

## **A MANIFEST CONTENT ANALYSIS OF WEB CONTENTS ON THE SECOND CAREER PHENOMENON AMONG HOSPITALITY WORKERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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### **Abstract**

During the COVID-19 health crisis, economic downturns have been observed in the different parts of the world. Retrenchments brought by this economic crisis gained the attention of researchers, especially on the workers' second career choices after losing employment. However, second career investigations in hospitality industry remains a research imperative to date. To contribute to the literature on hospitality workers' second career phenomenon, this manifest content analysis (MCA) study was conducted to examine web contents, such as online news articles and YouTube videos featuring second career choices of furloughed hospitality industry employees during the pandemic. Using the search words "COVID-19", "hotels", "restaurants", and "second career", a total of 70 articles and videos were identified with their different stories using the surface details descriptively analyzed. Findings revealed that most featured workers in the hospitality industry are from North America (75.71%), male (60.61%), those who had their first career experience in restaurant industry (94.29%), in which most of them were in North America (41.57%), and those who had chosen their second career in business and management (42.86%). The study's limitation to online news articles and YouTube videos, and recommendation for further studies were also discussed, including its implication to the second career phenomenon studies. Implications of the study's findings, limitations and recommendations were also discussed.

*Keywords: hospitality workers, second career phenomenon, COVID-19 pandemic, hotel, restaurant, manifest content analysis*

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### **Introduction**

In 2020, the world has been gravely affected by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) which caused a "pandemic" as identified by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). Due to this health crisis, several lockdowns were implemented in different parts of the world causing economic havoc. The horrors brought by this pandemic have several impacts on the daily lives of people all



over the world, these impacts can be split into several categories, such as healthcare, economic, and social impacts (Haleem et al., 2020).

One of the sectors that took a massive hit from the effects of the pandemic was the tourism sector and the hospitality industry. Notably, the effects the pandemic had on the sector can be considered even more grave than those of notable phenomena in the past, such as 9/11, SARS, and the financial crisis that happened in 2008 (Djeebet, 2020). As a result, many hotels and restaurants have no choice but to halt their operations, and some ultimately need to close their businesses (Thams et al., 2020; Hafsa, 2020), leading to revenue loss (Gursoy & Chi, 2020), and a massive rise in unemployment which Sönmez et al. (2020) believed to be temporary, although not all workers will be able to take their jobs back. Due to this event, small businesses are at risk of completely closing, with some commentators projecting that up to 75 % of small businesses in the US and Europe struggle and might not reopen even after the pandemic (Baum & Hai, 2020).

Interestingly, the news articles and YouTube videos are also promising corpora of data to understand the landscape of workers losing their jobs in the hospitality industry and seeking new career opportunities outside of it. It should be noted that several furloughed hospitality employees have yet to make their decisions clear, if they still want to come back to their previous career, while many are now solidifying their decisions to switch careers over concerns of pay and their safety (Lalley, 2020). Therefore, workers who were recently unemployed as an effect of the pandemic continue to be a challenge for the whole sector. Furthermore, current research studies briefly outlined the circumstances employees managed to surpass to achieve excellence in their transitioned careers. Thus, this study aims examine the hospitality industry employees who opted for a second career choice during the pandemic via manifest content analysis, the utilization of unobtrusive research designs, and to ameliorate the studies on second career phenomenon and the hospitality industry. This study may provide further implications, ideas, and inferences on studies concerning the second career phenomenon.

## **Theoretical Background**

### *Theoretical Framing*

In understanding the landscape of the second career phenomenon among retrenched tourism and hospitality employees during the COVID-19 pandemic, this manifest content analysis study is anchored on the Savickas (1997) career construction theory. The theory posits that “individuals with higher career adaptability possess more significant transactional competencies and more psychosocial resources that enable them to adapt to and successfully deal with tasks, transitions, and traumas in their careers” (Lee et al., 2021, p. 2). Notably, the said theory raises the individuals’ ability to shift from their accustomed career to a new one, despite the challenges. Impliedly, the retrenched hospitality and tourism industry workers during the pandemic may have innate career



adaptability that ushered them smoothly in their transition to second career jobs. Such adaptability may also be responsible for enabling them to manage and survive in the novel work environment they were currently employed in.

### *Literature Review*

#### *Second Career*

According to Helppie-McFall & Sonnega (2017), second career employment is defined as employment after leaving a long-term career position. It is apparent that only a few have ventured to study about second career phenomenon. Career transition can be defined as “the period during which an individual objectively takes on a different role and/or subjectively changes orientation to a role” (Fernandez et al., 2008, p.2). Notably, Helppie-McFall and Sonnega, (2017) emphasized that the option of a second career is most likely to be relevant for individuals who are at risk of burnout or becoming physically or cognitively unable to successfully continue in their current careers. A study also showed how an awareness of time (i.e., of the future) and the ability to take practical steps (specific strategies) both play important roles in the transition to a second career (Vilanova & Puig, 2016). Interestingly, push factors fulfill an important role in career transitions, especially in leaving their prior career professions. Different motivations to shift to second career were also present (Coppe et al., 2021). Additionally, career transitions destabilize established identities and can provoke self-doubt, anxiety (Alvesson et al., 2008; Black & Warhurst, 2018). Notably, studies on second career among the furloughed hospitality industry employees remain a research imperative to date, hence this qualitative investigation.

#### *COVID-19 Pandemic and Hospitality Jobs*

The COVID-19 pandemic brought horrors to the whole world and has presented numerous unprecedented circumstances to the hospitality industry (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021). This phenomenon, to this day, is affecting the sector, making it struggle to come back on its feet. The scope of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is rather large and widespread, it is expected that it will result in a massive shift in the economic balance, with many vocations that will cease to operate while some chosen ones will have a massive increase in demand (Kramer & Kramer, 2020). Furthermore, employees in the hospitality industry now describe returning to work, a danger to their health, thus affecting their job satisfaction (Demirović Bajrami et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the restaurant industry and employees in the worst possible way (Bufquin et al., 2021). With COVID-19 spreading rapidly, the world travel and tourism industry were among the hardest hit (Abbas et al., 2021). A major effect the pandemic had that is not only specific to the hospitality industry, but also other sectors, is the copious amounts of workers who lost their jobs (Tappe & Luhby, 2020). According to Manoharan et al. (2021), many workers that do accommodations and food-related work have



lost their jobs. Moreover, numerous studies have shown that the pandemic caused the fall of businesses in the hospitality and tourism sector along with its workers. On one hand, effects on businesses include the closure of many small establishments (Brewer & Sebby, 2021; Hafsa, 2020), suspension of business operations (Thams et al., 2020), financial losses (Dube et al., 2020; Solomon, 2020) and a decline in economic activities (Kabir et al., 2020). On the other hand, effects on industry workers include an increased sense of hygiene and sanitation (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021), increased concerns on workplace safety, (Kim et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2021) and increased stress levels that concern the emotional health of laid off and future workers (Sönmez et al., 2020; Birtch et al., 2021). The pandemic has confronted the hospitality industry with an unprecedented challenge (Gursoy & Chi, 2020). The tourism and hospitality industry currently faces one of its most serious operational, commercial, and financial crises as result of the worldwide spread of COVID-19 (Thams et al., 2020).

It is apparent that the COVID-19 pandemic made an immense impact not just on the economy but also on the human resource management of both the hospitality and tourism industry hence, actions that improve relationship management are imposed on the workers to facilitate their health and welfare (González-Torres et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021). Multiskilling and professional development have been the course of action of affected individuals giving way to career optimism as a means to cope with the widespread destruction (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021; Kramer & Kramer, 2020; Manoharan et al., 2021; McGuire et al., 2017; McGinley, 2018; Helppie-McFall & Sonnega, 2017). Subsequently, the management utilized content marketing effectively enforcing innovations with the purpose of enticing and regaining the trust of customers in their service (Brewer & Sebby, 2021; Gursoy & Chi, 2020; Dube et al., 2020; Duarte Alonso et al., 2020; Jeon & Yang, 2021).

## **Methods**

### *Research Design*

The manifest content analysis (MCA) was utilized in this study. The MCA, according to Haggarty (1996), involves analyzing the appearance of a particular word or content in textual material. The method is also defined as describing what is occurring on the surface, what is and present, and as “staying close to the text” (Kondracki, et al., 2002). The texts analyzed in MCA are to be described (Graneheim et al., 2017). Specifically, the observable characteristics (manifest) of the news articles and YouTube videos including the second career choice of hospitality workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, their location, their first career, and the month of publication were considered in this investigation. Apparently, “big data” is needed for such investigation, in which MCA is significantly appropriate (Dooley, 2016).

### *Data Collection and Analysis*



The process of MCA is comprised of choosing data sources and data analysis and interpreting the results (Dooley, 2016). For the data source, the researchers utilized online news articles and YouTube videos to become the bases of data in this investigation. According to Waters & Jones (2011), YouTube videos are increasingly being used by organizations to educate and inform just as much as they are to entertain. User-generated content, such as news articles (Figure 1) on various websites related to tourism all over the world have been utilized in this investigation. These articles were found in Google, while videos were found in YouTube using search words, such as “tourism industry covid-19” & “hospitality industry COVID-19”. The data gathered through articles and videos since February 2020 were listed, over 60 news articles and ten YouTube videos were collected and underwent descriptive analysis.

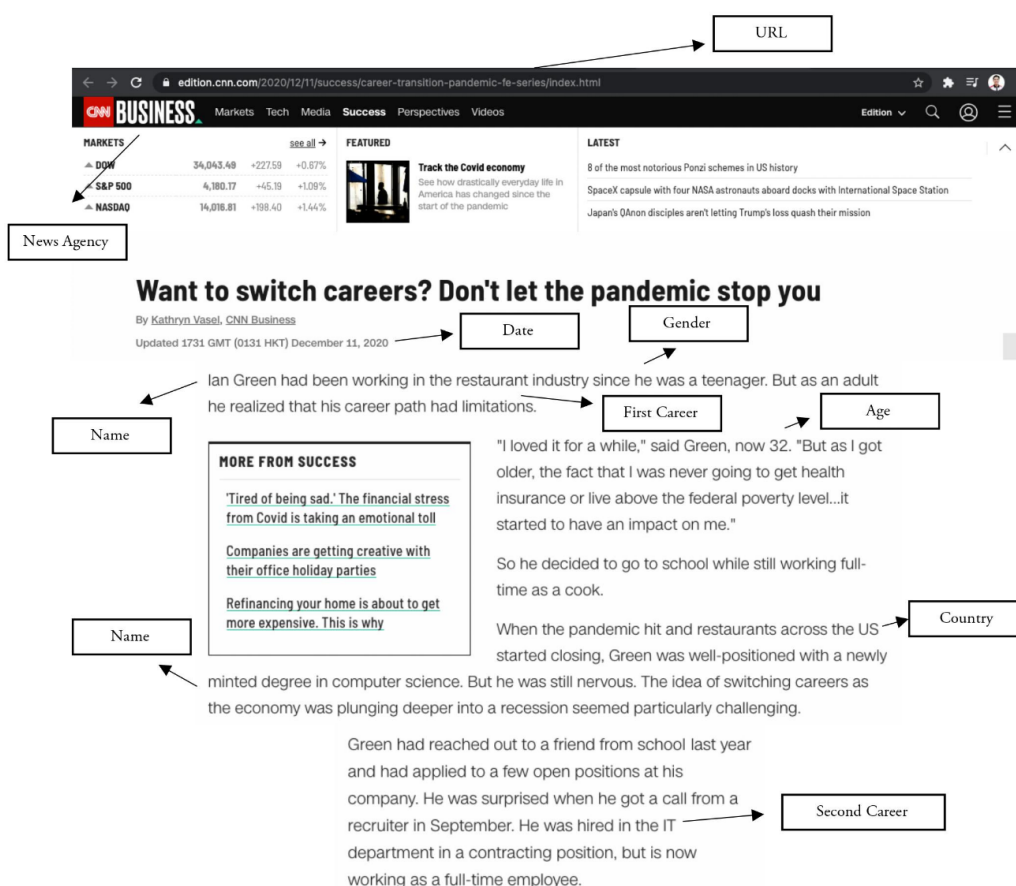


Figure 1. Identification of Data from Online News Articles

## Results

### *Distribution of second career choice news articles and videos per continent*

Table 1 presents the results of the descriptive analysis on the news articles and YouTube videos that tell stories about workers in the hospitality industry who had experienced the second career phenomenon. It is intriguing that, out of the



70 articles and videos, countries located in North America (75.71%) had the most amount of news articles and YouTube videos, followed by countries in Oceania (11.43%), Asia (7.14%), Europe (4.29%) and with countries within the Transcontinental area of Europe & Asia (1.43%) having the least.

**Table 1.** Distribution of News Articles and YouTube Videos based on the continent of origin (n=70)

Continent	March 2020 - August 2020	September 2020 - March 2021	Total
North America	24	29	53
Oceania	3	5	8
Europe	2	1	3
Asia	4	1	5
Europe & Asia (Transcontinental)	1	0	1

*Distribution of hospitality workers' gender, age, and years in industry*

Interestingly, Table 2 indicates the distribution of the restaurant and hotel workers based on their genders. As shown, majority of the hospitality workers were in the restaurant industry (94.29%), and surprisingly, most of that consisted of male workers (60.61%), followed by female workers (39.39%).

**Table 2.** Profile of retrenched hospitality workers based on their genders (n=70)

First Career	Male	Female	Total
Restaurant	40	26	66
Hotel	1	3	4

*Distribution of chosen career fields for hospitality workers' second career*

Further, Table 3 distributes the new career fields that people who had experienced the second career phenomena chose. Careers in the field of business, management, and administration (42.86%) the most, subsequently careers in the fields of education (15.71%), arts, culture, and entertainment (11.43%), community and social services (10%), science and technology (7.14%), installation, repair, and maintenance (7.14%), and health & medicine (4.29%) came after, with farming, fishing, and forestry (1.43%) were found to have the least of career transfers.



**Table 3.** Distribution of chosen career fields of hospitality workers as their second career (n=70)

Career	Total
Business, management, and administration	30
Education	11
Arts, culture, and entertainment	8
Community and social services	7
Science and technology	5
Installation, repair, and maintenance	5
Health and medicine	3
Farming, fishing, and forestry	1

*Comparison of chosen locations for the first and second career per continent*

Finally, Table 4 presents a comparison of the results of the descriptive analysis between the chosen locations of the worker's first career as well as the chosen location of the worker's second career. Astoundingly, worker's mostly chose countries located in North America as the location for their first careers (41.57%) and second careers (35.96%), followed by countries located in Asia for their first career (5.62%) and second career (3.37%), Oceania for their first career (3.37%) and second career (4.49%), Europe for their first career (2.25%) and second career (2.25%), while transcontinental countries had the least with countries in Europe and Asia having chosen as the location for worker's first career (1.12%) and none for the second career. However, it should be noted that not all articles and videos collected indicated the specific location for their first and second careers.

**Table 4.** Distribution of the chosen location between the first career choice and second career choice (n=89)

Continents:	Location of first career	Location of second career	Total
North America	37	32	69
Asia	5	3	8
Oceania	3	4	7
Europe	2	2	4
Europe & Asia (Transcontinental)	1	0	1



## Discussion

In this study, majority of the news articles and YouTube videos posted about the second career phenomenon of hospitality industry workers came from countries belonging to the North American continent. Notably, multiple regions within Asia, as well as some in North America and Europe are at serious risk of constant exposure to COVID-19 from China and other highly infected countries (Lau et al., 2020). Moreover, COVID-19 has significant negative impacts on the employment level in the overall US leisure and hospitality industry both in the long and short-run (Khan et al., 2020). Additionally, the United States emerges as the only developed country without universal health care and paid sick leave for all its workers (Sönmez et al., 2020). Hence, such results may be evident when the hospitality and tourism sector return to normal operations and bounce back.

Restaurant workers in the hospitality industry are mostly male. This fact might have been brought about because the profession is traditionally dominated by males (Gunders, 2008). Notably, over 93% of the restaurants in the United States are led by male chefs (Khalidi, 2020). Moreover, as disseminated by Anthony Bourdain, the reality is that most 21st century back of houses are testosterone-fueled, aggressive, and male-dominated spaces, thus, he correlated the roughness of the restaurant kitchen with tough, ball-busting guys (Druckman, 2010). More so, a claim by Sheila Dillon, a presenter for BBC Radio 4 stated that females have brought in great things to the professional kitchen, but in contrast said that women have always done the cooking that it is not seen as a real job, rather as a domestic task (Morgan, 2018). Hence, the industry standard should be based on skill and professionalism and must not be influenced by one's gender.

In terms of the worker's chosen second career, careers in line with the field of business, management, and administration showed to be prominent. Notably, during the pandemic, more and more people have wanted to become entrepreneurs, and it showed that many businesses have already started to show up during the phenomenon (Schroeder, 2020). Moreover, survey results have shown that one out of four women are considering a change in their careers as result of the pandemic (Castrillon, 2020). Additionally, self-employment provides an outlet for unemployed workers, as such, unemployed workers are about twice as likely to start a business as employed workers (Evans, & Leighton, 1990). The constructs of career construction theory by Savickas (1997), may be embodied in these findings, since these workers have adapted and have dealt with the challenges of unemployment and possible unemployment, guided them in their transition to their second career jobs, rather than going through without a job during the span of the pandemic. Such findings invite future researchers on career adaptability and successfully dealing with tasks and transitions, especially those set by the pandemic. Additionally, such results may be used by unemployed and employed workers when a change of career is necessary.





It is also striking that the locations for both first and second careers were majorly decided in countries in the North American continent. Yet, choosing the right career is important in ensuring that individuals lead rewarding lives; are motivated at their jobs, and can achieve remarkable productivity, thus setting the stage for organizational success and sustainability (Nyamwange, 2015). Furthermore, persons in the stable pattern group were significantly more likely to nominate professionals in their chosen fields as important career role models (Gianakos, 2002). Career opportunities and social climate are critical factors (Musumba et al., 2011). Hence, the location of a professional's first career may affect the performance at their job, and it may also influence them to reside in a specific location.

## **Conclusion**

This study sought to grasp the experiences of people from the hospitality industry who opted for a second career choice during the COVID-19 pandemic, when different workers were displaced. By utilizing the manifest content analysis study, provided with the data from the web, the surface data was explored. Different second career options were seen, especially in working for workers' new careers. Astonishingly, the findings of this study turned out that majority of the workers were found in the business industry as they transitioned from the hospitality industry. Nonetheless, the transition opened opportunities for better career development and growth. Consequently, the elucidation of online web contents on the second career phenomenon of hospitality workers opened a wide vitality on the improvements and opportunities in the said field.

Considering the deficit of studies on the second career phenomenon and the use of manifest content analysis, this study has rightfully utilized and delegated an unobtrusive research design to study a phenomenon worth taking. This study would bring forth and imply more research studies regarding the hospitality industry and second career phenomenon in the future. On the practical aspect, the findings of this investigation could be a springboard in empowering industries where furloughed hospitality workers are choosing their second careers. Moreover, some aspects in the tertiary education curriculum for hospitality courses (soft skills and technical skills) could be enhanced in line with the growing trends on second career among hospitality graduates locally and internationally.

## *Limitations and Recommendations*

While the study provides promising findings, certain limitations have been set and identified in its conduct. First, the investigation was limited only to the hospitality and tourism industry workers. Furthermore, the analysis of manifest (observable) content has been also limited to online news articles and YouTube videos, only which has already a set of "large data" or "thick data". The density of data mitigates studying the second career phenomenon within the hospitality and restaurant workers. Considering future research studies on the topic of the same may begin to utilize social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter,



especially if people subjected to the topic will share their stories on the said sites. Other aspects of jobs may also be studied upon considering that there were many displaced workers from different areas during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kramer & Kramer, 2020). Furthermore, other research designs may also be used in conducting future research studies by future researchers on the same topic to provide richer insights on the phenomenon.

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