

How important is the frontline uniform toward employee's self-efficacy? A case study of five-star hotel

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts (JTHCA)
2020, Vol. 12 (1) pp 15-33
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UiTM Press
Submit date: 30th June 2019
Accept date: 27th August 2019
Publish date: 29th February 2020

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Proposed citation:

Baharuddin, N., & Jamaluddin, M. R. (2020). How important is the frontline uniform toward employee's self-efficacy? A case study of five-star hotel, *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts*, 12(1), 15-33.

Abstract

In reality, uniform always represents pride, responsibility and also respect. It creates an image for the organization because the stakeholders will always associate uniform with the kind of services that they will receive. Even there are many significant findings on the importance of uniform toward self-efficacy, different scenario is observed in the hotel industry; where the literature discussing this issue is almost equal to none. How important is the uniform especially to the front-line operations remained to be answered? Hence, this study aimed to come out with a simple resolution of "Frontline uniform has an impact on employee's self-efficacy." The research used the five-star hotel segment as the case and studied the frontline staff. The research is quantitative where 253 respondents participated throughout two months of data collection by employing a snowball sampling technique. The data were analyzed using the PLS-SEM where the data was grouped in the proposed model before several alterations were done to come out with the model of employee's self-efficacy. The final model was able to provide an answer to the research questions where material, appropriateness, style, and functionality have a direct positive influence on the employee's self-efficacy of the five-star hotel segment. This study helped in filling the gap of the significant impact uniform has toward employee's happiness in performing their roles as the ambassador of the hotel. Besides, the hotel industry can use the findings of the study to examine the staff self-efficacy by using the simplified items finalized in the structural model. Finally, the ability of the researcher to reach the target respondents during the short time was the major limitation of the study that could be used as the opportunity to the future researcher. Using other star-rated lodging establishments or

hospitality segment, it will imply how critical uniform acts as the driver of self-efficacy to the front liners.

Keywords:

Uniform, Material, Appropriateness, Style, Functionality, Self-Efficacy, Hotel employees, Hotel employees' uniforms

1 Introduction

Uniforms in the service industry must meet a range of needs at different criteria attached to the sophistication levels of the job (Karch & Peters, 2017). In the hotel industry, employees' uniforms play an important role based on their job description. The most important department in the hotel is the frontline that comprised of the front desk and food and beverage department. The process of choosing a uniform is essential in the initial operation of the hotel. Choice of uniform, in particular, what to be worn in the workplace is not within the daily decision-making process of any individual. However, it has a potential impact on both physical and mental comfort and may impact the way the individual conducts his or her activities within the organization (Sutter, 2018). The individual dress is interlinked with one's identity (Entwistle, 2015) and clothing is found to shape the wearer's self-perception and subsequent behaviour (Adam & Galinsky, 2012; Karl, Hall, & Peluchette, 2013). Furthermore, uniforms can enhance the organization's presentation. Consequently, uniformly designed, developed, and manufactured for workers can assist in presenting sustainability identity and improving work efficiency (Cao, Dickson, Cobb, Carper, Scudder, & Wong, 2015).

In the service industries primarily hospitality sectors, the uniform is a must and the outfits as mentioned by Kwon (2014) can affect employees' attitudes as well as their productivity. According to Whitney (2013), the use of suitable or appropriate uniforms promotes the efficient performance of roles. The suitable or comfortability of employee's uniform could affect their level of performance (Lizasoain, Tort, Garcia, Leite, Miagostorich, & Victoria, 2015). Johnson, Lennon, and Rudd (2014) also agreed that dress and general appearance can act as a stimulus to shape how an individual is perceived by others.

Self-efficacy is a critical predictor of individual task performance (Judge & Bono, 2001). According to Peterson, Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, and Zhang (2011), self-efficacy is a significant aspect of employee psychological capital that helps manage their job requirements and motivates them to participate more effectively in their employment. A high self-efficacy enhances individuals' belief in their capability to complete assigned tasks and achieve challenging goals, and in turn benefits their productivity and efficiency (Philips & Gully, 1997). Several researchers have suggested that workplace resources can activate the personal resources of individuals, such as self-efficacy, self-esteem and optimism, resulting in positive psychological and organizational results (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). This can

be related to the self-performance of the employees itself which plays an important role based on the company resources.

According to Pratt (2012), workplace uniform increases employees' self-confidence and enhances their credibility. Most companies encourage their staff to choose workplace uniform to reflect their brand but understated the importance of wearing formal suits for a luxury hotel or casual and colourful outfits that fit their preference (Lizasoain et al., 2015). Workplace uniform shows a tremendous quantity about an organization and communicates a professional and reliable picture to clients.

Although uniform plays a significant role in affecting client expectations, one often overlooked aspect is how uniform affects staff strongly (Solomon & Schopler, 2009). Research by Tasci, Guillet, and Gartner (2014) mention that working uniforms are a very critical tourism and hospitality component while playing a diverse role for organizations as well as employees and customers. However, uniforms can influence self-efficacy of employees is often overlooked by the scholars in this area.

2 Issues in the Context of Study Setting

Liu, Li, Zhu, Xu, and Bian (2018) demonstrates that more attention to the innovation of uniform materials are required in designing the uniform because the uniform indirectly conveys the wearer's feeling. If the employees need to put aside their belief just to follow the companies rule of uniform, their performance will be below par. Besides, the self-efficacy of employees is the main issue nowadays for the employees to feel satisfied and appreciated before committed to giving higher performance. For the five-star hotel in Malaysia, there's a limited study conducted to comprehend the effect of uniforms towards employees' self-efficacy.

Sterman (2018) found that workers who are selling their knowledge, services, products, and capacities must feel self-confident and comfortable wearing their uniforms. Nevertheless, inappropriate design of uniforms may lead to the perception of careless and inefficient (Nelson & Bowen, 2000; Tu, Yeh, Chuang, Chen & Hu, 2011; Yeh, Tu, Chuang, Lin & Lin, 2013). Customers may misunderstand and form a perception of inefficient performance from the employees. This issue could also relate to the style of the uniform itself. Liu et al (2018) mentioned that uniforms design or style should meet the expectation of clients. As a result, it could also form a good image to the enterprise.

When interacting with the guest, customer service staff can enjoy wearing functional uniforms and it can be hypothesized that the perceived presence of the employee in the service meeting has a powerful impact on their performance in serving customers (Sterman, 2018). This in line with Bandura (2005), who confirmed that self-efficacy perceived impacts on how well people handle demands and difficulties, including those arising from the workplace environment. However, limited findings

made it impossible to understand the functionality and suitability of uniform material toward the self-assessment of the five-star hotel by guests and employees.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Uniform Features

Karch and Peters (2017) mentioned that uniform has many features that include functionality, comfort, material, appropriateness to job task, style, colour, and overall fit. For the present study, the core element of uniform will be explained in the following sections that are material, appropriateness, style and the functionality of the uniform.

3.1.1 Uniform Material

Uniforms enable the wearer to perfectly design body techniques to perform the attributes of selfhood and act out one's uniformed persona (Mentges, Neuland-Kitzerow, & Richard, 2007). Nelson and Bowen (2000) stated that material features are the feel of the difference between good and bad fabric. Moreover, Mugie, Midden, Mol and Heus (2014) mentioned that there are several effects of uniform for different materials with no physiological differences. Besides, when the clothing was poorly designed, the human body had to use substantially more strength effort (Nakahashi, Murayama, Monobe & Ikono, 2003). Different material of uniform could affect the performance of employees itself during their working time. Due to the use of different materials, the difference in wearer mobility will indirectly increase and decrease in movement range (ROM) (Kim, 2002). Based on Nickson, Warhurst, and Dutton (2005), material consequences in uniforms practices can either help or hinder the employees in performing their job. Hence, good uniform does not only have material features but appropriateness also important to make the employees feel satisfied to do their job.

3.1.2 Uniform Appropriateness

Mason and Evans (2019) argue that appropriateness perspective provides insight of cooperation in self-neglect casework between practitioners. According to Bishop (2015), the conceptualization of the appropriate uniform on which social job professionals is feasible. This author also sums up that women appropriate uniform consist of clothes and accessories that conform to workplace standards and expectations, are comparatively gender-neutral, that will add to the emotions of happiness, convenience, self-expression, self-efficacy, and self-esteem of the wearer. However, Glick, Larsen, Johnson, & Branstiter (2005), argued that people rate females who are provocatively dressed as inadequately attracted to the job. This is supported by Gurung, Punke, Brickner, & Badalamenti (2017), that even small changes are connected with negative perceptions, such as getting an undone button. The increasing prevalence in the unconventional appearance is a concern among employers who often viewed negatively (Karl, Peluchette, & Hall, 2016). From the actual industries, the

appropriateness element of hotel uniform needs to be studied for future generation comfort and self-confidence.

3.1.3 Uniform Style

It is important to consider style as one of the uniform features. Peluchette and Karl (2007) report that employees feel more competent and authoritative in formal business attire than in other clothing styles. Karl et al (2016) argued that alternative fashion and appearance styles may be trendy but bringing the risk in how these might be perceived wrongly by customers and colleagues at work. On the contrary, functional features also influence employee's behaviour and when making their decision.

3.1.4 Uniform Functionality

Functional uniform often associated with the organizational uniform design. Sterman (2011) found that in designing uniforms, fashion and trend is second to function, movement is most importantly the good feel of the uniform. They also mentioned that the new dimension of the garment can be provided by multifunctional solutions. In their study, the functionality of the fabric must combine perfectly with the function of the design, the lines of which are tailored to the different needs of movement jobs.

3.2 Employees Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is known as a cognitive self-appraisal of the ability to perform well (Joe, 2010). According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his/her ability to organize and execute the actions required to produce given attainments. While, Schreurs, Emmerick, Notelaers and Witte (2010) mentioned that self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs about their capacity to exercise control over their functioning and over events that affect their work lives. However, a self-efficacious person is not an employee who is passive in their work, slacken their efforts prematurely and like to fail in their assigned tasks (Karatepe, Arasli & Khan, 2007; Wood & Bandura, 1989). They agreed that self-efficacy is one of the self-appraisal or self-performance that employees believed about their ability in completing their job.

Karatepe et al., (2007) pointed of view, an individual who set higher goals to perform better than others are an individual with high self-efficacy. Frontline employees in the hospitality industry tend to perform their jobs at elevated levels are self-efficacious. On the other hand, Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003) stated that when people have a sense of efficacy and competence, it enables them to gain control and master in task-related behaviors. However, Karatepe et al. (2007) argued that employees who are self-efficacious typically deliver a favorable work-related performance. The higher self-efficacy of the employees means they perform well than employees with low self-efficacy.

4 Conceptual Framework of the Study

4.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the relationship between uniform features (material, appropriateness, style and functionality) and its influence on the employees' self-efficacy in 5-star hotels, Kuala Lumpur.

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does uniform features (material, appropriateness, style and functionality) influence employees' self-efficacy in 5-star hotels, Kuala Lumpur?

4.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This research focuses on the impact in the hotel sector of uniform features. From the studies, it is possible to identify three primary effects of uniform impact and the magnitude of each impact on the self-efficacy of employees. Research results are classified as follows:

4.3.1 Academic Perspective

From the academic perspective, this study adds to the existing knowledge on employees' uniform features among 5-star rated hotels. By examining uniforms, there are a few gaps that contributed for future and previous study in terms of incremental uniform improvements and the evaluation of uniforms functionality, style, and appropriateness to job role. This research provided the researcher with precious and priceless information, particularly those engaged in the same field of research. Furthermore, the new framework of uniform helped the researchers in understanding employees' self-efficacy and future uniform design to enhance the growth of the hotel industry in Malaysia.

4.3.2 Practical Perspective

This research provided a better knowledge of the performance of hotel employees from uniform features from a practical view. It also enables researchers to gain fresh experience while conducting research and more information to understand more about uniform features and use for preferences and performance of new generations. It can help in discovering what employees want, developing the product that is suitable for employees, with new idea of uniforms design for employees and helping the employees to feel satisfied and brings to excellent performance. Therefore, in the future approach, the fresh concept, data and understanding of uniform features and usage produced from this study can be used for hotel managers to enhance the service performance of employees for each department of hotel. Other than that, the impact of uniform usage towards future study will help the knowledge of designing

uniform for the next generation of hotel industry, food and service industry, researchers and also university.

The following hypotheses dictate the direction of the study:

H1: There is a significant relationship between uniform features and employee’s self-efficacy in 5-star hotels.

H1a: There is a significant relationship between uniforms material features and employee’s self-efficacy in 5-star hotels.

H1b: There is a significant relationship between uniforms appropriateness features and employee’s self-efficacy in 5-star hotels.

H1c: There is a significant relationship between uniforms functionality features and employee’s self-efficacy in 5-star hotels.

H1d: There is a significant relationship between uniforms style features and employee’s self-efficacy in 5-star hotels.

Figure 1 summarizes the conceptual framework for the study. There are four independent variables (i.e. material, appropriateness, style, functionality) to be examined against employee’s self-efficacy.

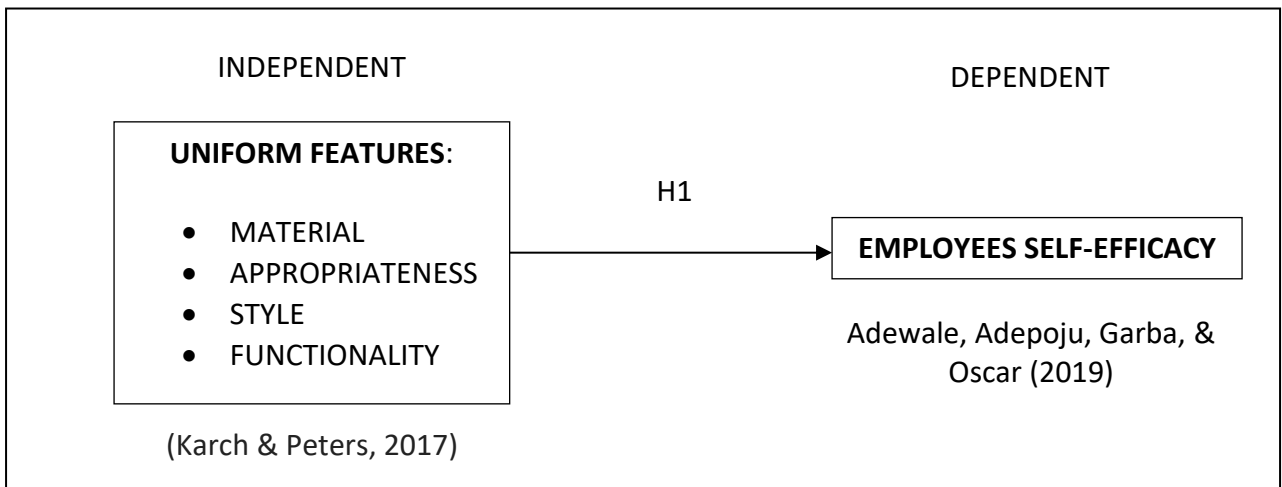


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Study

5 Methodology

5.1 Research Paradigm

This study is planned to answer the linear relationship between predictor and outcome variable that makes it impossible not to employ a causal study. This study uses cross-sectional data where the feedbacks of the respondents were collected once during the two-month data collection. The screening process was used before the respondents proceed with the questionnaires. In addition, a snowball sampling technique was employed to ensure the minimum sample of 250 will be collected throughout the data collection period. The study decided to use individuals as the unit of analysis because they are the one who wears the uniform at work.

Data were collected from 253 employees that represented 32 five-star hotel in Kuala Lumpur. According to the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism and Culture (2019), this study will use the number of 5-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur as 32 hotels of 5-star hotels, whereby the number of populations chosen for this study. The reason is to choose 5-star hotels because these hotels already have their own uniform that reflects the picture of their hotel and the goal is in distinct directions. The 5-star hotels are more conscious of meeting their enormous demand on the market and mostly their customers have their own preferences that they want to fulfill as they value for money for what their practice is. The number of 5-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur rank contributes the highest number in the statistics compared to other countries in Malaysia, according to the ministry statistics. Hence the population of five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur is selected.

The populations are among frontline staff of 5-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur. The department that involves is front office and food and beverage staff on current year 2019 only. The data of the population is available from all 5-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur. However, the data needed for this study is confidential for company and due to high employee's turnover. It is impossible or impractical to collect information from the entire population and therefore one has to settle for a sample.

With regards to the sufficient number of respondents, Hair et al. (2010) suggested that the minimum sample size is 100 when considering models containing five or fewer constructs, each with more than three items with high item communalities (0.6 or higher); 150 when models contain seven or fewer constructs and modest communalities (0.5); 300 when models contain seven or fewer constructs and low communalities (0.45), and/or multiple under identified (fewer than three items) constructs; and 500 when models contain a large number of constructs, some with lower communalities, and/or having fewer than three measured items. It is generally regarded that 100 is the practical minimum size for using SEM (Hair et al., 2010). In this study, 250 samples were taken up. This number would give a sample large enough for vigorous statistical analysis.

Since this study is non-contrived, the unit of analysis for this study must have prior and sufficient experience working in the front-line operation (i.e. front office; food

and beverage). The data collection was done by employing a self-administered questionnaire that had undergone a panel expert review process before it was distributed to the targeted respondents.

5.2 Instrumentation

The items in the questionnaire were adopted from Malakwen (2015), Nelson and Bowen (2000), and Karch and Peters (2017). Five-point Likert scale was used for all variables in section B and C. The Likert-scale used in the study was Continuous Scale (1-Disagree; 5-Agree).

Table 1: Instrumentation

DIMENSIONS	ITEMS	SOURCES
SECTION A		
Demographic profile	9 items	Malakwen (2015)
SECTION B		
Material	5 items	Nelson and Bowen (2000) and Karch and Peters (2017)
Appropriateness	5 items	
Style	5 items	
Functionality	5 items	
SECTION C		
Employees Self-Efficacy	5 items	Nelson and Bowen (2000) and Karch and Peters (2017)

5.3 Analysis of Data

Two statistical softwares (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS); WarpPLS 5.0) were utilized during the analysis. PLS-SEM was used in the analysis because it offered vast potential for social science researcher (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2011). Furthermore, it can also be used for research to predict key target/driver construct. Besides, PLS-SEM is capable in estimating a sequence of interdependence between constructs concurrently in a model. Awang (2012) noted that co-variance study offered a more effective technique for analyzing the correlational and causal relationship between latent constructs as well as observed variables; estimating their variance and covariance, testing hypothesis, modeling standard regressions.

6 Findings

6.1 Demographic Profiles Analysis

Initially, the questionnaire had been delivered to 300 respondents, but due to the presence of unanswered questions and unreturned questionnaire, 253 usable questionnaires were processed and analyzed. For demographic information, female accounted for 68% for the gender of the respondents than male by 32%. The majority of the respondents were aged between 18 to 24 (51.8%) followed by 25 to 34 years (30.8%) and 45 to 54 years (6.7%).

On the other hand, the majority of respondents participated in this study were single (69.6%) and has a secondary school education (SPM=34.8%). This study managed to interview 52.6% of front office staffs while remaining 47.4 percent represented the food and beverage department.

Table 2: Demographic Profiles

	Items	N	%
Gender	Male	81	32.0
	Female	172	68.0
Age	18 - 24 years	131	51.8
	25 - 34 years	78	30.8
	35 - 44 years	27	10.7
	45 - 54 years	17	6.7
Education Level	Secondary School (SPM)	88	34.8
	Post-Secondary School (STPM)/Diploma	79	31.2
	Degree	75	29.6
Department	Others	11	4.3
	Front Office	133	52.6
	Food & Beverage Services	120	47.4

6.2 Reliability Analysis

Convergent validity and discriminant validity were performed in line with the reliability test to assess the measurement model. The outputs of the analysis were displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Validity and reliability of the constructs

MEASUREMENT ITEMS		FACTOR LOADING	CRONBACH'S ALPHA (>0.7)	CR (>0.7)	AVE (>0.5)
Uniform Material					
MAT1	The colour of uniform I wear accurately represents the image of the hotel.	0.457			
MAT2	The uniform I wear (excluding footwear) is comfortable.	0.310			
MAT3	The uniform I wear tailored to fit my body.	0.211			
MAT4	The uniform I wear is easy to clean	0.865	0.563	0.819	0.694
MAT5	The uniform I wear is made of natural materials such as wool and cotton	0.801			
Uniform Appropriateness					
APP1	The style of uniform I wear elicits negative behaviour from customers.	0.467			
APP2	The style of uniform I wear elicits negative behaviour among employees.	0.399			
APP3	The uniform I wear does not interfere with my ability to perform my job	0.832	0.783	0.874	0.699
APP4	The uniform I wear was appropriate for the occasion	0.776			
APP5	The uniform I wear was suitable for interacting with customers	0.896			
Uniform Style					
SLE1	The style of uniform I wear accurately represents my position in the hotel.	0.429			
SLE2	The style of uniform I wear enhances my credibility perceived by customers.	0.370			
SLE3	The style of uniform I wear enhances my professionalism with customers	0.890	0.808	0.887	0.724
SLE4	With my uniform, I feel good about my appearance when at work	0.794			

SLE5	The uniforms make me feel being part of the organization	0.865			
Uniform Functionality					
FNT1	The uniform I wear enables me to perform better in my job	0.821	0.836	0.890	0.670
FNT2	The uniform I wear helps me in performing my job	0.828			
FNT3	The uniform I wear makes me less perspire.	0.436			
FNT4	The uniform I wear makes me comfortable	0.832			
FNT5	The uniform I wear increases my self-confidence while performing my job	0.794			
Employee Self-Efficacy					
SEF1	I interact better with customer while wearing my uniform	0.835	0.858	0.898	0.637
SEF2	I perform my job duties more efficiently while wearing my uniform	0.787			
SEF3	I feel more confident while wearing my uniform	0.811			
SEF4	When wearing a uniform, customers perceive us as more professional	0.750			
SEF5	My uniform communicates clearly my job duties to others	0.805			

Notes; AVE: Average Variance Extracted, CR: Composite Reliability, MAT: Material, APP: Appropriateness, SLE: Style, FNT: Function, SEF: Self-Efficacy.

From the above table, there are several items which fall below the suggested loading value of 0.5 (above 0.750); CR exceeded the recommended value of 0.7 (suggested between 0.819 and 0.898) and AVE exceeded the recommended value of 0.5. The items were then eliminated to ensure only the fit items were included in the next stage of analysis. Discriminating validity is obtained when the measuring model is free from redundant items (as suggested by Awang, 2012).

Table 4: Discriminant Validity: Combined loadings and cross-loadings of full model

	Appropriateness	Functionality	Material	Self-Efficacy	Style
Appropriateness	0.836*				
Functionality	0.787	0.819*			
Material	0.540	0.606	0.833*		
Self-Efficacy	0.733	0.775	0.690	0.798*	
Style	0.614	0.705	0.687	0.818	0.851*

Note: *The square root of average variance extracted of every multi-item construct is shown on main diagonal

Based on Table 4, the square root of each construct's AVE (diagonal values) is greater than its respective coefficients of correlation, showing sufficient discriminating validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, all of these statistics and measurements guarantee the reliability and validity of the measuring model.

Table 5: Result of Coefficient determination, R^2 , adjusted R^2 , and predictive relevance, Q^2

Constructs	R-Square, R^2	Adjusted R-Square	Predictive Relevance, Q^2
Self-Efficacy	0.780	0.776	0.458

The corrected R^2 values refer to the explanatory power of the predictor variable (s) on each construct. Based on the figure; $R^2 = 0.8$, it indicates that employee's self-efficacy can be explained by four predictor variables of uniforms (material, appropriateness, style, functionality). The result indicates that it is possible to describe employee self-efficacy ($Q^2 = 0.458$) of having a moderate relationship. If Q^2 is higher than 0, this implies that the model has a predictive relevance, whereas if it is less than 0, the model lacks predictive relevance (Fornell & Cha, 1993; Hair et al, 2014). Thus, this study finds that self-efficacy, as shown in Table 5, has acceptable predictive relevance.

6.3 Hypotheses Testing

In this study, a total of four hypotheses was proposed and evaluated by using the Partial Least Square technique. Accordingly, the results of structural coefficient are as exhibited in Figure 4.1 indicates that all hypotheses have a significant value thus H_{1a} , H_{1b} , H_{1c} , and H_{1d} are accepted.

Table 6: Structural estimate (Hypothesis testing)

Hypotheses	Standard Beta	Standard Error	P- Value	Decision
H1a Material -> Self-Efficacy	0.142	0.059	0.015*	Significant
H1b Appropriateness -> Self-Efficacy	0.232	0.063	0.000**	Significant
H1c Style -> Self-Efficacy	0.433	0.077	0.000**	Significant
H1d Functionality -> Self-Efficacy	0.203	0.085	0.021*	Significant

Note. P-value <0.01**, P-value <0.05*

Sil and Young (2014) characterized that uniform designs were reviewed according to the item, colour, pattern and accessory. While Liu et al. (2018) mention that uniform design needs to show an aesthetic standard that is consistent with job nature and requires investigation and survey on nature and characteristics of various occupations, the range of motion of human bodies and requirements of human body protection. However, Karch and Peters (2017) stated that uniform features like style, appropriateness, functionality, material, colour, and comfort influences on employee's performance. In this study, the characteristic of uniform material, appropriateness, style and also functionality does play critical roles in employees' self-efficacy. Referring to the result of PLS, it demonstrated that all four uniform features (material, appropriateness, style & functionality) were significant toward employee's self-efficacy. The value of R² that is closed to 0.8 indicated that employee self-efficacy can be considered to be a major impact in understanding employee work behaviour. Furthermore, the uniform style recorded the highest correlational value which implied that it is the strongest predictor in explaining employee's self-efficacy. This result is in line with Liu et al. (2018). According to Suhag (2015), there is a significant link between uniform features and employee's self-efficacy. This is further supported by Cox (2012), who highlighted that formal uniform strongly affects i) how people are being treated; ii) performance due the formal codes iii) motivation, and attendance.

7 Implications of the Study

This study managed to achieve its proposed objectives and suggested findings that may enrich the previous findings in particular to the hospitality industry hospitality and tourism industry. Findings in this context of study are scarce, thus making it vital to spark more studies within the same nature of the industry. By examining the influence uniform features (material, appropriateness, style & functionality) toward employee's self-efficacy; this study confirmed the findings of the previous studies. This study expanded the findings by Karch and Peters (2017) that examined the uniform features from job satisfaction perspective.

Besides, this study also offered contributions to the local hotel scene by suggesting fresh findings. Since there are lacks of studies conducted to comprehend the importance of employee's uniform in Malaysia, this study offered new knowledge and empirical findings to be referred by the industry practitioners, hotel staffs, and hotel association. Hotel needs to value the employee's uniform significantly because employees wear uniform every time serving the customer, and this indirectly creates a promotional tool to highlight the brand image.

8 Limitations and Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to identify the relationship between uniform features (material, appropriateness, style and functionality) and the impact on employees' self-efficacy in 5-star hotels, Kuala Lumpur. After performing a thorough analysis, it is concluded that the study managed to grasp its desired objectives by answering research questions with supports from previous findings. However, there's no study without limitation, thus the first limitation is the contextual setting and sample respondents. Since this study only took place in Kuala Lumpur, the findings of the study may not be comprehensive for the overall industry, to other states or countries. There are states in Malaysia with their own identity which may supply different perceptions of people towards different states.

Moreover, this study only took up employees from two departments specifically Front Office, and the Food and Beverage department in five-star hotels, thus making it difficult to explain the overall hotel operations. Hence, it is suggested that future research may extend the study in other departments and states to confirm the accuracy of the findings. A comparative study analysis will give better values for the policymakers in drafting a policy to suit the needs of the industry other than discussing lame issues surrounding the hotel industry for so many years.

9 About the author

Nurliyana Baharuddin is a graduating postgraduate student in the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Puncak Alam. This study was her first hands-on in research. The topic became her subject of interest due to the lack of findings in this area and she hopes to pursue her PhD studies embarking on the operational efficiency of the hotel industry.

Mohd Raziff Jamaluddin, a PhD holder in the field of hospitality management has accumulated research experience of more than ten years with specific interests in luxury branding and event impact. Currently, he is active in collaborating with international scholars for his editorial role in three journals. He is the supervisor for the main author, and has helped her understand the research process and also provide thorough training in writing an academic article.

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