

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ON TYPES OF STRESS MANIFESTED BY THE HOTEL EMPLOYEES IN THE CONTEXT OF PANDEMIC-ERA

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Abstract: *In the hotel sector, employee stress is a major problem that may affect employee job performance and well-being. Although addressing and reducing stress is a commendable objective that can lead to a healthy environment in the workplace, the type and extent of hospitality employee stress are not well known. The study objectives are as follows: (1) to evaluate the type of stress manifested by hotel employees in the context of COVID-19 and (2) to determine the effects of the pandemic on the hotel employees. This study conducts a systematic literature review (SLR) on types of stress and pandemic from the previous researches to elucidate the findings. All information was gathered by collecting data from previous articles. Resultantly, a substantial correlation was detected between the type of stress with job performance and employee well-being. This study perhaps could help to use as a source of information for future research that related to the type of stress and its effect manifested by the hotel employees in the context of pandemic-era.*

Keywords: *stress, hotel employees, job performance, well-being, covid-19*

Introduction

Globally, COVID-19 has impacted every business, but the hotel industry has been particularly heavily struck. The impact is truly severe as many hotels face shut down, whereas those who managed to maintain their operation are struggling to survive. Following the ease of the pandemic in Malaysia, the hotels started to operate with strict standard operating procedures (SOPs) in order to avoid the contagious virus from spreading. The outbreak of the virus in Malaysia was poorly handled, causing the hotels to close or operate based on the government directives, thereby exposing the employees to constant stress. According to Chin, (2021) from the Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH), the tourism and hotel industries can no longer survive given the current Movement Control Order 3.0 (MCO) and in a climate where travel restrictions are in place. Moreover, Hotels can only operate if they provide quarantine services or check-in customers who require necessary services. With the imposed regulation, the hotel may operate with strict SOPs, which may lead to stress due to the unusual working routine. These events will directly affect employee performance.

Stress, according to the Mental Health Foundation (2021), is the feeling of being swamped or incapable to deal with psychological or emotional strain. Previous research has found numerous forms of stress, including workload, job instability, psychological stress, and stress associated with the implementation of new SOPs. As supported by a prior study, workload stress is also one of the most significant factors in the context of COVID-19, as a consequence of ineffective coordination and communication with coworkers, which leads to elevated interpersonal stress levels (Tsui, 2021). Stresses that workload may also impact job performance owing to the extra stress of being unable to complete certain duties in the allotted time. A prolonged period of stress or unhappiness is often the underlying cause. Most times, an issue can be traced back to the workplace.

Due to the pandemic, employees have seen an unanticipated downsizing as a result of COVID-19, with their crucial connections losing their employment although they have weathered this catastrophe (Tu, et al., 2021). Employees are haunted by job insecurity and many have been relieved from duty. Kaushal et al. (2021) posit that this particular stress-inducing factor (job insecurity) is closely related to work behaviors and performance, which may lead to hotel employees' turnover. The most noteworthy data constructed by Mahmoud et al., (2021) demonstrates a statistically significant relationship between COVID-19 perceptivity and work uncertainty, as well as all other psychological aspects. The unfavorable work circumstances span a wide range of disturbing features in the hospitality industry, particularly persistent job instability, short-term contract tenure, and inadequate involvement of organization unions, all of which are detrimental to employees' well-being. Khawaja et al. (2021) further claimed that past research has demonstrated that job insecurity impacts the actions and attitudes of employees in the workplace. The impacts of COVID-19 on Malaysia's economy can be seen via high unemployment rate and depreciation in Malaysian Ringgit against USD. In 2019, the unemployment rate of Malaysia is 3.3% which means there are 508,200 individuals unemployed. The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously impacted the Malaysian economy. Many employees have experienced employment instability as a consequence of the pandemic (e.g., reduced work hours, salary reduction, and job loss). Anxiety and bad sentiments might result from job uncertainty (Wilson et al., 2020).

A negative physical or emotional reaction that occurs when an employee's qualities, skills, and needs do not match the job requirements is referred to as "psychological stress" (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016). A survey conducted by Karatepe et al. (2018) revealed that more

than 50% of all personnel were anxious, whereas two-thirds of those who were stressed had problems focusing on their tasks (Karatepe et al., 2018). Psychological stress is an unpleasant reaction that could lead to a variety of personal, emotional, and behavioral issues (Bunk & Magley, 2013). This issue will certainly affect employee well-being in terms of physical and mental health. When employees are under certain stress, the company might experience instant consequences as employee performance deteriorates. This situation will contribute to workplace stress, which may diminish work performance and boost the likelihood of turnover. According to Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs (2016); Kim et al. (2015) explained that stress has a detrimental influence on job attitude. Meanwhile, Akgunduz (2015) concluded that work-related stress has a severe influence on overall employee output. In other words, workplace stress is not only detrimental to employees' health and well-being, it directly influences their ability to execute their duties. Nevertheless, the implication of new SOPs might also affect the employee job performance as stated by Fatt et al. (2021) in the wake of the COVID-19, lodge and homestay management and employees have claimed higher levels of stress and lower levels of performance in response to the new norm. The furlough and uncertain SOPs have contributed significantly to the stress. Hence, the study explores the type of stress that is shackling the hotel employees and how the stress is manifested among the employees.

The tourism industry, which ranks third among the services sector's components, contributes 6 percent to Malaysia's GDP and 23 percent of the national employment, or 3.5 million jobs, according to the World Tourism Organization (DOSM, 2021). Tourism activities have a multiplier effect on the surrounding ecosystem, which includes hotel businesses, tourist projects, retail enterprises, restaurants, and transportation services, among other things. Nonetheless, the worldwide effect of the COVID-19 outbreak is putting significant strain on the tourism sector, which is already struggling. In preparation for recovery, the industry is anticipating that the new normal will entail a shift in the way people travel and regard leisure time in the coming years. The adoption of the MCO and the closure of borders in order to contain the pandemic, has resulted in a reduction in the number of tourists entering Malaysia. Hotel mergers and acquisitions are becoming increasingly common as owners choose to sell rather than continue to incur losses in difficult economic times, comparable to many other businesses in similar situations. Meanwhile, opportunistic buyers with deep pockets are scouting the market for bargains. According to Solid Real Estate, (2021), the number of listings for hotels for sale in Malaysia has increased by 40 percent year to date as a result of increased interest from both local and international investors. Prices for hotel properties have also plummeted as much as 35 percent when compared to pre-lockdown levels. Furthermore, in terms of the impact on staffing, the local hotel industry has already laid off 6% of its workforce, with an increasing number of its employees taking unpaid leave and receiving pay reductions as the sector continues to collapse due to the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. In a survey conducted by the Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) on a sample size of 41,000 employees, the organization found that 20 percent had already received wage reductions, whereas another 26 percent had been placed on leave without pay. According to Datuk Abdul Halim Mansor, the president of the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC), more than 30,000 employees in the country's hotel industry have lost their jobs, more than 10,000 people have been pushed to start taking unpaid leave, and more than 6,000 others have had their pay reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The laid-off and entirely furloughed hospitality employees reported feeling financially burdened, dejected, socially alienated, and terrified about the impacts of the pandemic. According to the survey, these events increased their intention to leave the business completely (Layoffs pushed hospitality workers to leave the industry - Zaske, (2021). Several studies found that the epidemic is amplifying these stressors,

as seen by large layoffs and an increased sense of insecurity among employees. Workers in the restaurant industry report that the pandemic has negatively affected their mental health in 75% of cases, and as the economy slowly recovers, occupational stress among the frontline workforce continues to rise (Lippert, et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a great deal of stress and worry among hotel employees, making it difficult for them to perform their jobs. From front-line workers to hotel managers, the detrimental effects of the pandemic have significantly impacted the stress levels of all hotel workforce.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, some of the employees' stress problems in a working organization were caused by several factors faced by them, personal issues, workload, and many more. Nevertheless, the pandemic has added more stress with all the issues facing the employees. These issues frequently affect employees' personal life, resulting in poor performance, which will have a direct impact on corporate productivity (International Labour Organizations, 2021). An employee must be efficient in their job performance for the organization to be productive (Hanaysha, 2016). This is because employees are essential to the production process and service delivery that leads to high productivity. One of the major determinants of a person's desire to switch professions is workload (Fabiyani et al., 2021). According to Lee et al. (2018), the hospitality business is recognized for solid service jobs, long working hours, and high workload since staff are expected to deliver the finest service possible for the hotel to receive positive customer feedback. Employee productivity is influenced by their workload. When an employee's workload grows, their performance suffers, especially if the burden presents challenges for them to overcome (Munandar et al., 2019). Meanwhile, Chen (2021) stated that the psychological impacts of COVID-19 are quite severe as it will affect the employee's wellbeing due to some stressors, such as furloughed and lack of support. Job insecurity is also one of the contributors to this type of stress.

Downsizing-related unemployment would probably alter a survivor's psychological and behavioral patterns in the post-downsizing period (Tu. et al., 2021). Moreover, employees have been subjected to an unpredictable downsizing as a result of COVID-19, with essential contacts losing their employment despite they have weathered the crisis. Furthermore, Fatt et al. (2020) concluded that to a minor extent, the implementation of new SOPs as a result of COVID-19 induces some job stress and performance for management and their employees. In this research, the type of stress manifested by hotel employees in the context of COVID-19 will be examined. This study explored how stress affects hotel employees in terms of job performance and employee well-being.

Methodology

This study conducts a systematic literature review (SLR) on types of stress and pandemic from the previous researches to elucidate the findings. The articles for the types of stress identified was published between 2002 and 2021. However, related issues to the pandemic were between 2019-2021. All worldwide articles that related to the issues were gathered from the internet and reliable websites, such as ScienceDirect, Elsevier, ResearchGate, and others. The 26 works of literature helped in the discussion and to meet the conclusion requirements. The themes and frequency of the type of stress, namely, Workload Job Insecurity, Psychological, Implementation of SOPs were found using the content analysis.

Table 1: The Framework for Systematic Literature Search And Review

Stage	Description
Search	Key actions: keywords identification; search database. Research scope: types of stress and pandemic
Appraisal	Key actions: papers selection through internet and reliable websites, such as ScienceDirect, Elsevier, ResearchGate, and others.
Synthesis	Key actions: data extraction and categorization
Analysis	Key actions: analysis of the data, result comparison and conclusions

Finding and Discussion

Focusing on objective 1, which is to identify the type of stress manifested by hotel employees in the context of COVID-19, several types of stress were demonstrated by employees worldwide during the Pandemic. Resultantly, the types of stress manifested by the hotel employees as discussed by most researchers are workload, job insecurity, psychological stress, and implementation of new SOP. Despite researchers reporting the same issues, whether the outcomes of the stress effects to the hotel employees are similar or different remains unclear.

Table 2: Findings Based On Previous Studies

Authors	Findings	Variables
Tu, et al. (2021)	Employees' COVID stress was elevated as a result of their COVID layoff, and their in-role and extra-role performance suffered as a result. The data reveal that downsizing comes at a cost in terms of increased stress and lower performance among surviving employees.	Job Insecurity
Fatt et al. (2020)	The introduction of the new SOPs in doing everyday chores has had a minor impact on work performance, and corporate entities have responded favorably.	Implementation of new SOP
Wong et al. (2021)	Job satisfaction and organizational commitment influenced job performance, subjective well-being, and prosocial conduct in the positive direction. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment, on the other hand, were no longer significant indicators of intention to quit.	Psychological stress
Kaushal, et al. (2021)	The stress-inducing factors were closely tied to work-related concerns and how they were perceived were not the same after COVID-19 because hotel workers had distinct setup stress-inducing revelations, which led to job turnover. Stress factors, on the other hand, used to only affect employees' work-related behaviors and performance after COVID-19.	Job Insecurity

Mahmoud, et al. (2021).	The major findings reveal a significant link between COVID perceptions and job insecurity, as well as all psychosocial aspects, i.e., higher levels of COVID-19 views are associated with higher levels of job insecurity, anxiety, depression, job burnout, and job alienation.	Job Insecurity
Teng et al. (2020)	The prevalence of depression and anxiety is higher than other countries due to lack of incomes, and knowledge regarding the pandemic.	Psychological stress
Drake et al., (2021)	The feeling of loneliness is higher for unemployed people compared to employed people. This finding is likely attributable to additional losses associated with unemployment, such as a sense of belonging, work-related social connections, and the support these relationships bring.	Psychological stress
Tsui, (2021)	Workload stress and interpersonal stress both have a favorable relationship with physical and mental health, indicating that the higher the workload stress, the worse and the perception of well-being.	Workload
Yu, et al. (2021)	Empirical investigation revealed that the four characteristics of epidemic concerns generate stress in hotel personnel and lower overall employee performance.	Psychological Stress
Khawaja et al. (2021)	Due to the changes of job description, and additional duties, it has developed workplace aggression, followed by employee withdrawal behavior (absenteeism, laziness, turnover intention).	Workload stress and Job Insecurity
Chi et al., (2021)	A greater level of vitality is associated with working from home. However, the absorption effect on burnout is exacerbated by working from home. Commitment and exhaustion both have a negative influence on turnover intentions while working from home due to work-home distractions.	Psychological Stress
Yan et. Al. (2021)	The findings show that job satisfaction diminishes the relationship between COVID-19 risk perception and the likelihood of depressive symptoms in hospitality professionals, whereas the number of children inflames the link.	Psychological Stress
Kniffin et al., (2020)	Findings from this study demonstrate the advantages of team science and a wide perspective, both of which give an integrated method to examining the implications of COVID-19 for the workplace and organizations.	Implementation of new SOP
Chen & Chen (2021)	Employee's job insecurity and organizational identification have significant positive effects during the pandemic which indicates that the employees are willing to stay with the job even if they are having anxiety due to the job insecurity.	Job Insecurity

Jung, et al., (2021)	The findings revealed that staff at deluxe hotels were less engaged which impacted their job performances due to their concerns of job insecurity.	Job Insecurity
Puspitawati et al. (2021)	This pandemic had a negative impact on employee job satisfaction due to the increased workload and difficult conditions they found themselves in. Workplace stress negatively impacts employee performance and job satisfaction, but workplace contentment has little impact on employee performance.	Workload
Khan et al. (2021)	The findings reveal that anxiety about the economy, unemployment, and mental health are all influenced by people's perceptions of job insecurity. It is only via the direct and indirect links between economic catastrophe fear and mental health that the moderating effects of COVID-19 fear can be shown.	Job Insecurity

The first variable, Workload stress is a primary source of stress, with workloads causing additional anxiety owing to ambiguous power, responsibility divisions, and insufficient time to complete tasks (Tsui, 2021). This statement was supported by Puspitawati et al. (2021) explaining that employees believed their job satisfaction was not up to par during the COVID-19 outbreak since they were confronted with a new situation and larger burden than usual. On the other hand, Khawaja et al. (2021) argue that the pandemic has created a workplace aggressiveness, followed by employee withdrawal behavior resulting from changes in job descriptions and more responsibilities, such as absenteeism, laziness, and turnover intention.

Secondly, job insecurity was linked to large increases in self-reported poor health, despair, and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Mahmoud et al. (2021) support this statement by demonstrating a substantial link between COVID-19 perceptions and work insecurity, as well as all psychological elements, such as the greater levels of COVID-related perceptions, job uncertainty, anxiety, job burnout, and depression. Anxiety related to a downturn in the economy, unemployment, and mental health are all mediated by job uncertainty. The moderating impact of COVID-19 dread can only be explained by the connection between concern about the economy and mental health, as well as by the perception of job insecurity (Khan et al., 2021). Given that hotel employees had different setup stress-inducing discoveries, which led to job turnover, stress-inducing factors were closely linked to work-related concerns and they were viewed differently after COVID-19 (Kaushal et al., 2021). Hence, Jung, et al., (2021) divulged a finding that staff in deluxe hotels were less engaged, which hampered their job performance due to their fears about job insecurity. However, Chen & Chen (2021) declared that employee job insecurity and organizational identification have strong positive effects during the pandemic, indicating that employees are ready to stay on the job despite the distress induced by job instability.

Furthermore, travel restrictions and social gathering bans worldwide are placing hospitality workers in a tough situation. Employees in the hotel industry are becoming more concerned about their well-being and job security due to this unprecedented disruption. (Chi et al., 2021). In the same vein, Yan et. al., (2021) also stated that job satisfaction has been shown to diminish the association between COVID-19 risk perception and the probability of depressive symptoms among hospitality workers, while the number of children has been found to raise it. Notwithstanding, Chi et al. (2021) posited that working from home was connected with a higher

degree of vitality but it also increased the impact of absorption on burnout. Turnover intentions are negatively impacted by the commitment and positively impacted by burnout when employees are allowed to work from home.

Lastly, the implementation of the new SOP was supposed to contribute to the employees' stress but the event was only reported by Fatt et al. (2020). The authors indicated that the implementation of the new SOPs in daily tasks had a small influence on work performance, and corporate entities have reacted positively.

The second research objective was to explore how the type of stress affects the hotel employees' job performance and well-being during the pandemic. Based on the findings presented in Table 1, a chart was constructed to illustrate how the type of stress affects the dependent variables: are job performance and employee well-being. The collected data is based on the frequency of the reviewed articles by previous researchers. The results reflected diverse sets of frequency as shown in the chart, which has been evaluated and analyzed according to the retrieved data.

The data collection was based on the relevant articles reporting the relationship between workload stress, psychological stress, job insecurity, and implementation of new SOP with job performance and employee well-being. An in-depth review has helped to acquire reliable data, expressing insight on the specific variables. First, workload stress has been influencing job performance. This variable was supported by Khawaja et al. (2021) who stated that the hotel sector is regarded as tough due to the high workload, long working hours, and constant stress to maintain a positive reputation through high-quality work in a short time, thus affecting the employee's job performance. Puspitawati et al. (2021) also reported a negative direct relationship between workload and job performance, reflecting that employees' performance will suffer as a result of workload stress. Interpersonal stress is exacerbated by poor coordination and communication among employees, making workload stress one of the major issues in the context of COVID-19 (Tsui, 2021). Regarding the influence on employees' well-being in the latter study, a positive correlation was observed between workload stress with mental and physical stress. This finding depicts that employees' perceptions of wellbeing deteriorate as stress levels rise. Hence, the correlations between workload with job performance and employee well-being and both dependent variables are equally affected by the workload in the context of COVID-19.

In terms of Job Insecurity, based on the chart, job performance is the most affected compared to the employees' well-being as reported in prior studies. For instance, Kaushal, et al. (2021) described job insecurity as a stress-inducing element that has a direct impact on hotel workers' work behaviors and performance, which may contribute to employee turnover. Further research by Khawaja et al. (2021) reported that Job performance has been negatively impacted by the company's downsizing. As the number of workers being laid off in the hotel business has increased, employees have become anxious, either due to the fear of losing their jobs or ambiguous job definitions. As a consequence of the workforce reorganization, a rise in job insecurity among workers results in workers' withdrawal behavior (Khawaja et al., 2021; Park et al., 2020). Job insecurity has been shown to alter workers' behavior and attitudes. In terms of employee well-being, job insecurity contributes to a decline in interpersonal trust. Workers' mental health and well-being are negatively impacted by stress and anxiety, work discontent, and absenteeism, which lead to a rise in employee turnover. Moreover, the impact of psychological stress on employees' job performance demonstrated the second-highest frequency.

How Stress Affects The Hotel Employee in terms of Job Performance and Employee Well-being

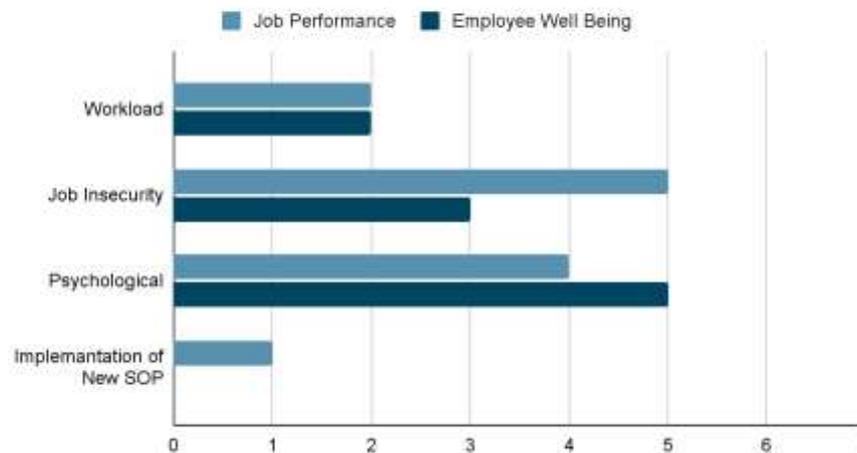


Figure 1: Types of stress that are influencing employee well-being and job performance

Based on Figure 1, employee well-being is much more affected compared to job performance in terms of psychological stress. Teng et al. (2020) argued that an employee's mental health is crucial in achieving effective performance while performing their job. Due to the nature of the contact that occurs in the process of servicing customers, hotel employees may encounter psychological issues and excessive stress. This is particularly true when new outbreaks emerge, such as SARS, MERS, and COVID-19. Workplace stress can lead to poor attitudes and behaviors among hotel employees, as well as a detrimental impact on hotel businesses (Yu, et al., 2021). It generates a negative correlation between the hotel's efficiency and the employee's job attitude and performance. In contrast, viewing the outbreak as a threat, hospitality employees may deplete their psychological resources and may result in depression, which is directly related to employee well-being (Yan, et al., 2021). Khawaja et al. (2021) emphasized that it is essential for employees to have a healthy mental state in order to maintain an organization's efficiency. However, employees' mental state and psychological health have been affected by COVID-19, causing anxiety and despair which result in negative employee well-being. Hence, a relationship exists between psychological stress and the two dependent variables, which will directly affect both job performance and employee well-being.

As for the implementation of new SOPs, it is the least variable that contributes to the type of stress. The independent variable affected only job performance. This result is supported by Fatt et al. (2020) who revealed that the COVID-19 outbreak has created a type of new norm in the operation of lodges and homestays, which has resulted in increased work stress and poor performance for the management and their employees. Thus, the findings suggest that even if the employees are facing increased stress, the effects are minimal and not as heavy as they have perceived.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The unexpected outbreak of COVID-19 has led to major operational adjustments, which contribute to several types of stress that affect job performance and employee well-being. It is clear that these types of stress have mainly affected job performance compared to well-being. Job performance will surely be affected if one is facing overwhelming stress due to some circumstances. By conducting this research, we were able to illustrate which type of stress is

more dominant and how it affects employee performance and well-being. Job performance is the most affected variable in the context of job insecurity while employee well-being dominates the psychological aspect during the pandemic. Employee well-being degrades as their stress level grows based on the positive correlation between workload stress with mental and physical stress. Therefore, maintaining good employee well-being will surely benefit any organization in terms of productivity and achieving the organization's goal. Without a doubt, working in the hotel industry can be extremely straining as it involves physical labor, tight schedules, unanticipated encounters with guests, long hours of work, irregular shifts, recurring tasks in prevalent shifts, job stress, socially inept working hours, and engagement with challenging guests.

This study finds that the type of stress and its effect are quite distinct during and prior to the pandemic. Specifically, the attitudes and conduct of hotel staff were significantly different before and after the outbreak of COVID-19. Antony et al. (2021) demonstrated that when the pandemic took hold, work satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, subjective well-being, and prosocial conduct all fell dramatically, while turnover intention increased significantly after COVID-19 had become widely prevalent. The management of a hotel certainly needs to look into this matter seriously as it could affect employee job performance and well-being, which will directly impact the overall performance of hotels. Nevertheless, a future study is necessary to explore and validate the current issue during this pandemic based on this research.

Future researchers will find this a fascinating issue to investigate, as the COVID-19 virus continues to spread while having emotional and physical impacts on many people. It is critical to complete this study thoroughly because it will assist the government in making changes and conformities. This is particularly important to national approaches, with the end goal of making Malaysia achieve cutting-edge the negative impact of this virus and turn into a healthy community. Our findings can be used as a guideline and a source of information for future research. There are a few suggestions for those interested in learning more about this subject. Other researchers who want to investigate this topic should include more independent variables, such as the unemployment rate during COVID-19 or the effect of the implementation of new SOP at the workplace on the employees. Besides hotels, researchers can gather more information from various hospitality areas, such as restaurants, resorts, retail stores, and many more.

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