


February 2022

Organizational response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Does it affect hospitality industry employees' outcomes?

Jessica Wiitala
High Point University, jwiitala@highpoint.edu

Trishna Mistry
University of South Florida, trishna@usf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jght>

 Part of the [Hospitality Administration and Management Commons](#), and the [Human Resources Management Commons](#)

This Refereed Article is brought to you for free and open access by the M3 Center at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Global Hospitality and Tourism by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Wiitala, J., & Mistry, T. (2022). Organizational response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Does it affect hospitality industry employees' outcomes?. *Journal of Global Hospitality and Tourism*, 1(1), 51-68. <https://www.doi.org/10.5038/2771-5957.1.1.1003>

Corresponding Author

Jessica Wiitala, High Point University, One University Parkway, Nido Qubein School of Communication, Drawer 33, High Point, NC 27268

Revisions

Submission: Jul. 5, 2021; 1st Revision: Sep. 25, 2021; Accepted: Oct. 20, 2021

Organizational Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Does It Affect Hospitality Industry Employees' Outcomes?

Jessica Wiitala¹ and Trishna G. Mistry²

Nido R. Qubein School of Communication
High Point University, United States
¹jwiitala@highpoint.edu

School of Hospitality and Tourism Management
University of South Florida, United States
²trishna@usf.edu

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationships between hospitality organizations' crisis response during the COVID-19 pandemic with hospitality employees' attitudes and behaviors. Data was collected using a survey distributed on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) targeting hospitality industry employees. The findings reveal that crisis response is related to psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among hospitality industry employees. This study broadens the scope of crisis management literature in the hospitality field. Furthermore, it establishes the significance of effective crisis response for hospitality industry employees' well-being and positive outcomes.

Keywords: crisis response, situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), psychological well-being, job satisfaction, organizational commitment

Introduction

Hospitality organizations were challenged with unprecedented circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic to manage the organization's need to communicate crisis response messages to their stakeholders. Initial messages need to convey instructing information on how internal and external stakeholders can protect themselves; this is followed by adjusting information that provides psychological coping strategies to internal stakeholders, and finally communicating outwardly to external stakeholders to speak to any reputational threat posed (Coombs & Holladay, 2008). The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of organizational crisis response during the COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality industry employees.

Crisis-related research has been driven by and associated with the practice of crisis management. In hospitality, crisis management literature has focused mainly on crisis impact and recovery (Wut et al., 2021), mere fragments of crisis management. In a review of crisis management research, Wut et al. (2021) suggest areas of future investigation to include theories of risk communication, an even smaller subset of crisis-related research in its infancy (Coombs & Holladay, 2008), adding to the existing gap in the literature. Risk communication strategies are explored under the domain

of communication theories and crisis outcomes. This domain of investigation presents yet another challenge crisis literature has faced, not only in hospitality but also in communication literature – the fact that crisis management and crisis communication have often been used interchangeably (Sellnow & Seeger, 2021). However, the strategies and theories of each differ greatly. The current study specifically focused on crisis communication and organizational crisis response, investigating the employee perspective.

The methodology investigating existing post-crisis communication and crisis response research has primarily been conducted using experimental design and case study methods (Coombs & Holladay, 2008). While each method has benefits and valuable data, the current study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design (Babbie, 2020). The empirical evidence found in the current study can help human resource managers, hospitality marketers, and crisis managers in the hospitality industry understand the effects of communication strategies on internal stakeholders. A substantial amount of communication is directed toward external stakeholders, leaving literature on internal crisis communication and crisis response scarce (Frandsen & Johansen, 2011). Furthermore, since a majority of the literature has focused on external stakeholders, research has been dedicated to maintaining a favorable reputation following a crisis, as such crisis response strategies are primarily used in public relations research (Sellnow & Seeger, 2021).

The importance of employee outcomes in the hospitality industry has been well established (He et al., 2020; Safavi et al., 2018; Varga et al., 2021); however, it is increasingly important to care for employees during a crisis (Agarwal, 2021). The hospitality industry is notorious for its labor-intensive nature, making the health and well-being of its employees and their response to such crises a paramount priority (Sonmez et al., 2017). An appropriate, timely, and effective crisis response is one such organizational strategy to foster positive employee outcomes during a crisis (Filimonau et al., 2020; Vo-Thahn et al., 2020). However, very little research focuses on the mechanisms explaining how organizations' internal crisis response can impact employees' outcomes, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Hence, the purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of organizational crisis response during the COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality and tourism industry employees.

Literature Review

Crisis Response and Employee Outcomes

Crisis response strategies are concerned with communicating and effectively constructing meaningful messages to coordinate crisis efforts, manage how the public and various stakeholders receive crisis information, and communicate crisis outcomes. Crisis response strategies largely originate from situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), which was previously defined using attribution theory to guide crisis response strategies (Coombs, 2009). These strategies offer a way in which organizations can help preserve their reputation based on the public's perception (Sellnow & Seeger, 2021). However, SCCT expands upon this, and the notion of attribution theory whereby inferences to the cause that is associated with the actions of the organizations may be observed.

SCCT provides necessary information and a number of response strategies for organizations. For example, three types of information are necessary to convey in a crisis response message:

instructing information, sharing information, and adjusting information (Coombs & Holladay, 2008). Only after this information has been conveyed can the organization's reputation be addressed. According to Coombs (2012), the four SCCT strategies include denial, diminishment, rebuilding, and bolstering; however, organizations are not limited to one strategy. Prior research has found that the "publics' emotional responses to a crisis event have significant implications in crisis communication" (Choi & Lin, 2009, p. 204), an area they argue remains understudied. As such, it is difficult to predict how internal stakeholders will respond to the organizational crisis response. Guzzo et al. (2021) also highlight a lack of research regarding the influence of an organization's crisis response messages on employee outcomes.

Communicating crises with internal stakeholders are best explained by crisis sensemaking and the theory of retrospective sensemaking (Weick, 1988). According to Frandsen and Johansen (2011), the prominence of the individual stakeholder can change in relation to a crisis event. The needs of employees of an organization do indeed differ from external stakeholders due to greater involvement with the organization, which results in differing strategies for how organizations should communicate daily operations and respond to crisis situations. Employees' reactions to a crisis and crisis response have been found to be categorized by certain cognitive and affective reactions (Frandsen & Johansen, 2011). During a crisis event, management must handle the reactions of employees to the crisis and sensemaking by communicating any changes due to the crisis in order to protect and restore confidence among employees and promote positive employee outcomes during a crisis.

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is a holistic assessment of an individual's well-being, not simply an absence of illness, and is a culmination of personal and organizational factors (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019). Employee well-being in the hospitality industry is amassing attention from researchers and practitioners alike, especially toward the younger generations of employees (He et al., 2019). The precarious nature of the hospitality industry challenges organizations to maintain their employees' psychological well-being (Arjona-Fuentes et al., 2019); the COVID-19 pandemic only further elevated this challenge. In a study assessing hospitality and tourism industry employees' emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic, Park et al. (2020) concluded that anxiety was the most prominent emotion, surpassing other negative emotions. Furthermore, Rosemberg et al. (2021) noted that hospitality industry employees used words such as *concerned*, *anxious*, *stressed*, and *disappointed* to describe their experience while working during the COVID-19 pandemic, further highlighting the importance of improving hospitality industry employees' psychological well-being.

Researchers have established that organizational factors and effective human resources management can connect the company and the employees, impacting hospitality industry employees' psychological well-being (Agarwal, 2021). For example, working conditions, organizational support, and responsible leadership are positively associated with employees' psychological well-being in the hospitality industry (He et al., 2019). Furthermore, procedural and emotional support from hospitality managers is linked with higher levels of psychological well-being amongst employees (Baker & Kim, 2020). Moreover, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a successful crisis management strategy, including efficient crisis response, has been a key in establishing and demonstrating organizational support toward internal stakeholders (He et al.,

2020). Satisfaction with an organization's response to the COVID-19 crisis was positively related to employees' psychological capital, including hope, resilience, and optimism (Mao et al., 2020). Hence, organizations can utilize effective crisis response to improve hospitality industry employees' psychological outcomes, including their psychological well-being.

- **H1:** Effective organizational crisis response will have a positive relationship with hospitality industry employees' psychological well-being.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as "an attitudinal construct about working conditions and treatment in one's job role" (Mahmood et al., 2019, p. 422). Job satisfaction is a crucial employee-related outcome in the hospitality industry since it affects employees' behaviors and has been researched extensively due to its wider implications in the hospitality industry (S. E. Kang et al., 2021). Furthermore, Yan et al. (2021) concluded that job satisfaction could weaken the negative psychological impact of COVID-19 risk perception among hospitality industry employees, making it further pertinent in the hospitality industry.

Job satisfaction is strongly impacted by organizational factors (Mahmood et al., 2019). Therefore, high-performance work systems directly influence hospitality industry employees' job satisfaction (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021). This connection is further critical during a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Bajrami et al. (2021) concluded a relationship between working under new conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic and lower levels of job satisfaction among hospitality industry employees. Additionally, Vo-Thanh et al. (2020) assessed that employees' satisfaction with their organization's COVID-19 response directly relates to their job-related outcomes. Hence, during the COVID-19 pandemic, crisis response is a crucial precursor of employee outcomes such as job satisfaction.

Employees' psychological status is expected to have an impact on their satisfaction. There is a link between COVID-19 related stress and employees' job satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Karatepe et al., 2021). Additionally, employees' psychological well-being, focusing on their experiences in life and work, is related to their job satisfaction in the hospitality industry (He et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2021). Therefore, since job satisfaction is a psychological and attitudinal outcome, employees' psychological position should affect the relationship between their perception of their organizations' crisis response efforts and job satisfaction.

- **H2:** Effective organizational crisis response will have a positive relationship with hospitality industry employees' job satisfaction.
- **H3:** Employees' psychological well-being will mediate the relationship between effective organizational crisis response and hospitality industry employees' job satisfaction.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment describes an employee's dedication toward their employer, as displayed by their emotions and actions to retain employment with that organization (Hunt et al., 1985). Employees who are committed to the organization are likely to believe in and adhere to the aims of their companies and, thus, want to stay with it (S. E. Kang et al., 2021). Employees'

organizational commitment is crucial to evaluate during and after the COVID-19 pandemic since it is impacted by occupational stressors in the hospitality industry (Wong et al., 2021).

Like hospitality employees' job satisfaction, high-performance work systems also enhance hospitality employees' organizational commitment (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021). One such practice is effective crisis communication, and Mazzei and Ravazzani (2011) highlighted the importance of effective crisis response and communication on employees' attitudes toward their managers and the organization. Additionally, socially responsible human resources management practices, such as effective crisis response, were found to enhance employees' positive attitudes toward their organization (He et al., 2020). Moreover, Filimonau et al. (2020) concluded a direct relationship between senior hotel managers' perceptions of their organizations' responses to COVID-19 and their organizational commitment. However, such a connection has not been established in the overall hospitality industry.

Furthermore, S. E. Kang et al. (2021) established a negative relationship between COVID-19 related stress and employees' organizational commitment in the hospitality industry; higher stress levels result in lower organizational commitment levels. However, organizational practices that fostered positive psychology, such as well-being, were linked with higher rates of organizational commitment among hospitality industry employees (Ngoc Su et al., 2021). So, increasing employees' psychological well-being positively affects employees' attitudinal outcomes, such as organizational commitment, especially during a crisis (Yu et al., 2021). Hence, psychological well-being could link employees' perceptions of their organizations' crisis response to COVID-19 and their organizational commitment.

- **H4:** Effective organizational crisis response will have a positive relationship with hospitality industry employees' organizational commitment.
- **H5:** Employees' psychological well-being will mediate the relationship between effective organizational crisis response and hospitality industry employees' organizational commitment.

Methods

Sample and Survey Instrument

The target sample for this research was hospitality industry employees in the United States. Participants for this study were enrolled from a variety of hospitality industry sectors, including lodging, food and beverage, event management, tourism, and entertainment, to get a holistic perspective of the hospitality industry (Mistry et al., 2021). A self-administered questionnaire was designed to collect data for this study. The first part of the survey included an introduction to the study, reiterated participant requirements, and clarified the voluntary nature of participation while further establishing anonymity and confidentiality (Choi et al., 2019) to avoid common method bias (H. J. Kang et al., 2021). The following section of the survey included measurement items for crisis response, psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment from scales used in previous studies as described in Table 1. All scale items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale, where one was strongly disagree and seven was strongly agree. Details of the measurement items are included in Appendix. The final section of the survey comprised of questions to assess the respondents' demographic profile.

Figure 1: Research Model

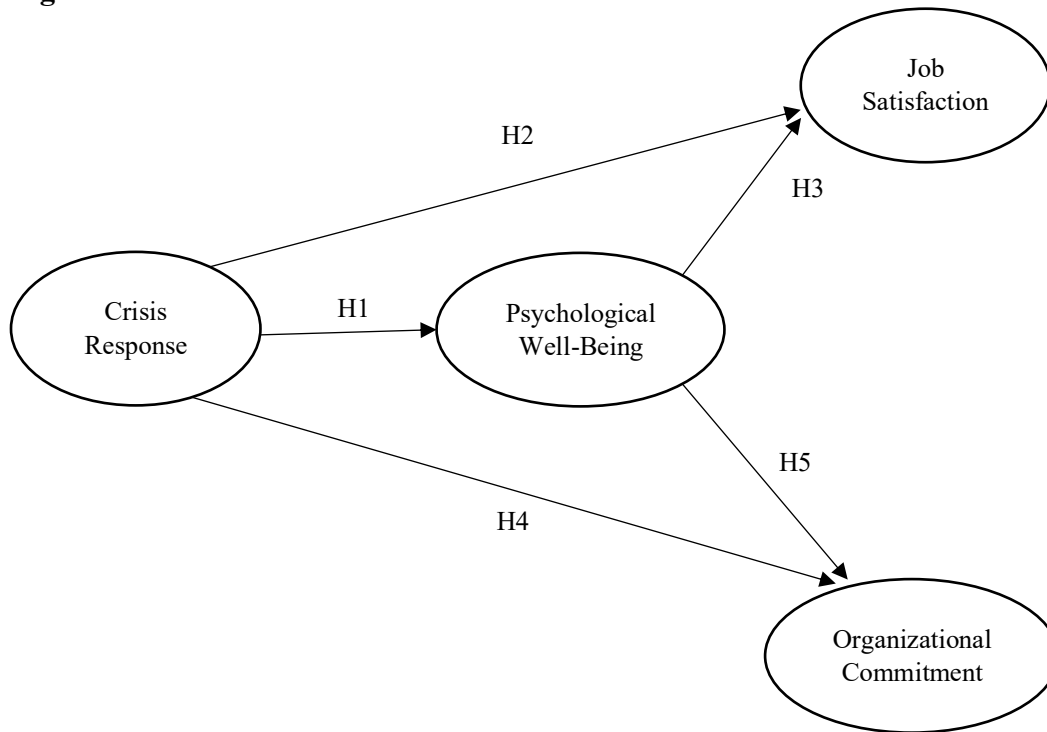


Table 1: Measurement Items

Construct	Item	Study
Crisis Response	12	Adamu and Mohamad (2019)
Psychological Well-Being	6	Grossi and Compare (2014)
Job Satisfaction	3	Lee and Ok (2012)
Organizational Commitment	3	Kang et al. (2015)

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey was hosted on the Qualtrics platform to be distributed online using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Prior researchers have deemed MTurk an appropriate platform for obtaining hospitality workforce samples (Varga et al., 2021) and reaching a more demographically diverse sample (Nanu et al., 2020). MTurk has been used widely in hospitality and tourism management research since it is a cost-effective and relatively reliable crowdsourcing platform for social sciences research (Cobanoglu et al., 2021). However, MTurk is not short of weaknesses, and appropriate precautions were implemented to ensure the quality of the data. Specifically, an attention check question was included in the survey to maintain the validity of the data. The attention check question was *I will select neither agree nor disagree for this statement* and was placed roughly in the middle of the survey. Surveys that did not pass the attention check question were discarded and not included in the final data set (Cobanoglu et al., 2021).

Data were analyzed with SmartPLS 3.0 using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), which has been used successfully in several hospitality industry studies (Nisar et al., 2021). Since this study aimed to explore the relationships between crisis response of organizations and employees’ outcomes, PLS-SEM was deemed appropriate since this tool is recommended to explore theoretical extensions and model building (Said & Tanova, 2021). Additionally, PLS-SEM

does not enforce the fulfillment of distributional normality assumptions on the data and was deemed appropriate for this research (Ali et al., 2018). The analysis was conducted in three steps – the measurement model was assessed first, followed by the structural model, and lastly, the mediation analysis was performed.

Results

Data Screening and Demographic Details

Out of the 672 initial responses, 68 responses were removed since the questionnaires were incomplete. An additional 98 responses were deleted because they failed to answer the attention check question. A total of 506 responses were retained for analysis. The demographic makeup of the respondents is detailed in Table 2. There were about twice as many males (67.6%) as females (32.4%). Nearly half the respondents were in their thirties, and respondents under the age of 40 consisted about 71% of the sample. A majority of the sample (91%) had at least a 4-year college degree, but a majority of the sample (68%) made less than \$60,000 annually. A majority of the respondents identified as White/Caucasian (52.6%) or Black/African American (17.6%).

Common Method Bias

There is a possibility of common method bias since the data were collected from a single respondent in a single wave (Nisar et al., 2021). A full collinearity test is recommended to assess common method bias in PLS-SEM analysis. Multiple hospitality industry studies have utilized this approach to evaluate common method bias (H. J. Kang et al., 2021; Nisar et al., 2021). A full collinearity test was performed to assess if the model is free of common method bias. Variance inflation factors (VIF) under 3.3 indicate that the model is rid of common method bias. The VIF values ranged from 1.361 to 2.482, confirming that common method bias was not an issue in this study.

Measurement Model

The outer model or measurement model is utilized to assess the relationship between constructs and their indicators, including reliability and validity. Table 3 highlights the results of the measurement model, along with reliability and convergent validity. All outer loadings were statistically significant ($p < .001$), most of them were above the recommended threshold of .7 (Hair et al., 2016). Four psychological well-being items had outer loading values ranging from .623 to .677 but greater than the accepted threshold of .50 (Hair et al., 2011). Hence, no items were removed from further assessment.

The internal consistency reliability of the measurement model was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, Rho A, and composite reliability. The Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .748 to .924 and the Rho A values from .749 to .924, all higher than the recommended value of .70.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	342	67.6
Female	164	32.4
Total	506	100.0
Age		
20-29	125	24.7
30-39	236	46.6
40-49	84	16.6
50-59	39	7.7
60-69	20	4.0
70-79	2	0.4
Total	506	100.0
Education		
High School	15	3.0
Some College	18	3.6
2-year College Degree	11	2.2
4-year College Degree	332	65.6
Master's Degree	118	23.3
Doctoral Degree	7	1.4
Professional Degree	5	1.0
Total	506	100.0
Income		
Below \$20,000	69	13.7
\$20,000 - \$29,999	63	12.4
\$30,000 - \$39,999	56	11.1
\$40,000 - \$49,999	83	16.3
\$50,000 - \$59,999	73	14.5
\$60,000 - \$69,999	39	7.7
\$70,000 - \$79,999	40	7.9
\$80,000 - \$89,999	23	4.5
\$90,000 - \$99,999	19	3.8
\$100,000 - \$149,999	32	6.3
More than \$150,000	9	1.8
Total	506	100.0
Race		
Black/African American	89	17.6
Asian	64	12.6
Native American	78	15.4
White/Caucasian	266	52.6
Two or More Races	2	0.4
Other	7	1.4
Total	506	100.0
Marital Status		
Never Married	74	14.6
Cohabiting	5	1.0
Married	419	82.8
Separated	4	0.8
Divorced	4	0.8
Total	506	100.0

The composite reliability ranged from .847 to .935, meeting the adequacy range of .70 to .95 (Hair et al., 2016). The average variance extracted (AVE) values for each construct were higher than .50, ranging from .544 to .671. Additionally, the outer loadings were significant ($p < .001$),

indicating convergent validity. The discriminant validity of the measurement model was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion shown in Table 4. The square root of AVE for each construct was greater than the correlation between other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and the confidence intervals of Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios did not include 1, further verifying discriminant validity (H. J. Kang et al., 2021).

Table 3: Measurement Model Results

Construct/Item	Loading	T-value	Cronbach's α	Rho A	CR	AVE
CR			.924	.924	.935	.544
CRes1	.751	30.775***				
CRes2	.734	36.553***				
CRes3	.749	30.114***				
CRes4	.744	38.537***				
CRes5	.754	26.896***				
CRes6	.713	31.852***				
CRes7	.758	32.594***				
CRes8	.704	31.456***				
CRes9	.716	35.162***				
CRes10	.726	29.401***				
CRes11	.747	34.352***				
CRes12	.749	30.495***				
PWB			.820	.854	.847	.582
PWB1	.674	15.302***				
PWB2	.671	12.937***				
PWB3	.623	10.605***				
PWB4	.763	29.937***				
PWB5	.747	23.309***				
PWB6	.677	13.191***				
JS			.754	.755	.859	.671
JS1	.802	37.942***				
JS2	.836	49.241***				
JS3	.818	46.707***				
OC			.748	.749	.856	.665
OC1	.817	46.134***				
OC2	.819	49.082***				
OC3	.810	43.897***				

Note. CR = Crisis Response; PWB = Psychological Well-Being; JS = Job Satisfaction; OC = Organizational Commitment; *** $p < .001$

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

Construct	1	2	3	4
CR	.822			
JS	.761	.818		
OC	.737	.802	.815	
PWB	.516	.485	.515	.695

Note. Values of the square root of AVE are in bold on the diagonal, and the bivariate correlation coefficients are in lower triangular. CR = Crisis Response; PWB = Psychological Well-Being; JS = Job Satisfaction; OC = Organizational Commitment.

Structural Model

Since the measurement model results were satisfactory, the structural model was assessed. The coefficient of determination (R^2), f^2 effect size, and statistical significance and relevance of the path coefficients were assessed to evaluate the structural model. Collinearity was determined not to be a concern since the VIF values of all constructs ranged from 1.00 to 1.36, under the recommended

value of 3.00. Next, R^2 values were weak to moderate, ranging from .265 to .693, as shown in Figure 2. However, since R^2 values are dependent on the number of predictor constructs, the lower values were determined to be acceptable for a smaller number of predictor constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2016).

Table 5: Effect Size Analysis

Path	f^2 Value	Effect Size
CR → PWB	0.360	Large
CR → JS	0.882	Large
PWB → JS	0.027	Small
CR → OC	1.401	Large
PWB → OC	0.034	Small

Note. CR = Crisis Response; PWB = Psychological Well-Being; JS = Job Satisfaction; OC = Organizational Commitment

The effect size of f^2 were evaluated next and are described in Table 5. Values greater than 0.15 indicate medium effect and greater than 0.35 indicate large effect (Cohen, 2013). In this study, the f^2 values of each construct on the latent variables ranged from 0.027 to 1.401, indicating small (effect of psychological well-being) to large (effect of crisis response) effects. Figure 2 illustrates the results of the direct relationships in the research model, including significant path coefficients and R^2 values. The effect of crisis response on psychological wellbeing was positive and significant ($\beta = .514$, $t = 12.536$, $p < .001$), supporting hypothesis 1. Furthermore, effective crisis response also affected job satisfaction ($\beta = .699$, $t = 19.281$, $p < .001$) and organizational commitment ($\beta = .765$, $t = 23.527$, $p < .001$) positively, supporting hypotheses 2 and 3 respectively. Additionally, psychological wellbeing had a significant and positive effect on both job satisfaction ($\beta = .123$, $t = 3.722$, $p < .001$) and organizational commitment ($\beta = .119$, $t = 3.931$, $p < .001$).

Mediation Effects

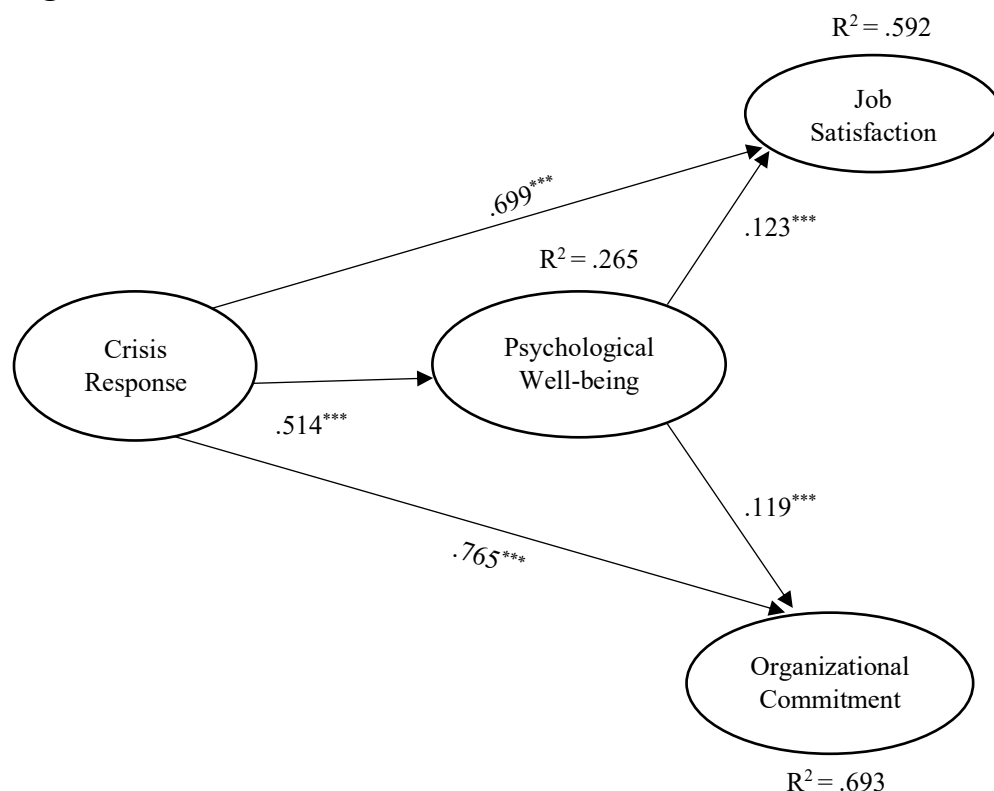
This study implemented the mediation analysis method recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008). The mediation effects were assessed using bootstrapping, and the results of the mediation analysis are demonstrated in Table 6. Since the 95% confidence interval did not include zero, statistical significance is established, and both mediation hypotheses were supported. Psychological well-being mediated the relationship between crisis response and job satisfaction ($\beta = .063$, $t = 3.428$, $p < .001$), supporting hypotheses 3. Hypothesis 5 was also supported as psychological well-being also mediated the relationship between crisis response and organizational commitment ($\beta = .061$, $t = 3.612$, $p < .001$).

Table 6: Mediation Analysis

Path	β	T-value	Confidence Interval (95%)	
			2.5%	97.5%
CR → PWB → JS	.063	3.428***	.032	.105
CR → PWB → OC	.061	3.612***	.033	.099

Note. CR = Crisis Response; PWB = Psychological Well-Being; JS = Job Satisfaction; OC = Organizational Commitment; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 2: Structural Model Results



Discussions and Conclusions

This research aimed to analyze the impact of crisis response of hospitality industry organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic on employees. The research model was proposed to assess the impact of organizational crisis response during the COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality industry employees' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Furthermore, the mediating relationships between effective crisis response and employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment through their psychological well-being were also assessed. Effective crisis response by hospitality industry organizations positively affected employees' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Hospitality industry employees are already beset with higher levels of job stress (Wang et al., 2020) because of the nature of the occupation and the industry. The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the negative characteristics of the hospitality industry and impacted employees' mental health and well-being (Bufquin et al., 2021), along with other attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. This study indicates that organizations could help alleviate factors impacting employees' psychological well-being through a successful crisis response strategy and boost their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

This research also revealed that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, effective crisis response impacted hospitality industry employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment through their psychological well-being. Following the social exchange theory, hospitality industry employees who perceive organizational support through efficient crisis response and

communication are more likely to harbor positive sentiments toward their organization as reflected by their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, these positive outcomes are grounded in the employees' psychological well-being, especially in a crisis. Previous studies have already established the importance of hospitality industry employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment in advancing employees' constructive behaviors (Wong et al., 2021). They have also been related to reducing turnover intentions among hospitality industry employees (Hsiao et al., 2019), making these emotions even more desirable and vital in the hospitality industry.

Theoretical Implications

Crisis communication literature in the hospitality and tourism industry has grown over the course of the past decade (Barbe & Pennington-Gray, 2018); however, the investigation of specific crisis response strategies and theories is still deficient (Liu et al., 2015; Liu-Lastres et al., 2020; Rousaki & Alcott, 2006), particularly when examining crisis response messages on employee outcomes (Guzzo et al., 2021). This study's investigation of SCCT explored an area of an organization's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and how this affected hospitality industry employees' outcomes. SCCT strategies have been primarily used in public relations literature or with implications related to public perceptions directed towards external stakeholders. Subsequently, this research expands the actions of the organizations' response strategies and messaging.

Crisis response is an under-investigated issue in the hospitality industry (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019), and this study establishes its significance for hospitality industry organizations. The findings from this study expand the scholarship on hospitality organizations' crisis response and communication strategies. Furthermore, crisis response literature focused on internal stakeholders and employees is negligent (Wut et al., 2021). The insights from this research provide the foundation for employee-related crisis response in the hospitality industry and its impact on desirable employee outcomes. Organizations focus their crisis response strategy mainly on their external stakeholders (Liu et al., 2016; Morakabati et al., 2017), producing research primarily in the area of public relations (Sellnow & Seeger, 2021). As such, this research sets the groundwork for hospitality organizations to include their human resources in their crisis management, crisis communication, and crisis response strategies.

This research demonstrates that organizations can enhance employees' well-being, satisfaction, and commitment even in times of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, it extends the literature on crisis communication by highlighting the importance of effective crisis response strategies focused on the employees. Hospitality industry employees already deal with the negative occupational characteristics of the industry (Hsu et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020), and these negative stressors are heightened during a crisis. Due to the high rate of organizational and industry turnover in the hospitality industry (Chang & Busser, 2020), it is critical to identify antecedents to positive employee-related outcomes, especially during a crisis.

This research advances the research on the psychological well-being of hospitality industry employees by investigating it through the viewing lenses of a crisis. Although psychological well-being has been linked with organizational outcomes in the hospitality industry (Sirgy, 2019), the results of this research support organizational behavior literature in the hospitality industry by reinforcing the importance of psychological well-being in the successful implementation of crisis

management strategies. This is vital in the hospitality industry since employees typically deal with emotional labor and job stress; therefore, psychological well-being is crucial.

The current study has expanded the methodology, research design, and statistical analysis of existing post-crisis communication and crisis response research. Coombs and Holladay (2008) identified that case study methods were the primary statistical/analysis method, which remains consistent with crisis management literature in hospitality, according to Wut et al. (2021). Although the descriptive data presented by these studies can be useful, there remain limitations to understanding how stakeholders respond to crisis message strategies (Coombs & Holladay, 2008). Furthermore, case studies frequently offer little theoretical insight and generalizability when investigating crisis communication (Dawar & Pillutla, 2000; Dean, 2004; Wut et al., 2021).

Since the early 2000s, studies have begun shifting to experimental design research (Babbie, 2020), capturing how stakeholders perceive crisis communication response strategies and how it affects their response to the organization. Approaching research using experimental design also builds crisis communication theory (e.g., Huang et al., 2005). The current study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design, employing PLS-SEM. According to Wut et al.'s (2021) crisis management research review, only 5.9 percent or 30 studies employed structural equation modeling, and even fewer studies adopted PLS-SEM from 1985 to 2020 in the hospitality and tourism industry. Thus, this study utilized analytical techniques that have been a rarity in crisis communication and response literature. As such, this study provides empirical evidence for hospitality industry employees' psychological well-being through an organization's successful crisis response strategy to boost their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Practical Implications

This research has several implications for hospitality industry managers. The findings of this study signify that hospitality industry organizations should include their internal stakeholders in their crisis management and crisis communication strategies, especially crisis response. Employees' perceptions of their organizations' crisis response will influence not only their levels of psychological well-being but also their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Furthermore, crisis response from the organization should be "timely, transparent, and robust" (Filimonau et al., 2020, p. 10). Hence, hospitality organizations should implement a consistent and honest communication strategy for their employees.

Hospitality industry employees deal with traditional occupational stressors; crisis events only exacerbate these conditions due to the uncertainty of crises and additional stressors, lowering their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Therefore, human resource managers, hospitality marketers, and crisis managers in the hospitality industry managers should attempt to reduce these stressors through effective crisis response and communication. Doing so will help enhance employees' satisfaction and commitment, along with and as a result of their enhanced psychological well-being. Findings from this research also confirm that effective organizational communication is a vital facet of high-performance human resources practices, in addition to leadership, training and development, and organizational support, that foster hospitality industry employees' well-being (Agarwal, 2021). These practices are crucial and should be highlighted, especially during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Limitations and Future Research

As is the case with all research, this study had certain limitations. Firstly, convenience sampling was used to enroll respondents for this research. Although this method affords convenience to the researchers and flexibility to the participants, the results should not be generalized. Additionally, this study recruited participants from a variety of sectors within the hospitality industry. Results may vary depending on the hospitality industry sector, as each sector had its unique struggles during the COVID-19 pandemic. Future research should endeavor to assess employee outcomes of effective crisis response and crisis communication outcomes for specific industry sectors to provide more meaningful implications. Furthermore, an additional investigation could be undertaken to assess the intrinsic and extrinsic forms of employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction and work motivation.

To further advance the theoretical implications of SCCT in the hospitality industry, future studies should investigate specific crisis response strategies, further expanding on the three types of information are necessary to convey in a crisis response message and the four SCCT strategies (denial, diminishment, rebuilding, and bolstering) on employee perceptions. Finally, while this research revealed significant relationships between effective crisis response, employees' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, additional employee outcomes must be analyzed. Future research should seek to identify the impact of crisis response on additional attitudinal outcomes such as organizational trust and perceived organizational support and behavioral outcomes, including organizational citizenship behavior and service innovation behavior, that are critical during a crisis.

References

- Adamu, A. A., & Mohamad, B. (2019). A reliable and valid measurement scale for assessing internal crisis communication. *Journal of Communication Management*, 23(2), 90-108.
- Agarwal, P. (2021). Shattered but smiling: Human resource management and the well-being of hotel employees during COVID-19. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 93, 1-10.
- Ali, F., Kim, W. G., Li, J. J., & Cobanoglu, C. (2018). A comparative study of covariance and partial least squares based structural equation modelling in hospitality and tourism research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(1), 416-435.
- Ariza-Montes, A., Hernández-Perlines, F., Han, H., & Law, R. (2019). Human dimension of the hospitality industry: Working conditions and psychological well-being among European servers. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 41, 138-147.
- Arjona-Fuentes, J. M., Ariza-Montes, A., Han, H., & Law, R. (2019). Silent threat of presenteeism in the hospitality industry: Examining individual, organizational and physical/mental health factors. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 82, 191-198.
- Babbie, E. R. (2020). *The practice of social research*. Cengage Learning.
- Bajrami, D. D., Terzić, A., Petrović, M. D., Radovanović, M., Tretiakova, T. N., & Hadoud, A. (2021). Will we have the same employees in hospitality after all? The impact of COVID-19 on employees' work attitudes and turnover intentions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 94, 1-9.
- Baker, M. A., & Kim, K. (2020). Dealing with customer incivility: The effects of managerial support on employee psychological well-being and quality-of-life. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 87, 1-11.
- Barbe, D., & Pennington-Gray, L. (2018). Using situational crisis communication theory to understand Orlando hotels' Twitter response to three crises in the summer of 2016. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 1(3), 258-275.
- Bufquin, D., Park, J. Y., Back, R. M., de Souza Meira, J. V., & Hight, S. K. (2021). Employee work status, mental health, substance use, and career turnover intentions: An examination of restaurant employees during COVID-19. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 93, 1-9.

- Chang, W., & Busser, J. A. (2020). Hospitality career retention: The role of contextual factors and thriving at work. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32, 193-211.
- Choi, H. M., Mohammad, A. A., & Kim, W. G. (2019). Understanding hotel frontline employees' emotional intelligence, emotional labor, job stress, coping strategies and burnout. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 82, 199-208.
- Choi, Y., & Lin, Y. H. (2009). Consumer responses to Mattel product recalls posted on online bulletin boards: Exploring two types of emotion. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 21(2), 198-207.
- Cobanoglu, C., Cavusoglu, M., & Turktarhan, G. (2021). A beginner's guide and best practices for using crowdsourcing platforms for survey research: The case of Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). *Journal of Global Business Insights*, 6(1), 92-97.
- Cohen, J. (2013). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Academic.
- Coombs, W. T. (2009). Conceptualizing crisis communication. In R. L. Heath, & H. D. O'Hair (Eds), *Handbook of risk and crisis communication* (pp. 99-118). Routledge.
- Coombs, W. T. (2012). *Ongoing crisis communications: Planning, managing, responding*. Sage.
- Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2008). Comparing apology to equivalent crisis response strategies: Clarifying apology's role and value in crisis communication. *Public Relations Review*, 34(3), 252-257.
- Dawar, N., & Pillutla, M. M. (2000). Impact of product-harm crises on brand equity: The moderating role of consumer expectations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 37(2), 215-226.
- Dean, D. H. (2004). Consumer reaction to negative publicity: Effects of corporate reputation, response, and responsibility for a crisis event. *The Journal of Business Communication*, 41(2), 192-211.
- Dorta-Afonso, D., González-de-la-Rosa, M., García-Rodríguez, F. J., & Romero-Domínguez, L. (2021). Effects of high-performance work systems (HPWS) on hospitality employees' outcomes through their organizational commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction. *Sustainability*, 13(6), 1-18.
- Filimonau, V., Derqui, B., & Matute, J. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic and organizational commitment of senior hotel managers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 91, 1-13.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.
- Frandsen, F., & Johansen, W. (2011). The study of internal crisis communication: Towards an integrative framework. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 16(4), 347-361.
- Grossi, E., & Compare, A. (2014). Psychological general well-being index (PGWB). *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-being*, 12, 5152-5156.
- Guzzo, R. F., Wang, X., Madera, J. M., & Abbott, J. (2021). Organizational trust in times of COVID-19: Hospitality employees' affective responses to managers' communication. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 93, 1-11.
- Hair Jr, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C., & Sarstedt, M. (2016). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)*. Sage.
- Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2011). PLS-SEM: Indeed a silver bullet. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 19(2), 139 -152.
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1), 2-24.
- He, J., Mao, Y., Morrison, A. M., & Coca-Stefaniak, J. A. (2020). On being warm and friendly: The effect of socially responsible human resource management on employee fears of the threats of COVID-19. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 33(1), 346-366.
- He, J., Morrison, A. M., & Zhang, H. (2019). Improving millennial employee well-being and task performance in the hospitality industry: The interactive effects of HRM and responsible leadership. *Sustainability*, 11(16), 1-19.
- Hsiao, A., Ma, E. J., Lloyd, K., & Reid, S. (2019). Organizational ethnic diversity's influence on hotel employees' satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention: Gender's moderating role. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 44(1), 76-108.
- Hsu, F. S., Liu, Y. A., & Tsaur, S. H. (2019). The impact of workplace bullying on hotel employees' well-being. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(4), 1702-1719.
- Huang, Y. H., Lin, Y. H., & Su, S. H. (2005). Crisis communicative strategies in Taiwan: Category, continuum, and cultural implication. *Public Relations Review*, 31(2), 229-238.
- Hunt, S. D., Chonko, L. B., & Wood, V. R. (1985). Organizational commitment and marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 49(1), 112-126.

- Kang, H. J., Cain, L., & Busser, J. A. (2021). The impact of living a calling on job outcomes. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 95, 1-13.
- Kang, H. J., Gatling, A., & Kim, J. (2015). The impact of supervisory support on organizational commitment, career satisfaction, and turnover intention for hospitality frontline employees. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 14(1), 68-89.
- Kang, S. E., Park, C., Lee, C. K., & Lee, S. (2021). The stress-induced impact of COVID-19 on tourism and hospitality workers. *Sustainability*, 13(3), 1-17.
- Karatepe, O. M., Saydam, M. B., & Okumus, F. (2021). COVID-19, mental health problems, and their detrimental effects on hotel employees' propensity to be late for work, absenteeism, and life satisfaction. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(7), 934-951.
- Lee, J. J., & Ok, C. (2012). Reducing burnout and enhancing job satisfaction: Critical role of hotel employees' emotional intelligence and emotional labor. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(4), 1101-1112.
- Liu-Lastres, B., Kim, H., & Ying, T. (2020). Learning from past crises: Evaluating hotels' online crisis responses to health crises. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 20(3), 372-378.
- Liu, B., Pennington-Gray, L., & Klemmer, L. (2015). Using social media in hotel crisis management: The case of bed bugs. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 6(2) 102-112.
- Liu, B., Pennington-Gray, L., & Krieger, J. (2016). Tourism crisis management: Can the extended parallel process model be used to understand crisis responses in the cruise industry? *Tourism Management*, 55, 310-321.
- Mahmood, A., Akhtar, M. N., Talat, U., Shuai, C., & Hyatt, J. C. (2019). Specific HR practices and employee commitment: The mediating role of job satisfaction. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 41(3), 420-435.
- Mao, Y., He, J., Morrison, A. M., & Andres Coca-Stefaniak, J. (2020). Effects of tourism CSR on employee psychological capital in the COVID-19 crisis: From the perspective of conservation of resources theory. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(19), 1-19.
- Mazzei, A., & Ravazzani, S. (2011). Manager-employee communication during a crisis: The missing link. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 16(3), 243-254.
- Mistry, T. G., Hight, S. K., Okumus, F., & Terrah, A. (2021). Managers from heaven: How do hospitality employees describe good managers? *International Hospitality Review*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IHR-09-2020-0055>
- Morakabati, Y., Page, S. J., & Fletcher, J. (2017). Emergency management and tourism stakeholder responses to crises: A global survey. *Journal of Travel Research*, 56(3), 299-316.
- Nanu, L., Ali, F., Berezina, K., & Cobanoglu, C. (2020). The effect of hotel lobby design on booking intentions: An intergenerational examination. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 89, 1-10.
- Ngoc Su, D., Luc Tra, D., Thi Huynh, H. M., Nguyen, H. H. T., & O'Mahony, B. (2021). Enhancing resilience in the Covid-19 crisis: Lessons from human resource management practices in Vietnam. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(22), 1-17.
- Nisar, Q. A., Haider, S., Ali, F., Naz, S., & Ryu, K. (2021). Depletion of psychological, financial, and social resources in the hospitality sector during the pandemic. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 93, 1-9.
- Park, E., Kim, W. H., & Kim, S. B. (2020). Tracking tourism and hospitality employees' real-time perceptions and emotions in an online community during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Current Issues in Tourism*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1823336>
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Assessing mediation in communication research. In A. F. Hayes, M. D. Slater, & L. B. Snyder (Eds.), *The SAGE sourcebook of advanced data analysis methods for communication research* (pp. 13-54). Sage.
- Ritchie, B. W., & Jiang, Y. (2019). A review of research on tourism risk, crisis and disaster management: Launching the Annals of Tourism Research curated collection on tourism risk, crisis and disaster management. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 79, 1-15
- Rosemberg, M. A. S., Adams, M., Polick, C., Li, W. V., Dang, J., & Tsai, J. H. C. (2021). COVID-19 and mental health of food retail, food service, and hospitality workers. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*, 18(4-5), 169-179.
- Rousaki, B., & Alcott, P. (2006). Exploring the crisis readiness perceptions of hotel managers in the UK. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 7(1), 27-38.

- Safavi, H. P., & Karatepe, O. M. (2018). High-performance work practices and hotel employee outcomes: The mediating role of career adaptability. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(2), 1112–1133.
- Said, H., & Tanova, C. (2021). Workplace bullying in the hospitality industry: A hindrance to the employee mindfulness state and a source of emotional exhaustion. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 96, 1-11.
- Sellnow, T. L., & Seeger, M. W. (2021). *Theorizing crisis communication*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Sirgy, J. M. (2019). Promoting quality-of-life and well-being research in hospitality and tourism. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 36(1), 1-13.
- Sonmez, S., Apostolopoulos, Y., Lemke, M. K., Hsieh, Y. C. J., & Karwowski, W. (2017). Complexity of occupational health in the hospitality industry: Dynamic simulation modeling to advance immigrant worker health. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 67, 95-105.
- Varga, S., Mistry, T. G., Ali, F., & Cobanoglu, C. (2021). Employee perceptions of wellness programs in the Hospitality Industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 33(10), 3331–3354.
- Vo-Thanh, T., Vu, T. V., Nguyen, N. P., Nguyen, D. V., Zaman, M., & Chi, H. (2020). How does hotel employees' satisfaction with the organization's COVID-19 responses affect job insecurity and job performance? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(6), 1-19.
- Wang, X., Guchait, P., & Paşamehmetoğlu, A. (2020). Why should errors be tolerated? Perceived organizational support, organization-based self-esteem and psychological well-being. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32(5), 1987-2006.
- Weick, K. E. (1988). Enacted sensemaking in crisis situations. *Journal of Management Studies*, 25(4), 305-317.
- Wong, A. K. F., Kim, S. S., Kim, J., & Han, H. (2021). How the COVID-19 pandemic affected hotel employee stress: Employee perceptions of occupational stressors and their consequences. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 93, 1-10.
- Wut, T. M., Xu, J. B., & Wong, S. M. (2021). Crisis management research (1985–2020) in the hospitality and tourism industry: A review and research agenda. *Tourism Management*, 85, 1-28.
- Yan, J., Kim, S., Zhang, S. X., Foo, M. D., Alvarez-Risco, A., Del-Aguila-Arcentales, S., & Yáñez, J. A. (2021). Hospitality workers' COVID-19 risk perception and depression: A contingent model based on transactional theory of stress model. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 95, 1-11.
- Yu, J., Park, J., & Hyun, S. S. (2021). Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on employees' work stress, well-being, mental health, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee-customer identification. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 30(5), 1-20.

Appendix: Measurement Items

Crisis Response:

1. I have been clearly informed by my employer internally about external responses to be used during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. I feel like my employer is prepared for how to communicate with employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. My employer's effective internal communication during the COVID-19 pandemic motivates me to serve as an ambassador by communicating a positive opinion about my organization with customers/guests.
4. I have been well informed by my employer during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the normal situation.
5. In my opinion, my employer tries to reduce employees' anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic.
6. My employer tries to defend its employees from external criticism during the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. I have been frequently informed by my employer about its operational and financial situation during the COVID-19 pandemic.
8. My employer communicates to employees its commitment to protecting their welfare and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.
9. Internal communication from my employer has been more factual in disclosing information relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.
10. My employer involves representatives of the employees in the crisis management team.
11. Communication with employees is very important for my employer during the COVID-19 pandemic.
12. My employer's response to my questions during the COVID-19 pandemic gives me job satisfaction.

Psychological Well-being:

1. I have been bothered by nervousness or my *nerves* during the past month.
2. I felt a lack of energy, pep, or vitality during the past month.
3. I felt downhearted and blue during the past month.
4. I was emotionally stable and sure of myself during the past month.
5. I felt cheerful, lighthearted during the past month.
6. I felt tired, worn out, used up, or exhausted during the past month.

Job Satisfaction:

1. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.
2. In general, I like working in my job.
3. I will recommend my job to other people.

Organizational Commitment:

1. I feel like part of the family at my organization.
2. I feel emotionally attached to this organization.
3. I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.