

DOES SUPERVISOR SUPPORT ACROSS ETHNICITIES MATTER? THE MEDIATION ROLE OF PERCEIVED COWORKER DISCRIMINATION AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF JOB TENURE

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ABSTRACT

Frontline employees strongly influence the companies' performance as they directly deal with the customers. This study explores the contribution of supervisor support to the foreign subordinates' perceived coworker discrimination and job satisfaction. Data were collected from 359 Thai who foreign workers are working as frontline employees in non-Thai companies and joining with non-Thai coworkers and supervisors. Partial least square structural equation modeling was used in data analysis. The results supported the positive relationship between non-Thai supervisor support and Thai subordinates' job satisfaction. Moreover, the negative effect of non-Thai supervisor support on the perceived coworker discrimination was stronger for Thai subordinates with longer job tenure. In addition, the perceived coworker discrimination was found to partially mediate the effect of non-Thai supervisor support on Thai subordinates' job satisfaction. The results provide further empirical evidence regarding the contribution of supervisor support across ethnicities. In addition, this study provides practical contributions to the companies that hire foreigners, particularly as frontline employees.

Keywords: Supervisor Support, Perceived Coworker Discrimination, Job Satisfaction, Frontline Employee, Across Ethnicities

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact across the globe. Once the outbreak is effectively handled, the economy should be gradually restored, and people should start living their life again. The air transport industry has driven the world for both personal and business purposes and therefore, it would play a vital role to recover the world economy. Previous study showed that there is a positive relationship between air transport industry performance and economic growth (Baltaci, Sekmen & Akbulut, 2015). International Air Transport Association (IATA) pointed out that the air transport industry had played a significant role in world GDP, world trade, and employment. Data from International Air transport Association (2021) showed that the air transport industry not only hired directly almost three million positions but also indirectly affect the hiring in the supply chain by approximately 70 million positions for the last 5 years. Although the air transport industry is in crisis due to the COVID-pandemic, the industry is now ready to restart and will be revived shortly.

Numbers of companies in the air transport industry were established to respond to the market demands and that leads to intense competition. Each company, therefore, has tried to expand its international network with the expectation that it would gain more business opportunities. Customers from all over the world carry various preferences and expectations due to their different cultures, value, lifestyle, belief, etc. Empirical evidence shows that customers' satisfaction strongly influences their repurchase intentions (Dharmawan & Sitio, 2020); which in turn, promote customer's loyalty (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2017). Accordingly, several companies have recruited foreign workforce as frontline employees with the notion that they are more

understanding and familiar with the customers from their own countries. They know what those customers truly need therefore they should be able to personalize their services to best suit those needs. The diverse workforces are also promoting the service recovery performance (Oentoro, 2019) and the companies' competitive advantage (Schaffer & Riordan, 2013). On the other hand, foreign employees are strangers to local employees due to their different backgrounds, beliefs, cultures, thoughts, personalities, and behaviors. These differences not only discourage relationship building but also enhance the favoritism (Schaffer & Riordan, 2013). Moreover, foreign employees seem to have lower status than local employees in working society (Byford & Wong, 2016). Based on the social barrier theory, differences in people such as age, gender, and ethnicities could enhance the inequalities in society. In this study, differences in ethnicities between local and foreign employees could serve as a barrier that promotes the feeling of segregation and discrimination (Chou & Choi, 2011), which in turn, could diminish job satisfaction (Jalain, 2020). The companies should take this matter into account as it could lower the frontline employees' performance. Hence, it is necessary for the company to develop a mechanism that could lower this barrier.

This study focuses on the benefits of social support; that is supervisor support. Particularly, this study focuses on the foreign employees in the context of Thai people who work as frontline employees with non-Thai companies in the air transport industry and join a team comprising of non-Thai coworkers and supervisors. Support from non-Thai supervisors could be a job resource that helps Thai employees to handle the perception of being discriminated against by coworker. Although supervisor support has been studied in many areas; for instance, the supervisor support to female employees (Kim, Lee & Sung, 2013), the supervisor support to elderly employees (Chou & Choi, 2011), more evidence on the supervisor support across ethnicities needs to be explored. The purpose of this study is to provide more empirical evidence that support from non-Thai supervisors could lessen the perception of being discriminated against while promoting job satisfaction in Thai subordinates when working in non-Thai companies. This will provide more support to social barrier theory in terms of ethnic diversities. The study will also provide more empirical evidence on Job Demands-Resources by focusing on the supervisor support to foreign subordinates. The results will also provide some guidelines for the management of companies that hired foreigners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Supervisor Support

Supervisors work closely with their subordinates and are intermediaries between the company and their subordinates. They communicate the company's targets and policies to their subordinates. The favorable relationship between supervisors and subordinates can enhance the positive working attitudes (Kim et al., 2013). Supervisor support refers to the extent to which subordinates perceive how their supervisors recognize and attend to their work and personal well-being (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2017); and it is the source of social support (Boz, Martínez & Munduate, 2009). Supervisors, themselves, influence the subordinates' perception of how strongly their supervisors support those (Arshadi & Hayavi, 2013). The results from previous researches showed that supervisor support tends to enhance the level of job autonomy (Vera Martínez, Lorente & Chambel, 2016), work engagement (Mekhum & Jermstittiparsen, 2019; Vera et al., 2016), organizational commitment (Kidd & Smewing, 2001), while lessening the level of stress (Babin & Boles, 1996), job burnout (Charoensukmongkol et al., 2016), emotional exhaustion (Charoensukmongkol & Phungsoonthorn, 2020), and perception of uncertainties.

Perceived Coworker Discrimination

Perception of discrimination in the workplace occurred when employees perceive that they have been treated differently or improperly due to their personal characteristics or membership status (Ensher, Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001; Schaffer & Riordan, 2013). Discrimination plays a vital role in entire human resource management starting from planning, recruitment, and performance evaluation to the development and relations (Ensher et al., 2001). Being treated badly enhances the feeling of being an alien and hostility, which in turn, promotes unfavorable work- and personal-related outcomes. This includes low performance, low organizational commitment, low career commitment, and low job satisfaction; as well as anxiety, stress, and sickness (Al Ramiah et al., 2010; Ensher et al., 2001; Williams & Mohammed, 2009).

Overall Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to how delightful employees feel with their job (Brough & Frame, 2004). It is an extent to which how employees perceive their jobs and working environments (Ellickson & Logsdon, 2002). Favorable job conditions and supportive working environments would enhance job satisfaction (Blando, 2019; Eisenberger et al., 1997), for example, goal clarification (Smerek & Peterson, 2007), interruptions (Jermstittiparsert et al., 2021), career advancement opportunities (Smerek & Peterson, 2007), and support from management (Smerek & Peterson, 2007). Employees who are satisfied with their job tend to have higher level of organizational commitment (Moonsri, 2018), better job performance and finally promote the company's performance (Winarto & Chalidyanto, 2020). On the other hand, when employees are less satisfied with their job, they are more likely to ignore the company's goals and objectives; hence, they tend to have lower job performance and more intention to leave the company (Ensher et al., 2001; Febrianti, Suharto & Wachyudi, 2020; Wazir & Jan, 2020).

Contribution of Supervisor Support to Perceived Coworker Discrimination and Job Satisfaction

This study proposes that support of non-Thai supervisors tends to help Thai subordinates lessen the level of perceived coworker discrimination while enhancing the level of job satisfaction when working in non-Thai companies. Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theoretically supports the contribution of supervisor support. It proposes two work-related factors; job demands and job resources. Job demands reflect the work settings that employees must dedicate both physical and/or mental efforts to achieve their job. Many researchers have found evidence showing that workplace discrimination was taken place when there are differences in ages (Chou & Choi, 2011; Kerdpitak & Jermstittiparsert, 2020; Snape & Redman, 2003), gender (Jalain, 2020; Ono et al., 2020; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2017), ethnicities (Canache et al., 2014; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2017; Schaffer & Riordan, 2013; Williams & Mohammed, 2009), and physical disabilities (Mattila & Papageorgiou, 2017). Due to the differences in ethnicities and the lower status in the workplace (Byford & Wong, 2016), foreign employees tend to be susceptible to discrimination against (Schaffer & Riordan, 2013); and that demands them to overcome this social barrier. Job resources reflect work settings that help employees to handle the job demands (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004; Demerouti et al., 2001). Support from supervisors could help employees to weaken the feeling of being unfairly treated (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2017), lower the perception of being threatened and harassed while enhancing the feeling of being protected (Chamberlain et al., 2008). Hence, non-Thai supervisor support could serve as a resource for Thai employees to overcome the perceived coworker discrimination when working

with the non-Thai company. The influence of supervisor support on perceived discrimination is supported by the study of Paustian-Underdahl, et al., (2017) who found that supervisor support can diminish perceived discrimination in terms of ethnic diversities.

Furthermore, support from supervisors raises an awareness that their superior will be there and get their back when they face any problems; that enhances the subordinates to enjoy their work (Winarto & Chalidyanto, 2020). Considering that support from the supervisor promotes a positive working environment, it is likely to increase the level of subordinates' job satisfaction. Previous researchers have found that supervisor support has an influence on job satisfaction (Babin & Boles, 1996; Brough & Frame, 2004; Smerek & Peterson, 2007; Winarto & Chalidyanto, 2020). Based on the above supported, these hypotheses are proposed:

- H1 The level of non-Thai supervisor support is negatively related to Thai subordinates' perception level of being discriminated against by coworker*
- H2 The level of non-Thai supervisor support is positively related to the level of Thai subordinates' job satisfaction.*

In addition to the direct relationship between non-Thai supervisor support and Thai subordinates' job satisfaction, this study examines the mediating role of perceived coworker discrimination. Ensher, et al., (2001) pointed out that employees who perceived discrimination in the workplace tend to have less job satisfaction. The effect of perceived discrimination on job satisfaction is supported by the study of Jalain (2020) who found that workers who experienced workplace discrimination tend to have less job satisfaction. When employees perceive that they are treated improperly, they feel lonely and stressed (Williams & Mohammed, 2009); thus, job satisfaction is difficult to be developed when discrimination is taking place in the workplace. On the other hand, when employees believe that they are being treated fairly, they are less likely to raise grievances (Ensher et al., 2001); therefore, job satisfaction is more likely to be developed. Hence, while this study proposes that support from the non-Thai supervisor is positively related to the level of Thai subordinates' job satisfaction, this relationship might be mediated by the perceived coworker discrimination. This leads to

- H3 Perceived coworker discrimination positively mediates the relationship between non-Thai supervisor support and Thai subordinates' job satisfaction.*

Moderating Effect of Job Tenure

This study predicts that Thai employees with longer job tenure tend to perceive higher level of coworker discrimination. Job tenure refers to the number of service years that employees have worked for the current company. De Coster, Estes & Mueller (1999) found that employees with longer job tenure tend to face more negative behaviors from coworkers. This study expects that job tenure not only positively relates to the perceived coworker discrimination, but also enriches the negative relationship between non-Thai supervisor support and perceived coworker discrimination. Uggen & Blackstone (2004) pointed out that employees with lower status in accordance with the company's culture but having higher authority are more likely to be harassed. With longer service years, Thai employees could get promotions becoming the senior level. Promotion allows Thai employees to have more authority in the workplace, while their coworkers tend not to accept that they are under Thai employees' authority. Moreover, they feel that their positions have been taken (Byford & Wong, 2016). Hence, the effect of non-Thai supervisor support on the perceived coworker discrimination may be stronger for Thai employees with longer job tenure. While new Thai employees have both lower status and authority than their coworkers as well as they have been working together for a shorter period, the likelihood of

favoritism may be lower compared to Thai employees who have worked longer. Therefore, the effect of non-Thai supervisor support on the perceived coworker discrimination may be less strong for Thai employees with shorter job tenure. This leads to the following hypotheses:

- H4 Thai employees' job tenure is positively related to their level of perceived coworker discrimination.*
H5 Thai employees' Job tenure moderates the negative relationship between the level of non-Thai supervisor support and the Thai subordinates' perceived coworker discrimination. The effect of non-Thai supervisor support on the Thai subordinates' perceived coworker discrimination is stronger for Thai subordinates with longer job tenure.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

The sample of this study is the Thai worker as foreign employees working with non-Thai companies in the air transport industry whose position is a frontline employee and having both non-Thai coworkers and supervisors in the team. Frontline employees whose duties are directly dealing with customers including sales and ticketing staff, lost and found staff, check-in staff, in-flight attendant, customer services staff, sales staff, etc. Snowball sampling was used in collecting the data. The participants were requested to recommend whom they may know that are fallen into the sample. Finally, 359 questionnaires were usable for the analysis. The characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS	
Demographic factors	Descriptive statistics
Gender	Female: 315 (87.99)
	Male: 43 (12.01)
Marital Status	Single: 300 (83.80)
	Married: 58 (16.20)
Working experience in host country	Min: 0
	Max: 5
	Mean: 0.06
	Standard deviation: 0.47
Job tenure (years)	Min: 1
	Max: 26
	Mean: 7.96
	Standard deviation: 6.23
Host country language proficiency	Very poor: 99 (27.65%)
	Poor: 134 (37.43%)
	Fair: 86 (24.02%)
	Good: 31 (8.66%)
	Very good: 8 (2.24%)

A self-administered questionnaire survey was used to collect data in this study. All reachable samples were invited to participate in the survey data collection on their consent, conforming to ethical consideration for justice. Participation is voluntary. According to the ethical consideration of respect for the person, the participant information sheet was first shown to all participants. It explains why they are invited to this study with the background, objectives,

methodology, risk, and contributions of the study. It also guarantees that how the collected data will be treated confidentially and kept anonymous. Only the results from the total sample analysis will be reported, not the individual result. Moreover, no real identity of the participants will be tracked. Furthermore, no third party can identify their identity or have access to them via their responses. Later, the informed consent statement will be shown to all participants. The participants have the right not to participate in the data collection. Although they agree to fill the questionnaire, they could stop filling the questionnaires at any time. They can also skip any questions that they are uncomfortable to answer. If they do not agree to participate or stop filling the questionnaire at any time, their data will not be included in the study. The data files of this study will be kept in accordance with the ethical consideration for beneficence/non-maleficence. They will be kept for 3 years and then completely deleted. The data collection process and tool have been approved by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) with the reference number KUREC-SS63/244.

Measures

There are two main sections in the questionnaire. The first section is about the demographic and work-related characteristics. To ensure that the participants are fallen into the sample of this study, they were asked whether or not they are working as frontline employees with non-Thai companies in the air transport industry and having both non-Thai coworkers and supervisors. The second section is asking respondents to evaluate the level of non-Thai supervisor support, perception of non-Thai coworker discrimination, and their job satisfaction.

The measurement of supervisor support was adopted from Patterson, et al., (2005). The scale consists of 5 items and is measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The measurement of perceived coworker discrimination was adopted from Sanchez & Brock (1996). The scale consists of 10 items and is measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The measurement of overall job satisfaction was derived from the following questions, “Overall, you are satisfied with your job” and “What is your level of overall satisfaction with your job?” (Ellickson & Logsdon, 2002). The items are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (none) to 5 (a lot).

Job Tenure, the moderating variable, was measured by the number of service years that they have worked for the current company.

Control Variables

Some personal and work characteristics that may have an influence on the perceived coworker discrimination and job satisfaction were added as control variables. The variables included gender, host country working experience, and host language proficiency. Gender was measured as a dummy variable (female=0, male=1). Host country working experience was measured by the number of years that participant had worked in the host country of the current company before. Host country language proficiency was measured by how fluently that participant can communicate the formal language used by the company and was measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good).

Estimation Method

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (Warp PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the proposed hypotheses. PLS can do predictions on several dependent variables from a set of one

or more independent variables. In addition, PLS has been designed to handle non-normally distributed data (Garson, 2016). Moreover, PLS has been employed in various research areas such as total quality management (Imran et al., 2018), information system (Chin, Marcolin & Newsted, 2003). Warp PLS version 7.0 was used to perform the analysis in this study.

RESULTS

The validity and reliability tests were administered to all main variables; supervisor support, perceived coworker discrimination, and job satisfaction before estimating the PLS model. Convergent validity was done using factor loadings and showed that all variables had loading greater than 0.5, which is an acceptable level as recommended by Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena (2012). The factor loadings are shown in table 2. Discriminant validity was done by comparing the square root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with its correlation to other variables. The result demonstrated that the square root of AVE of each variable was higher than its correlation to other variables, which is satisfactory as recommended by Fornell & Larcker (1981). The validity results were shown in Table 3.

Table 2			
FACTOR LOADINGS			
	Supervisor Support (SS)	Perceived Coworker Discrimination (PerDisc)	Job Satisfaction(JSat)
SS1	-0.858	0.013	-0.057
SS2	-0.924	0.017	-0.007
SS3	-0.902	-0.022	0
SS4	-0.919	-0.013	0.051
SS5	-0.914	0.005	0.01
PerDisc1	-0.031	-0.635	0.088
PerDisc2	0.051	-0.658	0.085
PerDisc3	0.054	-0.706	0.113
PerDisc4	0.13	-0.747	-0.024
PerDisc5	-0.031	-0.786	-0.03
PerDisc6	-0.051	-0.787	-0.145
PerDisc7	-0.081	-0.854	-0.017
PerDisc8	0.022	-0.762	-0.046
PerDisc9	-0.04	-0.847	-0.026
PerDisc10	0	-0.821	0.043
JSat1	0.034	0.021	-0.93
JSat2	-0.034	-0.021	-0.93

Furthermore, a full collinearity Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test was performed to confirm that a multicollinearity problem was not a serious problem. The result showed that the VIF values of all variables ranged from 1.043 to 1.535. None of them exceeded 3.3 which is the maximum threshold suggested by Kock (2017). The VIF values were presented in table 4. The normality was tested showing that only one variable was normalized, which affirms that PLS is proper for this study. In addition, the ten model-fit indices, shown in table 5, ensure that the research model has a satisfactory quality level. The results from the PLS analysis are shown in Figure 1.

Table 3 CORRELATION AMONG VARIABLES AND SQUARE ROOT OF AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED									
Variables	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	Composite Reliability coefficient	SS	PerDisc	JSat	Gender	WExp	Tenure	Lang
SS	0.944	0.957	-0.904	-0.489***	0.516** *	-0.027	0.015	-0.138**	-0.012
PerDisc	0.919	0.933		-0.764	-.470***	0.065	0.012	0.184** *	.128*
Jsat	0.843	0.927			-0.93	-0.072	-0.031	0.223** *	-0.078
Gender	n/a	n/a				-1	-0.053	0.186** *	0.021
WExp	n/a	n/a					-1	-0.037	0.088
Tenure	n/a	n/a						-1	-0.011
Lang	n/a	n/a							-1

Notes:

- ***p<0.001, **p<0.1, *p<0.05
- Square roots of average variance extracted of latent variables are shown in parentheses.
- SS=Supervisor Support, PerDisc=Perceived Coworker Discrimination, JSat=Job Satisfaction, WExp=Host Country Working Experience, Lang=Host Country Language Proficiency

Table 4 VIF VALUES						
SS	PerDisc	JSat	Tenure	Gender	WExp	Lang
1.535	1.494	1.53	1.106	1.043	1.018	1.043

Table 5 MODEL FIT INDICES		
Model fit indices	Coefficient	Result
Average path coefficient (APC)	0.142***	Significant
Average R-square (ARS)	0.314***	Significant
Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)	0.302***	Significant
Average variance inflation factor (AVIF)	1.088	Ideal
Average full variance inflation factor (AFVIF)	1.228	Ideal
Tenenhaus GoF index (GoF)	0.534	Large
Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)	1	Ideal
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)	1	Ideal
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	0.917	Acceptable
Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)	1	Acceptable

Notes: ***p<0.001

Hypothesis 1 proposed that the level of non-Thai supervisor support is negatively related to the Thai subordinates' level of perceived coworker discrimination. The results showed that there is a significantly negative relationship between these two variables ($\beta=-0.462$, $p<0.001$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that the level of non-Thai supervisor support is positively related to the level of Thai subordinates' job satisfaction. The results showed that there is a significantly positive relationship between these two variables ($\beta=0.372$, $p<0.001$). Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported.

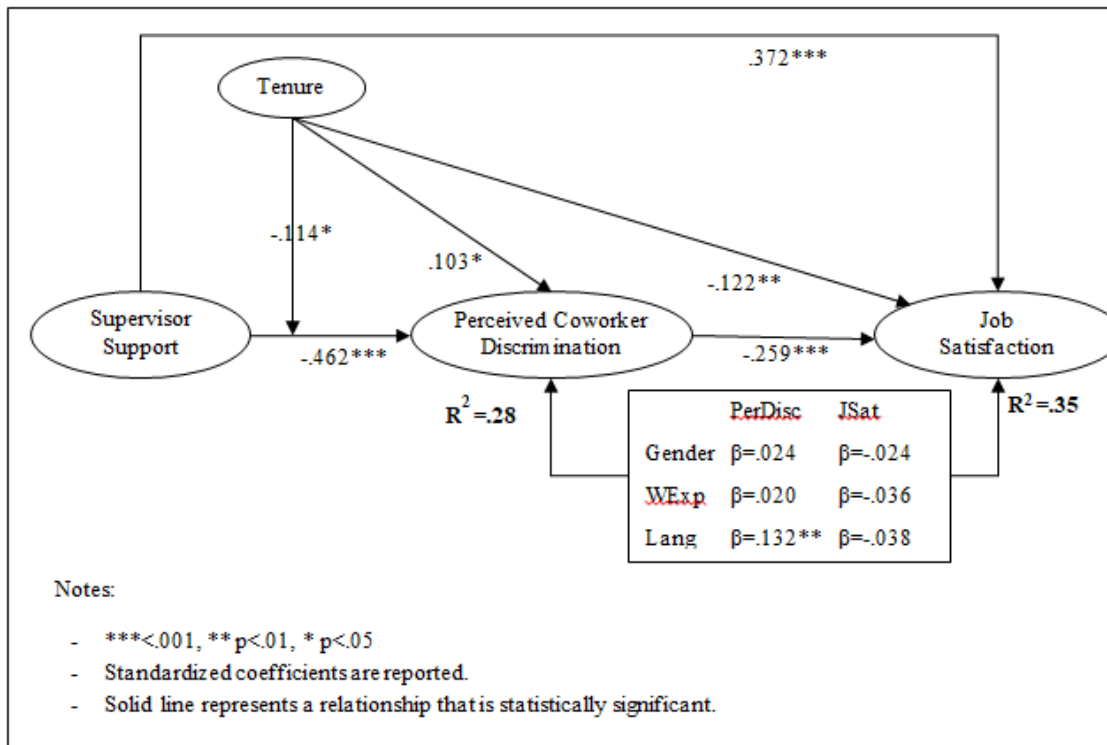


FIGURE 1
PLS RESULTS

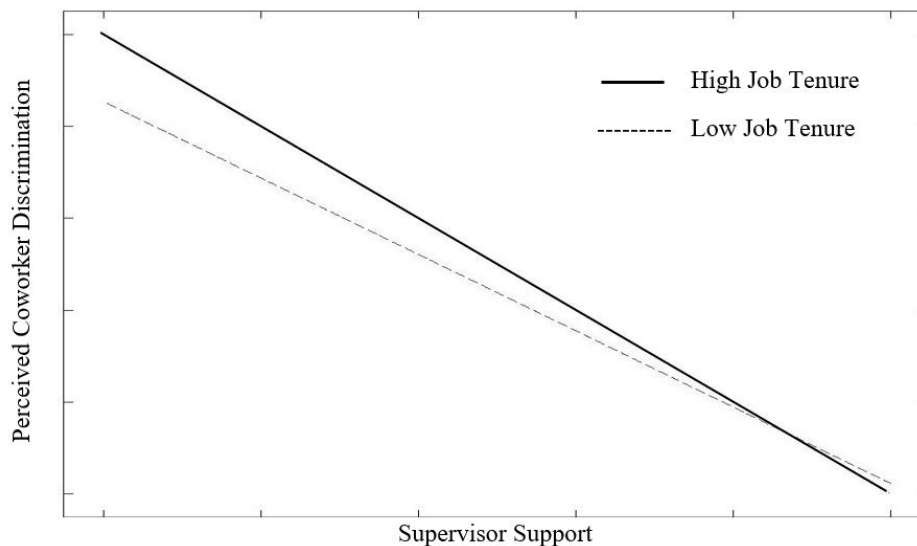


FIGURE 2
MODERATING EFFECT

Hypothesis 3 proposed that the perceived coworker discrimination positively mediates the relationship between non-Thai supervisor support and Thai subordinates' job satisfaction. The Sobel test was used to determine the mediating effect. The result showed that perceived coworker discrimination significantly mediates the effect of non-Thai supervisor support on Thai subordinates' job satisfaction ($t=3.871$, $p<0.001$). Therefore, hypothesis 3 was supported.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that Thai employees' job tenure is positively related to the level of their perceived coworker discrimination. The results supported that there is a significantly positive relationship between these two variables ($\beta=0.103$, $p=0.012$). Therefore, hypothesis 4 was supported.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that Thai employees' job tenure negatively moderates the negative relationship between non-Thai supervisor support and the Thai subordinates' perceived coworker discrimination. The results supported the negative moderation of the job tenure ($\beta=-0.114$, $p=0.011$). Therefore, hypothesis 5 was supported.

Apart from the relationships of the main hypotheses proposed, the relationships of the control variables were found as follows. Perceived coworker discrimination was positively related to gender ($\beta=0.024$, $p=0.334$), host country working experience ($\beta=0.020$, $p=0.300$), and host country language proficiency ($\beta=0.132$, $p=0.005$). However, only host country language proficiency was significantly related to perceived coworker discrimination. Furthermore, job satisfaction was negatively related to gender ($\beta=-0.024$, $p=0.291$), host country working experience ($\beta=-0.036$, $p=0.245$), host country language proficiency ($\beta=-0.038$, $p=0.213$), and job tenure ($\beta=-0.122$, $p=0.003$). However, only job tenure was significantly related to job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion of the Findings

This study aimed to explore the contribution of non-Thai supervisor support to perceived coworker discrimination, and job satisfaction of Thai subordinates when working with non-Thai coworkers in non-Thai companies. Regarding the effect of non-Thai supervisor support on the perceived coworker discrimination, this study examined whether or not the support by non-Thai supervisors could lessen the Thai subordinates' perception of being discriminated against. The result from the data analysis revealed that Thai employees working in non-Thai companies who experience higher level support from the non-Thai supervisor tend to have lower level of perceived coworker discrimination. The finding is consistent with the previous studies by Chou & Choi (2011); De Coster, et al., (1999) who found that support from supervisors can lower the employees' perception of being discriminated against. Moreover, this study proposed that there is a positive relationship between the level of non-Thai supervisor support and Thai subordinates' job satisfaction. The result from the data analysis revealed that Thai employees who perceived higher level of non-Thai supervisor support tend to have higher level of job satisfaction. This finding is in line with the previous study by Winarto & Chalidyanto (2020) who found that hospital employees tend to satisfy with their job when they get support from their supervisors. Smerek & Peterson (2007) also found that university' non-academic employees have high level of job satisfaction when their supervisors support them. Furthermore, this study aimed to investigate the mediating effect of the perceived coworker discrimination on the positive relationship between non-Thai supervisor support and Thai subordinates' job satisfaction. The result from the data analysis revealed that the perceived coworker discrimination partially mediated the positive effect of non-Thai supervisor support on Thai subordinates' job satisfaction. This finding is in line with the study of Jalain (2020) who found that lawyers who perceived discrimination have low level of job satisfaction. From a theoretical perspective, the

findings from this study are consistent with the JD-R model. Discrimination caused by the social barrier between non-Thai and Thai employees could serve as a job demand which requires Thai employees to cope with. While support from non-Thai supervisors showed attentiveness, it could serve as a job resource that helps Thai employees to handle their job demands caused by the non-Thai employees when they work together in non-Thai companies.

In addition, the result showed that Thai employees with longer job tenure tend to perceive higher level of coworker discrimination; this finding is consistent with the study of De Coster, et al., (1999) which found that employees with longer job tenure tend to face more negative behaviors from coworkers. As Thai employees who have worked longer in the non-Thai company spent more time working with non-Thai coworkers, there would be more chance that they are being discriminated against. Besides, as senior employees, Thai employees have higher status than some of the non-Thai employees, they could be resisted and harassed. Apart from the direct effect of local supervisor support on the perceived worker discrimination, the study explored whether the degree of this relationship might be subjected to the moderating variable; that is job tenure. The result from the data analysis revealed that the extent to which non-Thai supervisor support will have an influence on the Thai employees' perceived coworker discrimination varied depending on the length of Thai employees' job tenure. For the Thai employees with longer job tenure, non-Thai supervisor support played a greater role in lessening their perceived coworker discrimination. Thai employees who work longer in the company could have been facing more coworker discrimination. Support from non-Thai supervisors shows the attentiveness and protection that could play a vital role to help them in lessening the perception of being discriminated against. On the other hand, Thai employees who work shorter in the company could have been facing less discrimination from the non-Thai coworker. Therefore, a supportive non-Thai supervisor did not play a great role in lowering their perceived coworker discrimination.

This study provides few academic contributions. The findings from this study provide further evidence to the existing studies of social support; that is the supervisor support in the workplace, especially the benefit of supervisor support to foreign subordinates within the multinational corporations. This finding confirms that support from supervisors is significantly important for foreign employees who are being discriminated against by their coworkers. This study also provides more support to prior research that foreign employees' job tenure is related to their perceived coworker discrimination. This finding reveals that the perceived coworker discrimination could be influenced by work-related characteristics. Furthermore, the finding regarding the moderating effect of job tenure provides extra evidence that foreign employees with different work-related characteristics may need different levels of supervisor support. The finding reviews that a supportive supervisor is more likely important to foreign employees who have longer job tenure as they tend to experience higher level of coworker discrimination. This suggests that foreign employees with different work-related factors require different levels of supervisor support in lessening their perceived coworker discrimination when working in multinational corporations.

Practical Contribution

This study provides managerial implications for the multinational corporations that hire foreign employees. As the differences of team members enhance the segregation and hence, those foreign employees could experience the feeling of being discriminated against and job dissatisfaction. Especially, this study focuses on the foreign frontline employees who directly deal with customers, and these unfavorable working environments the frontline employees have faced could negatively affect customers. Thus, it is important for companies to pay attention to such incidence. This study found that the support from supervisors is social support that could

reduce the level of perceived coworker discrimination while increasing the level of job satisfaction; this study suggests that the companies may need to boost the companies' culture that value the diversities which enhances the employees to accept, appreciate, and learn the differences between them and foreign employees. Special courses regarding the diversities should be provided to employees especially supervisors who will work with the foreign employees. The courses could start from the knowledge about the countries of those foreign employees continuing by practicing on how to deal with them. The case study could be applied to gain an in-depth understanding.

Furthermore, the activities among employees should be promoted to enhance relationship development. For instance, the company could appoint them to be the corporate ambassadors or assign them as representatives to attend the company's public interest project together. The company may also encourage them to join the same company's club. Working and spending time together will enhance collaboration, generosity, and relationship.

In addition, the supervisors may join the recruitment panel when recruiting foreign employees. A positive relationship between them would arise beforehand which will lead to encouragement when working together. The supervisor may also be a part of the training program for the new foreign joiners. Supervising as well as advising since the beginning will get them to know and understand more about each other.

Limitations and Suggestion for Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the samples are Thai employees working for non-Thai companies in the air transport industry. The size and characteristics of the sample could limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, because this study was using a self-evaluated questionnaire for data collection, the data could be susceptible to subjective bias. Third, as the cross-sectional data basis was based when collecting the data, the interpretation of the results could be in form of association between variables rather than their causation.

Future research may extend the size and context of samples; for example, the European employees as foreign employees working with non-European companies. Furthermore, more contribution of supervisor support on other sources of the differences could be studied, for example, education background. In addition, more variables that might moderate the effect of supervisor support on perceived coworker discrimination should be explored.

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