

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE CHALLENGES AND THE
COPING STRATEGIES OF
HOSPITALITY EDUCATORS TO
PURSUE THEIR PART-TIME STUDY
FOR CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

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ABSTRACT

A rapid evolution of education demands educators to constantly enhance and develop their competencies in teaching field. Engaging educators in ongoing professional development is a transformative effort to enhance learning and teaching process. Pursuing continuing education and certification are very applicable to be implemented in educators' professional development. By continuing study, the educators can continuously improve and update their knowledge and skills in their area of expertise, to find out new teaching methods, current trends and best practices in their field. The demands of educators' work responsibilities make it impossible for them to study in full-time mode. Part-time study provide opportunity to the educators to combine their professional role of being a student and the employee at the same time. However, unlike the other students who can fully concentrate on their study, where the educators are also required to perform their existing work commitments and other social obligations. These situations are likely to present a number of challenges to the educators as part-time learners. Therefore, this research was conducted to explore the challenges faced by hospitality educators as part-time learners and the coping strategies used by them in integrating their part-time study with work and social obligations. Coping strategies refer to one's ability and strategies used to cope with stressful situations. Ten educators from two private hospitality institutions in Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia were involved in semi-structured interview sessions, where their organization supports and encourages continuous professional development (CPD) in their professions. Seven major themes were derived from research findings by using thematic analysis. Three themes derived on the challenges faced by educators as part time learners including: (1) conflicting commitments, (2) difficulties in managing time and (3) stress. Meanwhile, four more themes derived related to the coping strategies used by educators to integrate their part time study with work and social obligations including: (1) social support, (2) negotiation arrangement, (3) relaxation techniques and (4) religion spiritual approach. The study findings suggested that those who adopt suitable coping mechanisms can cope with the challenges they faced, able to manage their commitments well and more likely to complete their study successfully. There is a role of academics and higher institution administration in providing better support systems in assisting part-time students to adapt with their study. To the organization, continuous learning can contribute to new ideas and knowledge, a forward-thinking innovation culture in the workplace and positive attitude towards work performance as it is necessary for every profession to increase the level of professionalism.

Keywords: continuous professional development (CPD), hospitality educators, part time study, challenges, coping strategies.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

ABSTRACT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Introduction of the Research
- 1.2 Background of the Study
- 1.3 Problem Statement
- 1.4 Research Objectives
- 1.5 Research Questions
- 1.6 Significance of Study
- 1.7 The Scope of the Study
- 1.8 Definition of Terms
- 1.9 Summary

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 The Overview of Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
 - 2.2.1 The Importance of CPD in Hospitality Education and Industry
- 2.3 Pursuing Part-Time Education
- 2.4 The Issues and Challenges faced by Part-Time Learners
- 2.5 Work Study Life Balance
- 2.6 The Coping Strategy Models and Theories

2.6.1	Transactional Theory of Stress & Coping (Problem-Focused and Emotion- Focused by Lazarus & Folkman (1984)	20
2.6.2	The COPE Inventory by Carver, Scheier & Weintraub (1989)	23
2.6.3	Task-Oriented, Emotion-Oriented, and Avoidance-Oriented Coping by Parker and Endler (1992)	24
2.6.4	The Compass of Shame Coping Theory by Nathanson (1992)	25
2.6.5	Coping Theory: Present, Past and Future by Lazarus (1993)	27
2.6.6	Avoidant Versus Attentive Coping Theory by Krohne (1993)	27
2.7	Past Studies on Coping Strategies	29
2.8	Summary	32
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		34
3.1	Introduction	34
3.2	Research Design	34
3.3	Sampling Design	36
3.4	Data Collection Method	37
3.4.1	Semi-Structured Interview	38
3.4.2	Interview Protocol	39
3.4.3	Ethical Considerations	41
3.4.3.1	Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation	41
3.4.3.2	Confidentially and Anonymity	42
3.4.4	Transcription	42
3.5	Data Analysis	43
3.6	Reliability and Validity	47
3.6.1	Credibility	47
3.6.2	Transferability	48
3.6.3	Confirmability	48
3.7	Pilot Study	49
3.8	Summary	50
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS		51
4.1	Introduction	51
4.2	Respondents' Background Information	54