# AGW 712

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

# Service Sabotage in Hotel Industry: Empirical Study Using Social Bonding Theory

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# ABSTRAK

Perlakuan sabotaj khidmat di tempat kerja, terutama sekali dalam industri perhotelan semakin berleluasan sehingga menarik perhatian pihak penyelidik dan pengurus. Malangnya, perlakuan sabotaj khidmat ini sama ada telah di abaikan atau pun disalahfahami. Hirschi (1969) menyatakan bahawa Teori Ikatan Sosial boleh meningkatkan kefahaman perlakuan menyimpang. Model Ikatan Sosial mengandungi empat jenis ikatan: 1. Kerapatan, 2. Komitmen, 3. Penglibatan, dan 4. Kepercayaan. Harris dan Ogbonna (2002) mencadangkan bahawa dengan adanya sistem pemantauan dalam organisasi tersebut dapat mengurangkan peristiwa sabotaj khidmat. Dalam kajian ini, Model Ikatan Sosial telah di gunakan sebagai antisiden (antecedent) and kawalan tanggapan di jadikan "moderator" dalam perlakuan sabotaj khidmat. Dari kajian 115 bilangan sampel, keputusan analisis menunjukkan bahawa Komitmen dan Penglibatan mempunyai hubungan positif dengan sabotaj perkhidmatan. Kedua-dua Kepercayaan dan Kawalan Tanggapan tidak mempunyai impak yang besar dalam sabotaj perkhidmatan. Kerapatan, sepertimana kajian-kajian lain yang pernah dijalankan (Hollinger, 1986; Sims, 2002; dan Stewarts, 2003), masih merupakan pemboleh-ubah yang berkesan untuk mengurangkan perlakuan sabotaj khidmat.

# ABSTRACT

Research and managerial interest in employees' service sabotage behavior has become increasingly widespread, especially in the hotel industry. Unfortunately service sabotage behavior has either been ignored or misunderstood. Hirschi (1969) suggested that deviant behavior could be better understood by Social Bonding Theory. The Social Bonding model includes four bonds: 1. Attachment, 2. Commitment, 3. Involvement and 4. Belief. Harris and Ogbonna (2002) proposed that the presence of control system at organization level would lower the occurrence of service sabotage. In this study, the Social Bonding model was adopted as the antecedent; and perceived control as the moderator to service sabotage behavior. From the analyses of the 115 samples through survey, the result shows that both Commitment and Involvement have positive relationships with service sabotage. Both Belief and Perceived Control have no significant impact on Service Sabotage. Attachment, consistent with many previous studies (Hollinger, 1986; Sims, 2002 and Stewarts, 2003), remains the effective variable to reduce service sabotage behaviors.

# Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1  *Introduction*

This chapter reviews the importance of service industry in Malaysia and its quest for effectiveness and efficiency to achieve the industrial competitive edge and organizational survival. The intense pressures to the organizational structure changes have created tremendous pressure on the employees and hence have increased employee sabotage incidents which include service sabotage.

The consequence of service sabotage is costly for all parties concerned. To the guest, the service sabotage will ruin their holidays, which money cannot buy. To hotels' employees who sabotage, will stand the risk of loosing their jobs and the employees who did not sabotage may risk their lives when sabotage happened. When sabotage take place, organizations will suffer the costly process of investigation, domestic enquiries, time and administration costs in recruiting new staff and compensations to guests in various form. When that happened, the tourism industry will suffer the bad reputation for poor guest services, aggressive service culture, facing the risk of loosing its charm or attraction as a tourist destination and the sunk cost invested overseas to promote Malaysia as a tourist destination. For the nation, Malaysia will receive lower revenue from the tourism sector.

The Social Bonding Theory has been used to study the juveniles' delinquency behaviors and was adopted by a number of researchers to study the delinquency behaviors of employees (Hollinger & Clark, 1982; Sims, 2002). This study will also adopt the four bonds of the Social Bonding Theory to understand the service sabotage behaviors of employees in the hotel industry. This study intends to test if the behaviors control factors have significant influence on the frequency of service sabotage behaviors.

**1.2    *Background***

Due to the Asian crisis, the Malaysian economy was still suffering from the aftermath, the weakening United States markets, a decline in investments, slower electronics exports, increasing competition of regional economies especially from the Peoples' Republic of China. Based on the economic structure of advanced economies, where services constitute the largest sector of their economies, it was predicted that the next phase of Malaysia's economic growth would depend on services sector. (Sieh, 2003).

Currently, the service sector in Malaysia represents the largest component of GDP with a 57% share in 2004 and estimated to increase to 70% in 2005. The tourism industry generated RM21.3 billion from 10.6 million tourists in 2003. In 2004, tourist arrival was estimated at 15 million and was expected to contribute RM30 billion in revenue (Malaysian Ministry of Finance, 2004). The hotel industry, which represents a major part of tourism industry in Malaysia, serves very important economic and social needs to the nation. Hotel industry is an industry which is labor intensive and involves high capital investment. Hence the success of the hotel industry has a chain effect on the employees' career, the hotel owners' and the management companies' profit margin, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board and Malaysia's economy as a whole.

We have witnessed the hotel industry experienced economic difficulties due to overbuilding of capacity in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The increase in the number of more attractive tourism destinations in countries such as Thailand, China, and Indonesia, has caused competition to intensify and Malaysia's market share in the Asian tourism industry to be diluted. New entrants to the market typically have lower cost structures and a non-unionized workplace, whereas established companies have sunk cost into obsolete technology and a higher-waged unionized workforce (Batt & Doellgast, 2003). Globalization has made possible the utilization of large number of low-wage immigrant

labor and labor-saving technologies. Advances in information technologies have expanded remote service options and automated processes. These changes thus reduced the demand for labor in certain areas.

As competition intensified, most of the companies responded by fundamentally restructuring their companies and exercise cost cutting strategies such as cutting labor costs, downsizing; two-tier wage structures, concessions in work rules, establishing low cost subsidiaries with lower wage scales and more flexible terms, outsourcing activities, etc. (Anderson & Schalk, 1998; Doganis, 2000).

In the context of cost reduction, organization thus quest for more efficient and effective service delivery systems. This has driven individual employees to face the pressures of job insecurity and job redundancy should they fail to change according to the demand trend in time. For the remaining and new employees who survived the organizational restructuring, they would have to live up to the challenges of multi-tasking, re-training, flexible working patterns, temporary, fragmented, and cross-function career trajectories. These pressures have resulted in both positive and negative behavioral changes in the employees. The positive employees' behaviors seen in this more malleable workforce were Organization Citizenship, loyalty and better efficiency in work performance. The negative behaviors exhibited amongst the inefficient workforce were exit, voice (Hirschman, 1970; Sverke & Hellgren, 2001), withdrawal, anger, emotional unrest, and sabotage at workplace, which would affect the service quality, customer's satisfaction and organization performance.

Behaviors of frontline employees were critical to successful performance (Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000; Brown, 1992; Singh 2000 as cited in Harris & Ogbonna, 2002). Research found that guests were attracted to hotels due to the good services provided. Service sabotage would deter guest from coming back to the hotels and

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employees' sabotage at work would handicap or dysfunction hotel operations. Several studies have documented that employee sabotage at workplace would have a financial impact, and would cause social and psychological effects of negative workplace behavior in the organization (Hollinger & Clark, 1982, 1983; Murphy, 1993; Robinson & Greenberg, 1998). It was estimated that employee sabotage cost companies' losses of $6 to $200 billion annually (Murphy, 1993).

According to a study of employees in the hospitality sector, more than 85% of customer-contact employees admitted to some form of service sabotage behavior within the week leading up to the interview, more than 90% of all informants accepted that service sabotage was an everyday occurrence, and 100% of the frontline employees claimed to have witnessed some form of service sabotage (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002). In actual fact, it was difficult to pin down exactly how often service sabotage actually occurred as many incidences of service sabotage go unnoticed, (Crino, 1994; Harris & Ogbonna, 2002) or were ascribed to accidents / misfortune, or unreported or covered-up as companies were shy about reporting such misconduct (Laabs, 1999). Hence, to- date, relatively little empirical research has directly addressed this darker side of employee behavior (Vardi & Wiener, 1992; Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Crino, 1994; Sims, 2002). Service sabotage constitutes an important managerial issue and so far little attention has been devoted to how organizational frontline employees reinforce anti-service behaviors. An extended knowledge of employee sabotage behaviors is therefore underdeveloped.

Social Bonding Theory is one of the popular theories used by researchers to understand juvenile delinquencies and criminal behaviors. Hirschi (1969) in his Social Bond Theory (also known as Control Theory of Delinquency) claimed that the stronger the four social bonds, namely attachment, commitment, involvement and belief, the least likely would one become delinquent. Few researchers had adopted the above theory in

testing the delinquent behaviors of employees (Holingers, 1986; Sims, 2002). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) further expanded the previous theory by recognizing self control as the root of conformity. Research has confirmed that employee sabotage is possibly due to social and interpersonal variables, resulting from the influence of social norms in condoning sabotage behaviors and reactions to unfair interpersonal treatment (Robinson & Greenberg, 1998; Navran, 1991). Field interviews have indicated that the extent of surveillance and cultural control initiatives and procedures will exert a powerful influence on service sabotage (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002; Crino, 1994).

### 1.3    *Problem Statement*

Malaysia is dependent on the service sector for the next phase of growth. Many new tourist destinations have mushroomed in Asia causing competition to intensify. To sustain the competitive edge and market share, the Malaysia hotel industry must ensure that it provides a very good service standard to meet the guest requirements.

Consequences of service sabotage are costly to the guests, employees, companies, the hotel industry and the nation. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, (1985) identified a number of potential gaps in service quality. The actual damages from service sabotage were unable to be quantified because many companies were shy to report these types of incidences. However, thirteen years ago, Murphy (1993) reported that the estimated losses was at $6 - $200 billion per annum, and this author believed that thirteen years later, the figure should have been much more higher than the figure first reported. With that; we need to understand the motivation of service sabotage, the antecedents and the role of moderator of behavioral control variables in relation to service sabotage behaviors, so as to provide a solution to the managers to minimize service sabotage incidents at workplace.

**1.4 *Objectives of Study***

The objectives of this study are:

1. To gauge the level of service sabotage among the frontline service staff.

2. To examine the effects of the Individual Attitudinal (Predictor) Variables of Attachment, Commitment, Involvement and Belief as the antecedents of service sabotage behavior.

3. To examine the role of Surveillance techniques and culture control initiatives as the moderator in the relationship between the Predictor Variables and service sabotage behavior.

**1.5 *Research Questions***

Based on the objectives formulated in subsection 1.4, this study will help to answer the following research questions:

1. Is Service Sabotage high among the frontline service staff?

2. To what extent do Individual Attitudinal Variables (Attachment, Commitment, Involvement and Belief) affect service sabotage?

3. Do Surveillance techniques and culture control initiatives moderate the relationship between the Individual Attitudinal (Predictor) Variables (Attachment, Commitment, Involvement and Belief) and service sabotage behavior?

**1.6 *Significance of Study***

The major contribution of this study can be seen from five areas: (1) Adopting Social Bonding Theory to understand the service sabotage behaviors in the hotel industry. (2)

Testing the four bonds in Social Bonding Theory. (3) Focus specifically on service sabotage. (4) Testing the relationship of Control Behavior variables to service sabotage behaviors. (5) Most of the research in Social Bonding Theory was conducted in the western world and this would be the first time it is conducted in the hotel industry and in the Malaysian context.

(1) This study is adopting the Social Bonding Theory to understand the service sabotage behaviors in the hotel industry. Previous study by Shamsudin (2003) had adopted the model recommended by Robinson and Bennett (1995) in understanding the antecedents of employee deviants in hotel industry. To the knowledge of this author, this study will be the first in adopting the Social Bonding Theory in understanding service sabotage in the hotel industry in Malaysia.

(2) This study is testing the four bonds in the Social Bonding Theory. Previous empirical studies (Hollinger & Clark, 1982; Sims, 2002) used only three bonds out of four and the last bond, Belief was not tested. In this study, all the four bonds will be used to test the service sabotage behaviors.

(3) This study focuses specifically on service sabotage. Previous researches had focused mainly on generic employee deviances, antecedents of employee deviant at workplace, and the various classifications of deviant behaviors (for instance, Peterson, 2002; Vardi & Weitz, 2002; Robinson & Greenberg, 1998; Bennett & Robinson, 1995, 2000; Harris & Ogbonna, 2002; Shamsudin, 2003). Most of the researches were generalized on the topic. To the knowledge of this author, none of the researches had operationalized the concept of service sabotage or conducted empirical studies in the context of the hotel industry. Harris and Ogbonna (2002) had conducted a field research in the hospitality industry and concluded with propositions but not empirical studies. Shamsudin (2003) had conducted field study in antecedences of employees' deviances in

the hotel industry but did not test the causal relationships of the behaviors and consequences of the behaviors. The finding of the current study will contribute to the empirical study and literature of service sabotage, especially in the Malaysian context.

(4) Testing the relationship of Control Behavior variables to service sabotage behaviors. In many instances, the blame of service sabotage will be on an individual employee or the culprit alone. However, through field interviews of Harris and Ogbonna, (2002) and Crino (1994), it was highlighted that the role of control features at workplace would have significant influence on the sabotage behaviors. When a company has the traceability capability, either through camera or software audit trail to detect or identify the culprit, together with strong enforcement rules and punishment guidelines; strong service culture, positive service climate and shared value that service sabotage is strictly forbidden in the company, the customary-public service sabotage incidences would be reduced dramatically. In this study, we are testing the important role of behavioral control such as surveillance technique and cultural control initiatives in reducing service sabotage, which to the knowledge of this author, have not been tested in any of the service sabotage researches so far.

(5) Although Social Bonding Theory has been tested in the western world (Hollinger, 1986; Sims, 2002; Stewart, 2003), it has not been tested in relation to service sabotage and the hotel industry in the Malaysian context. Service sabotage is still a new research area and therefore has relatively few empirical studies conducted thus far. To the knowledge of this author, so far there was no empirical research conducted using the Social Bonding Theory in understanding the behaviors of employees in the Malaysian context. This study hopes to contribute to the service sabotage literature, particularly surveillance techniques and culture control initiatives, in relation to the Malaysian context.

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*1.7    Scope of Study*

The unit of analysis of this study is the frontline and guest service related employees in the hotel industry in Malaysia. The unit of analysis will be selected from various hotels, mainly frontline staffs from Front office, Housekeeping, and Food & Beverage outlets.

The antecedents in this study are individual variables, namely attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. The moderators are surveillance techniques and culture control initiatives. The dependent variable is the service sabotage behavior. Data will be collected via questionnaire and statistical tools will be used to analyze and test the Hypotheses.

*1.8    Definitions of Key Terms*

The key terms used in this study are briefly defined below. However, they will be explained in greater detail in the review of literature and in the research design.

**Service sabotage behaviors** refers to a broad range of intentional actions and behaviors that purposefully against the normal behavioral standard and that in turn create negative effect on the service offered (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002). In this study, the author defines service sabotage as the intentional action or no action which violated the company's service norms; leading to negative effect on guest services and resulting in damages; either monetary or non-monetary losses to the company and, or guest.

In hotel industry, service sabotage also divided to Direct Service Sabotage and Indirect Service Sabotage. **Direct Service Sabotage** is intentional action against guests which violate the company's service norms and has direct negative impact on guest services example stealing guest's belongings; ignore the guest and rude to the guests.

Indirect Service Sabotage is intentional action against others but causes negative impact on guest services and guest suffered. Example sabotaging co-workers by all

applying medical leave at the same time, leaving co-worker working alone during heavy check-in, causing guest have to wait for long time.

### *The Individual Variables:*

**Attachment** refers to one's interest in others. Hirschi (1969) stated that people who were more attached to others, would more likely to follow society's norms. Here, we segregate attachment into three forms: affective towards immediate supervisor, company and peers. Affective towards immediate supervisor will deter employee from engaging in service sabotage so as to avoid putting the relationship into jeopardy. The close attachment to a company will lead to the strong liking and sense of belonging and will deter employee from engaging in service sabotage. The close attachment with peers will also bond staff to be similar with its peers.

**Commitment** refers to one's level of investment in conventional aspirations and acceptance of the legitimate means of achieving these goals (Stewart, 2002). Hirschi (1969) argued that individuals who build an investment in life, property and reputation are less likely to engage in criminal acts which will jeopardize their social position. In this study, this definition extends to staff valuing their job, in turn rendering them to be hardworking and dutiful in their responsibilities.

**Involvement** refers to the participation in conventional activities in that lead to socially valued success and status objectives (Stewart, 2003); and doesn't leave time to engage in delinquent or criminal acts. Hirschi (1969) believed that "idle hands are the devil's workshop". It is argued that employees who are busy with non-sabotage acts will not have time to plan for service sabotage. Employees who actively participate in any recreational activities organized by companies will be less likely to participate in service sabotage.

**Belief** refers to society's value system, and entails respect for law, people and the company which enforce such law. Hirschi (1969) claimed that people who live in common social setting share similar human values. If such beliefs are weakened, or absent, one is more likely to engage in deviance. Also, if an employee believes that the policy is unfair, this bond to society weakens and the likelihood of committing delinquent acts rises.

**Perceived Control** (the employees' perception of behavioral control improvised by organizations)**:**

**Surveillance technique** refers to techniques used for constant observation or monitoring of a place or process. It may be in the form of supervision or inspection. This is the key determinant of personalized, bureaucratic and output control (Child, 1984; Sewell, 1998 cited in Harris & Ogbonna, 2002).

**A culture control initiative** refers to the intervention mechanism, domination (Gabriel, 1999; Willmott, 1993; cited in Harris & Ogbonna, 2002) and culture of tracing and punishment system for the offender. The above two factors shared the common theme of behavioral control (Child 1984; Lebas & Weigenstein, 1986, as cited in Harris & Ogbonna, 2002).

## 1.9 *Summary and Organization of Chapters*

The remaining chapters in this study are organized as follows: Chapter 2 presents an overview of literature on service sabotage, antecedence of service sabotage, surveillance techniques, culture control initiatives, and leading to the formulation of the theoretical framework and hypotheses. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology of the study. Chapter 4 presents each of the techniques used and the result. Chapter 5 will discuss on the findings and conclusion.

# Chapter 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1    *Introduction*

This chapter reviewed previous studies on service sabotage, theories related, motivations, antecedents, and variables of service sabotage behaviors. These reviews would then form the basis for this study's theoretical framework and the hypotheses.

### 2.2    *Service sabotage*

Service sabotage has been defined by Harris & Ogbonna (2002) as a broad range of intentional actions and behaviors of employees that purposefully conflict with normative behavioral standards and that in turn created negative effect on the guest services.

There were many terms used by different researchers in deviance behaviors, such as Organizational Misbehavior (Vardi & Wiener, 1992, 1996); counter productive behavior (Fallon, Avis, Kudisch, Gornet, & Frost, 2000; Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002; Lau, Au, & Ho, 2003), anti-social behavior (Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997), workplace deviances (Robinson & Bennett, 1995, 1997), workplace aggression (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Folger & Baron, 1996), organizational retaliation behaviors (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), non-compliant behavior (Puffer, 1987), sabotage (Taylor & Walton, 1971) etc.

Generally, employee deviance has been defined as "voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well being of an organization, its members, or both" (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Sabotage is an act of rule breaking where employee was conscious of such rule breaking or did

nothing towards the destruction of work environment (Taylor & Walton, 1971). Giacalone and Greenberg, (1997) defined antisocial behavior as employee embraces with any intentional and harmful action. Sabotage varies between active destruction (Brown, 1977) and the disablement of production (Taylor & Walton, 1971).

Two major dimensions of employee deviance have been suggested: property deviance and production deviance (Hollinger, 1986; Hollinger & Clark, 1982; Robbinson & Bennett, 1995; Szwajkawski, 1989; Shamsudin, 2003). Property deviance included embezzlement, theft, fraud, vandalism and sabotage. Production deviance included wasting resources, working slowly, taking excessive breaks, leaving early, and deliberately under performing. In addition to property and production deviance, political deviance and personal aggression have also been proposed as categories of employee deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Political deviance includes gossiping, favoritism, and blaming; and personal aggression includes verbal and physical abuse, and sexual harassment (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). This model is very frequently used by researchers.

Taylor and Walton (1971) found that when employees wanted to reduce dissatisfaction, tension and frustration, they will go through sabotaging. The differences of service sabotage with other types of sabotage are:

(1) The act is intentional, which may even been properly planned prior to the incident, with an intention to cause negative effect in guest services.

(2) The acts have violated the service norm or customer's service culture of the company.

(3) The acts involved interaction with guest and routine services offered to the guest, for example, in the restaurant, the food for the host came 30 minutes after all

his guests had finished theirs; concierge staff kept the guest's parcel and delivered to rooms only after a few enquiries from guest, etc.

(4) Causing negative guest service, discomfort, dissatisfaction, losses, damages or inconveniences to the guest and further disrupt guest's original plan. For example, purposely dropping the guest's ring into garbage bag; purposely loading guest's luggage into another tour bus; purposely leading the guest to sit on the chair with tomato ketchup; purposely delaying the luggage collection from rooms knowing very well that the guest is in a hurry to catch a flight;

(5) The acts will cause damages or losses to companies either tangible (in monetary form) or intangible (such as badwill and reputation). For example, casually informing guest that someone had committed suicide in the room he is currently staying; informing guest not to come out from their rooms should they hear any commotion at the corridor because the hotel is a popular place for a lot of mistresses and gangsters.

In this study, service sabotage is defined as intentional action or no action which has violated the company's service norms, leading to negative effect on guest services and resulting in damages; either monetary or non-monetary losses to company and, or guest.

## 2.3     *Theory Associated with Service Sabotage*

### 2.3.1  *Social Bonding Theory*

Social Bonding Theory is a theory which attempts to explain why individuals choose to conform to conventional norms. Hirschi (1969) proposed that there were four important social bonds, namely attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. The greater the social bond, the greater the likelihood of conformity to societal

expectations. This theory was often used by sociologists and criminologists to better explain deviance and criminality.

In his work, Hirschi (1969) focused on juvenile delinquency and he operationally defined delinquency as theft, vandalism, and battery (physical aggression). The delinquent behaviors which Hirschi (1969) described were similar to the employee deviance behaviors included in the literature. The differences were in the age and role of the subject in question. Hollinger (1986) and Sims (2002) have applied Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory to better explain employee deviance and ethical rule breaking.

The similarities in behavior led this author to believe that the social bonding model which was used to understand juvenile delinquency could also be used to understand employee service sabotage behavior. Hence in this study, Social Bonding Theory was adopted.

## 2.4    *Motivations of service sabotage*

Motivation is the set of forces that lead employee to behave in particular ways (Moorhead & Griffin, 1995). Possible employee sabotage motives were gathered through published examples (Crino, 1994), field research by other researchers (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002; Shamsudin, 2003) and discussions with a few Human Resources personnel and chief security officers in the hotel industry.

(1)    To highlight the irregularities (Crino, 1994).

Some employees might believe that the guest, the firm was engaging in an immoral or wrongful act and that they had the responsibility to bring those incidences to light. For example, the staff had purposely

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checked-in guest into room occupied by an old guest staying with his young mistress.

(2) To establish personal worth over others, or to be the center of attention. Employee trying to gain entry and status in the group culture of "problematic" and trying to be rude and embarrassed the guest, so as to meet peers' acceptance.

(3) To gain revenge against management company or co-workers. When the management or supervisor violated their promises, norms or damaged employee's social identity, it may trigger employee to sabotage (Bies & Tripp, 1998).

(4) To have an impact in the bureaucracy. The employees purposely slow down their work by performing all the steps in their work example ask the guest to write down all information in the registration cards; at restaurant, waiter taking orders and slowly repeat the orders few times etc.

(5) To satisfy a need to destroy, to seek thrills.

(6) To avoid responsibility for failure, or to avoid work. Employee purposely did not maintain the equipment, overload the equipment causing breakdown and conveniently convince others to conspire to avoid work. For example, the bellman purposely neglected charging the buggy battery and hence no need to pick-up or deliver luggage and conveniently leave the job to next shift staff.

(7) For personal gain. For example, the front office staff purposely slowed down the checking out process, closing of shift, in order to claim overtime or other form of compensation.

(8)     To vent personal anger created by non-work problems and frustrations.

The motive for service sabotage varies and the consequences of service sabotage would be very troublesome and expensive for the company (Crino, 1994). Since there is no valid statistics to determine how widespread service sabotage is, it has attracted the attention of business and academic researchers to study the antecedences of service sabotage.

## 2.5     *Antecedents of Service Sabotage*

This study has adopted Hirschi's (1969) Social Bonding Theory to understand the employees' behavior in service sabotage. There were four social bonds, namely attachment, commitment, involvement and belief.

### 2.5.1   *Attachment.*

Hirschi (1969) stated that people who were more attached to others would more likely to follow society's norms. The primary attachments and interactions were with the parents, closely followed by the attachment to peers, supervisor, religious leaders, and other members of a community. Attachment could be seen when someone was sensitive to the opinion of others concerning their behavior. As the employee became more attached to others, it was very unlikely that he or she would sabotage.

### 2.5.2.   *Commitment.*

Hirschi (1969) described commitment as the "rational component in conformity". It referred to the fear of law-breaking behavior. When one considered committing deviance, or criminal behavior, one must consider the risk of losing the possessions,

reputations, and opportunities. Commitment also include financial commitment, such as financial loan with the bank, children education funding responsibility which would also deter employee in committing sabotaging acts or violate society's norms. Hollinger (1986) suggested that the desire to remain with organization (affective commitment) and the needs for financial and security well being to continue with the organization (Meyer et al., 1989) could be used as a measure of commitment. Sims (2002) suggested that organization tenure might be a good measure for commitment as employee with longer service would stand a better opportunity in promotion, higher retirement benefit, higher salary, and better vacation benefit.

### 2.5.3. Involvement.

Hirschi (1969) explained involvement as participation in conventional activities such as recreational activities which would keep one too preoccupied to allow one the indulgences of sabotaging behavior. The thought of "idle hands are the devil's workshop" was the reason. Hollinger (1986) and Sims (2002) had used organization tenure as a measurement of involvement. Even though both findings were positive, Sims was of the opinion that employee with shorter length of tenure might not have more free time than employee with longer length of tenure, and hence involved in sabotaging behaviors. In this study, the author would use the employee participation in recreation activities organized by the company and involvement in social activities as a measure.

### 2.5.4. Belief

Hirschi (1969) explained that belief dealt with assents to a society's value system. It entailed respect for laws, the people and institutions which enforced such laws. An

employee would more likely to conform to social norms when he believed in them. If such belief was weakened, or employee believed that the laws were unfair, then it would be very likely that employee might be engaged in sabotaging acts. Hirschi recognized that individuals vary in the depth and magnitude of their belief, and this variation was reliant upon the degree of attachment to systems representing the beliefs in question.

## 2.6    Moderating Variables

This referred to employees' perception of control that is improvised by the organization. There are two types as follows:

## 2.6.1    Surveillance technique

This referred to techniques used for constant observation or monitoring of a place or process. It may be in the form of supervision or inspection. This would be the key determinant of personalized, bureaucratic and output control (Child, 1984; Sewell, 1998 as cited in Harris & Ogbonna, 2002). Frontline employees are surprisingly aware of surveillance system used by management, which attempts to control workplace behavior. Consequently, the present of surveillance systems served as a powerful influence on service sabotage (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002). With that Harris and Ogbonna (2002) in their proposition 10, they have indicated that "*the greater the extent and effectiveness of surveillance systems, the lower the level of service sabotage and the greater the likelihood that such behaviors are covert*".

### 2.6.2 Culture Control Initiatives

Cultural control initiatives refers to consideration and extended efforts at culture management appears to impede the development or continuation of counter or orthogonal subculture norms (Siehl & Martin, 1984, as cited in Harris & Ogbonna, 2002). This referred to the intervention mechanism, domination (Gabriel, 1999; Willmott, 1993; as cited in Harris & Ogbonna, 2002) and culture of tracing and punishment system for the offender. When employee perceived that management has the capability to trace and will not hesitate to take necessary action, the occurrence of sabotage will be reduced (Leap & Crino, 1993). Harris and Ogbonna (2002) have indicated in their proposition 11 that "*the greater the sophistication and effectiveness of culture control initiatives and interventions, the lower the level of service sabotage and the lower the likelihood that such behaviors become routine and normalized*"

The above two factors shared the common theme of behavioral control (Child 1984; Lebas & Weigenstein, 1986; as cited in Harris & Ogbonna, 2002).

### 2.7 Theoretical Framework

Based on the discussion in the literature review with regards to the relationships between the variables, the conceptual framework for this study is depicted in Figure 2.1.
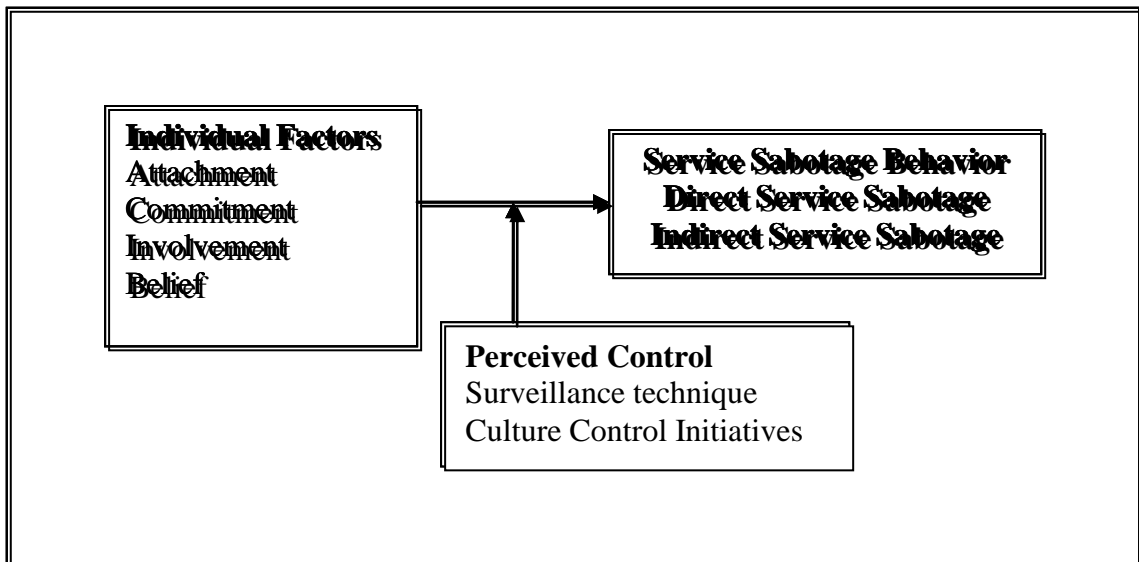
*Figure 2.1*. **Research Framework**

## 2.8    *Hypotheses*

Based on the theoretical framework (Figure 2.1), the hypotheses for this study would be grouped into three major sections. The first section represents the relationship between Individual factors (attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief) and service sabotage behavior (Direct Service Sabotage and Indirect Service Sabotage). The second section represents the perceived control which moderates the relationship between individual and service sabotage behavior. The third section relates service sabotage behavior.

Hirschi (1969) indicated that attachment is one's interest to others. The close attachment, affection to one's immediate supervisor, organization and co-workers will deter staff in engaging service sabotage as to prevent putting the relationship into jeopardy.

Commitment refers to a sense of belonging, a sense of loyalty to organization and responsibility to one's job. Normally, one will take extra effort to follow through and ensure all operations are running smoothly.

Involvement refers to participation in conventional organizational activities such as positive recreation activities and involvement in charitable organization, sport associations, political party and social community work etc. By occupying their free time with various types of activities, one will not have time to think of service sabotage. Involvement also refers to one's sense of involvement in the organization decision making process by contributing suggestions, recommendation and ideas to superior or top management.

Belief refers to the existence of a common value system within the society where one trusts and has fate that the existing regulations, policies have played the important role in maintaining the fair system.

*H1:*    *The higher the degree of Attachment felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of service sabotage behavior.*

    *H1a:*   *The higher the degree of Attachment felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of Direct Service Sabotage behavior.*

    *H1b:*   *The higher the degree of Attachment felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of Indirect Service Sabotage behavior.*

*H2:*    *The higher the degree of Commitment felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of service sabotage behavior.*

    *H2a:*   *The higher the degree of Commitment felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of Direct Service Sabotage behavior.*

    *H2b:*   *The higher the degree of Commitment felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of Indirect Service Sabotage behavior.*

*H3:*    *The higher the degree of Involvement felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of service sabotage behavior.*

*H3a:   The higher the degree of Involvement felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of Direct Service Sabotage behavior.*

*H3b:   The higher the degree of Involvement felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of Indirect Service Sabotage behavior.*

*H4:   The higher the degree of Belief felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of service sabotage behavior.*

*H4a:   The higher the degree of Belief felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of Direct Service Sabotage behavior.*

*H4b:   The higher the degree of Belief felt by an individual, the lower will be the level of Indirect Service Sabotage behavior.*

Perceived control factor can be subdivided to surveillance technique and cultural control initiatives (Child 1984; Lebas & Weigenstein, 1986; as cited in Harris & Ogbonna, 2002). Hollinger and Clark (1983) found that employees perceiving a low risk of detection for acts of employee theft were more likely to steal from their employers. When the control factors are strong, such as closed supervision, frequent interaction between supervisor and co-workers; management has strong traceable ability and strict punishment system, the employees' service sabotage ratios will reduce (Crino, 1994).

*H5:   The higher the influence of Attachment, the lower the Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

*H5a: The higher the influence of Attachment, the lower the Direct Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

*H5b: The higher the influence of Attachment, the lower the Indirect Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

*H6: The higher the influence of Commitment, the lower the Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

*H6a: The higher the influence of Commitment, the lower the Direct Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

*H6b: The higher the influence of Commitment, the lower the Indirect Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

*H7: The higher the influence of Involvement, the lower the Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

*H7a: The higher the influence of Involvement, the lower the Direct Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

*H7b: The higher the influence of Involvement, the lower the Indirect Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

*H8: The higher the influence of Belief, the lower the Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

*H8a: The higher the influence of Belief, the lower the Direct Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

*H8b: The higher the influence of Belief, the lower the Indirect Service Sabotage under Perceived Effective Control.*

## 2.9    Summary

In short, by adopting the framework as illustrated in Figure 2.1 with the underpinning Social Bonding Theory that explains the four individual factors and the Control mechanism as the moderator, the purpose of this study is to investigate whether the use of Social Bonding Theory can predict the individual service sabotage behavior of the front liners' service behavior.