.23	2.490	0.030
I really care about the fate of this outlet	4.61	5.22	4.75	4.97	5.19	5.00	4.675	0.000
Note : Mean 1=Very strongly disagree, 2=Strongly disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree, 7= Very strongly agree ** p<0.001, * p<0.05								

## 5.10 Chapter summary

The above analysis has applied independent sample t-tests and ANOVA, which, however, do not permit interaction between each of the socio-demographic variables. Some results clearly emerge but others need further explanation. For example, one result from this study found that age groups have significant differences with reference to the formation of an intention to leave a job. Although there significant different between age groups it must be noted that in absolute terms these were minimal. The same observations apply to the issue of gender, where some statistically significant differences were found, but where the absolute scores indicated both genders tended to agreement or disagreement with an item. As Schmitz (2007) observes, the term “significant” does not mean “a really important finding” but simply that there is statistical evidence that there are differences. Of more importance are two general findings. First, scores pertaining to job satisfaction tend to be above 5.0 and thereby indicate agreement that work in the fast food industry is generally satisfying. Second, standard deviations are high, implying the existence of a highly committed and a potentially disaffected group within the sample. Additionally it appears that some differences may be allocated to age.

With reference to specific measures of stress and job satisfaction, the number of hours worked appeared to have some significance as was shown in Table 5.16. Using the criterion of the number of hours worked for a full-time representing 40 hours, it was found that those working full-time are more likely to record higher levels of job satisfaction – but this may in part represent a tautological argument, as those less

satisfied are probably less likely to adopt full-time jobs within the industry. Similarly it was found that better educated workers tended to scores that represented lower levels of stress, but in itself this potentially hides other exogenous factors such as the extent to which the better university educated worker may simply be looking at a job as a short term temporary source of revenue while perhaps working their way through university.

In many respects therefore this chapter raises the spectre of relationships between the variables. The use of t-tests and ANOVA involves simply analyzing relationships between just two variables, and while it is useful in identifying those variables that may be of statistical significance, it does not examine relationships that exist between three or more variables. This requires additional modes of analysis, and hence the next chapter will look more closely at an employee's intention to leave a job and will do so based on clusters and factors, thereby also combining some of the variables described above into groups of related variables.

# **CHAPTER SIX: FACTOR ANALYSIS AND COMPOSITE FACTORS**

## **6.1 Introduction**

While, as reported in the previous chapter, the scales of job satisfaction, job stress and others have been shown to possess sufficient degrees of reliability to permit further statistical analysis, one further test that seeks to assess their validity in terms of actually testing ‘something’ that is thought to be ‘meaningful’ is to undertake factor analysis. The purpose of factor analysis is to reduce the numbers of items that comprise a scale into a smaller set of dimensions that comprise highly correlated items. This then permits subsequent analysis using summary factor scores. At the same time, should the technique produce clearly defined factors, it can be said that the scales comprise broad underlying dimensions that are being ‘correctly’ measured by the items.

Therefore the aim of this chapter is to understand employees’ intention to leave a job based on single variable or a small number of factors. In other words, the researcher wants to better understand underlying dimensions of job stressor, job stress, job feeling and job satisfaction and commitment rather than identifying individual items. Thus, this study applied principal component factor analysis (PCA) to reduce the items to a smaller set of underlying dimensions that summarise the information contained in the variables (Coakes & Steed, 2007).

There are several methods for factor extraction and this study used principal component (PC) extraction with Varimax rotation. Varimax rotation is commonly used because it creates a simple structure while maintaining the rotating axes as being uncorrelated. It seeks to maximise the sum of the variances of squared loadings in each column of the matrix, and through the use of squared values removes issues that might pertain to negative values (Coakes & Steed, 2007). Kline (1994) comments that it is an efficient, effective and simple method that produces excellent results. The actual method of rotation is described in many books including that of Everitt & Dunn (1991).

## **6.2 Job stressor items**

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy (0.750) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ( $X^2 = 2295.70$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) showed that the data were suitable for factorisation. Factor loadings in the range of 0.30 to 0.40 are considered to meet the minimal level for an interpretation of structure and loadings 0.50 or greater are considered practically significant (Hair *et al.*, 1998). In the case of loading exceeding +0.70 it is considered as being indicative of a well-defined structure and is the goal for any factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 1998). The 13 items yielded three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. All thirteen items had factor loadings of over 0.526. The internal consistency of items within each dimension was shown by alpha coefficients being greater than 0.60. Three factors were found that 'explained' 53 percent of variance and were labelled: 'Role ambiguity', 'Work-family conflict' and 'Role

conflict'. Two items of work overload fell under role conflict factors and one was under work family conflict.

Table 6.1 Factor analysis of Job Stressors Items			
Factor Domain and items	Factor Loading		
	1	2	3
My job are well defined	<b>0.814</b>	0.114	0.022
My job responsibilities are clear to me	<b>0.801</b>	0.168	0.017
At my job, I practice Teamwork	<b>0.693</b>	0.051	0.099
It is clear what my fellow worker expect of me at my work	<b>0.658</b>	0.123	0.048
My job does give me time for family activities	0.110	<b>0.855</b>	0.032
My job does give me enough time to socialize	0.087	<b>0.794</b>	0.075
My job schedule does not interferes with my family life	0.155	<b>0.731</b>	0.046
I am given enough time to do what is expected of me at my work	<b>0.420</b>	<b>0.491</b>	-0.056
My job requires continuous hard work	0.122	-0.077	<b>0.691</b>
At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines	-0.049	0.185	<b>0.683</b>
To satisfy some people at my job, I have to upset others	-0.054	0.163	<b>0.653</b>
It seems that I have more work at my job than I can handle	0.199	0.070	<b>0.630</b>
My job makes me too tired to enjoy my family life	-0.021	-0.231	<b>0.526</b>
Eigenvalues	3.319	1.983	1.588
Percent of Variance	25.53	15.25	12.21
Cumulative Percent	25.550	40.788	52.980
Reliability Coefficient	0.767	0.770	0.642

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

The first factor consists of 4 items related to role requirements. All those items have loadings greater than 0.658. The second factor consists of 4 items where 3 relate to Family commitment except the 4<sup>th</sup> item ‘I am given enough time to do what is expected of me at my work’ which has a relatively lower factor loading of 0.492. It is also needs to be noted that this item has a factor loading of 0.420 in the 1<sup>st</sup> factor which implies a cross loading. On the other hand, in the psychology literature, this item used to measure work overload (Firth *et al.*, 2004). Subsequently, the third factor illustrates ‘Role conflict’. Three items here relate to role conflict and two on work overload. Table 6.2 provides the details.

Table 6.2 Factor analysis with Varimax Rotation for Job Stress Items		
Factor Domain and items	Factor Loading	
	1	2
I feel frustrated at my job	<b>0.892</b>	0.187
I feel burnt-out at my job	<b>0.812</b>	0.237
I feel tense at my job	<b>0.765</b>	0.289
I feel stigmatized at my job	<b>0.708</b>	0.181
Job related problems make my stomach upset	0.209	<b>0.831</b>
Job related problems keep me awake all night	0.198	<b>0.781</b>
Job related problems make my heart beat faster than usual	0.157	<b>0.759</b>
I lose appetite because of my job related problems	0.270	<b>0.708</b>
Eigenvalues	<b>4.029</b>	<b>1.292</b>
Percent of Variance	<b>50.36</b>	<b>16.156</b>
Cumulative Variance	<b>50.358</b>	<b>66.514</b>
Reliability Coefficient	<b>0.854</b>	<b>0.830</b>

### **6.3 Job stress items**

A similar PCA for the Job stress items was undertaken for job stress, resulting in in 2 factors which each had eigenvalues greater than 1.0. The KMO values for Job stress reaches 0.805 and suggests the adequacy of the sample is 'meritorious' (Ryan, 2008). The factors accounted for 66.5 percent of variance and were named: 'Job Burnout' and 'Job anxiety & somatic complaints'. Alpha Reliability was also tested and exceeded 0.8. The 1<sup>st</sup> factor consists of 4 items related to job stress and the 2<sup>nd</sup> factor consisted of 4 items comprising anxiety and somatic complaints. Table 6.2 shows the results.

### **6.4 Job feeling items**

Subsequently, 18 Job Feeling items resulted in 5 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. The KMO and Bartlett's Test for the Sphericity were computed to examine the adequacy of the sample. The KMO values for feeling of the job items reaches 0.822. The factors accounted for 57 percent of variance and were termed as: 'Religion', 'Work & Family Balance', 'Convenience & Support Type Job', 'Enjoy & Co-Workers' and 'Educational Background'. Alpha Reliability was also tested and the results showed alpha coefficients greater than 0.7.

The 1st factor only consists of three items, of which two were related to religion plus the item 'This job gives me an opportunity to meet new people'. The 2<sup>nd</sup> factor comprises four items that have loadings greater than 0.4. These items were related to

career and supporting a family. The 3<sup>rd</sup> factor illustrates a mixture of easy to get the job, to satisfy parents, temporary basis and to support study. However, these four items appear related to one another as this dimension has a mixture of a lack of 'hassle' and 'fill-in jobs' whilst studying. Also one needs to note that item 'I work here to support my study' has a factor loading of 0.454 in the 4<sup>th</sup> factor. This cross loading suggests that this item can be also be allocated in factor 4.

Table 6.3 Factor analysis with Varimax Rotation for Job Feeling					
Factor Domain and items	Factor Loading				
	1	2	3	4	5
I am allowed to wear 'Tudung' during working hours	<b>0.768</b>	0.101	-0.039	-0.013	0.109
This job gives me an opportunity to meet new people	<b>0.734</b>	0.243	-0.030	0.144	-0.022
I am given time to meet my religious obligation during working hours	<b>0.715</b>	0.062	0.030	0.123	0.162
I would like to make a career in the fast food industry	0.077	<b>0.722</b>	-0.156	0.287	0.233
I would like to get promotion in this company	0.195	<b>0.704</b>	-0.129	0.173	0.171
I work here to support my family	0.380	<b>0.512</b>	0.308	-0.211	0.094
I get well on with my supervisors	0.258	<b>0.512</b>	-0.061	0.276	0.086
I work here because it was easy to get this job	-0.002	-0.809	<b>0.701</b>	0.032	0.060
I work to satisfy my parents	-0.054	0.048	<b>0.635</b>	0.024	0.183
I work here on a temporary basis to earn some extra money	0.047	-0.211	<b>0.552</b>	0.117	-0.422
I work here to support my study	0.076	0.454	<b>0.472</b>	0.060	-0.431
I work here because I enjoy the company of my co-workers	0.190	0.135	0.088	<b>0.726</b>	0.031
I spend times with my co-workers for social life outside of the workplace	0.008	0.208	0.053	<b>0.667</b>	0.090
I work here because I enjoy it	0.469	0.286	-0.109	<b>0.554</b>	0.112
I work here because my friends are working here	-0.246	-0.160	0.422	<b>0.465</b>	0.065
I feel my educational background is suited to my current job	0.090	0.081	0.138	0.019	<b>0.730</b>
I work here because I want to work in this industry	0.087	0.441	0.046	0.117	<b>0.586</b>
I consider this type of job as a proper job	0.251	0.181	0.005	0.237	<b>0.533</b>
Eigenvalues	4.367	2.085	1.520	1.222	1.037
Variance explained	24.261	11.585	8.444	6.791	5.763
Cumulative Percent	24.262	35.847	44.291	51.081	56.844
Reliability Coefficient	0.755	0.711	0.573	0.605	0.617

The 4<sup>th</sup> factor consists of four items and is related to co-workers and enjoyment. Also, things need to be examined here is the cross loading of item 'I work here because I enjoy it'. This item also has a factor loading of 0.469 in the factor 3. The last factor contains 3 items where 2 items were related to respondents' own reasons and one related to educational background. Table 6.3 provides the results.

## **6.5 Job satisfaction and commitment items**

In this case, KMO equalled 0.956 and Bartlett's Test ( $X^2=9950.615$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The 23 factors items yielded three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. These factors explained 53 percent of variance and were labelled: 'Organizational Commitment', 'Job Stability & Supervision' and 'Benefits, Workplace Condition & Wages'. To confirm the results, the reliability testing was conducted and each alpha exceeded 0.80, indicating that Nunnally's (1978) criterion was met.

The 1<sup>st</sup> factor consists of 11 items where 10 items are related to organizational commitment and one to training. However, four items show cross load into factor 2. Those items are 'I feel loyalty to this outlet', 'I am proud to work for this outlet', 'I am happy working in this outlet' and 'I am prepared to work harder than I have to in order to help this outlet successful'.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> factor is mainly consists of items related to Job Stability & Supervision. Five refer to Job stability and 1 to supervision. All items in factor 2 have a factor loading greater than 0.50. The last factor contains 6 items related to benefits, workplace

condition and wages. Also 2 items, 'I receive a good pay rate for my work' and 'My working hours are adequate' have a cross loading and can be allocated to factor 2.

Table 6.4 Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation Job Satisfaction			
Factor Domain and items	Factor Loading		
	1	2	3
I talk about this outlet to my friends as a great place to work	<b>0.794</b>	0.213	0.242
I talk about this outlet to my family as a great place to work	<b>0.767</b>	0.287	0.207
I would recommend this outlet to work	<b>0.758</b>	0.154	0.303
I really care about the fate of this outlet	<b>0.745</b>	0.162	0.216
I feel loyalty to this outlet	<b>0.723</b>	0.412	0.123
I feel this outlet offers attractive work conditions	<b>0.707</b>	0.247	0.287
I am proud to work for this outlet	<b>0.609</b>	0.474	0.095
I hope I can work in this industry until retirement	<b>0.614</b>	0.074	0.319
I am happy working in this outlet	<b>0.599</b>	0.566	0.069
I am prepared to work harder than I have to in order to help this outlet successful	<b>0.577</b>	0.406	0.163
I have been provided excellent training since I started to work here	<b>0.446</b>	0.372	0.284
Career advancement at my current job is very good	0.226	<b>0.689</b>	0.270
I am satisfied with the location of the outlet that I have been assigned to work	0.259	<b>0.671</b>	0.258
I am enjoying my current job	0.374	<b>0.667</b>	0.310
I get a good recognition when I do a good job	0.165	<b>0.667</b>	0.317
I have a freedom to do my best at my job	0.203	<b>0.656</b>	0.249
My supervisor's style in managing staff is excellent	0.367	<b>0.557</b>	0.182
My job is very secure	0.275	0.191	<b>0.732</b>
The benefits (uniform, insurance, etc (given to me are excellent.	0.294	0.265	<b>0.719</b>
Welfare (accommodation, staff meals, etc) given to me are excellent	0.208	0.242	<b>0.695</b>
Physical conditions at my workplace are very good	0.369	0.286	<b>0.649</b>
I receive a good pay rate for my work	0.108	0.466	<b>0.592</b>
My working hours are adequate	0.156	0.486	<b>0.499</b>
Eigenvalues	11.145	1.750	1.135
Variance explained	48.457	7.607	4.936
Cumulative Percent	48.457	56.065	61.001
Reliability Coefficient	0.941	0.874	0.869

## 6.6 Intention to leave a job items

Principal component factor analysis with Varimax rotation was also done for the 8 Job Intentions to leave items, and resulted in three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. The KMO measure of sample adequacy (0.699) and Bartlett's Test of sphericity ( $X^2 = 1253.18$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) were arguably just appropriate. The factors accounted for 67 percent of variance and were termed: 'Outlet Commitment', 'Intention to Leave a Job & Better Paid' and 'Friends & Family Influence'. Alpha coefficients were more than 0.6. Table 6.5 shows the details.

Table 6.5 Factor analysis with Varimax Rotation- Intention To Leave A Job Items			
Factor Domain and items	Factor Loading		
	1	2	3
How often do you think that is the best outlet to work for?	<b>0.797</b>	0.147	0.045
How often you care about the future of this outlet?	<b>0.767</b>	0.088	0.155
How often do you feel satisfied working in this industry?	<b>0.679</b>	-0.198	0.314
How often do you think to work in some other industry?	-0.003	<b>0.831</b>	0.114
How often do you think of leaving your present job?	-0.112	<b>0.798</b>	0.211
How often do you think of better paid position?	0.361	<b>0.634</b>	-0.040
How often your friends influence your job choice?	0.167	0.095	<b>0.869</b>
How often does your spouse/family influence your job choice?	0.180	0.176	<b>0.845</b>
<b>Eigenvalues</b>	<b>2.663</b>	<b>1.635</b>	<b>1.080</b>
<b>Variance</b>	<b>33.288</b>	<b>20.441</b>	<b>13.496</b>
<b>Cumulative Percent</b>	<b>33.288</b>	<b>53.729</b>	<b>67.225</b>
<b>Reliability Coefficient</b>	<b>0.689</b>	<b>0.672</b>	<b>0.777</b>

## 6.7 Composite Factors

In order to obtain an average mean score for each factor, composite values or grand means were calculated by adding all item scores within a factor and dividing by the number of items. There are 13 factors as stated above, and Table 6.6 shows the results.

<b>Table 6.6 Composite Mean for the 13 Factors</b>			
No		Mean	Standard deviation
1	Role Ambiguity	5.61	0.871
2	Work-family conflict	4.39	0.867
3	Role Conflict	4.19	0.955
4	Job Burnout	3.39	1.077
5	Job Anxiety and Somatic Complaints	3.53	1.131
6	Religion & Meeting New People	5.77	1.066
7	Work & Family Balance	5.30	0.990
8	Convenience & Support Type	4.09	0.986
9	Enjoy & Co-workers	4.39	0.946
10	Education Background	4.53	1.082
11	Outlet Commitment	5.04	1.079
12	Job Stability & Supervision	5.04	1.036
13	Benefits, Workplace & Wages	4.93	1.133

From the table 6.6 five factors high mean scores implying that these possess some importance. “Religion & meeting new people” possessed the highest mean indicating that employees felt able to meet religious requirements, followed by “job responsibility and co-worker expectation”, “career and family balance”, “job stability & supervision”, “organizational commitment” “ benefits, workplace condition and wages”.

“Religion and meeting new people” factor arises from the importance of the Islamic faith in Malaysia. In Islam, the faithful pray 5 times in a day. Employees were concern about prayer obligation and have to pray even through during working hours. In addition many outlets did not provide a prayer room. Most outlets are located in the hypermarket or shopping complexes. Employees were allowed to pray during their breaks. However, in some cases, employees have to walk quite far to the prayer room and create difficulties due to break time constraints. In the worst case, the prayer room may be located outside the shopping complexes or hypermarkets which require them to walk even further. Thus face even tighter time constraints.

In term of work uniforms, male and female employees wear identical uniforms and their uniform signifies the company (Seymour, 2000). The use of a work uniform is to permit customers recognize who are employees and is part of a company’s image and branding (Seymour, 2000). Male and female employees were given a uniform which consists of two T-Shirts, one long pants, one cap, and a name tag. They have to deposit money to get the uniform and prices differ from one company to another and it ranges from RM50.00 to RM100. The dress code as per their offer letter, require them to tuck in and a wearing a short-sleeve T-Shirt. Wearing a black scarf was allowed while working and according to Islam practice, females have to cover their body accept for their palms and face. In Islamic practice, a short-sleeve shirt can be worn by men but women have to cover the crown of their heads.

The issue of dirty uniforms could contribute to the importance attributed to the religion factor. In order to pray, a Muslim is obliged to wear clean clothes. As

working in fast food sometimes involved handling dirty stuffs like cleaning up tables, wiping windows, sweeping and mopping floors, such work could make their uniform dirty. Therefore, employees may find it difficult to perform prayers with a dirty uniform. These considerations are important to those of Islamic faith and less to those less rigorous in their profession of Islam. Relatively high variance also accounts for the role of this determinant.

The conditions of the industry differ from many other industries and are often considered as poor (Allan *et al.*, 2006). Generally, employees were asked to work for long hours and lower pay. Their job responsibilities are well defined. They have to follow guidelines and there is less allowance for personal patterns of work. The fast food industry is a service and people oriented business and employees have to handle customers. Not only employees working at the 'front house' deal directly with customers but also those working at the back of the house can be seen by the customers. Many customers come to fast food outlets to eat on the premises (Allan *et al.*, 2006). According to the Big burger human resource manager, there were 1000 customers who came to each of their outlets daily. The Training manager of ABC fast also mentioned about 1500 - 2000 customers visiting their outlet in Petaling Jaya and on average 200 - 250 at other outlets daily. This suggests that the nature of the fast food industry is that it is always busy and has a high turnover of customers. This outlet-specific scenario requires employees to be energetic and healthy because it not only involves physical work but also mental alertness. Employees need to stand for long hours and deal with customers promptly, especially if facing customers' complaints. Work in the fast food industry requires a high degree of responsibility

because employees are dealing with human emotion and food that could adversely affect a customer's health if poorly stored or prepared. Customers expect employees working in the fast food to be friendly, patient and have high speed when delivering their order. In most cases, people associated fast food as being fast in everything, starting from taking the order, to delivering the order, having meals and leaving the outlet.

These factors are especially true for those working in 'front of the house' where they interact with customers' everyday. Front line employees are required to greet customers, take orders and prepare customers' orders. This job responsibility is significantly different from other kinds of work due to emotional involvement. The smile produced and friendly behaviour is part of the job (Seymour, 2000). Employees faced with an angry customer, may feel angry themselves but they have to display the correct emotion when dealing with the customers. Employees have to control their display of emotions and not appear 'false' to the customers. This is considered as an important aspect for employees' job responsibility.

Similarly, employees who are working at 'the back of the house' had the same pressure as employees serving at the counter when came to busy time like lunch time or during school and university holidays. The employees at the back counter can be seen clearly by the customers and their job responsibilities of frying fries, preparing burgers, etc. are also as important as those front line employees. As these pressures are a possible cause of turnover, managers at Head office should consider this aspect when designing the employees' manual and interviewing potential staff. Such factors

also indicate why job responsibility and the role of co-workers feature strongly on the factor analysis. It also raises issues as to the extent to which employees have to repress their own personal feelings when working in teams or dealing with more awkward customers.

In the fast food industry research, it was shown that dissatisfaction with pay is among the significant factors responsible for turnover. Benefits, workplace conditions and wages were found to be possible causes that may lead to employee turnover in the Malaysian fast food industry. Similarly, employees who worked in the Hong Kong fast food industry viewed salary and fringe benefits as not being competitive in the market (Lam & Zhang, 2003). According to the interview undertaken with the Human resource managers and Training managers in the 7 international chains, minimum wages offered to their employees were Ringgit Malaysia (RM) 3.50 which is equivalent to \$1.50 per hour. This is considered as a very low wage and employees were paid monthly. In most cases, Malaysia does not practice weekly pay and employees get their pay on monthly basis (Wages Council Act 1947, 2008).

In terms of employee benefits and welfare offered, all employees are entitled to Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and SOCSO (a social security organization to provide protection to employees involved in accidents arising in the workplace) and medical benefits. Meal allowances are also provided for employees who were working for more than 8 hours a day in these companies. Employees are entitled to one set menu per shift. With reference to accommodation, it depends on an outlet's location and only certain outlets provided accommodation for their employees.

On the other hand, mean score for the organizational commitment factor show high level of agreement with  $m=2.96$ . Similarly, Igarria and Greenhaus (1992) in their study of management information systems personnel found that the most immediate determinants of turnover intentions were lack of commitment to the organization. This result implies that employees who were working in the Malaysian fast food industry were agreed that the organizational commitment requisition from the companies may lead them to find other job alternatives. Job commitment in the fast food industry covers various aspect of jobs as discuss earlier. To be more specific, commitment that the employee need to achieve not only on daily basis work but the pressure from the head office to achieve sales target market. The restaurant manager of Big Burger commented that:

*....We have a daily target sale which is sometimes a burden to us. Even though we know that there will be a reward to outlet that achieve the target sales but it is a pressure to staff....*

## **6.8 Chapter summary**

This chapter applied exploratory factor analysis to the different scales, namely those of job stressors, job stress, job feeling, job satisfaction and intention to leave a job. Exploratory factor analysis was adopted because (a) the scales were modified a little to reflect the Malaysian context and (b) a new scale not directly based on scales previously existing in the literature was introduced. The existence of this scale thereby, it is argued, excluded the use of confirmatory factor analysis. The primary purpose of exploratory factor analysis is to assess whether or not underlying or latent dimensions exist 'blow' the items that form the scales, but to an extent the arguments

are tautological. For example, if it is concluded that job satisfaction is based around concepts of affective notions of being pleased about a job, about supervisor recognition and career progression and about pay and conditions of working, a scale based on these premises would simply reveal three dimensions, as proved to be the case shown in Table 6.4. In this instance factor analysis might be said to (a) confirm the existence of dimensions found in previous research – which research was the basis of scale construction, (b) indicate that respondents have generally responded in a logical and consistent manner and (c) possibly permit the calculation of factor mean scores that can be used as proxies for the aggregated scores derived from individual items. Such scores were calculated in Table 6.6.

The various dimensions found in the study may be said to be interrelated. Job stressors were found to be of a three-fold nature – namely clarity of job roles, impingement on social and family free time and third, having more than one can cope with (see Table 6.1). Job stress was found to relate to somatic conditions being tense, burnt out and frustrated (see Table 6.2). The new ‘job feeling’ scale comprised five factors, namely religious obligations (but with a need to meet people), career promotion and family support, the temporary nature of the work, enjoyment derived from the job, and feelings that the job was ‘proper’ and was one for which the respondent felt qualified. While this scale therefore ‘worked’ it did throw up some anomalies such as the item about meeting people being tied to performance of religious requirements in a formal Islamic state – although obviously religious meetings do perform social functions as well as recognising the divine.

Generally though, it was concluded that the factor analysis, when combined with other measures such as the alpha coefficients and the split half correlations, indicated that, from the statistical perspective, that the data set was 'reliable' and could be further assessed. Consequently the next chapter presents the results of a cluster analysis.

# **CHAPTER SEVEN: PSYCHOMETRIC VARIABLES AND THE INTENTION TO LEAVE A JOB – AN INITIAL EXPLORATION**

## **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter is to examine the relationship between each psychometric variable formed from the factor analysis and the intention to leave a job. The chapter is exploratory in the sense that it uses simple linear regression and bivariate correlations to initially assess the strength of relationship between these variables. The strength of the correlation between variables is based on a suggestion made by Field (2005) which stated 0 to 0.2 is a weak correlation, 0.3 to 0.5 is a moderate relation and from 0.5 to 1 is considered strong relationship. If the correlation is found to be at least moderate, then further regression analysis is merited and is undertaken in chapter nine when additional socio-demographic variables are also included. It should, in interpreting the statistics cited below, be remembered that where samples are large, that correlations of as little as 0.2 may well be statistically significant, and thus the Bonferroni adjustment for scale is occasionally used to take into the account the scale effects.

## **7.2 The relationship between job stressor, job stress, job feeling and job satisfaction & commitment and intention to leave a job**

Having identified the factors (from factor analysis results in the previous chapter) the relationship between aggregated factor scores and the intention to leave a job was analysed. The results of this simple linear regression analysis indicated that 9 factors were found to have significant relationship with the frequency of thinking leaving their present job. On the other hand two factors relating to job stressors, namely 'Role ambiguity' and 'Work-family conflict' and one factor from the job feeling variable, 'Religion & meeting new people' were not found to correlate with the intention to leave a job.

'Role conflict' was positively but weakly correlated to intention to leave a job ( $r=0.138$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Therefore, this means employees who experience role conflict at an outlet showed that they had some thoughts about leaving their present job. Role conflict refers to a situation where employees find it difficult to follow guidelines, have too much work to handle and the job requires constantly hard work. The 'Job burnout' also has a positive relationship to intention to leave a current job ( $r=0.344$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). This correlation implies that the higher the employees' felt burnout, the higher employees' intention to leave a job. This result is logical because employees who experience burnt-out were the one who most likely leave the outlet. 'Job anxiety and somatic complaints' is correlated with the intention to leave ( $r=0.287$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) which means employees who had no job-related problem will experience lower

turnover intention. Anxiety and somatic complaints refers to employees who cannot sleep due to problems at workplace or experience heart beat faster than usual.

The results of the bivariate correlation indicated that 4 job feeling factors had weak correlations with employee intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry. 'Work and family balance' had a negative correlation ( $r = -.185, p < 0.05$ ) with the intention to leave a job. This result suggests that the lower the family commitment and burden at the outlet, the higher might be the employee intent to leave his/her job, albeit the relationship is weak. The 'Convenience and support type job' has a positive relationship between intention to leave a job ( $r = 0.191, p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, 'Education background' has a negative correlation with intention to leave a job ( $r = -0.113$ ). This means that the higher the education level, the lower the intention to leave.

Lastly, this section measures job satisfaction and commitment which consisted of 3 underlying groups or factors. The first factor 'Outlet commitment' has a negative significant relationship with the intention variable. This result indicates that the higher the employees commitment the lower the intention to leave a job. 'Job stability & supervision' emerges as having a negative significant. Thus, it means that the lower the employees' job stability the higher the intention to quit. Lastly, 'Benefits, welfare & wages' also had a negative correlation to the intention to leave a job which reveal the lower the employees felt satisfied with those items, the higher will be the intention to leave a job. It is worth noting that this correlation analysis cannot make direct conclusions about causality which means correlation coefficients say nothing

about which variable causes the other to change (Field, 2005). They are, however, congruent with expectations derived from the literature as reviewed in chapter two, but Bonferroni adjustments indicated a lack of statistical significance.

In a further analysis, the Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ) is used to measure the amount of variability in one variable that is explained by the other. Table 7.1 below presents the correlation of factors used in this study. The results of the bivariate correlation indicated that 'Job burnout had the strongest correlation with employee turnover intention ( $r = 0.344$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) followed by 'Job anxiety & somatic complaints'  $r = 0.287$ ,  $p < 0.01$  and 'Role conflict'  $r=0.138$ ,  $p<0.01$ . A close examination of the  $R^2$  shows that the 'Job burnout' factor account for 11.83 percent of the variability in intention to leave a job. In other words, it means although 'Job burnout' was highly correlated with intention, it can account for only 11.83% of variation in intention to leave and 'Anxiety & somatic complaints' factor accounts for 8.24% of variation. These relationships are examined in more detail in chapter nine when taking into account socio-demographic variables as well as the psychometric.

Table 7.1 : Correlation between Factors and Intention to leave a job		
Factors	Intention To Leave r=	Intention To Leave β=
Role Ambiguity	N/A	N/A
Work Family Conflict	N/A	N/A
Role Conflict	0.138**	1.90
Job Burnout	0.344**	11.83
Job Anxiety & Somatic Complaints	0.287**	8.24
Religion	N/A	N/A
Work & Family Balance	-0.185**	3.42
Convenience & Support type	0.191**	3.65
Enjoy & co-workers	N/A	N/A
Education Background	-0.113**	1.28
Outlet Commitment	-0.176**	3.10
Job Stability & Supervision	-0.165**	2.72
Benefits, Workplace & Wages	-0.126**	1.59

\*\*Correlation significant at the 0.01 (2-tailed)

The results of the bivariate correlation indicated that 4 job feeling factors correlated with employee intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysian fast food industry. ‘Work and family balance’ had a negative correlation ( $r = -0.185$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with the intention to leave a job. In a further analysis, regression analysis was used (see chapter 8).

Subsequently, the relationship was done to look at the relationship of job stress item and intention to leave.

### 7.3 Intentions to leave and feeling burnt out

The mean scores and the standard deviations for the items have already been reported, but are here re-assessed in terms of highlighting the scores of those most likely to

suffer burn-out or thinking most frequently about leaving their job. To highlight various findings from the descriptive statistics, only 9.8 percent of the sample strongly or very strongly agreed that they felt 'burnt-out' although a further 9.4 percent 'agreed'. At the other end of the scale 14.5 percent 'strongly or very strongly disagreed' and a further 35.5 disagreed that they felt 'burnt-out'. It should be noted that three measures of job fatigue were employed – feeling burnt out, feeling frustrated and feeling tense – and these all correlated with each other in excess of  $r=0.7$ ,  $p<0.01$ . Across these three measures it can be stated that about 20 percent of the sample expressed some disquiet about the work related stress. This was confirmed by the finding that 18.7 percent of respondents noted that they 'often' or 'very often' thought of leaving their job.

On the other hand 34 percent stated they 'strongly' or 'very strongly' agreed that they enjoyed their job. Cross tabulating feelings of being burnt out, intending to leave and enjoying the current job showed that of the 76 respondents who expressed strong or very strong agreement with feeling burnt out, 58 often or very often thought of quitting the job ( $\chi^2=246.86$ ,  $df=36$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Similarly of those expressing high levels of enjoyment from their job ( $n=280$ ), 48 indicated they often or very often thought of leaving ( $\chi^2=32.91$ ,  $df=36$ ,  $p=0.62$ ). These findings alone indicate the nuanced nature of the relationships as indicated by Leidner (1993) for, while feeling burnt out correlates well with intention to leave (Pearson  $R = 0.39$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), job enjoyment is not statistically significantly related to intention (or otherwise) to quit. It is notable that, with reference to family and social roles, respondents tend to the mid-point of the scale, one interpretation of which is that working in the fast food industry

neither benefits nor inhibits these other aspects of respondent life, implying hence an independence of work and social roles.

In terms of job responsibilities, it appears from the data previously reported, that respondents tend to agree that their roles are generally clear to them (5.82), and that they work within teams (5.75). Given the nature of the 'crew' and the operating manuals used by the fast food industry, these results are consistent with expectation.

With reference to job involvement respondents tend to consider fairly often the thought of a better paid job (5.44), but this item is slightly ambiguous in that it could refer to promotion within the branch, company or industry, and not simply to a willingness to leave the current post. Indeed many of the scores in excess of 5.0 indicate satisfaction with managerial styles and the nature of the work, and the mean scores for considering leaving the industry and/or the current job (4.3, SD=1.5) occur far down the list of items. In short many of these results support Leidner's (1993) contention that many employees quite happily 'buy in' to the management modes and cultures espoused by fast food companies.

## **7.4 Chapter summary**

At the completion of chapter five it was stated that t-tests and ANOVA possessed limitations as means of analysis in that they considered primarily pair-wise linkages of variables, and that in many instances relationships existed between three or more

variables. Chapter six sought to better assess the rigour of the data through factor analysis, and hence having completed that this chapter examined the role of a number of variables operating together through the technique of regression analysis. It represents a preliminary examination preparing the ground for chapters eight and nine. It did so by taking factor mean scores and relating these to an intention to leave a job, leaving to the later chapters the addition of socio-demographic analysis (as assessed in chapter five) and clusters derived on chapter eight.

In undertaking this analysis a restricting factor is identified, which is that only about 20 percent of the sample displayed strong intentions to leave a job, and hence inevitably this means that some factors will prove to be poor predictors. This was found to be the case as shown in Table 7.1 where role ambiguity, work family conflict, religion and enjoyment of working with colleagues proved to be poor predictors of an intention to leave the job, thereby apparently disproving some of the earlier literature. However, as is demonstrated in chapter eight, a confounding issue is that some of these factors may be important when operating with socio-demographic variables, and as will be shown in chapter eight, age and peer groupings was thought to be important.

Two sets of conclusions can be tentatively derived from this exploratory analysis. The first is that job stressors, job stress and feelings of being burnt out have a *prima facie* correlation with an intention to leave in the fast food industry, and that job satisfaction is not, on the other hand, a sufficient pre-condition to predict the strength of an intention to leave. Second, it does appear that 20 percent of employees have a

high level of commitment to work (and hence lower intention to leave) while another 60 percent do not frequently think of leaving. These findings indicate two further analytical steps – the first to carefully assess the likelihood of clusters within the work force, and the second to add to those variables that may explain an intention to leave the job. Consequently, as noted above, a cluster analysis is undertaken in chapter eight while chapter nine provides a multiple regression analysis of intention to leave where socio-demographic nominal variables are included with the ordinal psychometric measures of attitude looked at in this chapter.

# CHAPTER EIGHT: CLUSTER ANALYSIS

## 8.1 Introduction

Following from the previous chapter the next stage of the analysis was to undertake a cluster analysis. The purpose of such an analysis was to allocate respondents to specific categories based on sets of psychometric characteristics common to members of each group, yet which distinguishes them from other groups (Hair *et al.*, 1998). The cluster analysis in this study was undertaken using K-means analysis with various numbers of clusters and used 10 iterations. Subsequently, discriminant analysis was used to ensure that the clusters are correctly classified. The underlying principles are to assess the value of the clusters centres to identify different scenarios and to identify the numbers where clusters have large distances between them thereby indicating the existence of independent groupings (Ryan, 2008). Cluster analysis helps the researcher to identify relationship or similarities and differences among observed group which have not previously revealed.

The issue was, which set of items should be used for conducting such an analysis? Should the cluster analysis be undertaken using all items simultaneously, even though as previously stated the questionnaire comprised items drawn from different scales in the literature that separately measured, for example, job stressors, job stress and commitment to work. An alternative approach was to assess each sub-scale separately and then examine cluster membership to assess whether any degree of meaningful overlap existed. For example, it could be conceived that those committed

to their jobs in the fast food industry would be under-represented in a cluster that comprised those suffering from high levels of job stress, assuming that the stress being measured was more debilitating than facilitative. It was this latter approach that was adopted. The relationship thus being sought was one whereby those 20 percent having the highest intentions to leave the job would be found in those clusters experiencing the highest job stress, least job satisfaction and least job commitment. The stages were thus to (a) first undertake the cluster analysis, (b) confirm the reliability of the clusters by reference to discriminate analysis and then (c) cross tabulate the cluster memberships with the scores on intention to leave their jobs.

## **8.2 Job stressors cluster**

The first set of such items used were those relating to job stressors. Cluster analysis with K-means analysis resulted 4 appropriate clusters. The first comprised 158 respondents who scored high on 'Role ambiguity', mid-mean scores on Work-family conflict and a low mean on 'Role conflicts'. Role ambiguity that include items ' My job responsibilities are clear to me', 'My job objectives are well-defined', 'It is clear what my fellow worker expect of me at my job' and 'At my job, I practice teamwork' had mean scores above 5 which suggest respondents in this cluster understood well their role-related information set by their Head offices. The second cluster comprised 112 respondents, who scored lower weighting on work-family conflict related items. The family commitment related items mean score are relatively lower than those of the other clusters, which suggest respondents in this cluster felt working in the fast

food industry interfered with their time to socialise and spend times with family or join family activities. The third cluster comprised 209, which is the largest group and who scored relatively medium mean scores for work-family conflict ranging from 3.96 to 4.13. The last cluster comprised 158 respondents where the mean scores for role conflict items ‘To satisfy some people at my job I have to upset others’, ‘At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines’, ‘It seems that I have more work at my job than I can handle’ and ‘My job requires continuous hard work’ were above 5. This means that respondents in this cluster might experience some role conflict at workplace.

<b>Table 8. 1 Clusters based on Job Stressors</b>				
	Cluster			
	1	2	3	4
My job responsibilities are clear to me	6.50	5.66	4.93	6.32
My job objectives are well-defined	6.30	5.47	4.83	6.12
It is clear what my fellow worker expect of me at my job	5.53	5.07	4.67	5.68
At my job, I practice teamwork	6.16	5.87	4.99	6.27
To satisfy some people at my job I have to upset others	2.32	3.33	3.77	4.96
At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines	2.53	3.57	3.81	5.30
I am given enough time to do what is expected of me at my work	5.33	4.36	4.49	5.70
It seems that I have more work at my job than I can handle	4.33	5.12	4.24	5.74
My job requires continuous hard work	3.76	5.29	3.95	5.39
My job schedule does not interferes with my family life	4.91	2.90	4.08	5.52
My job makes me too tired to enjoy my family life	3.68	5.30	4.13	4.72
My job does give me enough time for family activities	4.63	2.40	3.89	5.30
My job does give me enough time to socialize	4.43	2.54	3.96	5.13

From the above explanation, it is clear that each cluster is different from one another.

The 1<sup>st</sup> cluster scored well on role ambiguity items, which suggests respondents in this cluster understand and are clear about their job description and received enough

necessary information needed to perform his or her job. Therefore, the first cluster is named 'No Ambiguity'. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cluster scores low means for work-family conflict items which suggest job in the fast food interfere with these respondents' family life. Thus this cluster is named as 'Family Type'. The 3<sup>rd</sup> cluster can be named as 'Neutral' because it is obvious that the respondents in this cluster score merely average on work-family conflict and role conflict. This means that respondents in this cluster tend to higher scores that reflect experiencing some tension in the work place such as finding it difficult to follow guidelines or feeling a need to work continuously hard. Role conflict occurs when respondents have different expectations of roles to perform at workplace. The intensity of conflict can range from minor disagreement between co-workers to perform work itself. Thus, this cluster is named 'Conflict at work'. Table 8.1 below shows the detail of the clusters.

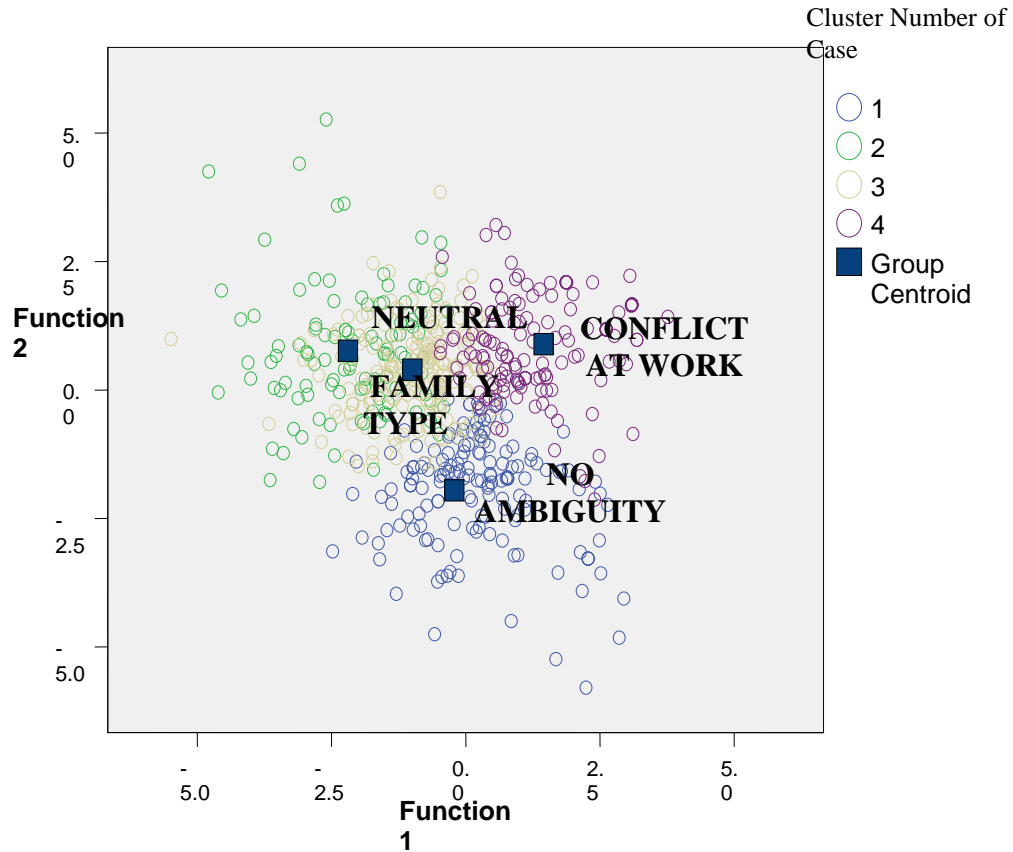
Subsequently, discriminate analysis was undertaken to assess the degree to which respondents are 'correctly' allocated to a given cluster and this showed that overall 92.8 percent of respondents were correctly allocated into the 4 clusters. When the clusters were examined closely, cluster 2 was the most the most accurately classified with 96.4% of the cases correct. The lowest level was the cluster 1, which has 89.9% of cases correct.

Table 8.2 Classification Results							
		Cluster Number of Case	Predicted Group Membership				Total
			1	2	3	4	
Original	Count	1	142	4	10	2	158
		2	2	108	2	0	112
		3	7	6	196	0	209
		4	5	1	7	145	158
	%	1	89.9	2.5	6.3	1.3	100.0
		2	1.8	96.4	1.8	.0	100.0
		3	3.3	2.9	93.8	.0	100.0
		4	3.2	.6	4.4	91.8	100.0

a 92.8% of original grouped cases correctly classified.

Two figures can both be used to examine the centre point (centroid) of each cluster. In the territorial map, the sign \* represent the centroid of each cluster which are properly allocated in an each cluster and possess substantial distances from each other. Second, Figure 8.1 is used to assess the level of coherence. It can be observed that cluster 1 are scattered quite distantly, which indicate relatively moderate level of coherence. The level of coherence can also be measured from the percentage rate presented in Table 8.2 above. For example, cluster 1 possesses moderate percentage of successful rate (89.9%). Generally, all these clusters are properly classified.

**Figure 8.1: Canonical Disriminate Plot Based on Job Stressor**



### **8.3 Job satisfaction and commitment cluster**

On this scale there were found to be 3 clusters appropriate for further analysis. The 1<sup>st</sup> cluster scored an average mean of about 4.00 to 5.00 on outlet commitment related items such as ‘I hope I can work in this industry until retirement’, ‘I talk about this outlet to my family a great place to work’, ‘I talk about this outlet to my friends as a great place to work’ and ‘I really care the fate of this outlet’. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cluster score high means from 5.75 to 6.61 which fall within ‘agree’ to ‘strongly agree’ on all

items. The 3<sup>rd</sup> cluster scores all items from 2.99 to 4.27. This result shows respondents in this cluster tend to scores labelled as ‘disagree’ to ‘neither agree nor disagree’ level. Table 8.4 explains result in detail.

<b>8.3 Cluster based on Job satisfaction and commitment</b>			
	Cluster		
	1	2	3
My job is very secure	4.88	6.20	4.01
Physical conditions at my workplace are very good	4.82	6.40	4.27
The benefits (uniform, insurance, etc (given to me are excellent.	4.96	6.46	4.05
Welfare (accommodation, staff meals, etc) given to me are excellent	4.58	5.98	3.69
I receive a good pay rate for my work	4.67	5.88	3.56
My working hours are adequate	4.80	6.03	3.97
I get a good recognition when I do a good job	5.04	6.21	3.78
I have a freedom to do my best at my job	5.16	6.29	4.04
Career advancement at my current job is very good	5.05	6.20	4.10
I am enjoying my current job	5.06	6.55	4.04
I am satisfied with the location of the outlet that I have been assigned to work	5.05	6.47	4.07
My supervisor's style in managing staff is excellent	5.04	6.38	3.80
I have been provided excellent training since I started to work here	5.07	6.50	4.27
I am prepared to work harder than I have to in order to be successful	5.11	6.47	4.19
I am happy working in this outlet	5.10	6.61	4.20
I am proud to work for this outlet	5.10	6.54	3.99
I feel loyalty to this outlet	4.90	6.47	3.85
I talk about this outlet to my family as a great place to work	4.82	6.34	3.80
I talk about this outlet to my friends as a great place to work	4.88	6.32	3.72
I really care about the fate of this outlet	4.85	6.12	3.89
I would recommend this outlet to work	4.88	6.27	3.88
I feel this outlet offers attractive work conditions	4.96	6.22	3.79
I hope I can work in this industry until retirement	4.18	5.75	2.99

Based on the above, it is clear that each cluster is different from one another. Thus, the clusters are named as following (1) Average attitude (2) Very satisfied & committed and (3) Not satisfied & committed. The largest cluster was cluster 1 with 222 respondents followed by cluster 2= 173 respondents and cluster 3 = 147 respondents. Again, using discriminate analysis, and as shown in Table 8.5, 96.1 % of respondents were correctly allocated into three clusters. Cluster 3 was the most accurately classified with 98.0% of the cases correctly classified. Then it was followed by cluster 1 with 95.5% of cases and then cluster 2 with 95.4% of cases correctly allocated.

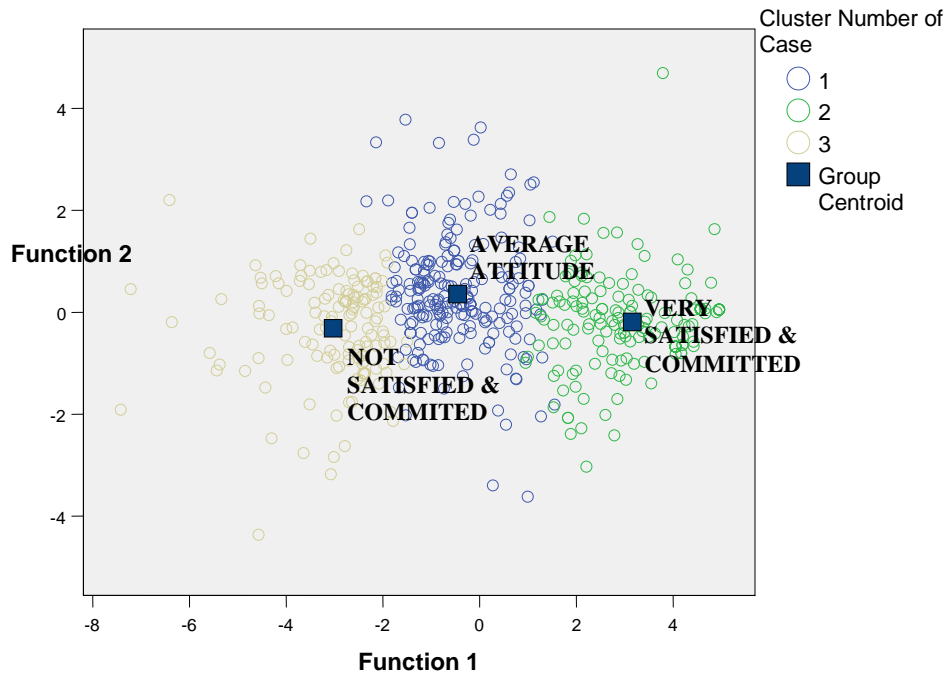
<b>Table 8.4 Classification Results</b>						
		Cluster Number of Case	Predicted Group Membership			Total
			1	2	3	
Original	Count	1	212	4	6	222
		2	8	165	0	173
		3	3	0	144	147
	%	1	95.5	1.8	2.7	100.0
		2	4.6	95.4	0	100.0
		3	2.0	0	98.0	100.0

a 96.1% of original grouped cases correctly classified.

As before, the canonical discriminant plots and territorial maps (see appendix) were visually examined. The canonical distribution is shown in Figure 8.2. The level of coherence also can be measured from the percentage rate presented above (Table 8.5).

**Figure 8.2**

**Canonical Discriminant Functions on Job Satisfaction and Commitment Items**



**8.4 Job stress clusters**

There are 3 clusters appropriate for further analysis under Job stress. The 1<sup>st</sup> cluster score relatively low means for burnout, anxiety and somatic complaints items. All items score means from 1.66 to 2.12 which indicate higher levels of disagreement

with the items. This suggests that respondents in this cluster did not feel stress and had no job-related problems at workplace. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cluster score mean indicate respondents in this cluster as having stress and job-related problems with the highest score (5.17) on the item ‘Job related problems keep me awake all night’. The 3<sup>rd</sup> clusters score most of the means above the mid-scale of 4. The level of agreement on job stress is relatively moderate to high agreement to this cluster. Table 8.6 reveals results in detail.

The names given to the clusters were thus ‘No stress at all’ for Cluster One. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cluster score most items above mid-point and towards an agreement level. Therefore this cluster is named ‘stress employees’. The respondents in the last cluster score most items above 3. Thus, this cluster is named ‘Little stress employees’.

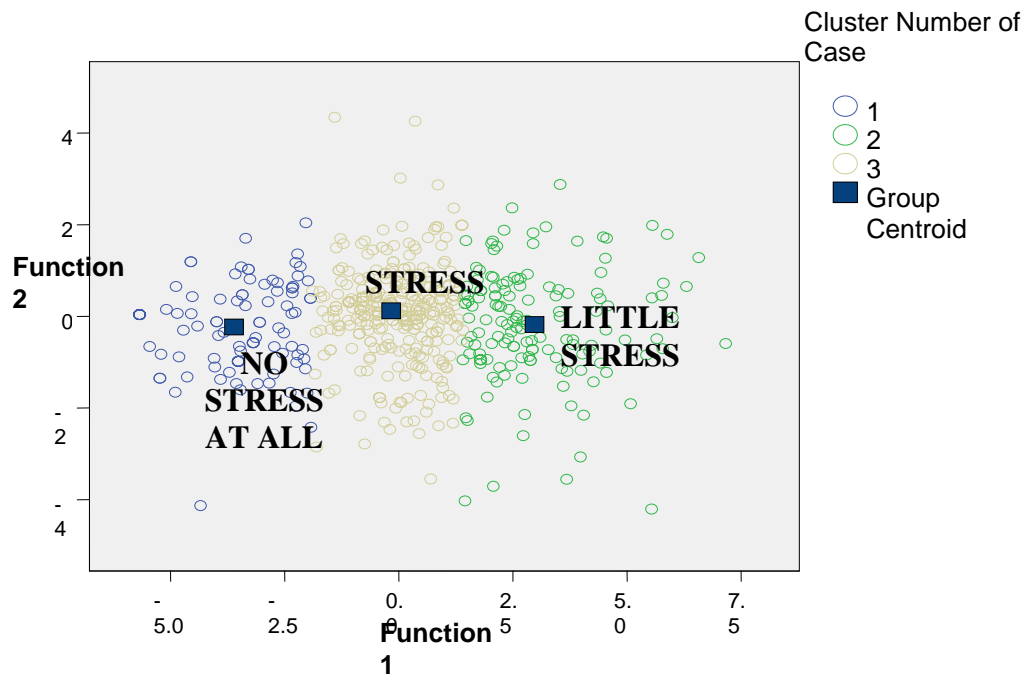
<b>8.5 Cluster based on Job Stress</b>			
	Cluster		
	1	2	3
I feel burnt-out at my job	2.12	4.94	3.50
I feel frustrated at my job	1.76	4.53	3.35
I feel tense at my job	2.00	4.83	3.48
I feel stigmatized at my job	1.66	4.03	3.12
I lose my appetite because of my job related problems	1.88	4.71	3.26
Job related problems keep me awake all night	1.97	5.17	3.56
Job related problems make my stomach upset	1.89	5.12	3.53
Job related problems make my heart beat faster than usual	1.96	4.69	3.38

8.6 Classification results						
		Cluster Number of Case	Predicted Group Membership			Total
			1	2	3	
Original	Count	1	101	0	3	104
		2	0	148	2	150
		3	2	3	416	421
	%	1	97.1	.0	2.9	100.0
		2	.0	98.7	1.3	100.0
		3	.5	.7	98.8	100.0

a 98.5% of original grouped cases correctly classified.

The same procedures as in the first two cases were again followed with the results shown in Table 8.7 and Figure 8.3

**Figure 8.3 Canonical Discriminant Functions based on Job Stress**



### **8.5 Job feeling clusters**

Then, cluster analysis with K-means analysis was run for the Job Feeling scale which resulted in 3 appropriate clusters. This scale comprises 5 factors that consist of Religion & meeting new people, Convenience & support type job, Career- family balance, Co-workers and Education background items. The 1<sup>st</sup> cluster comprised 193 respondents whose score values from 'disagree' to 'neither disagree not agree' on all those items mentioned above except for religion & meeting new people items. The second cluster comprised 91 respondents which score average to high mean for all job

feeling items. The scores are ranging from 4.27 to 5.96. This suggests that respondents in this cluster feeling happy with their current job. The last cluster comprised 123 respondents where respondents also place high scores on most of items but with variances on co-worker related items. For example, respondents place high agreement on the item 'I work here because I enjoy it' (6.64), but for 'I work here because I enjoy the company of my co-workers' the score was 2.67 and 'I spend times with my co-workers for social life outside of the workplace' had a mean of 2.91. Similarly, for the item 'I work here because my friends are working here' had the lowest score of 2.84.

<b>8.7 Cluster based on Job Feeling</b>			
	Cluster		
	1	2	3
I feel my educational background is suited to my current job	3.74	4.48	4.76
I work to satisfy my parents	3.34	5.33	3.27
I work here because I want to work in the industry	3.97	5.16	5.63
I work here because my friends are working here	3.34	4.27	2.84
I work here because it was easy to get this job	4.13	5.32	3.61
I work here on a temporary basis to earn some extra money	4.10	5.20	3.16
I consider this type of work as a proper job	4.10	4.86	5.65
I am given time to meet my religious obligation during working hours	4.91	5.58	6.58
I am allowed to wear 'Tudung' during working hours	5.10	5.90	6.81
This job gives me an opportunity to meet new people	5.17	5.96	6.80
I work here because I enjoy it	4.62	5.25	6.64
I work here because I enjoy the company of my co-workers	4.04	4.67	5.33
I spend times with my co-workers for social life outside of the workplace	3.73	4.56	5.09
I get on well with my supervisors	4.77	5.35	6.16
I would like to make a career in the fast food industry	4.22	5.11	6.26
I would like to get promotion in this company	4.63	5.11	6.55
I work here to support my study	3.99	5.14	4.30
I work here to support my family	4.89	5.73	6.07

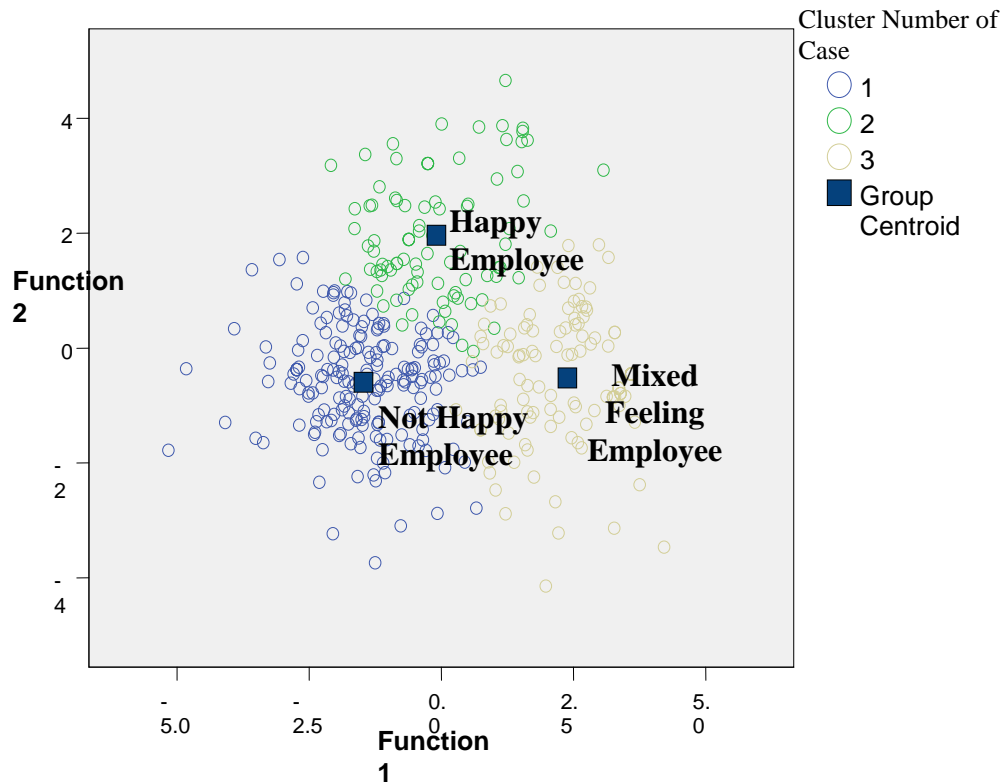
The first cluster was named 'Not happy feeling employees'. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cluster expressed high levels of agreement on most items and respondents in this cluster can be named as 'Happy feeling employees'. The last cluster can be named as 'Mixed feeling employee' because of the variance of scores that fell between clusters one and two, especially on 'Co-workers' items. Table 8.8 below shows result in detail. The classification table 8.9 below indicates that 95.3% of respondents are correctly

allocated into 3 clusters. The lowest was cluster 2 with 93.4% of cases correct. In general, the result suggests that all respondents are accurately classified.

<b>8.8 Classification Results</b>						
		Cluster Number of Case	Predicted Group Membership			Total
			1	2	3	
Original	Count	1	185	4	4	193
		2	4	85	2	91
		3	1	4	118	123
	%	1	95.9	2.1	2.1	100.0
		2	4.4	93.4	2.2	100.0
		3	.8	3.3	95.9	100.0

a 95.3% of original grouped cases correctly classified.

**Figure 8.4 Canonical Discriminant Functions based on Job Feeling**



Next, Figure 8.4 can be used to assess the coherence of the cases in each cluster. It can be observed, each clusters were located properly and can be distinguish from each other.

### **8.6 Cluster membership and intention to leave**

As an intermediate step in the analysis cluster membership was correlated with the intention to leave using chi-squared tests. In all cases the relationships were at

statistically significant levels ( $p < 0.05$ ). The following presents a summary of the results.

### **8.6.1 Job stressor clusters**

Those with a high intention to leave are significantly under-represented in cluster 1 (No Ambiguity in Job Responsibilities Cluster) and significantly over-represented in cluster 2 (Work Family Conflict Cluster).

### **8.6.2 Job satisfaction and commitment clusters**

Those with a high intention to leave are significantly over-represented in cluster three (Not satisfied and committed), are under-represented in cluster two (Very satisfied and committed) and are under-represented in the 'Average Attitude' cluster.

### **8.6.3 Job stress clusters**

Those with a high intention to leave are statistically significantly under-represented in cluster three (No stress group) having 54 as against an expected number of 76 individuals, and are significantly over-represented in cluster two (Stressed Employees) with 53 as against an expected 22 respondents.

### **8.6.4 Job feeling clusters**

In this case, contrary to expectations, those with a high intention to leave were found to be over-represented in the second cluster 'Happy Feeling Employees' and under-represented in cluster three 'Mixed Feelings Employees'.

## 8.7 Chapter summary

The cluster analysis concludes that respondents can be grouped into 4 appropriate clusters for the stressor determinants. Respondents under job stressors cluster were named 'No ambiguity', 'Family type', 'Neutral' and 'Conflict at work'. For job satisfaction and commitment determinants, 3 appropriate clusters emerged, namely 'Average attitude', 'Very satisfied and committed' and 'Not satisfied and committed'. Similarly, Job stress and Job feeling variables each had 3 clusters respectively. Job stress had 'No stress at all', 'Stress employee' and 'No stress employees'. In turn Job feeling had 3 different group entitled 'Not happy', 'Happy' and 'Mixed feeling'.

It was shown that there were statistical significant relationships between cluster membership and an intention to leave, but while for the most part these relationships were in the anticipated directions, there are important caveats to note. First the relationship is nuanced as evidenced by the results for the "Job Feelings" cluster where it can be suggested that "satisfying others" may be a variable that relates in some way to intentions to leave or not. That is, it remains in retrospect, as to who the 'others' are who being satisfied, and in what way they are to be satisfied. For example, satisfying peers who are also fast food workers, but who wish to leave, requires one form of possible behaviour. On the other hand, if those wish to remain, a second form of behaviour emerges. Other significant 'others' may be represented by managers or customers – hence the variable possesses some degree of ambiguity. Second, it can be noted that there were some respondents with high intentions to leave who were found among that sub-sample who were satisfied with their work place and the conditions that existed there. In

short, the data had to be ‘mined’ in yet more detail to see if it was possible to clarify these issues. Given this, the next stage was to combine psychometric measures and socio-demographic variables to assess the interactions between them and the degree to which they might impact on an intention to leave their current job and place of work.

# CHAPTER NINE: LINEAR MULTIPLE REGRESSIONS

## 9.1 Introduction

Having, in chapters six to eight adopted a mode of analysis that separately considered psychometric and socio-demographic variables, this chapter seeks to adopt a more dynamic approach by considering both sets of data. Hence this chapter uses multiple regression analysis to analyse determinants of employee turnover in the Peninsular Malaysian fast food industry. Multiple regression analysis examines the relationship between a single dependent (criterion) variable and several independent (predictor) variables. In this study, the determined variable, to predict intention to leave a job was examined by looking at various aspects of the job - role ambiguity, role conflict, work overload and work-family conflict (stressors), feelings about the job (job stress) that includes burnout items and anxiety and somatic complaints and job satisfaction which includes extrinsic and intrinsic items and job commitment. These independent variables were regressed to determine their significance in predicting turnover intentions. The subsequent introduction of socio-demographic variables that are of a categorical nature requires the use of multinomial logistic regression, and this done toward the end of the chapter.

There are therefore several methods available to calculate regressions such as hierarchical, forced entry and stepwise available within software packages such as SPSS. The stepwise method was chosen because researcher wanted to see the

variance explained by each additional variable entering the model as the stepwise function is based on purely a mathematical criterion. It does this by selecting the predictor that has the highest correlation with the outcome (Field, 2005). On the other hand, in social science, several assumptions should be taking into considerations when using regression because researchers are usually interested in generalizing findings outside of the sample (Field, 2005). In order for a regression model to generalize, the researcher has to make sure underlying assumptions have been met. The first of these is that a sample can be regarded as representative of a wider, defined population in this instance, fast food workers in Peninsular Malaysia. Other, technical issues remain. For example, for independent errors, the Durbin-Watson test is used to test a serial correlation between errors and adjacent residuals that should be uncorrelated. Generally, a value greater than 2 indicates a negative correlation between adjacent residuals and a value below than 2 indicates a positive correlation. Consequently the desired value is 2.0 for it means each independent variable is independent of not only the determined variable, but also the remaining independent variables.

According to Coaked (2007) one also needs a measure expressing the degree to which each independent variable is explained by the set of other independent variables. The two most common measures used are the tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF). Tolerance is defined as the amount as the amount of variability of the selected independent variable not explained by the other independent variable whereas VIF is calculated simply as the inverse of the tolerance value (Hair *et al.*, 2005). Problems of

multi-collinearity can be checked by looking at the collinearity statistics and the rule of thumbs, tolerance should be  $>0.1 < 1.0$  and  $VIF < 10 > 1.0$ .

Given that all the items on the questionnaires used the same seven point Likert type scale, the regression coefficients of determination that are reported are unadjusted. Additionally an intercept value is generally excluded unless otherwise stated. To predict the intention to leave a job, the item 'How often do you think of leaving your job' was used as determined variable in a linear analysis. Questions had been asked, as explained in chapter 3, designed to measure job stressor, job stress, job feeling and job satisfaction and commitment. First, the researcher conducted a series of diagnostic analyses for each scale with the results described below.

## **9.2 Job stressors items and intention to leave a job**

This section presents the analysis of the relationship between frequency of thinking of leaving a present job as the dependent variable and stressor items that consist of role ambiguity, role conflict and work-family conflict as independent variables. This yielded a coefficient of determination of 0.842 and this analysis was done in an absence of constant or intercepts value. The Durbin-Watson for stressors model is 1.746 and this is 'acceptable' albeit not ideal as it is close to desired value of 2.0

In order to better evaluate the regression coefficients more closely, the model summary table is presented as Table 9.1. The results with a coefficient of

determination of  $R^2=0.842$  shows 6 influential variable could be used to predict employees' intention to leave their current job. The item, 'At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines' 'explained' 78.4 of the variance in employees' intentions of leaving their present job and emerged as the most influential factor to predict intention to leave a job within the stressors context. It thus seems employees who have a high intention to leave their present job were those who had difficulty in following guidelines as set by the Head offices.

The nature of work in the fast food industry differs from many other industries and job responsibilities are well defined by a set operating manual. Employees have to follow the guidelines and there is less allowance for personal patterns of work. This result suggests that the branch managers and the managers at the Head office of these 6 international chain fast food should focus strategically on this variable in order to reduce employee intention to leave a job (Lam & Zhang, 2003). The item, 'My job makes me too tired to enjoy my family life' added 0.04 to generate  $R^2=0.824$ . Employees who felt working in the fast food industry made them tired and unable to join their family activities also demonstrate higher intentions to leave their job.

Table 9.1 Model Summary – stepwise regression					
No	Items	R	R <sup>2</sup> Squared	R <sup>2</sup> Change	Durbin- Watson
1	At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines	0.885	0.784	0.784	
2	My job makes me too tired to enjoy my family life	0.908	0.824	0.040	
3	It is clear what my fellow worker expect of me at my job	0.914	0.836	0.012	
4	I am given enough time to do what is expected of me at my work	0.916	0.839	0.003	
5	To satisfy some people at my job I have to upset others	0.917	0.841	0.002	
6	It seems that I have more work at my job than I can handle	0.918	0.842	0.001	1.746

### **9.3 Evaluation on the relative importance of the independent variables with the regression coefficients and assessing multicollinearity**

The regression coefficients or beta coefficients represent the type of relationship (positive or negative) and the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables in the regression variate (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Table 9.2 displays the relative importance of the independent variables with the regression coefficients and all the six predictors had a positive significant result with  $p < 0.01$ . Thus, as the levels of stressors increase, so too does the frequency of thinking to leave a job.

However, a closer examination of the data using the tolerance statistic and the variance inflation factor (VIF) highlighted some minor issues where two cases were identified as indicating a potential issue of multi-collinearity. Results in this model

indicated that items ‘At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines’ had a VIF of 10.86 and the item ‘To satisfy some people at my job I have to upset others’ had a VIF of 10.67 which indicate high correlation with other items in the scale.

No	Items	Unstandardized Coefficients		Stand. Coeff.	T	Sig	Collinearity Statistic	
		B	Standard Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines	.169	.040	.195	4.219	.000*	.092	10.864
2	My job makes me too tired to enjoy my family life	.300	.036	.301	8.366	.000*	.153	6.550
3	It is clear what my fellow worker expect of me at my job	.175	.048	.133	3.683	.000*	.151	6.608
4	I am given enough time to do what is expected of me at my work	.128	.043	.106	2.966	.003*	.153	6.519
5	To satisfy some people at my job I have to upset others	.109	.038	.131	2.859	.004*	.094	10.673
6	It seems that I have more work at my job than I can handle	.109	.045	.097	2.424	.016**	.122	8.165

Notes: \*p< 0.01, \*\*p< 0.05 Multiple R= 0.918; R<sup>2</sup> =0.842; F=712.141;

#### 9.4 Job stress items and intention to leave a job

Similarly, a stepwise regression with the exclusion of a constant was run to find the best predictors for the intention to leave arising from the Job stress items. Results in

table 9.3 indicate that job stress is associated with turnover intention. The item ‘I feel burnt out at my job’ accounts for 85.9 percent of the coefficient of determination with a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.909. This finding arguably has value to a branch manager seeking to easily identify staff who may wish to leave and forms a question that can be easily asked of employees. It also confirms the analysis undertaken in chapters seven and eight.

9.3 Model Summary- stepwise regressions				
No	Items	R	R Square(a)	Durbin-Watson
1	I feel burnt out at my job	.927(b)	.859	
2	Job related problems keep me awake all night	.933(c)	.871	
3	I feel frustrated at my job	.935(d)	.874	
4	Job related problems make my heart beat faster than usual	.936(e)	.875	1.909

Table 9.4 present the collinearity statistics. When independent variables are correlated, the possibility of multi-collinearity cannot be ruled out. The tolerance and VIF statistics were computed to see if multicollinearity was a major problem. It was observed that VIF for all variables were high and well above the acceptable limit of 10. As all of these items were formed to measure Job stress, it is acceptable these items were correlated to each other. In short, multi-collinearity is high among these items. This being the case, from a practical perspective any manager might use any of these questions as alternatives when seeking to assess whether a staff member may leave their job.

9.4 Collinearity Statistics – Job Stress			
No	Items	Tolerance	VIF
1	I feel burnt-out at my job	.043	23.437
2	Job related problems keep me awake all night	.079	12.695
3	I feel frustrated at my job	.040	25.089
4	Job related problems make my heart beat faster than usual	.069	14.542

9.5 Model Summary – stepwise regression – Job Feeling Scale				
No	Items	R	R Square(a)	Durbin-Watson
1	I work here because my friends are working here	.903(b)	.815	
2	I work here on a temporary basis to earn some extra money	.916(c)	.838	
3	This job gives me an opportunity to meet new people	.920(d)	.847	
4	I work here to satisfy my parents	.922(e)	.849	
5	I work here because it was easy to get this job	.922(f)	.851	
6	I am allowed to wear 'Tudung' during working hours	.923(g)	.852	1.876

### 9.5 Job feeling items and intention to leave a job

To explore which of the job feeling items explain the most variance in intention to leave, again a stepwise regression was run with the absence of a constant. After doing this, the result shows a coefficient of determination of 0.852 with a Durbin-Watson of 1.876. The item 'I work here because my friends are working here' was found to be

the most significant predictor. Employees thought more often to leave their current job when their friends were working at the same workplace. Various implications might arise from this finding. What it does highlight is the role of the peer group in determining both the formation of an intention to leave or a commitment to the business.

As before, a close examination of tolerance and VIF was undertaken and indicated that the item 'I work here because my friends are working here' had a value just exceeding 10. This means that this item had a potential multi-collinearity with the other items.

## **9.6 Job satisfaction and commitment items and Intention to leave a job**

Table 9.6 below represents stepwise regression for Job satisfaction and commitment items. The item on 'Career advancement at my current job is very good' found to explain the most variance with  $R=0.713$ . This finding reveals some interesting issues about employees' who worked in West Malaysia fast food industry. It suggests employees who satisfied with their career advancement may have a high intention to leave their current job. Various propositions could be considered. First, like other areas in the catering and hospitality industries the fast food industry may create career histories where promotion is allied to mobility in moving to other outlets or competing companies. Another possible explanation is that employees may have satisfactory career plans, but their stay in the fast food industry is simply seen as being a transitory phase in those plans. Additionally it should be noted that regression

explains variance in the determined variable, but a negative relationship was expected and this did not materialise. There is, however, a problem again with multi-collinearity and this further complicates analysis.

9.6 Model Summary- stepwise regressions and Collinearity Statistic						
No	Items	R	R Square(a)	Durbin-Watson	Tolerance	VIF
1	Career advancement at my current job is very good	.845(b)	.713		.086	11.661
2	Physical condition at my workplace are very good	.861(c)	.741		.087	11.531
3	I really care about the fate of this company	.867(d)	.751		.102	9.803
4	I have been provided excellent training since I started to work here	.870(e)	.756		.122	8.169
5	I am enjoying my current job	.871(f)	.759		.083	11.976
6	My working hours are adequate	.874(g)	.763		.099	10.121
7	Welfare given to me are excellent	.875(h)	.765		.108	9.239
8	I hope I can work in this industry until retirement	.875(i)	.766	1.694	.112	8.946

Given the results in each section contribute to high multi-collinearity, a second step was undertaken. This involved using all the items from the above scales.

## 9.7 Stressors, job stress, job feeling and job satisfaction & commitment and intention to leave a job

Following the same procedures as above, and using the item ‘How often do you think of leaving your present job’ as the determined variable and all other items as determining variables a coefficient of determination of 0.89 resulted as shown in

Table 9.7

Table 9.7 Model Summary – stepwise regression – All scale items				
No	Model	R	R Square(a)	Durbin-Watson
1	I feel burnt-out at my job	.927(b)	.859	
2	I work here on a temporary basis to earn some extra money	.934(c)	.872	
3	I am given enough time to do what is expected of me at my work	.937(d)	.878	
4	Job related problems keep me awake all night	.939(e)	.882	
5	I would like to make a career in the fast food industry	.940(f)	.883	
6	This job gives me an opportunity to meet new people	.941(g)	.885	
7	I feel frustrated at my job	.941(h)	.886	
8	At my job I practice teamwork	.942(i)	.887	
9	I am satisfied with the location of the outlet that I have been assigned to work	.942(j)	.887	
10	I work here to support my study	.942(k)	.888	1.927

The table indicates the 10 most influential factors in predicting employee intention to leave for Malaysian fast food industry. As expected, the item ‘I feel burnt-out at my job’ was found to be the most influential variable and explained the most variance in

predicting employee thoughts of leaving their present job. This was followed by the item ‘I work here on temporary basis to earn some extra money’ with a combined  $R^2$ .

These findings are logical and it also seems reasonable to propose that those employees who experience high levels of job stress are less likely to be committed to the company and in turn have a higher intention to leave. However, in this study, it can be contended that the ‘feeling burnt out’ is a consequence of other factors and emerges as a result of other issues that lead to stress. In short, the question shifts as to what are the potential causes of feeling burnt-out. Again regression techniques permit an analysis of this question, but it might also be argued that other factors might play a role, including life stage and gender. For example, a young mother seeking to balance the need for income and child care might be more likely to feel stress and hence be ‘burnt out’ than a single male.

Under these circumstances it seems pertinent to introduce socio-demographic variables into the equation. Various modes of analysis become possible and in this instance multinomial logistic regression analysis was adopted as a means of incorporating the nominal or categorical nature of the socio-demographic datasets relating to age, gender, marital status and the presence or absence of children under the age of 15 years. Ethnicity and religion were not included in the analysis because the sample was overwhelmingly Malay and Islamic, thereby creating too many cells with a zero content in the analysis if these variables were included. Initially running a model using the socio-demographic variables alone yielded no significant results, implying that the attitudinal measures were generally independent of socio-

demographics (see chapter 5 for a further analysis of this). Running initially a separate linear regression analysis where feeling burnt-out was the dependent variable revealed that the items 'feeling frustrated', 'feeling tense', 'it is clear what my fellow workers expect of me', 'physical conditions at my job' and 'it seems I have more work at my job than I can handle' accounted for over 90 percent of the coefficient of determination in the absence of a constant. Combining these factors with the socio-demographic variables of age, gender, marital status and presence or absence of children produced a result where the Cox and Snell pseudo coefficient of determination was 0.9 in the absence of a constant (i.e. the line of best fit passes through the origin). The items 'feeling frustrated' and 'feeling tense' are found to be significant at  $p < 0.001$ , 'it seems I have more work at my job than I can handle' is significant at  $p = 0.005$  and the age of the respondent is significant at  $p = 0.045$ . The findings contain coherence, and indicate that the source of the feelings of being burnt out; being tense and frustrated may lie in a sense of having more to cope with than the respondent feels capable of handling. Age might also be a factor and it can be suggested that younger, less experienced workers might be vulnerable to feelings of stress.

Finally, running classification fit tables that are made available under SPSS showed a goodness of fit index that was statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ , while 96 percent of cases were correctly allocated.

## **9.8 Evaluation on the relative importance of the independent variables with the beta coefficients and collinearity statistics**

Similar multiple regressions were calculated with ‘how often do you think of leaving your present job’ as the determined variable and various aspects of job, job feeling, job satisfaction and job commitment were entered as the independent variables. Table 9.8 below displays that eight items had significant results as predictors for turnover intention. Table 9.8 displays the relative importance of the independent variables with the beta coefficients. Two predictors, ‘I would like to make career in the fast food industry’ ( $\beta = -0.179$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and ‘I am satisfied with the location of the outlet that I have been assigned to work’ ( $\beta = -0.086$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) were found to have negative weak relationships in predicting the frequency of thinking about leaving their current post.

On the other hand, collinearity statistics found 3 predictors had multicollinearity. These three items ‘I feel burnt out at my job’, ‘Job related problem keeps me awake all night and ‘I feel frustrated at my job’ are found again to be highly correlated.

Table 9.9 Coefficients and collinearity assessment								
No		Unstandardized Coefficients		Stand. Coeff	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	I feel burnt-out at my job	.296	.049	.349	6.092	.000	.043	23.272
2	I work here on a temporary basis to earn some extra money	.113	.034	.123	3.384	.001	.106	9.426
3	Job related problems keep me awake all night	.168	.033	.197	5.163	.000	.097	10.357
4	I am given enough time to do what is expected of me at my work	.154	.038	.128	4.037	.000	.139	7.175
5	I would like to make a career in the fast food industry	-.179	.037	-.151	-4.774	.000	.141	7.086
6	This job gives me an opportunity to meet new people	.128	.042	.083	3.032	.003	.189	5.293
7	I feel frustrated at my job	.142	.051	.174	2.802	.005	.037	27.351
8	At my job, I practice teamwork	.096	.043	.062	2.219	.027	.180	5.554
9	I am satisfied with the location of the outlet that I have been assigned to work	-.082	.038	-.067	-2.156	.031	.148	6.747
10	I work here to support my study	.072	.037	.071	1.969	.049	.107	9.311

Based on these results, it is reasonable to conclude that feeling burnt-out was the strongest determinant to predict turnover intent in Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry. This prediction can be confirmed through interviews with the employees. Of 10 employees interviewed, 9 mentioned that they felt stress and only 1 employee did not.

*“Definitely, I felt stress worked in this outlet. The area managers did not understand us. He always burden us with admin work which made me feel so burnt-out”*

Employee 1

*“Oh, if I were given a chance, I would like to work in other industry. Fast food made me felt stress...”*

Employee 2

*“Yes, I felt stress working in this industry. But I managed to control my stress. I have been working in this industry for almost 7 years. I don’t know until when I will work in this industry...”*

Employee 3

*“I did not feel stress or burnt-out or frustrated at the outlet. I knew that my intention only to work for temporary basis and when the university starts I will go back to the university. I do not care about other things. What matter the most, is money”*

Employee 4

*“Yes, I feel stress working in fast food industry. The wages is low and we only get leave once a week. I think this job is not suitable for married people.”*

Employee 5

*“I feel stress with my boss (supervisor). There is no focus on the job. He keeps asking me to do more work. It is like one after another”*

Employee 6

*“I have to admit that sometimes I feel stress at work. One of reasons why I felt stress because there are many customers and it is difficult to handle fussy customers. There is customer who already ordered and suddenly changes his/her mind to order other foods which in turn delay others’ orders.”*

Employee 7

*“I feel stress because too much work I have to do. The boss requests to this work..but no teamwork among managers. And what made I feel more stress when many crews absent. I have to find someone to covers the shift and this situation really gives hassles to me.”*

Employee 8

*“I feel stress when I have pressure from my boss. The boss angry and scold me when delivery cannot run on that day. It is not my false; the delivery staff cannot work because it was raining.”*

Employee 9

*“I think most fast food employees will feel stress at work. Personally, I do not prefer to work in this industry but I have no choice at the moment. It is so difficult to get a job especially during this economic down.”*

Employee 10

From the quotations above, it clearly showed that at least some employees in the fast food industry felt stress at the workplace. Generally, the source of stress came from an internal environment, for example pressure from management, but also personal preferences had a role to play.

Additionally, it is interesting that when the researcher asked about how the employees handled the stress, the majority stated that they can handle their feelings. For example;

*“Whenever I feel stress, I have to calm myself. I need to drink water and avoid contact with others for at least 15 minutes”*

Employee 6

*“Whenever I feel stress, I just ignored whatever my boss asked me to do. I need time for myself”*

Employee 5

But one employee expressed her feeling on stress and emphasised:

*“I will give myself some times. If I keep facing stress and pressure, I will resign”*

Employee 9

The researcher also asked questions on the frequency with which employees felt stress at the workplace. Indicative statements included:

*“I always feel stress at work”*

Employee 3

*“To measure how frequent I felt stress, I can say that I will feel stress at least 3 times in a week”*

Employee 5

*“I feel stress at least once a month”*

Employee 7

*“Yes, it is about 2-3 times in a week that I feel stress at my workplace”*

Employee 6

## 9.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter was concerned with completing the major analysis by utilising psychometric measures and socio-demographics in a simultaneous analysis of determinants of an intention to leave the job through the use of multiple regression and logistic nominal regression. Stepwise regressions were used because SPSS permits an assessment of the additions made to the coefficients of determination at each stage when a further variable is added to the calculations, while it is also possible to assess multi-collinearity and goodness of fit indices through a classification index.

Generally speaking the Durbin-Watson statistic that measures the existence of multi-collinearity (along with the tolerance and variance inflation factor) was at the desired level of 2.0 but a significant exception to this finding was the role of feelings of being 'burnt out' as demonstrated in Table 9.9. Hence it is concluded that the analysis indicates that feelings of burn out and stress play a significant role in determining the formation of an intention to leave their job. This is reinforced by the finding that related somatic disorders can also play a role – in short the evidence seems to point that those experiencing stress through feeling 'burnt out' are also likely to suffer sleepless nights and similar experiences. While this is perhaps unsurprising from the wider medical and psychological literature – it does represent a possible measure that managers might use – for example through simply enquiring whether staff sleep well. The tables and the statistics of multi-collinearity also indicate that feelings of being burn out are interlinked with issues such as a sense of frustration at work. Normally

multi-collinearity is generally perceived as a problem in statistical analysis, but in this case it might provide some clues as to the causes of the feelings of “burn out”. It is this issue among others that is discussed in the final chapter.

These findings are supported by the data derived from interviews with staff as reported in the latter part of the chapter. These data add further detail such as the role of supervisor’s support, low wages and other elements such as ‘not being understood’. However, while the qualitative statements do lend support to the general notions, important caveats need to be noted. First, the sample is very small, and second the findings are not consistent in some specific aspects with the quantitative data. For example earlier data tended to show that supervisory support systems generally had little influence in creating an intention to leave by the greater number of staff. There appears to be a conundrum within the data. It is clear that feelings of stress are an important determinant of an intention to leave a job, but in some ways this is an incomplete answer as the causes of that stress do not immediately become apparent. There is some evidence that it may not be wholly structural when the various measures are being looked at – but one possible clue lies in an observation made that high levels of customer demand at some outlets may cause ‘busy working practices’ that some staff find difficulties in coping with. Unfortunately the nature of the data did not permit an analysis by location and degree of busyness of outlet – or of the shift times when such factors may appear to be more stressful. This issue is discussed more in the final chapter.

Of the socio-demographic factors only age seems to have a role to play. It was suggested in the analysis relating to feeling frustrated and burnt out that younger workers may be less better equipped to handle these pressures. Again, the finding of a statistical relationship seems to simply add to the questions. Are they able to adopt least because they are less experienced – or is that they are more willing to simply move on because of simply wanting jobs for a temporary motive or because for other reasons they have less long term commitment to the industry? Again this presents a further issue for the final chapter.

# **CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSION, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **10.1 Introduction**

The main objective of this study was to identify determinants of employees' turnover intentions in the fast food industry of Peninsular Malaysia. Despite an increasing amount of research on labour turnover and employees' intentions to quit their jobs in the hospitality literature, very few have clearly highlighted potential determinants on intent to leave a job in the fast food industry, and none have done so for Malaysia. Chapter One outlined the background, issues, the research questions, and significance structure of this study. Chapter Two reviewed the literature relevant to this study, namely that relating to the determinants of an intention to leave a job, turnover in the fast food outlets and the nature of the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry. Chapter Three described the research design and includes a discussion of paradigms, methods and methodology used in this study. Chapter Four presented the descriptive statistics derived from the study and supported these with quotations obtained from interviews with managers in the industry. Chapter Five provided an analysis of the role of socio-demographic variables, again supported with interview quotations. Chapter Six focused on deriving underlying latent factors from the scales to enable aggregated factor scores to be used. Chapter Seven assessed intention to leave determinants and relationships with potential determining psychometric variables derived from the scales described in chapter two. Chapter Eight highlighted employees' groups based

on their similarities by using cluster analysis and looked at cluster membership and the intention of respondents to leave their jobs. Chapter Nine, used multiple regression to predict employees' intention to leave a job. Consequently this final chapter presents and discusses the major findings emerging from the data presented in previous chapters. This chapter will summarize the key results based on four research questions and also possible contributions of the study to the literature. The contribution to managerial practise is also discussed and lastly the chapter concludes by providing recommendations to managerial practice, the study's limitations and possible areas of future research.

## **10.2 Evidence from the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry**

The main objective of this study was to identify potential determinants that may influence employees' intention to leave a job within fast food context. Six international fast food chains participated in this study but due to guidelines of the University of Waikato research ethics procedures and the nature of the consent from the companies, the researcher created fictitious names for these companies to preserve anonymity. Of the 816 respondents, 52 percent were male and 45 percent were between the ages of 18 and 20 years, with a further 47 percent being between 21 and 30 years of age, thus representing the young nature of the workforce in this industry. In terms of work experience, 8.7 percent had worked for less than one month in the fast food industry, but 12 percent had worked between one to three months and 50 percent had worked over 12 months. Of the total sample, 22 percent

had worked over 3 years. With reference to the weekly hours worked, about 20 percent worked less than 10 hours a week, but on the other hand 70 percent worked 40 or more hours a week. Of the sample 72 percent had, as their highest educational qualification, the Malaysian school leaving certificate, the SPM. Even though the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry may share similarities with other fast food in other countries due to international chain licences, differences may also exist. For example, as Islam is an official religion in Malaysia, the practice of Islamic teachings is allowed at the workplace. However the results generally show that employees do not have any problems to pray 5 times during working hours and women are allowed to wear the Tudung. This was also confirmed in managerial interviews, one manager saying: *“For the uniform, an employee will be given 2 T-Shirt, pants and hat. Even though they (employees) are required to wear a hat, female employees are allowed wearing a scarf. But as the key to this industry is uniformity, only a black scarf is allowed to be worn”*.

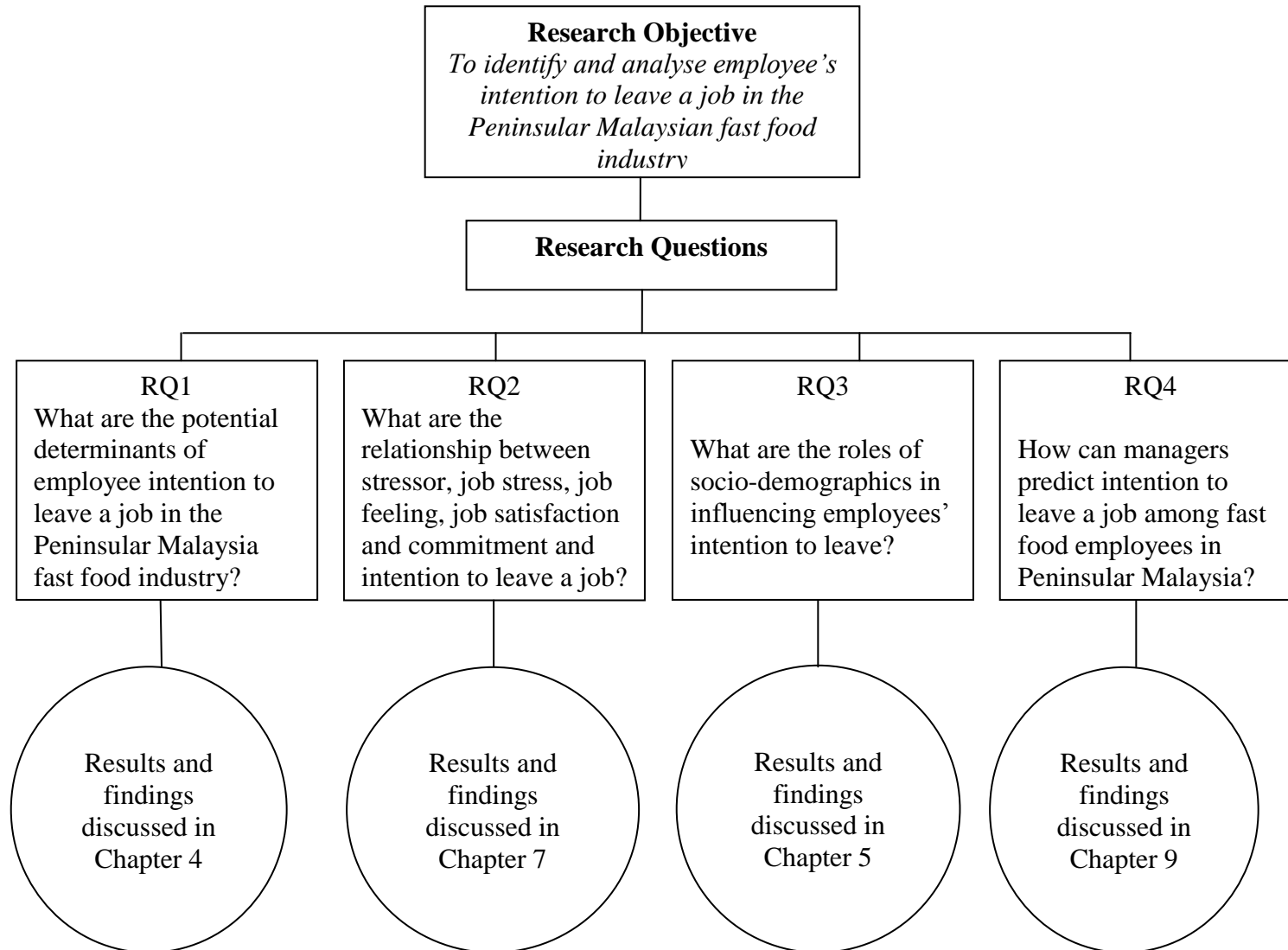
In addition, it is compulsory for fast food companies to obtain the Halal certificate endorsed by JAKIM. All fast food outlets in Malaysia have this Halal logo displayed on the main entrance in order to run the food business. The fast food industry in Malaysia also operates on shift work. In term of wages, minimum wages offered to the employees were Ringgit Malaysia (RM) 3.50 which is equivalent to NZD1.50 per hour, and in most cases employees are paid on a monthly basis.

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of this study, a diagram is presented in Figure 10.1. This diagram helps to better understand the relationship between the research objective, research questions and the findings. The main objective of this study was to identify potential determinants that may influence employees to leave a job within the context of the fast food industry in Peninsular Malaysia. Consequently, to achieve the objective of this study, four research questions were developed to understand how the determinants may lead to a formation of intent to leave a job in that industry.

The first research question one seeks to find potential determinants. The literature suggests that the most consistent and frequent used determinants were job stressor, job stress, job satisfaction and commitment (Firth, *et al.*, 2004). Suggested answer to the first research question is discussed in chapter four which provides results of potential determinants that may formulate an employee's intention to leave a job and it includes job stressor, job stress, job satisfaction and commitment. Research question two aims to find the relationship between these determinants and intent to leave a job. It is noted and discussed in chapter seven where bivariate correlations showed a 'feeling of being burnt-out' had the strongest correlation with employee intention to leave. Research question three was developed to find the impact of socio-demographic variables on job stressor, job stress, job feeling, job satisfaction and commitment. The detail of the results are discussed in chapter five and among the selected socio-demographic variables, it was found that age groups have significant different with reference to formation of an intention to leave a job. However, it must be noted that although they were statistically different, the mean differences between

the age group were minimal in absolute term. Lastly, research question four was developed to predict employee intention to leave the job. The details of results can be found in chapter nine and it indicated that job stress items provide evidence to predict employee's intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysia.

**Figure 10.1 Research Objective, Research Questions and Findings**



### **10.3 Summary and discussion of key findings**

This study employed a mixed-method approach and the ‘mixing’ of key results of this thesis are presented based on the research questions. This study was based on four research questions. Section below summarised the key findings based on the research questions.

#### **10.3.1 Research question one**

The first research question was: what are the potential determinants of employee intention to leave a job in Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry?

With regards to intention determinants, a review of the literatures identified the most consistent and frequently mentioned variables in the turnover literature were stressors, job stress, job satisfaction and commitment. These determinants were widely discussed in managerial psychological, human resource and occupational stress studies. In this study the stressors elements selected were role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload. Mean scores and standard deviations of stressors items showed high levels of agreement with the items, which means employees found their job responsibilities to be clearly stated and the job objectives were well-defined, as were the practices of teamwork and expectations from co-workers at workplace. This high level of agreement was expected as working in the fast food industry (due to the very nature of the industry) requires employees to follow strictly the pre-set guidelines and procedures.

The qualitative evidence for this ‘reality’ can be found in the findings as shown by the following quote from one of the managers:

*“They (staff) have to remember 7 steps while working at the front counter. Firstly, they have to smile, greet and taking orders. Secondly, do suggestive selling. Thirdly, repeat the customers order. Fourthly, total up the orders. Fifthly, cash transactions which mean customer pay the order. Then, assemble the order and lastly, deliver orders and parting peers”*

Thus, the findings are logical and it can be said that working in the fast food at an operational level does not need extra ‘hard work’ to think of what should be done next or how to handle point-of sales machines and interactions. Every procedure was written clearly in the operating manual. Similarly, job stress determinants which comprise of feelings of burn-out, anxiety and somatic complaints were found to elicit moderate levels of disagreement, which implies employees worked in Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry did not generally experience stress at their workplace. They also did not agree that their job affected sleep patterns or caused stomach upsets, feeling burnt-out and feeling tense. Overall, the descriptive results conclude employees tended to skew on the scales to moderate levels of disagreement. For example, on the item ‘I feel frustrated at my job’ had about 42.9 percent of employees disagreed they were feeling frustrated, 23.4 percent neither agreed nor disagreed and about 36 percent agreed to a varying degree. Some qualitative evidence can be drawn from the interviews data. Of 10 employees interviewed, 9 agreed that they felt stress at the workplace. On the other hand, for job satisfaction and commitment determinants, the descriptive results reveal the majority of employees were satisfied with the work conditions offered. For example, employees were satisfied with the location of the outlet to which they had been assigned to work. Employees also

expressed a high level of commitment and stated they were happy working in the fast food industry. However the item ‘I hope I can work in this industry until retirement’ had the lowest score, from which it can be concluded that employees did not want to work in the fast food industry until retirement.

The above results highlight the overall scores of determinants of employees to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry. However analysis based on more than the individual items and different sub-sets of data, as suggested by Koh and Goh (1995), provided more nuanced and complex findings. The questionnaire used various proxies to predict an intention to leave. This was necessary because it was impossible to obtain a list of employees who had resigned from the fast food companies: reflecting a well-known difficulty of getting access to past employees to conduct research in the fast food industry (Allan *et al.*, 2006, Schollosser, 2001 & Tannock, 2001).

The study’s findings often differed with the previous study of Firth *et al.*, 2006), perhaps because this study did not analyse data using structural equation modelling (SEM). It is worth noting that this study was exploratory in nature and thus excludes the use of techniques such as confirmatory factor analysis given it did not commence with a specific model to either prove or disprove. However, in spite of the generally high positive scores recorded by the overall sample, a sub-set of respondents did show that they frequently thought of leaving the industry. This group formed about 20 percent of the sample on various measures and thus was large enough to permit analysis of variance on different variables and using different statistical tools.

### 10.3.2 Research question two

Given this, the second research question: ‘What are the relationships between Job Stressor, Job Stress, Job Feeling, Job Satisfaction and commitment and intention to leave a job?’ was both pertinent and subject to additional analysis. Results from this study indicated that ‘feelings of being burnout’ had the strongest correlation with employee intention to leave ( $r = 0.344$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). A close examination of coefficients of determination showed that the ‘Job burnout’ factor accounts for 11.83 percent of the variability in intention to leave a job. In other words, it means although ‘Job burnout’ was highly correlated with intention, it can account for only 11.83% of variation in intention to leave. Other factors are ‘Job anxiety & somatic complaints’ with  $r = 0.287$ ,  $p < 0.01$  and ‘Role conflict’  $r = 0.138$ ,  $p < 0.01$ .

One significant area in which this study differs from much of the previously published literature was that in multiple regression analysis it paid attention to the issues of multi-collinearity. Given that factor analysis revealed successfully the grouping of items into factors, it is thus not surprising that multi-collinearity emerged as a significant statistical issue when seeking to determine what caused an intention to leave a job. While conventionally this is seen as a problem, it does possibly direct attention to a key question. It is easy to note that ‘stress’ is positively related to the formation of an intention to leave a job, but this in itself does not indicate what are the causes of that stress. Various items do correlate well – for example feeling stress correlates with job problems make my stomach feel upset ( $r = 0.47$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) – but again this is indicative of the existence of stress, not a causation. On the hand feelings

of stress are negatively correlated with getting on well with supervisors ( $r=-0.26$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). The issue is that overall levels these data tend to be weak and not always at statistically significant levels. However the cluster analysis does show that for a subset of those who do experience stress, relationships with supervisors and co-workers can be a source of that stress. However, multiple regression shows that relationship to be nuanced. One complicating factor is the role of peer groups for younger workers. Thus, it was found that while they get on with co-workers, some may still have a high intent to leave. It is suggested that if within a peer group there are some who are anticipating leaving, their formative decision may also cause others to consider more often the thought of leaving their job.

Unfortunately, the research design did not include a question along the lines of ‘do you consider leaving your job because a friendly co-worker has indicated a wish to leave’ – and this is a factor future research may wish to consider. Another complicating factor is the general homogeneity of the sample in terms of age. As befitting this industry, the majority of respondents were under the age of 25 years and most had worked for less than 6 months. One side effect of this is that many specifically seek temporary work, and in that sense intention to leave may have more to do with plans outside of their employment than the specific conditions under which they work.

### **10.3.3 Research question three**

This thus brings to the fore the third research question: What are the roles of socio-demographics in influencing employees' intention to leave?

In this study, overall, the results suggest that there were a few significant differences between stressors, stress, feeling about the job and satisfaction and commitment, intention to leave a job with the socio-demographic variables. However, for the best part a closer examination of the results revealed, in absolute terms, that the differences were minimal.

#### **The influence of gender**

This study found that gender appears to be a minor discriminating factor for some job satisfaction, commitments and job feeling items. Females respondents scored lower agreement on five items (see chapter 5) and 2 items higher than males respondents. For example, items on 'I get on well with my supervisors' and 'I would like to get promotions in this company' reveals male respondents expressed higher agreement. In term of job satisfaction and commitment items, again, female respondents scored statistically significantly higher than males. However, large mean differences between genders on job satisfaction were not obtained, and the scores indicate that both males and females were generally satisfied and committed to the companies. In short, although some statistically significant differences were found, it was generally concluded that gender was not a discriminatory variable in explaining differences on psychometric measures or the intention to leave a job.

### **The influence of marital status**

Marital status found to be significant on only 2 items from the Job feeling scale. As the mean differences were small, it implies single and married employees shared a similar feeling towards reasons for working in the fast food industry. However, qualitative findings highlighted some different views on the role marital status. As mentioned by the human resource of Big Burger “... *some employees choose to resign because they have personal problem such as getting married*”. Another manager from Golden Chicken Company stated “*to me, being a married employee is not suitable for working in this industry because the nature of this industry requires commitment which sometimes involves during weekends and public holidays*”.

### **The influence of age**

Of the socio-demographic variables age was the most important discriminatory variable. In terms of the job stressor scale, 4 items were found to be statistically significant when comparing age groups. For example, the item ‘To satisfy some people at my job, I have to upset others’ suggests younger respondents might not wish to upset their friends because of their friendship bonding when compared to older counterparts who may adopt ‘professional’ attitudes. The item ‘At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines’ indicated a possible explanation in terms of a life-stage affect whereby older employees may have experience and tend to repeat personal patterns of work k now to work for them. For the job stress scale, only one item was found to be significant, but generally younger employees were more likely to score lower means than older employees. Older employees tended to report that job related problems could affect their emotions and health with reference to somatic

conditions. All age groups expressed agreement with a wish to satisfy parents, a result that is congruent with Abdullah's (2001) study that indicated that Malay people have been raised with the 'respect for elders' and possess 'family oriented' values. For the job satisfaction and commitment scale, only one item was found to be statistically significant between age groups. Employees aged 31 to 40 years old are highly satisfied and thus want to work in this industry until the age of retirement. This result is consistent with finding from Bloomme *et al.*, (2008).

### **The influence of employees' length of employment in an outlet**

The findings indicated that the majority of employees have worked less than 6 months in the fast food industry. Only a small percentage had worked for more than 10 years. Arguably tenure has some role in predicting intention to leave among fast food employees. One-Way ANOVA analysis found statistically significant relationships for five job stressor items. For example, employees who worked more than 10 years in the fast food industry scored the highest mean for the item 'My job responsibility is clear to me'. It can be assumed the longer an employee works in one company, the clearer become the job responsibilities. For job feeling items, 9 items were found statistically significant. Lastly, job satisfaction vs. tenure in the outlet found to be significant for 8 items and results indicated employees who had worked from 1 to less than 3 years scored higher agreement on 4 items than those who had worked for shorter periods of time. There is therefore some tentative evidence of employees becoming habituated to the patterns of fast food employment the longer they work in the industry, but equally higher levels of job satisfaction may also be

related to higher levels of management being attained. The research design did not permit examination of this variable.

#### **10.3.4 Research question four**

This final research question was: How can managers predict intention to leave a job among fast food employees in Peninsular Malaysia?

This study provides evidence that ‘I feel burnt-out at my job’ was the item ‘explaining’ most of the variance in predicting employee intention to leave a job in the Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry (88.8 percent) and this finding arguably has value for managers at the head offices. In addition, the qualitative evidence also supported a view that stress may influence employees in the fast food industry to re-evaluate their position/job to stay or leave the industry. For example, when the researcher asked questions as to whether an employee ever felt stress, burnt-out, frustrated, tense and stigmatised at workplace, a majority of employees concerned agreed that they had felt stress at some time. In addition, results derived from quantitative data, found that, of the total sample, 58.4 percent of employees expressed a view of not having stress or burn-out at the workplace, whereas the remaining sample did agree that they had felt stress to at least some degree. Four employees, for example, in the interviews commented and expressed their feeling about stress thus:

*“Definitely, I felt stress worked in this outlet. The area managers did not understand us. He always burden us with admin work which made me feel so burnt-out”*

Employee 1

*“Oh, if I were given a chance, I would like to work in other industry. Fast food made me feel stress...”*

Employee 2

*“I feel stress because too much work I have to do. The boss requests to this work..but no teamwork among managers. And what made I feel more stress when many crews absent. I have to find someone to covers the shift and this situation really gives hassles to me.”*

Employee 8

*“I have to admit that sometimes I feel stress at work. One of reasons why I felt stress because there are many customers and it is difficult to handle fussy customers. There is customer who already ordered and suddenly changes his/her mind to order other foods which in turn delay others’ orders.”*

Employee 7

Again the issue arises as to what is it that causes stress. The qualitative findings supported this statement. Fast food offers fast service and many customers prefer having their meals on premises. This can be found in the findings as shown by the following quotes. According to the Big Burger human resource manager, *“there were 1000 customers who came to their outlets on a daily basis”* and the training manager of ABC fast also mentioned, *“there are about 1500 - 2000 customers visiting their outlet in Petaling Jaya and on average 200- 250 at other outlets daily”*. Not only are employees working at the ‘front house’ deal directly with customers but also those working at the back of the house can be seen by the customers. This suggests that the nature of the fast food industry is that it is always busy and has a high turnover of customers. This outlet-specific scenario requires employees to be energetic and healthy because it not only involves physical work but also mental alertness. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that employees’ job stress may results from frequent customers’ contacts.

## 10.4 Contribution to the literature

This study contributes to the fast food literature in several ways. First, from a conceptual point of view, given a lack of studies relevant to turnover intention behaviour with respect to fast food industry, the framework of this study was borrowed from other field of study including managerial psychology. The ‘intention to leave a job model’ developed by Firth *et al.*, (2004) was modified in this study. Initial reliability measures clearly indicated no issues when applying these constructs and scales to the Malaysian fast food industry, although, as noted above, issues of multi-collinearity were found about which the existing literature is generally silent. This study also utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods to better understand the determinants that may form an intention to leave a job among employees in the fast food industry context.

Second, this study argued that determinants using measures of stressors, job stress and job satisfaction and commitment are (a) both frequently mentioned variables that are identified in the wider literature on labour turnover and (b) can be adapted in the fast food industry, and generally this was found to be the case. Even though this current study used the same determinants (job stressor, job stress, job satisfaction and commitment) to predict intention to leave, the results clearly indicated some differences when applied to the Malaysian fast food context. One difference was the finding that the ‘feeling of being burnt out’ was found to have the strongest correlation with employee intention to leave a job. The study also developed one new scale named ‘Job Feeling’ to further understand employees’ feelings about work in

the Malaysian fast food industry. The 'Job Feeling' variable in this study includes reference to cultural perspectives relating to the practice of religion and dress code.

A further contribution to the literature on fast food industry is that the study is located in a Malaysian cultural context which, previously, has not been explored. The extrapolation of theory to the Malaysian context, it is hoped, will provide a new insight on the labour turnover issue relevant to Malaysian norms and culture and fill some gap in the literature. According to Khatri *et al.*, (2001), it appears that most studies on turnover intention have been done in the United State of America (USA) or in other Western countries, Malaysian context remains under researched. Furthermore, findings from this study might have some implications for other countries with Islamic culture where religion is practiced in everyday life (Wong, 2007).

### **10.5 Managerial implications**

Knowing the factors that may lead an employee to leave the organization is often better than losing that employee and needing a replacement to fill the vacant position. The consequences of high labour turnover involve costs that include new selection, recruitment and training. In the fast food industry, labour turnover is common (Jerris, 1999, Allan *et al.*, 2006). In response to a question - What managerial implications might arise from this study? First, it might be interesting for managers to note that almost 20 percent of respondents of the current sample scored high on intention to leave the industry, there is an equal percentage committed to the industry. Second, the majority of the respondents who scored 'neutral' are open to

persuasion to remain in the industry. This shows potential for employees to continue in the industry if career enhancement with improved levels of pay and conditions of employment is offered.

The Malaysian fast food industry has grown rapidly since its inception when the first outlet was established in 1963 and until today the numbers of outlets have grown in large number. Therefore, this scenario has given an opportunity for managers at the head offices to attract more newcomers to join this growing industry. It is imperative that managers in the industry be aware of the causes and effects of stress at the workplace. Effective strategies such as creating a congenial work environment (a large proportion of employees are teenagers who look forward to fun and pleasure in their work) despite the repetitive nature of the job, can help the industry to prevent employees from feeling stress at the workplace. The signs of employees being stressed at outlets can be predicted through problems such as lateness, absenteeism or low productivity. These may also be signs of frustration, which in itself can also be source of stress as well as a consequence, and whatever the sequence of events both stress and frustration may be precursors to the formation of an intent to leave the workplace. This study shed light by providing information on determinants that may form an intent to quit among employees' who were working in Peninsular Malaysia fast food industry. Most importantly, the results of this study may help managers to better monitor their employees before they actually leave the outlets. In other words, it can be said that the findings of this study possess some validity for the industry where management action can be directed best at current employees to avoid future problems.

The findings also imply that it is necessary to take care over selection and recruitment in that, as noted above, attitudes that are more directed toward externally oriented peer groups rather than the specifics of work routines could possibly imply a lack of commitment to long-term employment within the industry. Against this, however, it might be noted that there is an argument that the highly routinised nature of employment at the front end of the service encounter and the seeming ease of recruiting personnel at that level may mean that franchisors have come to accept (what in other industries might be seen as alarmingly high) levels of labour turnover as something that is an acceptable cost. In return the industry benefits from a flexibility in labour practices and low labour costs that are offered by such 'turnover employees'. In short, while high turnover infers costs, so too there are costs in interventions to address the issue (Bonn and Forbringer, 1992).

These findings imply that while there are potentially identifiable characteristics of those who may be susceptible to higher intentions to leave, to simply work on such human resource characteristics without reference to a more careful cost analysis of the implications of the alternative modes of recruitment and selection intention would be inadequate. In countries such as the United States the fast food industry has come to play a role where, for many young Americans, it is their first experience of structured employment, and while not subsequently seeking a career in the industry, and only having fulfilled only a temporary role within a given workplace, it might be argued that the majority have met franchisee's expectations and gained disciplines that subsequently stand the employee in good stead. To conclude therefore, while it is conventional to argue that high labour turnover is something to be avoided and,

within the hospitality industry, to be addressed through staff empowerment schemes and knowledge systems that disseminate understandings from and to all staff levels, managerial and non-managerial, it is important to understand the routinised nature of the fast food industry and the brutal fact that not all posts possess intrinsically high levels of satisfaction for many workers.

## **10.6 Recommendations for future research**

The researcher hopes that this study can be used as a starting point for more research on the fast food industry in Malaysia. There are many other perspective of study that can be interesting to look deeper into. This study only emphasised potential determinants that may influence employees to leave a job without reference to their position. It could be interesting to study the difference between managerial or non-managerial intent to leave or those who work part-time or full time only. It could also be of interest to look at role of companies in retaining their employees. Some further areas of study include the following.

### **Managers or non-managers participation**

An examination of managers and non-managers perspectives would probably create different views of an intention to leave a job in the fast food industry. In most cases, managers are involved in tasks such as preparing reports, scheduling, staffing, etc. The job description of managers in fast food industry is obviously different to those employees at non-managerial, yet many managers would have had 'crew' experience.

Research based on work life histories might reveal some insight as to why some become and remain committed to the industry.

### **Companies and outlet location**

There are many outlets of international fast food chains in Malaysia located in different places within the country. It was noted by the managers at the head offices that rural outlets or locations far from big cities such Kuala Lumpur and Penang had much lower labour turnover rates. For example, the human resource manager of ABCfast stated,

*“In Terengganu state (situated in East part of Peninsular Malaysia), we seldom have employees resign and many of them have worked there many years. And the turnover rate is low”.*

This suggests that outlets in less developed States of Malaysia have more advantages compared to the bigger cities because there are less job opportunities available in these States. Therefore, there is some indication that research on this area can be investigated further.

### **Other variables**

It is arguable that not only stressor, stress, job satisfaction and commitment variables may lead to employee intent to leave. Other variable such as push or pull factors in the company also can be examined to predict intention to leave a job in the fast food industry.

## 10.7 Research limitations

The researcher recognises that this study has some limitations. Therefore, this study suggests more improvements and recommended future explorations.

- 1) The sample is limited to operational staff in the larger cities of Peninsular Malaysia. It is therefore not representation of all employees throughout Malaysia, and equally the Malay context limits any wider generalisation, although comparisons might be made with other parts of the world.
- 2) The main results of this study are based on self-administered questionnaires from employees. Even though this survey clearly indicated its purpose and care was taken that responses remained confidential to the researchers, it remains possible that employees may have provided responses based on what they feel they should answer rather than their actual opinions.
- 3) While based on scales used successfully in the human resource management literature elsewhere, the results indicate that an inconclusive linkage of stress and burn out with managerial actions has resulted. Contributing to this is the role of peers among young workers, while another factor is that for many employees in the industry, their acceptance of a job in a fast food outlet is seen as a temporary stage in their work career. The research design failed to ask specific questions about an employee's desired work career and the role of fast food employment within it, and it is suggested this is a factor that future research should clearly identify.

- 4) Owing to restriction of time and financial abilities, only the Peninsular part of fast food industry was sampled. Malaysia consists of thirteen States and divided by 2 parts namely- Peninsular and East. The Peninsular consists of 11 States and participants did not portray the whole Malaysia as noted above.
- 5) Since this study only focused on the international chains of the fast food industry, it could not be generalised to other types or outlets of the Malaysian fast food industry that include local chains, fast ethnic foods or hawker stalls.

In spite of these limitations the feeling remains that study has made a contribution to a better understanding of the Malaysian fast food industry, not only because of the findings generated, but also the questions that it has raised for future research.

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## **Appendix A: QUESTIONNAIRE**



The University of Waikato  
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Waikato Management School  
Te Rauropapa

### EMPLOYEE TURNOVER STUDY

The purpose of this questionnaire is to ascertain your attitudes towards employment in the Malaysian fast food industry. Your name and address is not required and you have every right not to answer any questions. Your answers will be kept totally confidential and any report will be of aggregate data only. This study is to help completion of Doctoral thesis.

It should take around 20 minutes or less to complete the questionnaire.

If you have any queries about the questionnaire please do not hesitate to contact Hazrina Ghazali on +6019-2369884

#### Section A:

This section attempts to gauge how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements related to your job. Please circle the number that best indicates your opinion about each of the following statements using the following scale.

Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree	Not Applicable/ Have no opinion
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

1 My job responsibilities are clear to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
2 My job objectives are well-defined	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
3 It is clear what my fellow worker expect of me at my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
4 At my job, I practice teamwork	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
5 To satisfy some people at my job, I have to upset others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
6 At my job, I find it difficult to follow guidelines	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
7 I am given enough time to do what is expected of me at my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
8 It seems that I have more work at my job that I can handle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
9 My job requires continuous hard work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
10 My job schedule does not interferes with my family life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
11 My job makes me too tired to enjoy my family life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
12 My job does give me enough time for family activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
13 My job does give me enough time to socialize	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

#### Section B:

This section attempts to find out your attitude towards your current job. Please circle the number that best describes your feeling using the following scale.

Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree	Not Applicable/ Have no opinion
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

1 I feel burnt-out at my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
2 I feel frustrated at my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
3 I feel tense at my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
4 I feel stigmatized at my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
5 I feel my educational background is suited to my current job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
6 I lose my appetite because of my job-related problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
7 Job-related problems keep me awake all night	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree	Not Applicable/ Have no opinion
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
8 Job-related problems make my stomach upset	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
9 Job-related problems make my heart beat faster than usual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
10 I work to satisfy my parents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
11 I work here because I want to work in this industry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
12 I work here because my friends are working here	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
13 I work here because it was easy to get this job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
14 I work here on a temporary basis to earn some extra money	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
15 I do consider this type of work as a proper job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
16 I am given time to meet my religious obligation during working hours	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
17 I am allowed to wear 'tudung' during working hours	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
18 This job gives me opportunity to meet new people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
19 I work here because I enjoy it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
20 I work here because I enjoy the company of my co-workers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
21 I spend times with my co-workers for social life outside of workplace	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
22 I get on well with my supervisors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
23 I would like to make a career in the fast food industry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
24 I would like to get promotion in this company	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
25 I work here to support my study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
26 I work here to support my family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

The following statements are related to your job and intention to stop working for this outlet. Please circle the number that best represents your opinion using the following scale.

	Not at all	Rarely or never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Quite Often	Very Often	Not Applicable/ Have no opinion
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
27 How often do you think of leaving your present job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
28 How often do you think to work in some other industry?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
29 How often do you think of a better-paid position?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
30 How much do think that this is the best outlets to work for?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
31 How often you care about the future of this outlet?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
32 How often your spouse/families influence your job c	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
33 How often your friends influence your job choice?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
34 How often you feel satisfied working in this industry?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

**Section C:**

This section attempts to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with various aspects of your job. Please circle the number that best represents your feeling using the following scale.

	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree	Not Applicable/ Have no opinion
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
1 My job is very secure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
2 Physical condition at my workplace are very good	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
3 The benefits (uniform, insurance, etc) given to me are excellent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
4 The welfare (accommodation, staff meals, etc) given to me are excellent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
5 I receive a good pay rates for my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
6 My working hours are adequate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
7 I get a good recognition when I do a good job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
8 I have a freedom to do my best at my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
9 Career advancement at my current job is very good	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
10 I am enjoying my current job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
11 I am satisfied with the location of the outlet that I have been assigned to work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
12 My supervisor's style in managing staff is excellent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
13 I have been provided excellent training since I started to work here	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
14 I am prepared to work harder than I have to in or outlet to be successful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
15 I am happy working in this outlet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
16 I am proud to work for this outlet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
17 I feel loyalty to this outlet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
18 I talk about this outlet to my family as a great place to work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
19 I talk about this outlet to my friends as a great place to work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
20 I really care about the fate of this outlet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
21 I would recommend this outlet to work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
22 I feel this outlet offers attractive work conditions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
23 I hope I can work in this industry until retirement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

**Section D: Demographic Profile**

This section attempts to obtain some background information of respondents. Please select ONE appropriate response or provide ONE answer to each question.

- 1 What is your gender? Male  Female
- 2 What is your age? Below 20 years  21years - 30years  31 years - 40years   
41 years - 50 years  51 years - 60 years  Above 60 years
- 3 Which ethnic group do you belong to?  
Malay  Chinese  Indian  Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Which religion do you belong to?  
Islam  Christian  Buddha  Hindu  Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 What is your highest education qualification?  
Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)  Diploma  Bachelor Degree   
Master Degree  Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Is your status that of a single person? Yes  No
- 7 Do you have children below the age of 15 years? Yes  No
- 8 How long have you been working in the fast food industry? \_\_\_\_\_years \_\_\_\_\_months
- 9 How long have you been working for this outlet? \_\_\_\_\_years \_\_\_\_\_months
- 10 How many hours per week do you work in this outlet? \_\_\_\_\_hours

**That is the end of the questionnaire. Please put the questionnaire in the given envelope and give it back to me. Thank you very much for taking part in this study.**