

Organizational Determinants of Job Estrangement in an Organization in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry: A Case Study

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Abstract

Early writings on estrangement can be traced back to the works of Georg Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx, but it was Marx who started the endeavor to understand estrangement and its consequences to labor and capital in the workplace. Since Marx, studies of job estrangement abound, but such studies are mostly absent in the tourism and hospitality industry, especially the accommodations sector of the industry. This study, hence, focused on understanding factors of estrangement in the tourism and hospitality industry with a case study of an organization in the accommodations sector of the industry. Hierarchical regression under two conditions, non-interaction and interaction of powerlessness and social isolation, were tested. Findings showed that the strongest determinants of explained variance in job estrangement under both regression conditions were social isolation and powerlessness, but the unique predictors of estrangement were stronger under the interaction condition than the non-interaction condition. The study concluded by recommending that the job status of the reservation agent be analyzed and redesigned to ameliorate job estrangement.

Keywords: Job Estrangement, Job Alienation, Hospitality Industry, Hotels and Motels, Accommodations Industry, Reservation Agents, Front-Line Employees, Service Industry.

1. Review of Relevant Literature

1.1 Alienation.

Early use of the term, alienation, dating back to medieval French, *aliénacion*, and Latin, *alienationem* and *alius*, meant other or another, and by the 14th century it appeared in the English language to describe an action of estranging or a state of estrangement in relation to being cut off from God (Williams, 1983). The modern use of alienation as the feeling of separation or estrangement in the context of social relations and society, came into practice during the 19th and 20th centuries, with the advent of theories of alienation by Georg Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx who approached the concept from philosophic, religious and economic perspectives respectively (Morrison, 1995). To be alienated is to experience a lack of connection or disconnection, detachment, aloofness, separation, removal or distancing of self from a situation or target (Ashford & Lee, 1990; DiPietro & Pizam, 2008; Kanungo, 1982; Korman, Wittig-Bierman & Lang, 1981). Specifically, to the workplace, work alienation can be described as a state of psychological detachment from work (Kanungo, 1982). It (alienation) may also be described as a cognitive sense of separation from work and the workplace, which is reflected in a lack of job involvement and organizational identification (Ashforth & Lee, 1990).

These descriptions originated in Marx's writings regarding the source of work alienation as the disagreement between the nature of work and human nature that sought creativity and autonomy, which, work, under capitalism, fails to grant (Karl Marx, 1964). Using the work place as his reference, Karl Marx (1964) argued that creative activity, as a basic human need was best satisfied through work.

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He (Marx) however, also recognized the failure of work in fulfilling human desire for creative activity because of the tendency for work to produce alienation (Marx, 1964). He (Marx, 2016 [1844]) further argued that due to how labor is organized in capitalism, the capitalist society does a disservice to its labor force by causing workers to become estranged. The proletarians in capitalism experience estranged labor which estranges them from the products of their labor, the labor process, other fellow workers and from their own selves (their essence as humans) (Marx, 2016 [1844]).

Consistently with the Marxian perspective, Melvin Seeman (1959) theoretically distinguished among five forms of alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement. However, over the years since Seeman (1959), a variety of human conditions such as political apathy, distrust, norm and value rejection, egocentrism, etc., each with its own definition, has been described by scholars as forms of alienation (Henricks, 1982). Among all the various forms of alienation, powerlessness, social isolation and estrangement (specifically, job estrangement) are the foci of this study.

1.1.1 Powerlessness

Seeman (1959, 1983) explained powerlessness as a condition in which a person lacked control over events. Specifically, to the workplace, powerlessness describes the extent to which a worker has no control over work activities (Blauner, 1964; Mottaz, 1981; Seeman 1983). It is a condition in which a person may perceive that he/she has very little, if any, job autonomy (Seeman, 1959, 1983). That is, powerlessness is the “expectancy or probability held by the individual that his (*her*) own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes or reinforcement, he (*she*) seeks” (Seeman, 1959, p. 784). It can also be described as the relative gap between what an individual perceives s/he has and what s/he desires in regard to job autonomy (Seeman, 1959). Hence, for Seeman (1959,1983), powerlessness, essentially, is a relative perception of deprivation of autonomy and control over work decisions rather than an objective degree of control.

The relativity of powerlessness is also captured in Rotter’s (1966) concept of locus of control. Rotter explained that Powerlessness dealt directly with one’s locus of control, defined as the generalized expectancy that rewards or outcomes in life were controlled by an individual’s actions or by external forces (Rotter, 1966). The locus of control theory holds that individuals with internal locus of control believe they are in control of what happens to them, but those with external locus of control view events as outside their control and see them as the result of luck, fate, or chance (Rotter, 1966). Specifically, to the workplace, Spector (1988) described job locus of control as the generalized expectancy that organizational and job-related rewards, reinforcements, or outcomes were controlled either by one’s own actions (internality) or by other forces external to individuals. Those who have an internal locus of control would express greater need to have control over their work environment than those who have greater external locus of control. Therefore, powerlessness in the workplace is likely to be more negatively consequential for workers with high internal locus of control than those with external locus of control (Spector, 1988).

Regardless of the relativity of powerlessness and its relations to locus of control, powerlessness deprives workers of desirable autonomy and control of their work processes, and such deprivation is not without its consequences. As Kanungo (1971) indicated, the degree to which one experiences control had implications for motivation and organizational commitment. The powerless worker would feel any action s/he would take would have very little or no influence at all on the organization, therefore, causing him/her to be less likely to participate in the organization beyond regular job demands (Sarros et al., 2002).

1.1.2. Social Isolation

Arguably, the first image the term, alienation, conjures in the mind, is the image of the lone or alone person. To be alone is the central conceptualization of social alienation (Korman, et al., 1981). The alone person could be by him/herself, who may be aloof or who may be ostracized from others. The recognition of social isolation as a negative job experience was a major aspect of Marx’s extensive discussion on conditions of work under capitalism, when he cited capitalist work conditions as producing an outcome in which workers were removed from other workers (Marx, 1964). Consistently with the Marxian framework for understanding social isolation, DiPietro and Pizam (2008) explained that isolation occurs when there was a disconnect between the individual and the social aspects of human behavior and motivation.

This leads one to feel that s/he is in society, but not a part of it (DiPietro & Pizam, 2008). Invariably, social isolation is a situation in which individuals are not integrated into supportive social networks, and which may produce a diverse range of consequences such as turnover (Seeman, 1983), occupational stress (LaRocco, et al., 1980; Seeman, 1983), and higher mortality (Berkman & Syme, 1979; Seeman, 1983).

To be socially isolated is to lack fellowship with co-workers (Gorz, 1967). Social isolation separates one from coworkers and deprives one of necessary common frameworks within which one may successfully interact with coworkers (Gorz, 1967). In addition to powerlessness, social isolation, a lack of communication and fellowship with other workers, rob the isolated worker of conditions that are important for life satisfaction (Gorz, 1967). When one is isolated from other workers, one loses identification with other workers, with collective goals and with the workplace itself (Blauner, 1964). Employees prefer a high expectancy for being socially included and integrated with other workers, as a signal of social acceptance, which enhances the likelihood of identification with their coworkers and their organizations (Seeman, 1972). However, when conditions of social isolation prevail, an employee resorts to low expectancy for inclusion and social acceptance, invariably forcing the employee to identify with his/her profession, but, not the employer, and resulting in a turnover, whereby the employee seeks a better place to practice his/her profession (Seeman, 1972).

1.1.3. Estrangement.

In Marx's writing, the term alienation is synonymous with estrangement. To be alienated is to be estranged. He explained that man was estranged from the product of his labor, from his life-activity and from his species being (Marx, 1964, 2016 [1844]). The proposition that man's species nature is estranged from him means that one man is estranged from the other, as each of them is estranged from man's essential nature (Marx, 1964, 2016 [1844]). Seeman (1959) also indicated that estrangement was an individual's inability to find intrinsically rewarding activities that engaged him/her. Also, for Blauner (1964), workers experienced estrangement when they felt their work was neither self-fulfilling nor intrinsically rewarding, but that their tasks were merely a means to accomplishing something else. So, for the estranged worker, nothing is inherently gratifying about work; work is merely an instrumental activity which is done only for extrinsic rewards (Blauner, 1964).

Seeman (1959) further indicated that estrangement described the degree of behavioral dependence upon anticipated future reward that were external to one's task itself. The worker does not feel pride, nor identification with his/her work duties, s/he feels essentially detached from his/her employer, and s/he is involved in activities that are mainly instrumentally necessary, such as a paycheck, as opposed to activities that are mainly intrinsically rewarding (Blauner, 1964; Seeman 1983). In these regards, the worker who works mainly for his salary is experiencing work-estrangement (Seeman 1959).

1.2. The Tourism and Hospitality Industry

The tourism and hospitality industry can be segmented into three distinct, yet, overlapping sectors: accommodations, food and beverage, and travel and tourism (Reynolds, 2018). Organizations in the accommodations sector include hotels, motels, bread and breakfast enterprises, inns, campgrounds and other places of lodging (Reynolds, 2018). The food and beverage segment is the largest of the three segments, and it includes high-end restaurants, fast-food establishments and catering services, while the travel and tourism segment comprises of such enterprises as airlines, trains, cruise ships, amusement parks (Reynolds, 2018) as well as taxies and buses. The backbone of the industry is its customer service, indicating that how the staff of an organization in this industry serves customers determine the level of success of such enterprise (Reynolds, 2018).

The reliance of this industry on quality of customer relations provided, accentuates the importance of employees, especially, front-line employees who deal most directly with customers. Yang (2010) expressed the importance of front-line employee satisfaction and performance in the tourism and hospitality industry, because these employees were a major component of service. The performance of these employees drives guest satisfaction and loyalty which are invaluable in the competitive and people-oriented industry (Yang, 2010). Similarly, Kusluvan et al. (2010), indicated that good employee performance in the tourism and hospitality industry were crucial for service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and competitive advantage. Addressing tourism, Emiroglu, Akovab and Tanriverdic (2015) emphasized that the competitive advantage derived from quality service underlay the success and survival of the industry.

Despite the recognition of the importance of good employee relations to the success of the tourism and hospitality industry, some studies (DiPietro & Pizam, 2008; Kusluvan et al., 2010; Pizam, 1982; Yang, 2010) have concluded that employee job satisfaction tended to be low. The low job satisfaction has been linked to various sources such as poor job design in which jobs are characterized by dullness, routineness, low skill, low status, low pay and poor benefits (Kusluvan et al., 2010) and repetitiveness (Muller & Woods, 1994). In turn, low job satisfaction has been found to contribute to high turnover intention (Kim, Leong & Lee, 2005; Zopiatis, Constanti, & Theocharous, 2014) and actual turnover (Faldetta, Fasone & Provenzano, 2013) in the industry.

High turnover has become characteristic of the tourism and hospitality industry such that most organizations in the industry expect high attrition among their employees (Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997). For example, the National Restaurant Association (2017) in the US reported a 70 percent turnover in 2016. Specifically, to the restaurant and accommodations sectors, turnover rate in 2016 was approximately 73 percent, and the rate had consistently increased over each of the six years prior to 2017 (National Restaurant Association, 2017). Also, Demir, Çolakoğlu and Güzel (2007) claimed that the average turnover rate in the US hospitality industry often exceeded 200 percent. This pattern of high attrition seems to be also true in other countries, based on a study by Hatipoğlu et al. (2013) that found the average employee turnover in Istanbul hotels was approximately 22 percent, and the report by the Australian Tourism Labor Force Report (2011) of an average annual turnover rate of 63 percent in Australia.

Factors associated with high turnover in the hospitality industry have been asserted by many studies. Among these factors, low wage, in particular, has been commonly cited (Getz 1994; Kusluvan et al., 2010; Albattat & Som, 2013). Other commonly cited factors include poor working conditions and poor job safety (Albattat & Som, 2013; Getz, 1994), lack of opportunities for growth and career (Getz, 1994; Hai-Yan & Baum, 2006; Yang, Wan & Fu, 2012), long hours, poor working conditions, high stress and dissatisfaction with management (Albattat & Som, 2013), as well as low motivation, and job monotony (Pizam & Thornurg, 2000; Yang, et al., 2012).

While problems of employee dissatisfaction and consequences, such as turnover, have been widely studied, a glaring absence in understanding employee experiences in the tourism and hospitality industry are studies on employee estrangement. In fact, Suarez-Mendoza and Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara (2007) claimed that studies that focused on alienation of workers in tourism and hospitality organizations were scarce, despite that work alienation had been linked to several undesirable organizational outcomes. These outcomes may include low organizational commitment, high job turnover, absenteeism, low job satisfaction, poor job performance, high occupational stress, high workplace deviance, poor quality of work life, emotional exhaustion, high work-family conflict, and problem drinking (Yang, 2001).

Among the very rare studies that have paid attention to employee alienation in the tourism and hospitality industry was the study by Dipietro and Pizam (2008) that outlined various patterns of alienation in the quick service restaurant sector. This study found that age was inversely correlated, while education was positively correlated, with alienation in the industry. The study also found men (more than women), Blacks (more than Hispanics), and hourly employees (more than managers) to suffer significant alienation. Neither employment tenure (length of employment) nor hours worked per week, type of work (front counter vs kitchen or drive-through window) language of employee (English vs Spanish) and restaurant location (Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa) significantly explained alienation in the industry (Dipietro and Pizam (2008).

2. Objective

The large absence of alienation studies in the tourism and hospitality industry, and specifically, the accommodations sector of the industry, necessitated this study. Many studies agree that alienation has a negative effect on individuals' perception of, and engagement in, the world of work (Hirschfeld, 2002; Kanungo, 1982; Korman, et al., 1981; Paullay, Alliger & Stone-Romero, 1994), yet, little attention has been paid to the extent of the presence of alienation, and specifically, job estrangement in the accommodations sector of the hospitality industry. The lack of investigation of alienation among the workers in the industry could signal a neglect of the well-being of these employees. Such neglect may be detrimental to both the workers and their organizations because alienation robs employees of good emotional well-being which typically results in less productivity for the organization as well as high employee turnover (Korman, et al., 1981)

Due to the significant absence of studies on alienation in the tourism and hospitality industry, and the link between workplace alienation and negative work-related outcomes, the objective of this study was to investigate organizational conditions that produced job estrangement among employees in one organization in the accommodations sector of the industry. Hence, this was a case study of job estrangement in an organization. The case study approach was adopted consistently with the conclusion by Clark (1959), that alienation was most meaningful and useful when applied to a specific social or organizational setting. He argued that measuring alienation from a specifiable social system or sub-system is more meaningful than measuring it from a global social referent because “when viewed from the standpoint of a single organization, the concept of alienation can be examined in an environment about which we are more adequately informed than with the whole of society” (Clark, 1959, p. 851). Consistently with Clark’s assertion, many studies on alienation (e.g. Banai, Reisel & Probst, 2004; DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Hirschfeld, 2002; Hirschfeld, Feild & Bedeian, 2000; Korman, et al., 1981, etc.) have focused on the workplace, and the same is true of this study.

2.1. Research Questions and Hypotheses

In the tradition of measuring alienation within specific systems and subsystems, this study investigated factors of job estrangement in one organization in the accommodations sector of the tourism and hospitality industry, to answer two main research questions:

1. What set of organizational conditions best determine the likelihood of job estrangement among the employees of an organization in the accommodations sector?
2. Which specific organizational conditions uniquely predict the likelihood of job estrangement among the employees in the subject organization?

Answers to these questions are intended to contribute to knowledge of alienation, and specifically, job estrangement, in the accommodations sector of the tourism and hospitality industry. It is anticipated that the findings in this study will contribute to filling of the gap in knowledge of job estrangement in the industry, and especially, the accommodations sector, where data were collected for this study.

2.2. Research Hypotheses

Based on patterns of direct relationships between various alienation characteristics and organizational outcomes found in some previous studies, such as the relationship between powerlessness and organizational participation (Sarrows et al., 2002), social isolation and identification with collective goals (Blauener, 1964), social isolation and turnover rate (Seeman, 1983), social isolation and organizational job status, hours worked, type of work, organizational tenure and alienation (DiPietro & Pizam, 2008), the following directional research hypotheses were advanced for analyses to answer the two questions in this study:

- H1. Lower Job statuses will significantly increase the likelihood of job estrangement than higher job statuses.*
- H2. Part-time employment status will be a significantly higher determinant of job estrangement than full-time employment.*
- H3. Lower employee wage will significantly increase the likelihood of job estrangement than higher employee wage.*
- H4. The shorter the employment tenure, the greater the significant likelihood of job estrangement.*
- H5. The shorter the job status tenure, the greater the significant likelihood of job estrangement.*
- H6. The higher the extent of perceived powerlessness of employees, the greater their likelihood of feeling of job estrangement.*
- H7. The higher the extent of perceived social isolation of employees, the greater their likelihood of feeling of job estrangement.*
- H8. The greater the interactive experiences of powerlessness and social isolation, the greater the likelihood of feeling of job estrangement*

3. Method

3.1. Instrument

A questionnaire comprising scales of powerlessness, social isolation and job estrangement, adapted from Oyinlade (1997) which was adapted from Kanungo (1982), was designed for data collection. Each scale was summated rating, Likert-type, consisting of multiple items (powerlessness = 7 items, social isolation = 5 items, estrangement = 6 items). Response options for each scale item ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) with higher scores representing greater presence of each latent variable. To reduce the likelihood of response-set by survey respondents, at least one item was written in a reverse order in each scale. The questionnaire also contained organizational characteristic questions of relevance to this study (see table 1 for all questionnaire items for all study variables).

3.2. Data Collection

Data were collected at the national headquarters of a motel chain located in a midwestern USA state. Top-level executives in human resources in the organization permitted this study as a case study of their organization, hence, they were instrumental in publicizing this study to their organizational members. Due to employee privacy protection regulations, necessary employee information that could aid in conducting random sampling could not be obtained, hence, convenience sampling was adopted. The human resources office wrote to all 424 employees at the headquarters to pick-up a copy of the questionnaire from a designated location in the building, and to return their completed questionnaires directly to the author. No questionnaire was collected by organizational officials to provide necessary privacy, anonymity and psychological safety to all participants. Three hundred (300) questionnaire copies were picked-up, and 120 were anonymously returned (40% return rate). Of the 120 returned, 97 were completed sufficiently enough (at least 90 percent of questions completed) to be included in data analysis (32% effective return rate). The remaining 23 questionnaires were eliminated and discarded from data analysis for insufficient completion.

Table 1. Research variables and definitions

Dependent Variable

Job Estrangement: The extent to which an employee fails to identify with, connect with and have pride in his/her job, and hence, only work mainly to derive external benefits from the job (Blauner, 1964; Kanungo, 1982; Marx, 1963; Mottaz, 1981; Oyinlade, 1997). See table 2 for operational items. Measured in ordinal values with higher scores indicating greater presence of job estrangement.

Independent Variables:

Powerlessness: The perception by an employee that he/she lacks control of his/her job activities as evidenced by lack of input in decision-making and being supervised than preferred (Blauner, 1964; Kanungo, 1982; Marx, 1963; Mottaz, 1981; Oyinlade, 1997). See table 2 for operational items. Measured in ordinal values with higher scores indicating greater presence of powerlessness.

Social Isolation: The perception by an employee that he/she is not connected with fellow workers as well as perceiving the work environment as uncomfortable (Blauner, 1964; Kanungo, 1982; Marx, 1963; Mottaz, 1981; Oyinlade, 1997). See table 2 for operational items. Measured in ordinal values with higher scores indicating greater presence of social isolation.

Organizational Demographic Variables

1. Job Status: Job status identified by job titles: Supervisors, Secretaries, Reservation Agents and others
 - a) Supervisors—First level leadership position within the organization
 - b) Reservation Agents: Nonsupervisory workers who take reservation calls and make reservations for hotel patrons
 - c) Others: All other mentioned various jobs outside of the Supervisors, Secretaries and Reservation Agents
2. Job Tenure--Length of time, in months, continuously employed by the organization
3. Position Tenure--Length of time, in months, continuously at present position.
4. Average numbers of hours worked per week
5. Employment Status: Full-time (working minimum scheduled of 40 hours per week) vs Part-time (working regular schedule of less than 40 hours per week)
6. Wage Per Hours: Per hour income earned working *only* in the organization...determined by dividing reported annual income by number of hours worked.

The demographic characteristics of the 97 participants in this study showed that they were predominantly women (69 percent), their average age was 39, 80 percent were full-time employees, they had worked for the organization for an average of 46 months, and they also averaged approximately 28 months of tenure on their respective job positions. The three main positions that were identified in the survey were supervisor (31%, $N = 27$), secretary (15%, $N = 13$) and reservation agent (30%, $N = 26$). A number of other positions mentioned by 3 or fewer employees (computer systems staff, accounting staff, receptionist, etc.) were classified together in this study as “other” (23%, $N = 20$). See table 2 for full characteristics of research participants.

3.3. Factor Analysis and Reliability Tests

First, each scale of latent variables (Job Estrangement, Powerlessness, Social Isolation) was factor analyzed, using principal component method with no rotation, to measure construct validity of each scale. Any item that did not achieve a minimum factor coefficient of .600, as well as failed to load highest on the variable component, was eliminated from each scale. The adopted .600 factor coefficient threshold was twice as high as the minimum standard of .300 recommended by Kline (2005) for keeping a scale item, but the .600 threshold was preferred to ensure high internal consistency of each scale. Final items for each scale (table 3) and their corresponding factor coefficients loaded strongly on their variable components (component 1).

Table 2. Characteristics of research participants and Pearson's one-tail correlation values of independent variables with estrangement

Variables	N	Mean of Estrangement	Bivariate r - values	P-values
Dependent Variables: Job Estrangement	95	16.33	1	.000
Organizational Demographic Variables				
Job Status: Supervisors	27	15.15	-.198	.035
Job Status: Secretary	13	18.00	.114	.297
Job Status: Reservation Agents	26	20.19	.278	.005
Job Status: Others	20	15.65		
Employment Status: Part-time	16	16.81	-.041	.356
Employment Status: Full Time	66	17.05		
Hours Worked per week (Mean = 39 hours)	82	-	-.092	.207
Hourly Wage (Mean = \$8.00)		-		
Organizational Tenure (Mean = 46 months)	84	-	-.141	.100
Job Status Tenure (Mean = 28 months)	83	-	-.177	.055
Organizational Alienation Experiences				
Powerlessness	93	17.18	.475	.000
Social Isolation	95	6.92	.551	.000
Powerlessness * Social Isolation	93	126.02	.569	.000

Upon determining the final items for each scale, the Cronbach's alpha and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy tests were calculated for each scale for reliability and appropriateness for factor analysis respectively. Test values for each scale (Job Estrangement: $\alpha = .850$, KMO = .806; Powerlessness: $\alpha = .785$, KMO = .802; Social Isolation: $\alpha = .679$, KMO = .668) revealed moderate to strong reliability of each scale as well as confirmed the appropriateness of each scale for factor analysis (see table 3). The minimum KMO value for confirming appropriateness of a scale for factor analysis is .50 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974).

Second, to confirm the independence of each scale, all three scales were cross-factor analyzed using the principal component extraction method with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization to test for cross-loading items among the three scales. Test result showed no cross-loading items, as each item loaded highly only on its own variable component (see table 4).

Table 3. Factor analysis component values and inter-item correlations for each scale. All correlation values are significant at $p < .001$

JOB ESTRANGEMENT		Factor Component		Inter-item correlations			
Scale Items	Mean	1	1	2	3	4	
1. I enjoy coming to work every day [R]	3.12	.878	1				
2. Time drags on this job	3.22	.747	.612	1			
3. I would rather have a different job	3.35	.833	.701	.467	1		
4. I am not proud of doing this job	2.55	.757	.514	.489	.590	1	
5. I would keep this job even if I did not need the income [R]	4.09	.747	.619	.419	.513	.432	
Cronbach's Alpha = .850, Kaiser-Meyer-Okin (KMO) Sampling Adequacy Test = .806, $N = 97$							
POWERLESSNESS		Factor Component		Inter-item correlations			
Scale Items	Mean	1	1	2	3	4	
1. I cannot take a break when I desire	3.04	.697	1				
2. I have no say in how my performance is evaluated	3.66	.793	.490	1			
3. I have no input in policy decision in this organization	4.19	.701	.278	.496	1		
4. I am being supervised more closely than I like	3.00	.755	.420	.474	.410	1	
5. I can try new ideas on my job [R]	3.29	.724	.394	.414	.408	.451	
Cronbach's Alpha = .785, Kaiser-Meyer-Okin (KMO) Sampling Adequacy Test = .802, $N = 97$							
SOCIAL ISOLATION		Factor Component		Inter-item correlations			
Scale Items	Mean	1	1	2			
1. I have made friends at work [R]	1.80	.788	1				
2. I feel like I cannot relate with my co-workers in this company	2.40	.803	.456		1		
3. The work environment is not comfortable for me	2.71	.768	.400			.426	
Cronbach's Alpha = .679, Kaiser-Meyer-Okin (KMO) Sampling Adequacy Test = .668, $N = 97$							

[R] Reverse written items whereby low scores represent higher presence of the item.

4. Tests and Findings

4.1. Correlations

Given that all research hypotheses were directional, the one-tail t-test was used to determine bivariate correlations between all independent variables and job estrangement. For inclusion in the correlation tests, discrete variables (job status and employment status) were converted into dummy variables using the G-1rule (see Lewis-Beck, 1980). All decisions on tests of significance were determined at $\alpha = .05$.

Results of the correlation tests (displayed in table 2) showed that job status as a single variable was correlated with job estrangement ($\lambda = 14.299$, $Power = .897$, $F = 4.766$, $p = .0041$).

However, among the three job status categories (the "others" category as reference category), only the statuses of supervisor ($r = -.198$) and reservation agent ($r = .278$) were significantly correlated with job estrangement. And, Fisher's PLSD post-hoc analysis (not shown in table 2), indicated that the "reservation agent" status was more likely to be estranged than the "supervisor" ($N = 86$, $mean\ difference = 5.044$, $critical\ difference = 2.901$, $p = .0009$) and the "other" job categories ($N = 86$, $mean\ difference = 4.542$, $critical\ difference = 3.140$, $p = .0051$). Also, powerlessness ($N = 93$, $r = .475$), social isolation ($N = 95$, $r = .551$) and the interactive effects of powerlessness and isolation ($N = 93$, $powerlessness*social\ isolation; r = .569$) were significantly correlated with job estrangement. Additionally, job status tenure (length of time on current job) approached significance ($N = 83$, $r = -.177$, $p = .055$). No other variable was significantly correlated with job estrangement.

Table 4. Cross-loading factor coefficient matrix among Estrangement, Powerlessness and Social Isolation scale items using Principal Component extraction method and Varimax Rotation and Kaiser Normalization

SCALES ITEMS	Component		
	1	2	3
I enjoy coming to work every day [R]	.790		
Time drags on this job	.707		
I would rather have a different job	.795		
I am not proud of doing this job	.763		
I would keep this job even if I did not need the income [R]	.711		
I cannot take a break when I desire		.575	
I have no say in how my performance is evaluated		.735	
I have no input in policy decision in this organization		.747	
I am being supervised more closely than I like		.692	
I can try new ideas on my job [R]		.712	
I have made friends at work [R]			.832
I feel like I cannot relate with my co-workers in this company			.766
The work environment is not comfortable for me			.609

Component 1: Estrangement, Component 2: Powerlessness, Component 3: Social Isolation

4.2. Regression Analyses

To determine organizational variables that predicted job estrangement, two hierarchical regression tests under two different conditions were calculated. The two conditions differed in the entrance of powerlessness and social isolation in the regression equations. In Regression Condition1, the two variables were entered in the 3rd model as separate independent variables, while in Regression Condition 2, they were entered as an interaction single variable (powerlessness*social isolation). In addition, the test of linearity, normality, multicollinearity and data reduction were completed for each regression condition.

4.2.1. Regression Condition 1: Non-Interaction Analysis.

The number of cases in the data was reduced from $N = 97$ to $N = 65$ when the extreme outliers that had undue influences on regression results were removed from analysis. Although the maximum Mahalanobis distance value (54.6) still recorded one outlier, the maximum Cook's distance value (.167) and Centered Leverage Value (.853) indicated no (or nonsignificant) impact of the outlier on the regression result. The standardized residual values for all the 65 cases for the dependent variable were shown through scatterplot and histogram (figures 1 and 2) to fall within $-/+3$ standard deviation of the residual mean, indicating normality of data distribution. In addition, the P-P plot of regression standardized residual for the dependent variable affirmed linearity of relationships among the independent variables with the dependent variable (figure 3). Lastly, the tests of Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were conducted for multicollinearity among the independent variables, and values obtained for each test were within statistically acceptable ranges to rule out any multicollinearity among the variables (see table 5).

4.2.1.1. Regression Condition 1 Models and Results

The null hypotheses for each research hypothesis was tested using three hierarchical regression models, as follow, to seek the determinants of job estrangement in the subject organization.

Model 1: The variable, Job status, with each separate status (supervisor, secretary, reservation agent, other) coded as 1, while others = 0, and the job status of "others" coded "0" as reference category, was entered into the regression equation in Model 1. This model was designed to determine the extent to which job status as a variable (collection of all job statuses) contributed to explained variance in job estrangement, as well as demonstrated the extent to which each specific job status uniquely predicted the likelihood of job estrangement.

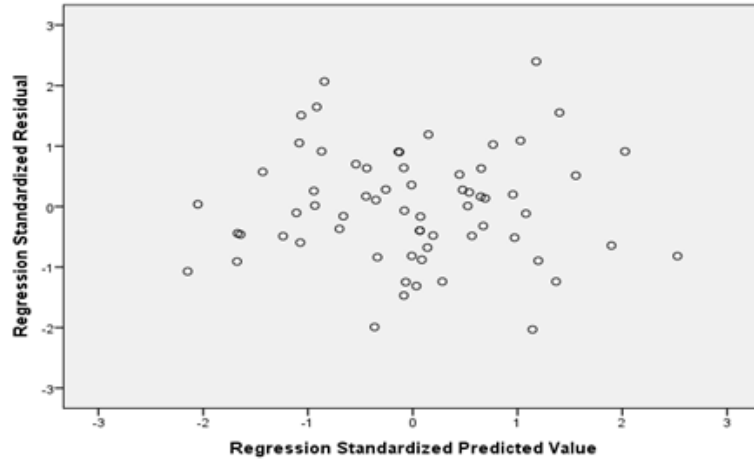


Figure 1. Scatterplot of regression standardized residual with job estrangement as dependent variable

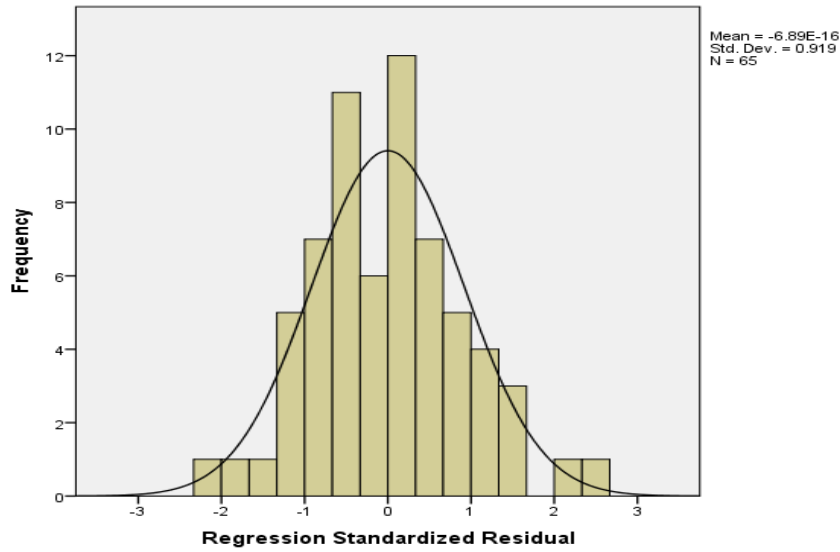


Figure 2. Histogram of regression standardized residual with job estrangement as dependent variable

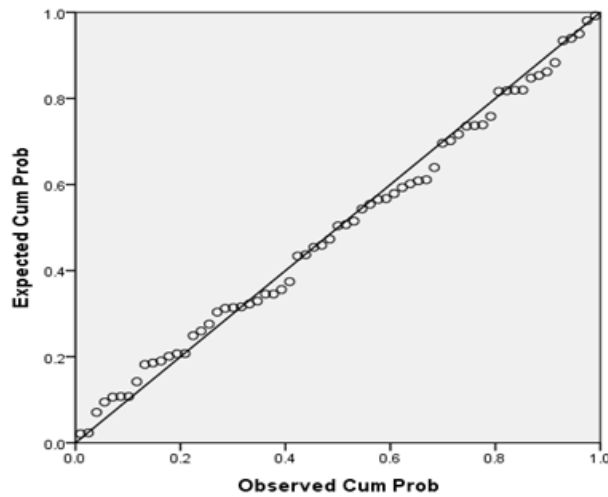


Figure 3. Normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual with job estrangement as dependent variable

Regression values (see table 5) showed that, Model 1, though not statistically significant, contributed roughly 9 percent to explained variance in job estrangement ($R^2 = .088, p = .128$). However, the model also showed that the status of reservation agent uniquely predicted job estrangement ($\beta = .326, p < .05$), and no other job status uniquely did. This meant that the reservation agent position was significantly at a higher likelihood to experience job estrangement than other job positions.

Model 2. In addition to job status, the remaining five organizational variables (hours worked per week, employment status: part-time = 1, full-time = 0, hourly wage, organizational tenure and job status tenure) were entered into the regression equation. This model helped to determine the extent to which these various employee characteristics might explain variance in job estrangement as well as understood how each variable might uniquely predict the dependent variable.

Table 5. Hierarchical regression values of three analysis models with powerlessness and social isolation entered as separate independent variables in Model 3

VARIABLES	Mean	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
		t	β	t	β	t	β
Organizational Demography							
Constance		13.77	15.22***	3.93	21.24***	2.557	14.32***
Supervisor =1, others =0	.26	.23	.034	.51	.076	.339	.047
Secretary =1, others =0	.17	.64	.090	.53	.085	.686	.102
Reservation Agent =1, others =0	.29	2.21	.326*	2.62	.432*	1.607	.275
Hours Worked per week	39.14			1.18	-.195	-1.20	-.183
Employment Status:							
Part-time = 1, Full time = 0	.25			-1.62	-.278	-.91	-.149
Hourly Wage	8.2			.79	.111	.83	.107
Org. Tenure- in months	46.74			.58	.123	.96	.191
Job Status Tenure-in months	26.28			-1.25	-.243	-2.03	-.370*
Org. Alienation Experiences							
Powerlessness						.726	.108
Social Isolation						3.02	.392**
MODEL STATISTICS							
R		.297		.414		.576	
R Squared		.088		.172		.332	
Adjusted R Squared		.043		.053		.208	
R ² Change		--		.083 (NS)		.160**	
F-Value		1.970		1.450		2.684	
P-Value		.128		.197		.010	
Durbin-Watson = 1.615							
Collinearity Statistics							
Tolerance: Minimum and Maximum		.687 and .747		.323 and .745		.310 and .741	
VIF: Minimum and Maximum		1.338 and 1.455		1.343 and 3.097		1.350 and 3.223	
RESIDUAL STATISTICS							
		Minimum		Maximum		Mean	
Predicted Value		10.57		23.49		16.51	
Std. Predicted Value		-2.148		2.526		.000	
Adjusted Predicted Value		10.80		24.12		16.60	
Std. Error of Predicted Value		1.207		3.977		1.693	
Residual		-8.667		10.235		.000	
Standardized Residual		-2.031		2.398		.000	
Mahalanobis Distance		4.135		54.602		9.846	
Cook's Distance		.000		.164		.019	
Centered Leverage Value		.065		.853		.154	
N = 65							

*Significant at $p < .05$ **Significant at $P < .01$ ***Significant at $P < .001$

Results showed that the five variables entered in Model 2 collectively contributed additional 8 percent to explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .083$) in job estrangement, and the entire model (including job status from Model 1) produced 17 percent of explained variance ($R^2 = .172$) in the dependent variable. However, neither contributions to explained variance was statistically significant at $\alpha = .05$. It should also be noted that, while none of the five variables entered in Model 2 uniquely predicted job estrangement, the entrance of these variables increased the unique likelihood of reservation agents to significantly experience job estrangement ($\beta = .432, p < .05$).

Model 3. Powerlessness and social isolation were entered in the regression equation in this final model to determine their contributions to explained variance in job estrangement. Results showed that the two variables alone, collectively, accounted for 16 percent ($\Delta R^2 = .160, p < .01$) while the entire model accounted for 33 percent ($R^2 = .332, p = .010$) of explained variance in job estrangement. Also, while powerlessness did not significantly uniquely predict job estrangement, social isolation emerged as the single, biggest, unique predictor of job estrangement ($\beta = .392, p < .01$), followed by job status tenure ($\beta = -.370, p < .05$), among all the model variables. This model also showed that the entrance of powerlessness and social isolation into the regression model fully mediated the unique ability of the job status of reservation agent to predict job estrangement.

Other than job status tenure and social isolation, no other individual organizational factor uniquely significantly predicted the likelihood of job estrangement. And, because the third model was the full model, all decisions on the null-hypotheses were based on the findings of the third model. Hence, decisions were that only the null for hypotheses 5 and 7 were rejected in favor of their research hypotheses, and the nulls for the remaining hypotheses failed to be rejected. Hypothesis 8 was tested only in Regression Condition 2 as an alternative hypothesis to hypotheses 6 and 7, hence it was not included in the decision in this Condition 1 regression test.

To summarize, the final (third) model in the first regression condition test showed that while all the variables in the model contributed to explained variance in job estrangement, powerlessness and social isolation alone provided roughly 50 percent of the total contributions. Also, while social isolation increased the likelihood of job estrangement, longer time in any particular job position significantly reduced it.

4.2.2. Regression Condition 2: Interaction Analysis

Regression Condition 2 (table 6) was characterized mainly by the interaction effect of powerlessness and social isolation entered into the regression equation as a single variable in the third model. The variables in Models 1 and 2, and model results were exactly the same in Regression Condition 2, as they were for Regression Condition 1. The only difference between the two sets of analyses, hence, appeared only in the third model.

Results for the analysis of Model 3 in Regression Condition 2 (table 6) showed that the interaction variable of powerlessness and social isolation (powerlessness*social isolation) contributed roughly 15 percent ($\Delta R^2 = .147, p < .01$) of explained variance in job estrangement, while the entire model was responsible for roughly 32 percent ($R^2 = .317, p = .008$) of explained variance. Also, in this model analysis, the interaction variable (powerlessness*social isolation) was the larger unique predictor ($\beta = .447, p < .05$) while job status tenure emerged as the second large unique predictor of job estrangement ($\beta = -.386, p < .05$). See table 6 for full regression statistics. As in Regression Condition 1, all decisions on the null-hypotheses were based on the findings of the full (third) model, hence, in Regression Condition 2, decisions were that only the null for hypotheses 5 and 8 were rejected in favor of their research hypotheses, and the nulls for the remaining hypotheses failed to be rejected. Note that hypothesis 8 replaced hypotheses 6 and 7 in Regression Condition 2.

Table 6. Hierarchical regression values of three analysis models with powerlessness and social isolation entered as a single interactive variable in Model 3

VARIABLES	Mean	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
		t	β	t	β	t	β
Organizational Demography							
Constance		13.77	15.22***	3.93	21.24***	3.22	16.54**
Supervisor =1, others =0	.26	.23	.034	.51	.076	.22	.031
Secretary =1, others =0	.17	.64	.090	.53	.085	.46	.067
Reservation Agent =1, others =0	.29	2.21	.326*	2.62	.432*	1.40	.227
Hours Worked per week	39.14			1.18	-.195	-1.09	-.165
Employment Status:							
Part-time = 1, Full time = 0	.25			-1.62	-.278	-.71	-.116
Hourly Wage	\$8.24			.79	.111	.98	.127
Org. Tenure- in months	46.74			.58	.123	1.21	.241
Job Status Tenure-in months	26.28			-1.25	-.243	-2.11	-.386*
Org. Alienation Experiences							
Powerlessness * Social Isolation	118.3					3.42	.447**
MODEL STATISTICS							
R		.297		.414		.563	
R Square		.088		.172		.317	
Adjusted R Squared		.043		.053		.205	
R ² Change		--		.083		.146**	
F-Value		1.970		1.450		2.837	
P-Value		.128		.197		.008	
Durbin-Watson = 1.594							
Collinearity Statistics							
Tolerance: Minimum and Maximum		.687 and .747		.323 and .745		.313 and .744	
VIF: Minimum and Maximum		1.338 and 1.455		1.343 and 3.097		1.344 and 3.193	
RESIDUAL STATISTICS							
		Minimum		Maximum		Mean	
Predicted Value		11.35		23.58		16.51	
Std. Predicted Value		-1.910		2.620		.000	
Adjusted Predicted Value		11.84		25.43		16.62	
Std. Error of Predicted Value		1.168		3.966		1.611	
Residual		-9.057		10.155		.000	
Standardized Residual		-2.240		2.645		-.008	
Mahalanobis Distance		3.793		54.071		8.862	
Cook's Distance		.000		.194		.019	
Centered Leverage Value		.059		.845		.138	
N = 65							

*Significant at $p < .05$ **Significant at $P < .01$ ***Significant at $P < .001$

Summary of Study Findings

Findings of this study suggest that while all the organizational factors studied collectively contributed to the likelihood of job estrangement in the motel organization, employees' experiences of powerlessness and social isolation proved to be the two most important conditions that determined job estrangement. Of the explained variance in job estrangement in each condition of hierarchical regression analyses conducted, the combination of powerlessness and social isolation, alone, explained about 50 percent of likelihood of job estrangement, while the remaining 6 factors, combined together, accounted for the other 50 percent of variance in job estrangement. It is also worth noting that while the factor, job status (comprising of four job categories: supervisor, secretary, reservation agent, others), was not a significant determinant of job estrangement (model 1 in both regression conditions), the variable contributed approximately 9 percent to explained variance in job estrangement, mainly due to the influence of estrangement reported by the reservation agents. In fact, the reservation agent status was the only unique predictor of estrangement in Models 1 and 2 in both regression conditions.

It was not until the entrance of powerlessness and social isolation in the full model that the status of reservation agent became fully mediated, indicating that powerlessness and social isolation were the driving forces (reasons) behind the higher levels of job estrangement reported by the reservation agents.

The attempt to assess potential differences in the entrance of powerlessness and social isolation in two different ways (as individual factors and as a single interaction factor), which necessitated two separate regression conditions, proved useful in understanding the drivers of job estrangement. While the total explained variance in the full model in both regression conditions were similar (33 percent and 32 percent in regression conditions 1 and 2 respectively), it was in the unique contributions of the predictors that the value of Regression Condition 2 became apparent. The interactive effects of powerlessness and social isolation was a much stronger predictor ($\beta = .447, p < .01$) of job estrangement (Regression Condition 2) than their individual contributions whereby only social isolation ($\beta = .392, p < .01$) was a unique predictor of job estrangement. Given that powerlessness, by itself, did not independently predict job estrangement (Regression Condition 1), the contribution of powerlessness in the interaction variable means that the significance of powerlessness in predicting job estrangement was dependent of the value of social isolation. Therefore, powerlessness was linearly predictive of job estrangement depending on the extent to which social isolation was predictive. This is in agreement with the assertion that in an interaction condition, “the impact of one independent variable depends on the value of another independent variable” (Lewis-Beck, 1980, p. 543). Also, in the full models in both regression tests, the longer an employee had occupied a position (job status tenure), the lesser the likelihood of job estrangement experienced. However, the role of job status tenure in ameliorating job estrangement was much larger under the interaction condition of powerlessness and social isolation (Regression Condition 2: $\beta = -.386, p < .05$) than under the non-interaction condition (Regression Condition 1: $\beta = -.370, P < .05$).

5.0. Discussion and Conclusion

In that Clark (1959) called for analysis of alienation to be social setting-specific, this study analyzed the determinants of job estrangement, specifically, at the national headquarter of a national motel chain as a case study. Among all the factors studied, three factors appeared most pressing for organizational leaders to consider, as they may ponder over issues of employee job estrangement. These factors were the job status of reservation agents, the combined effects of powerlessness and social isolation and the ameliorating power of long job tenure.

As disciplines such as sociology, organizational sociology, organizational science and organizational behavior will indicate, all organizational outcomes are the products of organizational structures and systems (see for example, Gibson, et al., 2009; Tolbert & Hall, 2009). It is, therefore, important for organizational leaders in this case study organization (and as may also benefit other organizational leaders beyond the study organization) to investigate the structures within this organization that may produce estrangement, powerlessness and social isolation among their employees. It is equally important to understand structural conditions of longer job status tenure that significantly reduce the likelihood of job estrangement. The recommendation, here-forth advanced, is for organizational leaders to have a good understanding of structural factors that produce both the negative (job estrangement, powerlessness, social isolation) and positive (long tenure in a position) outcomes of their job designs.

Recognizing that organizational structure fundamentally reflects the groupings of jobs and people in an organization (Gibson, et al., 2009; Tolbert & Hall, 2009), the analysis of job design is an important undertaking necessary to understand the existence of job estrangement, its predictors and its ameliorating factors. While Kusluvan et al. (2013) and Muller and Woods (1994) focused on employee satisfaction in their studies, they also specified job design as the fundamental source of employee problems. In the case of this study, although higher organizational statuses did not uniquely predict job estrangement, the lower status of reservation agents did, in two of three models. Furthermore, in three other separate bivariate exploratory regression tests conducted in this study, being a reservation agent was found to predict job estrangement ($\beta = .345, t = 2.616, DF= 3(81): 84, p = .011$), powerlessness ($\beta = .610, t = 5.263, DF= 3(80): 83, p = .000$), and powerlessness*social isolation ($\beta = .372, t = 2.842, DF= 3(80): 83, p = .006$). It may, therefore, behoove the organization to analyze and appropriately redesign the job of reservation agent to eliminate or significantly reduce conditions of job estrangement, powerlessness and social isolation.

It is, in particular, important to use job redesign to reduce conditions of job estrangement, powerlessness and social isolation because of their potential negative consequences in an industry that has been identified by scholars to suffer from high job dissatisfaction (Kusluvan et al., 2010; Pietro & Pizam, 2008; Pizam, 1982, Yang 2010) and high turnover (Demir et al., 2007; Faldetta et al., 2013).

Such job redesign is especially important for the job of reservation agents, who are the front-line organizational members, who deal with customers en masse, in determining organizational success (see Reynolds, 2018). In an industry that depends mostly on customer service for its existence, customer relations are key for customer loyalty that drives organizational success (Yang, 2010; Kusluvan et. al., 2010). The likelihood of social isolation and powerlessness is especially associated with lower job statuses within organizational structures (such as the reservation agent status in this study), therefore, the consequences of powerlessness, by structural design, typically accrue highest at job statuses at the lowest rungs of organizational scalar chains. For example, Shani and Pizam, (2009) found that depression, resulting from powerlessness, was highest for general hotel staff than for upper level managers.

In the hotel sector where the reservation agents, though very low on the scalar chain, are very crucial for organizational success, conditions of job estrangement, social isolation and powerlessness will likely be detrimental to organizational success. It is, therefore, imperative that the job of those most directly responsible for cultivating and maintaining customer relations, such as the reservation agents, be well analyzed and redesigned to eliminate or, at the very least, significantly reduce the experiences of job estrangement, social isolation and powerlessness and to enhance the likelihood that longer tenure in job positions will lower alienating organizational experiences.

6.0. Limitations and Future Studies

By conducting this research as a case study in a single organizational setting, generalization over the entire accommodations sector of the tourism and hospitality industry is impossible, and, hence, not claimed. Also, while much attention was paid in the analytical section of this study to data quality and meeting of conditions of regression, such strong adherence to statistical rules led to much data reduction, resulting in a smaller sample size than would have been preferred for data analysis. Despite these limitations, this study offered a potential insight into possible driving forces of job estrangement in motel organizations, and even, possibly (but not claimed), the general accommodations sector of the tourism and hospitality industry. It is suggested that more studies of job estrangement be conducted in the industry. The more knowledge of job estrangement is uncovered through research in the industry, the better jobs could be redesigned to eliminate estrangement, especially for front-line employees whose roles are crucial for customer satisfaction and loyalty.

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