Mandatory uniforms: Employees are what they wear

Kathleen S Nelson
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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MANDATORY UNIFORMS: EMPLOYEES ARE WHAT THEY WEAR

by

Kathleen S. Nelson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

in

Hotel Administration

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
July, 1996
The Thesis of Kathleen S. Nelson for the degree of Master of Science in Hotel Administration is approved.

Chairperson, John T. Bowen, Ph.D.

Examinining Committee Member, Robert H. Bosselman, Ph.D.

Examinining Committee Member, Stowe Shoemaker, Ph.D.

Graduate Faculty Representative, John A. Schibrowsky, Ph.D.

Dean of the Graduate College, Ronald W. Smith, Ph.D.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
July 1996
ABSTRACT

Uniform design is an overall scheme which includes four design factors: appearance, function, character and comfort. To what extent do these elements used in the design of mandatory uniforms predict an employee’s attitude toward his/her job? Will an employee wearing a lime green polyester uniform that fits poorly and is overly hot feel differently about his job than one wearing a finely tailored, naturally fibered uniform?

An examination of these elements will be conducted as well as an investigation of degree of guest interaction to determine the effect of mandatory uniforms on the attitude toward the job of the hospitality employees who wear the uniforms.

Key words: perceiver, wearer, design, attitude, position, interaction
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 1.</strong> INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Hypotheses</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations and Limitations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of This Study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of This Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 2.</strong> A REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Attempt to Solve Problem</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Relationship of Other Related Research</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Factors</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceiver Attitudes</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearer Attitudes</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deindividuation</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceiver - Wearer Relationship</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Guest Interaction</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Attitude</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued on next page)
## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire Design</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Attitude</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderating Variable</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scales</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Method</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Administration and Sample Selection</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabulation and Evaluation of Data</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 4. RESULTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Response</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis Testing</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Survey Data and Hypothesis Testing</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey Results</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of the Study for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Challenges</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of the Study for Future Research</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding Remarks</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| APPENDIX A | Focus Group Transcript | 82 |
| APPENDIX B | Survey Instrument      | 85 |
| APPENDIX C | Cover Letter           | 88 |
| APPENDIX D | Comments from Questionnaire | 89 |

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LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 2.1. Theoretical Model 10
Table 2.1. German Waffenfarbe: Color/Arm of Service 14
Table 2.2. Psychological Connotations of Color 15
Table 3.1. Population: Themed Casino Resort Properties 37
Table 4.1. Participation in Survey 49
Table 4.2. Factor Analysis (VARIMAX Rotation) 51
Table 4.3. Factor Analysis 52
Table 4.4. Multiple Regression 54
Table 4.5. Multiple Regression 55
Table 4.6. Multiple Regression—Set 1 58
Table 4.7. Multiple Regression—Set 1 (Low Guest Interaction) 59
Table 4.8. Multiple Regression (High Guest Interaction) 60
Table 4.9. Multiple Regression—Set 2 61
Table 4.10. Multiple Regression—Set 2 (Low Guest Interaction) 62
Table 4.11. Multiple Regression—Set 2 (High Degree of Guest Interaction) 63
Table 4.12. Chow Tests 64
Table 5.1 Expected Factors and Factors 66
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The importance of supplying themed casino resort property employees with fashionable, top quality mandatory uniforms is easily understood when applying it to marketing and customer service philosophies. For guests, customer contact employees are the organization (Lovelock, 1981). Thus, employee uniforms represent the organization. Rafaeli (1993) maintains that judgements about quality of service will be strongly influenced by quality of the encounter with customer contact employees who transport the tangible part of the service from the organization. Employee dress contributes greatly to the guest’s encounter with customer contact employees. Uniforms have the ability to create aesthetic, stylish, and colorful impressions of the property (Solomon, 1986).

The wearing of a uniform is a strict requirement in many hospitality organizations. For some employees, this is one of the attractions, while for others it can be a negative aspect of the job. Although uniforms can distinguish employees from the general public, making employees accessible and easily identified, they also have the ability to create attitudes about an employee’s job. Poorly designed uniforms—constructed with low quality materials, “tacky” colors, inappropriately styled, ill-fitting and lacking functionality—can potentially influence how employees feel about the organization for which they work. And, ultimately, uniforms may impact how an employee feels about his/her job. An employee wearing a lime green polyester uniform that fits poorly and is overly hot will feel differently about his job than one wearing a finely tailored, naturally fibered uniform.
Uniforms also have the ability to communicate signals about the wearer to the perceiver. Therefore, mandatory dress codes requiring female employees, depending on their position, to don overtly sexually suggestive clothing, may inaccurately transmit messages to the observer about the character of the wearer.

Statement of Problem
This study analyzes the effect of mandatory uniforms on attitude toward the job of hospitality employees who wear them at themed casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada. An examination of appearance, function, character, and comfort of uniforms will be conducted. In addition, this study will investigate the degree of guest interaction based on an employee's job position.

Importance of Problem
Perception enhancement of occupational attributes, gender traits, and employee behavior has been studied. A few studies have been conducted pertaining to the service industry in the marketing and clothing and textile fields, however research of the literature available indicates a need for additional analysis on the effects of uniforms on the wearer. Also, there is a lack of empirical data using employees as research subjects (C.M. Smith, personal communication, February 26, 1996).

The hospitality industry endures a high employee turnover rate which directly influences profitability. According to Hogan (1992), An estimated average cost in the late 1980's was $2100 per hourly position--costing hotels with a 100% turnover rate and 200 employees over $400,000 (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 1996). Today, industry experts believe this figure is about $2,500 per hourly position (R. H. Bosselman, personal communication, July 10, 1996). Therefore, a reduction in turnover can have a tremendous impact on the bottom line. As hospitality managers become obsessed about the bottom line, experts warn that turnover costs may ultimately prove to be the larger financial issue (Wolson, 1991). A competitive edge
may rely on a commitment by senior management to retain workers (Williams & Hunter, 1992). Furthermore, there are hidden costs associated with turnover. According to Goll (1995), the hospitality industry acquires tremendous costs from the time the employee has mentally left the job. Once an employee has made the decision to leave, his heart is no longer in his current job. Thus, in the hospitality industry, the guest may pay the price by being deprived of the service he deserves.

Service organizations spend billions of dollars a year defining, acquiring, maintaining and monitoring employees’ dress (Solomon, 1986). Data analysis revealing a relationship between an employee’s uniform and attitude toward his/her job should prove useful to management as well as uniform designers and manufacturers. There is a possibility that the study could ultimately prove beneficial to employees if managers would consider employee input when choosing mandatory uniforms.

**Research Hypotheses:**

This research will test the following hypotheses:

1) There is a significant linear relationship between the design attributes (appearance, function, character and comfort) used to create mandatory uniforms and attitude toward the job of hospitality employees who wear them at themed casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada.

2) There will be significant differences in the linear relationship between the design attributes (appearance, function, character and comfort) used to create mandatory uniforms and attitude toward the job, across positions, based on the degree of guest interaction of hospitality employees who wear them at casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada.
Delimitations and Limitations

Themed casino resort properties used in the study will include three Las Vegas hotels. Occupational positions used in the study will include employees visible to the customer: bell station employees, front desk employees, food servers, cocktail servers and showroom dancers. This study will not attempt to study variables such as salary, tips and employee benefit packages in relationship to job attitude.

The study is limited by the amount of information casino resort properties are willing to share in the area of employee attitude toward the job. Casinos have voiced concern regarding possible negative effects of the study on employee morale. Therefore, employee attitude questions must be kept to a minimum.

Contribution of This Study

A wealth of research has been conducted in the sociology and psychology fields on relationship between dress and perceiver attitude and behavior. Perception enhancement of occupational attributes, gender traits, and employee behavior has been studied. A few studies have been conducted in the service industry in the marketing and clothing and textile fields, however, there have been no studies which have specifically targeted the gaming industry.

Research of the literature available indicates that more analysis is needed in the area of effects of uniform(s) on the wearer. Although Rafaeli and Pratt’s aspects of dress theory (1993) can be easily applied to the gaming industry, the need for further studies is indicated. According to Rafaeli (1993), “there is insufficient evidence at this time to predict which attribute is most salient, or even what is the impact of particular attributes of dress. Additional experimental and comparative research is necessary on this question” (p. 208). Studies have been conducted with prostitutes (Terkel, 1974) and flight attendants (Hochschild, 1983) on dress and deindividuation showing an effect on behavior caused by organizationally designated
attire. Studies about themed casino resort employee's and mandatory uniforms should contribute to this body of work.

**Definition of Terms**

1. **Appearance**: The overall look of the uniform.
2. **Boning**: Stiff pliable materials (wire or plastics) used to brace or support garments.
3. **Character**: Design elements that set off the appearance of the wearer.
4. **Color**: All of the tints, hues, and shades between white and black (Picken, 1957).
5. **Closures**: Functional, as opposed to decorative, buttons, zippers, snaps, hooks, eyes, laces, end ties and velcro.
6. **Conspicuousness**: Refers to the extent to which dress of organization members stands out from dress of nonmembers (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993).
7. **Construction**: The way in which a thing is made or put together.
8. **Design**: Overall uniform scheme which includes four aspects of dress: color, fit, materials and style. Selection and arrangement of parts, ornament, and construction that form an artistic whole (Picken, 1957).
9. **Fabric**: Material from which garments are made. Any cloth, knit or woven, felt, hosiery, lace, etc. (Picken, 1957).
10. **Fiber**: The smallest unit in a woven, knit, plaited, braided, or lace material (Linton, 1966).
11. **Fit**: Proper size and shape of a uniform specific to a person's body. The way in which a garment conforms to the figure or part of the body (Picken, 1957).
12. **Function**: To perform in a required or expected manner.
13. **Garment**: Any article of clothing.
14. **Identification**: Anything by which a person can be associated closely.
15. **Integrity**: The entire, unimpaired state or quality of the garment.
16. Look: The external semblance of the garment.

17. Materials: All elements used in the process of uniform construction: fabric, thread, buttons, closures, and trim that remain as part of the final product.

18. Performance: Effective operation of the uniform design.

19. Polyester: General term now applied to the cellulosic and non-cellulosic fibers that are the products of the ingenuity of man or manmade fibers (Linton, 1966).\(^1\)

20. Style: a) Specific tailoring or characteristic manner of expression, execution, construction, or design. Examples: single breasted, double breasted; peaked lapels, shawl lapels; notched collar, coin collar; set-in sleeves, raglan sleeves, kimono sleeves, dolman sleeves; french cuffs, lapped cuffs, shirt-sleeve cuffs; A-line skirts, gathered skirts, straight skirts, pleated skirts, dirndl skirts, gore skirts; and pleated pants, gathered pants, fitted pants.

b) To give particular cut, design, or other fashion features to an article or group of articles (Picken, 1957).

c) Distinctive or characteristic quality expressing a typical mode; as, Empire Style (Picken, 1957).

21. Symbol: Something that stands for or represents another thing.

22. Themed Casino Resorts: Properties intended for rest and relaxation that rely on a central signature concept by which variations are developed with architecture and illustration throughout the property in restaurants, interior decorating and entertainment.

\(^1\)Manmade Fibers include nylon, "Dacron" polyester fiber, "Orlon" acrylic fiber, Dynel, Acrilan, Kodel, Creslan, Saran, Verel, Zefran and others. These fibers have also been referred to as specially manmade fibers, test-tube fibers, synthetic fibers, true synthetic fibers, and chemically made fibers in the past.
Organization of this Study

Chapter One has provided a framework for this study, which included hypotheses to be tested as well as research objectives. Chapter Two will provide a review of literature and research related to effects of clothing on perceiver and wearer attitudes. Additionally, Chapter Two will discuss design attributes essential in creation of hospitality uniforms. Chapter Three addresses the research methodology used for this study. It describes the survey instrument used, as well as the method of administering the survey. Chapter Three also discusses how data will be analyzed. Chapter Four offers data results and analysis. It will test the two hypotheses presented earlier in this chapter. Chapter Five discusses implications of the results for the hospitality industry, indicates areas for further research and summarizes the paper.
CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Clothing has been studied as an important element in impression formation (Hamid, 1968; Hendricks, Kelley & Eicher, 1968). A person's clothing is found to elicit behavior in the perceiver. These behaviors have been studied in the areas of altruism (Judd, Bull & Gahagan, 1975; Mallozzi, McDermott & Kayson, 1990; Melissa, McDermott, & Cozen, 1990), violence (Egan, 1994), eroticism (Joseph, 1986), sexual harassment (Blum, 1993; Klass, 1991; Watson, 1993), gender traits (Kaiser, 1989), occupational attributes (Forsythe, 1987), social status (Kennon & Reynolds, 1994; Rosencranz, 1962) and compliance (Bushman, 1984).

Clothing has also been proven to have a profound effect on the behavior of the wearer (Aiken, 1963; Taylor & Compton, 1968), with subjects ranging from nuns (Joseph, 1968) to prostitutes (Terkel, 1974) in the area of deindividuation (Festinger, Pepitone & Newcomb, 1952; Zimbardo, 1969). Clothing has been found to be a contributing factor in role playing, acting as a vivid cue that can encourage employees to engage in the behaviors associated with the role of the employee (Rafaeli and Pratt, 1993). In addition to role playing, clothing may also be used by the wearer to enhance self-confidence (Solomon, 1986).

Researchers (Jones, 1968; Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, and Rottman, 1964) have explored how appearance provides information that influences not only evaluations made of another by an observer, but also observer's actions directed toward the other person.
**Theoretical Attempt to Solve Problem**

The theory used in this study builds on the *aspects of dress* theory developed by Rafaeli and Pratt (1993). This theory was used to study dress and behavior of customer contact employees. It indicates the importance of dress attributes because of the nonverbal messages they have been shown to communicate.

Rafaeli and Pratt's attributes of dress include colors, materials, and styles that are evident in the dress (This study will measure additional variables contributing to the design of dress: conspicuousness, construction, fit, integrity, performance and symbol). As applied to this study (see Figure 2.1), the aspects of dress theory holds that one would expect the following independent design variables: color, conspicuousness, construction, fit, integrity, materials, performance, style and symbol to influence or explain the dependent variable: attitude towards the job, because research in nonverbal communications suggests that *colors* generate influential associations (Burgoon and Saine 1978; Ketcham 1958); research in organizational dress encourages researchers to examine the proposition that *conspicuous* organizational dress may lead to employees' compliance by making a particular role salient (Rafaeli and Pratt, 1993); *construction* contributes to degree of comfort the wearer experiences; *fit* can either convey a message of sloppiness or neatness; *integrity* of the uniform contributes to uniform character; *materials* can convey coldness and lower class or warmth and upper class (Fussel 1983; Molloy 1975); uniform *performance* is a key element in the way a uniform functions; *style* of dress has been noted to elicit attributions of status and power (Bitner 1990); and uniforms act as a *symbol* of not only the wearer (Rosencranz, 1962) but also represent the organization's values (Lovelock, 1981).
Figure 2.1 Theoretical Model
Theoretical Relationship of Other Related Research

History

A St. Louis Commerce newspaper article (Author unknown, December, 1990) provides us with some hospitality uniform history. In 1878, Cherubino Angelica came home from his job as a cook on the St. Louis Railroad and asked his wife to design a cook's uniform. The hat featured an impressive high crown that fit closely to the head to protect the food and chef's hair. A white double-breasted coat was designed with two layers of cloth in front to protect the chef from a hot stove and spattering grease. Designed to button on both sides, the front of the coat could be reversed so that the chef could maintain a fresh appearance should the coat become soiled. The cuffs of the coat were split to serve as pot holders when turned down.

Mrs. Angelica's cook's uniform design met her husband's requirements for a uniform consisting of both function and fashion. The design of the uniform also served as a non verbal symbol that would reflect Cherubino's position with the railroad, enabling customers and co-workers to easily identify not only his position, but also the organization's values.

Today, Angelica's Uniform Group is the United States' leading manufacturer and marketer of uniforms, employing nearly 9,000 people. Angelica creates and provides uniforms for the Ritz-Carlton, Omni, Hilton and Adam's Mark hotel chains. It also constructs all uniforms for Carnival Cruise Line as well as numerous casinos in Las Vegas, Reno and Atlantic City.

Mrs. Angelica's original uniform design has stood the test of time. Mr. Angelica's requirements of appearance, function, character, and comfort have proven to be critical design components used to ensure successful fashions for the uniform manufacturing industry. These four design factors are used in this study.
Design Factors

The hospitality industry is quickly becoming a very important fashion-conscious consumer. The hospitality uniform business is a $6 billion industry that has doubled since 1970 (Hersch, 1993). Biagini (1993) informs us that the largest growth segment in hospitality uniforms is the gaming resort segment. Hospitality uniforms have evolved during the past 75 years from a representation of servitude to a fashion statement (Elan, 1994). According to Angie Michael, a successful image consultant, 55 percent of that first impression a guest forms about a hotel will be based on appearance and body language of a hotel property’s employees. She maintains that uniforms are the most visible aspect of a hotel (Ludicke, 1990).

Guests are not consciously aware of independent design factors when observing employees dressed in uniforms, but most attributes are contained in each design: appearance, function, character and comfort. Additionally, these factors can be broken down to contain the following design variables: color, construction, fit, identification, integrity, look, materials, performance and style.

Gloria Steinem (1983) demonstrates this when she recounts her experience of trying on her first “Bunny” costume while working undercover as a journalist at the New York City Playboy Club:

She gave me a bright blue (color) satin (material). It was so tight (fit) that the zipper caught my skin as she fastened the back. . . . The bottom was cut up so high (style) that it left my hip bones exposed as well as a good five inches of untanned derriere. The boning (materials) in the waist would have made Scarlett O’Hara blanch, and the entire construction (overall design) tended to push all available flesh up to the bosom. (p. 35)

Successfully designed uniforms should create positive reactions from both the wearer and perceiver. In order to accomplish this, all design components should be examined at the design stage. One of the most significant design factors, effecting both wearer and perceiver, is appearance.
Appearance

Appearance is a powerful design factor, influencing impression formation. Attractive people are considered to be more sociable (Lennon & Miller, 1984) and more accomplished at tasks (Lapitsky & Smith, 1981). Clothing has a profound effect on degree of attractiveness. According to Solomon (1986), clothing is laden with symbolism that provides information about social and occupational standing, sex-role identification, political orientation, ethnicity and aesthetic priorities. One of clothing's most dominant messages emanates from color.

Color

Research in nonverbal communications suggests that colors generate influential associations (Rafaeli, 1993). Colors are sometimes used as a stratification technique (Jamieson, 1988). Levels of staff are segmented while attempting to convey an overall harmony. Kennon and Reynolds (1994) state, "Within most city office buildings . . . , browns, greens and blues designate maintenance workers; the bottom rung; a step up is gray, which conveys technical skill and more substantial pay stubs" (p. 57). The German military excelled in using colors as a methodical means of identification (Davis, 1971). The German Army Waffenfarbe (arm of service color) system was introduced in September, 1915 (See Table 2.1). This highly complex color system has remained constant with the German military.
Table 2.1

German Waffenfarbe: Color/Arm of Service

Source: German Army Uniforms and Insignia: 1933 - 1945

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Arm of Service</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carmine (Karmesin)</td>
<td>General staff officers of the German High Command,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veterinary Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright Red (Hochrot)</td>
<td>Personnel of artillery units, generals of all arms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (Weiss)</td>
<td>Infantry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Yellow (Goldgelb)</td>
<td>Cavalry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemon Yellow (Zitronengelb)</td>
<td>Signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Pink (Rosa)</td>
<td>Armoured troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Green (Hellblau)</td>
<td>Rifle battalions and Mountain Rifle regiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bordeaux Red (Bordorot)</td>
<td>Smoke troops (smokescreen weapons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornflower Blue (Kornblumeblau)</td>
<td>Medical personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light blue (Hellblau)</td>
<td>Mechanized supply troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (Schwarz)</td>
<td>Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange (Orangerot)</td>
<td>Personnel of recruiting offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Green (Dunkelgrun)</td>
<td>Administrative officials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Davis, 1971)

Not only every color under the rainbow, but also every hue and shade of color is thought to carry psychological connotations (see Table 2.2). The medical profession adopted white uniforms because of the implication that this color denotes cleanliness, while the law enforcement field chose primarily blacks and blues (Stern & Stern, 1994) which convey dignity and honesty. Pink (a color favored by Mary Kay Cosmetics) has been shown to be associated with femininity (Rafaeli, 1993).
### Table 2.2

**Psychological Connotations of Color**

**Source:** Applied Basic Textiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Connotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Health, Vitality, Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bright</td>
<td>Passion, Heat, Warmth, Vigor, Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>Evil, Slinking, Cunning, Slyness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Strong Light</td>
<td>Femininity, Festiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pure Medium</td>
<td>Delicacy, Innocence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grayed Light</td>
<td>Daintiness, Lightheartedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grayed Medium</td>
<td>Frivolity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Strong Dark</td>
<td>Ambition, Glowing, Warmth, Strength, Flame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong Medium</td>
<td>Enthusiasm, Zeal, Determination, Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong Light</td>
<td>Intensity, Seriousness, Excitement, Vigor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Dark Medium</td>
<td>Utility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Light Medium</td>
<td>Maturity, Full-Grown Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Strong Light</td>
<td>Inspiration, Thoughtfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Prudence, Goodness, Joyousness, Clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Light Medium</td>
<td>Wisdom, Attention, Sagacity, Gaiety, Youth, Youthfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>Strong Light</td>
<td>Glamour, Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Luxury, Glory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Light Strong</td>
<td>Vitality, Vigor, Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong Medium</td>
<td>Sociability, Friendliness, Peacefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Frankness, Practicality, Serenity, Coolness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grayed Medium</td>
<td>Innocence, Naivete, Serenity, Restraint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Strong Medium</td>
<td>Idealism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dark Medium</td>
<td>Sincerity, Devotion, Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grayed Medium</td>
<td>Kindness, Gratefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Light Medium</td>
<td>Tranquility, Quietude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Strong Light</td>
<td>Magnificence, Greatness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Light Medium</td>
<td>Fragility, Softness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dark Grayed</td>
<td>Royalty, Seriousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Poise, Individualism, Distinctiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td>Purity, Cleanliness, Virginity, Spotlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mourning, Without Hope, Dignity, Formality, Sadness, Melancholy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Linton, 1966)
Hospitality organizations need to consider the psychological connotations of color when designing uniforms for their audience (guests). Blue is the most widely accepted color scheme a hospitality organization can choose. It creates images of sincerity, devotion and honesty. Ludicke (1990) advises, "The marine navy color stands out best for men, royal blue or teal (the navy of the '90's) for women" (p. 77). Ludicke (1990) also suggests that hospitality organizations consider international clients when choosing uniform colors and recommends teal blue, watermelon red, periwinkle, turquoise and off white for a global appeal.

Colors convey personality traits and psychological clues about the wearer to the perceiver. However, the wearer's status is often denoted by materials used in clothing design.

Materials

The difference between good and bad fabric is the feel. Designers indicate that consumers "think" they want natural fibered uniforms until they have to care for them. Marcia Hischke (personal communication, February 16, 1996), executive designer of Uniforms to You, points out that uniform consumers want the "hand of cotton that performs like polyester." According to Durocher (1990), cotton fades, shrinks and wears out easily when washing. Cotton and linen wrinkle easily. Wool must be dry-cleaned. Polyesters resist fading and shrinking—holding up well during laundering.

However, Rafaeli (1993) maintains that synthetic materials have been argued to be colder and to convey lower class (Fussel, 1983; Molloy, 1975; Ribeiro, 1986), and have an effect on customer behaviors and expectations. Uniforms constructed from the finest and most expensive fabrics will lose their positive impact on the perceiver if they are not fitted properly for the wearer.
Fit

A disheveled employee in an ill-fitting uniform communicates a lazy and inefficient organization. An organization’s values become evident when it places an ill-fitting uniform on an employee. When a guest pulls up to the front of the hotel and is greeted by a bell person or valet attendant in a uniform with the sleeves hanging down over his/her hands, the guest receives a loud and clear message about the organization. These non-verbal cues demonstrate a lack of caring for the employee by the organization. And, given the fact that the employee is the organization’s link to the guest, cues are transmitted to the guest about the organization’s lack of caring for the guest.

Also, employers who supply uniforms to employees must be aware that ill-fitting uniforms may promote lewd comments. As part of a bicentennial celebration, Sage Realty costumed one of its employees (female lobby attendant) in a poncho-styled cape made to resemble the American flag. The woman was tall and, therefore, the cape was much too short, exposing various parts of her body. Alterations (letting the hem down as far as possible) to the uniform did not correct the problem. However, the employer insisted she continue to wear the uniform. Over a two day period, the woman received numerous propositions and was subjected to lewd comments and gestures. A law suit ensued when the employee was terminated for refusing to wear the uniform after she complained both orally and in writing about the harassment. The court held that the employer was liable for sex discrimination (Watson, 1993).

Conspicuousness

Conspicuousness of dress refers to the extent to which dress of organizational members stands out from the dress of nonmembers (Rafaeli and Pratt, 1993). Rafaeli and Pratt (1993) maintain that conspicuousness of dress can be categorized into high,
low and moderate levels of conspicuousness. Highly conspicuous dress clearly distinguishes employees of an organization. Professional athletic uniforms, as well as police and military uniforms, reveal exactly what organization with which the wearer is affiliated. A uniform with a low level of conspicuousness will not distinguish employees from nonemployees. With a moderate level of conspicuousness, the nature of the organization is perceived from the employees’ dress, but not the specific organization. Uniforms donned by medical workers have a moderate level of conspicuousness.

Employees working at Las Vegas casinos in gaming positions as well as many food and beverage positions wear uniforms with a moderate level of conspicuousness. The “black and whites” worn by these employees identify them as working in the casino resort business, but the name of the property is not usually discerned by their uniform.

Rafaeli and Pratt (1993) also compare degree of homogeneity of dress, which is the variance observed when dress of different employees is compared.

Random Homogeneity exists when there is no similarity in dress among different members of the organization; . . . . Stratified Homogeneity is evident when there is similarity of dress within an organizational subgroups; . . . . and Complete Homogeneity of dress occurs when all members are dressed in a similar manner (p. 37).

Unfortunately, complete homogeneity has been the favorite of most hospitality organizations purchasing uniforms. Stratified homogeneity is recommended. Employees need to be able to add their personal flair to their uniform without sacrificing conspicuousness.

Uniforms which incorporate stratified homogeneity through employee input are also the most challenging and interesting from a design standpoint. Designers for airline companies have been successful with their stratified homogeneity uniform designs for flight attendants for over twenty years.
Doreen Doyle, merchandise manager for Ella Skinner Fashion Uniforms in Toronto (Jamieson, 1988) says, “The hospitality industry demands professionalism and an accent on practicality” (p. 27). The best designed uniforms in the hospitality industry balance fashion with function.

**Function**

Function cannot be ignored when designing uniforms. Given the opportunity, employees will alert designers to whether pockets in the jacket are large enough for the guest check pads; whether shirt fabric is scratchy; whether cut of the slacks restricts movement and a host of other practical points that might have been overlooked (Durocher, 1990). These elements deem employee input a must at the design stage.

In addition to the design of uniforms, dress code requirements such as footwear can effect the functionality of the uniform. It’s difficult to serve guests in a timely manner when employees’ feet are hurting so bad they can hardly walk.

**Materials**

Fabrics used to enhance functionality should be fabrics that are easy to clean as well as durable. Hischke of Uniforms To You (Biagini, 1993) reports a return to a much finer polyester yarn that “feels like cotton or wool, but looks better and lasts longer—with little upkeep” (p. 50).

Footwear should be designed to have textured soles and be impervious to moisture, chemicals, and oils (Petit, 1993).

**Performance**

Mandatory uniforms and dress code requirements that fail to consider the performance requirements of each employee position leave indelible impressions about the organization on the wearer.
Jamieson (1988) advises that servers’ jackets should have pockets for corkscrews, keys and checques while aprons designed for servers should include large, strong pockets for change. When asked about the placement of pockets on food server uniforms, a manager of a Las Vegas themed casino resort property replied, “Pockets? We don’t want to give them pockets. That just makes it easier for them to steal from us.”

Symbol

Dress announces various identities (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992) within family, social, religious, and political arenas.

Families utilize dress for identification. . . . twins are often identified by identical dress. . . . The idea of family identity is further exemplified by observing the wearing of matching cloth by African cultures as well as Scottish cultures. (5-6)

In the workforce, social ranking is often identified by dress. Occupational positions in fields such as law enforcement, medical profession, religious community and the hospitality field have the potential of being easily identified by the perceiver.

Clothing also acts as an important symbol in the communication of attitudes for the counter culture. Buckley and Roach’s (1974) study reveals that information is communicated through symbolic means (clothing). During the 1970’s, in an attempt to rebel against society, the youth of America chose denim as the predominant material used in the construction of their “uniform.” This is supported by Buckley and Roach (1974), “Those chosen to represent the counterculture tended to prefer clothing that they perceived as communicating attitudes similar to their own” (p.100).

According to Rosencranz (1962), clothing acts as a guide to inform the stranger of the status of an unknown person. Therefore, it is important that hospitality organizations supply employees with uniforms that readily identify the employees’ position as well as convey accurate messages about the organization.
Character

The "Character" design factor of the uniform refers to a distinctive feature or attribute given to the wearer of the uniform by merely donning the uniform. The character factor is strengthened by the style and integrity design components which contribute to feelings of professionalism and self confidence for the person wearing the uniform.

Style

Style may elicit attributions, particularly of status and power (Forsythe, 1990). According to Rafaeli (1993), style can be noted as formal or informal, with formal being more tailored, precise and clean. Informal will typically be more casual, loose, and less meticulous.

"More than ever before, operations are looking for uniforms which project their own image," says Doyle, merchandise manager for Ella Skinner Fashion Uniforms. "They want individuality and custom designs which show that image. No longer are people content with standard uniforms from catalogues (Jamieson, 1988)." This is even more evident with themed properties.

Integrity

The integrity of a uniform acts like a vessel in delivering the values of the organization to the guest. It's a powerful role playing tool for the wearer. According to Goll (1994), "Roles are expected behaviors" (p. 15). The integrity of a uniform also helps to increase the self-confidence of the wearer by preparing him/her to act in a manner expected by the customer.

Comfort

Uniform discomfort is a nagging irritant to employees. Something as minor as the trim on a uniform can cause a great deal of discomfort for the wearer. If the trim
happens to be constructed from metallic fabrics, which is quite common for cocktail server and showroom dancer uniforms at themed casino resorts, the wearer will go home at the end of the shift with worn, chafed skin.

The frustration that comes from wearing uniforms that hinder movement—a result of poor design/wrong fabric for the function of the uniform—can lead to job attitude problems. Joseph (1986) maintains that “Uncomfortable (mandatory) uniforms which severely constrain body movements are a constant reminder to the wearers of their lack of power” (p. 40).

**Materials**

According to Doyle (Jamieson, 1988), “The days of 100% polyester are gone.” Rather, a blend of natural and synthetic fibers is being used. Today, designers of hospitality uniforms are recommending using a 55 percent polyester and 45 percent wool for a year round tropical fabric. Designers advise properties to look for two years wear or 100 washings when testing fabrics for durability (Jamieson, 1988).

**Construction**

Construction can contribute greatly to the degree of comfort of the uniform wearer. Unfinished seams (either improperly bound or unlined) can irritate the skin of the wearer. Boning materials (used to enhance the figure of female employees) improperly applied during the construction phase can poke the skin, causing injuring and scarring for wearer’s subjected to continual wearing.

Gloria Steinem (1983), at the end of a long day, working as a Bunny at the New York City Playboy Club, complains about the construction of her costume:

> The stays had made vertical indentations around my rib cage and the zipper had left a welt over my spine. I complained about the costume’s tightness to the Bunny who was sitting next to me, also motionless. ‘Yeah,’ she said, ‘a lot of girls say their legs get numb from the knee up. I think it presses on a nerve or something.’ (p. 51)
The Playboy Bunny Handbook required Bunnies to wear “spiked” heels. Gloria Steinem (1983) remembers, “My feet were so swollen that I could barely get my regulation three-inch heels on” (p.53).

**Perceiver Attitudes**

The attitude of the uniform wearer in the hospitality industry is of little use without considering perceiver attitudes. Numerous researchers have demonstrated that clothing influences the perception in another individual of stereotypes of traits such as attitudes, personality characteristics (Hamid, 1968; Gibbins, 1969; Douty, 1963), social status (Rosencranz, 1962), and social roles (Lasswell and Parshall, 1961).

Anthropologist Ralph Linton (1936) maintained that clothing makes it possible for a stranger to determine at once the social category to which the wearer belongs and thus avoid acts or attitudes toward him which would be social errors.

Impression formation studies leave no doubt that physical appearance is an important variable in the perceiver’s judgment about an individual’s character or ability (Gross & Crofton, 1979). A “halo effect” occurs whereby the perceiver attaches positive traits such as sociability and accomplishments to an attractive person. Kaiser (1990) describes this halo effect as a cognitive leap that takes place once the perceiver has interpreted an appearance cue. Analyses have indicated that clothing is a critical component of person perception (Behling, 1994). Douty (1963) points out that, “On meeting, the clothing may not be consciously perceived, but its effect can be just as strong as though it were” (p. 201). Rosencranz’s (1962) early studies revealed that social class and all of its related indices were found to have significant relationships of clothing awareness.
This signal is even evident to small children. By the second grade, 75% of students studied believed that clothing communicated something about the wearer (Parr & Halperin, 1978). Morganosky and Creekmore (1981) reported that physical appearance influenced student’s perceptions of the leadership ability of their peers (Behling, 1994). When Kaiser (1989) studied girls 2 through 10 years of age she found an increased tendency with age to associate unisexual styles with physically active and aggressive play behaviors, while the frilliest clothing style was associated with doll play.

Mauro (1984) studied effects of uniforms on perceptions and problems of police uniforms. Officers wearing a traditional-type uniform were perceived as more honest, more helpful, more active, more competent and possessing better judgement than those wearing a civilian style blazer uniform. Kwon and Farber’s (1992) study about attitudes toward appropriate clothing in perception of occupational attributes supports the notion that appropriate dress often enhances perception of occupational attributes and especially reflects the worker’s perceived professionalism, intelligence, and competence. Forsythe (1987) examined the effects of masculinity of clothing on the perception of masculine and feminine managerial traits in women. Analysis of variance showed a significant relationship between masculinity of the clothing worn and perception of masculine managerial traits.

Bushman (1984) studied perceived symbols of authority and their influence on compliance. Dress of perceived authority not only affected the number of subjects who complied but also the type of compliance, the type of noncompliance, and the latency between request and compliance.

Uniforms have also been shown to elicit violent behavior from the perceiver. Military and quasi-military uniformed employees have become targets for violence.
According to various Federal agencies (Egan, 1996), "A handful of people have made the Government their No. 1 enemy" (p. J1 11).

Uniforms can also contribute to wearer stigmatization. Thompson and Harred's (1992) studies of topless dancers tell us what is already known: perception is not reality. The nicest of human beings are most likely to be stigmatized by their occupational position when the position can be seen as improper. In fact, a national poll conducted by Time magazine indicated that 52% of Americans considered topless nightclubs or bars pornographic and 38% thought they should be illegal (Time 1988, p.22).

Las Vegas showroom dancers also suffer from being stigmatized. The perception of their occupational position is often negative: uneducated, unmotivated females, lacking morals, taking off their clothes for men in order to earn money. However, a study (Nelson, 1992) in which ten Las Vegas showroom dancers were interviewed, representing various Nevada gaming hotel properties (Las Vegas: Bally's, Mirage, Harrah's, Union Plaza, Aladdin, Arizona Charlies, Hacienda, Palace Station, Maxim; Lake Tahoe: Harvey's), revealed dancers who had trained their whole lives (80% since pre-school age) much like Olympic athletes. While growing up, these young ladies did not spend summer vacations at the beach. Instead, days were filled inside various dance studios, fine art camps and dance conventions, fine-tuning triple pirouettes. Also, each summer included trips to New York or Los Angeles for professional classes. Claudene speaks of the training that prepared her to be a Las Vegas dancer:

I started when I was 3 years old. Later, I trained with China White who was one of the principal dancers for the Dance Theatre of Harlem. She trained me from the time I was 8 until I was 18. She used the Russian technique. She was very strict. From the moment you started class with her, you were in ballet training. Period!
When specifically asked if there is a relationship between the audience response and the costumes they wear, Marcie explains the difference in reaction based on gender:

Some women are offended by the costumes. And men are never offended. You can tell when the audience is close, the people up front—the women—will laugh and snicker and talk about the girls’ bodies in a negative way. You can hear that. They act like we are deaf or something. And a lot of it is that they are threatened by that—the way we look.

Maria's comparison of a Las Vegas showroom dancer's make-up and costume technique to a ballet dancer gives insight into the similarities in performance philosophy:

They make up (ballet dancers) so they have eyes and lips and cheek bones, and they sleek back their hair as not to ruin the line of the body and costumes, which lend themselves to movement. Therefore, they can't be restrictive and covered and so usually the arms are bare and there is a beautiful cut to the bustline and the legs of the garment and the dancer.

All ten women interviewed by Nelson came from homes with both parents. Most parents gave them a tremendous amount of support (Eighty percent were extremely supportive, 10% were moderately supportive, and 10% were not supportive). Without exception, all women interviewed took pride in their occupational position. Sharie, an extremely talented dancer, choreographer, and teacher shares her feelings about the job, “I know that dancers love their job. They love what they do. We do it because dancing is in our heart... You’re born with a talent to perform.”

The women who participated in the study are women very much in control of their lives and profession. Eighty percent of the women are involved in a monogamous relationship (married or living with a significant other), forty percent are full-time college students, and forty percent are mothers whose children live in the
same house with them. Fifty percent of the women interviewed are entrepreneurial, owning entertainment based businesses.

Camille Paglia’s book (1995) entitled, “Vamps and Tramps: New Essays” enlightens us about the control on stage maintained by strippers, based on her research, “In virtually all venues, the nude dancer is in total control of the stage and audience. Hard as it may be to believe, men in strip clubs *admire* what they see and are even awed by it” (p. 63).

It does not necessarily follow that the intended perception projected by the wearer is interpreted accurately by the perceiver. The effects of the uniform on the perceiver may differ greatly from the effects of the uniform on the wearer.

**Wearer Attitudes**

The use of uniforms is based upon a bureaucratic ideology which stresses external identification of status and accountability through observability (Joseph, 1986). Differentiation between an employee and guest is critical in the hospitality industry. Ideally, this non-verbal cue will enable the organization to better serve the guest. Rafaeli and Pratt (1993) propose that employees’ dress can direct employees’ behavior to be more consistent with the goals and standards of behavior established by the organization.

Uniforms prove to be a powerful tool utilized by the wearer when Enck & Preston (1988) discover in their analysis of topless waitresses that the setting, performance and manner is orchestrated by the waitress through which she uses semi-nudity to stimulate the fantasies of her patrons. Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo (1973) found that normal, stable, individuals when placed in prison guard uniforms in a simulated prison began performing sadistic behaviors.
Markus and Kunda, 1986; and Markus and Wurf, 1987 find, “Dress acts as a reminder that helps engage particular cognitive schemas of behavior” (p. 862). Putting on the costume can mean putting on a role and shedding other roles. This role playing can assist the employee in representing the organization and servicing the customer, however, when taken to an extreme, deindividuation can occur.

Deindividuation

Deindividuation is a psychological process where individuals shed their individual goals, preferences, and standards of behavior, and adopt group goals and standards (Milgram 1974; Zimbardo 1969). Goll’s (1990) Management By Values model refers to this behavior as value masking. Employees learn to check their values at the organization’s door, adopting the values of the organization in an attempt to “belong” to the organization. Depriving individuals of the right to determine their own appearance has been found as a major contributor to the process of deindividuation.

Steinem (1983) describes the impact of the uniform on role playing as a Playboy Bunny:

A blue satin band with matching Bunny ears was fitted around my head like an enlarged bicycle clip, and a grapefruit sized hemisphere of white fluff was attached to hooks at the costumes rear-most point.....I looked into a mirror. The Bunny looked back. (p. 32)

Terkel (1974) offers us an extreme example of assuming a role in his study of prostitutes. A prostitute’s account:

At the beginning I was very excited. But in order to continue to turn myself off, I had to disassociate who I was from what I was doing. It’s a process of numbing yourself, .....I found that I couldn’t turn myself back on when I finished working. When I turned myself off, I was numb--emotionally numb. (p. 138)

Joseph (1986) tells of a nun, lauding the emancipation she felt after abandoning her habit for conventional dress, “She felt the freedom to interact with others as an individual rather than a group representative” (p. 154).
Also, Hochschild’s (1983) study of flight attendants and Rafaeli’s (1988) study of supermarket cashiers suggest that the problems of not being yourself on the job are difficult in even the most mundane service settings.

Employers need to select employees who have a personality that is compatible with not only the uniform, but also the work environment which may be created, in part, because of the uniform. Andrew Nazarechuck, former catering director of a prominent Las Vegas strip property, describes the interview technique he used when hiring female cocktail servers, “I would hand them a size 6 uniform and ask them to try it on to ensure they would be comfortable wearing the uniform. Many people would take one look at the uniform and realize they would not be comfortable.”

Gloria Steinem was asked to try on a Bunny uniform during her first interview with Playboy. She was told, “We just want to see that Bunny image” (Steinem, 1983).

Female management should conduct interviews which include the prospective female employees trying on and modeling the uniform, especially for positions that will require employees to wear revealing uniforms.

As with any position, when employers fail to hire the right person for the job, problems can occur. However, when the position requires the employee to wear provocative clothing, it becomes paramount that the wearer has a personality to reflect the image of the organization. When the employee’s personality is not congruent with the organization’s uniforms, problems will arise with the perceiver - wearer relationship.

**Perceiver - Wearer Relationship**

The perceiver is vital for the wearer’s self-image which is based on the perceiver’s reaction (Joseph, 1986). This non-verbal communication evolves into conversations rich with superficial clues about the wearer. Uniforms are often designed to stimulate feelings in the wearer. For example, the perceiver may feel
intimidated when observing someone in military regalia. Uniforms also have the ability to enhance the sexual attractiveness of their wearers both to the heterosexual and homosexual observer (Joseph, 1986). Design elements in military and quasi-military uniform construction include extensive padding in the shoulders and chest, resulting in a taller, stronger looking wearer. Military and quasi-military uniforms may also elicit erotic feelings which stem, first, from the function of violence as an aphrodisiac for some (Fussell, 1977).

Uniforms designed to emit sexual connotations are prevalent in themed casino resort properties—especially uniforms used in the positions of cocktail server and showroom dancer.

Joseph (1986) contends that a basic relationship read into clothing is that of power, or "who controls whom" in the realm of clothing. Those in power dictate to wearers clothing not of their own choosing. Uniforms mandated for employees at themed casino resort properties, especially employees in the positions of cocktail server and showroom dancer, will in all likelihood be designed in a revealing and/or provocative style.

In this sexually charged society, sex is used to market everything from automobiles to computer systems. Visit a Comdex or CES show and witness how effectively sex sells computer products. Sex, not computer chips, draws attendees to popular exhibit booths. The hospitality industry is no stranger to this type of marketing. In fact, sex is utilized quite effectively when selling rest and relaxation to our guests. A typical ad campaign for a hotel property will contain attractive looking guests and employees, interacting with one another in a very pleasant manner. And, one of the most important sales tools used to characterize the product is the way in which these appealing looking people are clad. A successful way for Las Vegas hotel/casinos to reach their audience is through advertisements in airline in-flight
magazines. Casinos attempt to lure their guests to the tables by placing full page color ads of showgirls, not gaming equipment. Las Vegas strip casinos devote a significant amount of their advertising budget to large billboards placed near McCarran International Airport displaying their wares—beautiful Las Vegas showgirls and dancers, donned in extremely revealing costumes, for tourists to see before they have left the airport grounds.

In some cases this message emitted by the uniform is that of sexual attractiveness or even availability, which is very often not the meaning desired by the wearer (Joseph, 1986). Uniforms are used to create an atmosphere of counterfeit intimacy (Boles and Garbin, 1977). Hamid’s (1968) study of dress as a perceptual cue in impression formation reveals that particularly in the perception of the opposite sex, dresses with high hemlines will have a “decided influence on the resulting impression” (p. 905).

It is important for both management and employees to realize that neither performance nor character of an employee can be determined by the amount of clothing worn.

Degree of Guest Interaction

Customer contact workers are probably the most important employees of the organization, having the first, and in some cases the only, encounter with the consumer (Barbee & Bott, 1991).

George Gallup, Jr., pollster, states, based on a Gallup survey, “A variety of factors may affect a consumer’s perception of service quality, including time spent waiting, treatment by the staff or, sometimes just the look of the place (Wehrenberg, 1987). Uniforms not only contribute greatly to “the look of the place,” but also have the ability to effect the service encounter with the guest.
The five employment positions chosen for this study were selected to include a wide range of customer contact employees, based on the degree of guest interaction. Showroom dancers and bell station employees have the lowest degree of guest interaction, with front desk employees having a moderate degree of guest interaction, while food servers and cocktail servers comprise the highest degree of guest interaction.

Barriers exist between customer contact employees and guests. These barriers can influence the relationship between customer and employee. The counter, which stands between the guest and the front desk clerk, presents a physical barrier between the customer contact employee and the guest. Barriers exist in varying degrees for each position studied, however all barriers are not physical, some are psychological. One of the most evident psychological barriers are found in the position of showroom dancer.

**Showroom Dancer**

Showroom dancers have a minimal amount of customer contact with hotel/casino guests. The illusion of the “stage” creates an invisible barrier between performers and their audience members. This barrier is so strong that members of the audience sometimes forget that their reactions can be seen and heard by performers appearing in the production. This perceived barrier can chip away at the self-esteem of the performers on stage, hindering the relationship between performer and guest. Barbee and Bott (1991) believe that self-esteem among service deliverers is the prime ingredient for positive customer relations.

The development of a positive self esteem starts at the top of the organization and is reflected in the service philosophies of the customer contact employees. The average customer will never see the top management of a hotel property. Customer contact employees will relay the management style to the guest. And, the first
opportunity to set the organizational tone usually lies with bell station employees.

Bellperson

Bell station employees do not typically spend a great deal of time interacting with guests during their overall stay. The bellperson’s main function is to escort guests and transport luggage to their rooms (Walker, 1996). The barrier between bellperson and guest stems from the small amount of time spent with the guest, combined with the lack of opportunity to interact with the guest due to the function of the position. However, bell station representatives create first impressions that influence the perceptions of later experiences. This first impression leads to the ultimate outcome of service quality judgments (Rafaeli, 1993).

Depending on the uniform, a bell station employee may have a high degree of visibility for the property. However, no where is the customer contact employee more visible than in the front desk-guest relationship.

Front Desk Staff

The front desk acts as the organizational “hub” for the guest. Questions that arise during a guest’s stay will usually be funnelled through the front desk. When guests stand across from the front desk representative during check-in, they observe the hotel’s style and neatness in that front desk uniform (Biagini, 1993). They also form impressions about the hotel’s service philosophy during this transaction.

Front desk employees experience a higher degree of guest interaction than the showroom dancer or bellman position, however the front desk is still classified as low degree of guest interaction. A large portion of the guest’s time at the front desk is spent waiting in line. Another reason for being placed in the low level classification is the counter as a barrier between employee and guest. Although the position of front desk clerk enjoys a greater degree of customer contact than either the showroom dancer or the bellperson, the employee/guest relationship at the front desk is not as
intense as the remaining two positions being studied: food server and cocktail server.

**Food Server**

The foodserver position holds a high degree of customer contact with a moderate level of barrier between the server and the guest. Barriers are provided by the nature of the position as well as the work environment. The continual coming and going (from and to kitchen and service areas) in order to better serve the guests as well as additional guests seated at other tables acts as an intrinsic barrier between the food server and the guest.

No position in the hotel has fewer barriers between the employee and customer than the position of cocktail server.

**Cocktail Server**

Cocktail server ranks as the position containing the highest degree of guest interaction and the lowest level of barrier between employee and guest. Cocktail servers, much like dancers, run the risk of paying the price for the perception of their occupational position. The uniform they wear contributes greatly to this perception. Customers communicate to employees their expectations about people dressed in a particular way (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1989):

> When a female cocktail server is wearing shorts and high-heels, customers verbally and nonverbally convey their understanding that the interaction between the cocktail server and her customer is likely to have a sexual undertone. (p. 33)

The cocktail server position is not afforded the barriers of the food server position. Cocktail servers do not usually travel far from the view of the customer nor do they have reasons for remaining away from the customer for long periods of time. The work environment (uniform, lighting, alcohol, large percentage of opposite sex customers) appears to make the position almost barrier-free.
**Job Attitude**

The key to improving service quality in the hospitality industry lies in the ability of management to improve the attitude and performance of the staff (Barbee and Bott, 1991). Attitudes regarding workload/stress, training/development, job/company satisfaction are all related to customer satisfaction (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1991). According to Barbee and Bott (1991), “Callousness or indifference in the delivery of an inherently helpful service destroys much of its benefit” (p.28). It is reasonable to believe, based on research results pertaining to effects of clothing on the wearer, a relationship exists between employee uniforms and job attitude.

**Summary**

The literature revealed a wide variety of information on the relationship between dress and perceiver attitudes through extensive research on impression formation and compliance.

A person’s clothing is found to elicit perceiver behavior in the areas of altruism, violence, eroticism, sexual harassment, gender traits, occupational attributes and social status.

Studies on the relationship between clothing and wearer attitudes reveal clothing has an important effect on self concept, role playing, and deindividuation.

Studies in the clothing and textile field as well as the fashion industry provide valuable information about design attributes. The color, materials, style and fit of a garment effects both the wearer and the perceiver.

Although no studies directly correlated employee uniforms and job attitude, there is a hypothetical link between employee uniforms and job attitude based on studies of design attributes, self concept, and impression formation.

The next chapter will examine the research methodology used for this study.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The objective of this study was to develop an understanding of the relationship between independent variables of uniform design (appearance, function, character, and comfort) and the dependent variable of employee attitude towards the job (See Figure 2.1). It also sought to examine possible effects of individual design attributes (color, conspicuousness, fit, integrity, materials, performance, style and symbol) on employee attitude toward the job.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss how the study was conducted, procedures used to gather research data, and methods used to analyze research data. This chapter will also discuss design of the questionnaire, pre-testing of the survey instrument and survey administration.

Questionnaire Design

Due to the size of population of casino resort properties chosen for this study, subjects for this study included the population of hospitality employees assigned to positions of front desk, bell station, cocktail server, food server, and showroom dancer employed at a mega resort strip hotel, a large themed property located on the strip, and a small themed property located at the Fremont Street Experience in downtown Las Vegas. Hospitality employees assigned to position of showroom dancer were included from two additional properties. One property was located one...
block off the Las Vegas strip between the strip and the Las Vegas Convention Center, while the other property was located at the Fremont Street Experience in downtown Las Vegas.

Of the total population (see Table 3.1), 157 (12.6%) are bell station employees; 245 (19.6%) are front desk employees; 434 (34.7%) are food servers; 298 (23.7%) are cocktail servers; and 117 (9.4%) are showroom dancers.

Also, of the total population, 485 (38.8%) are employed at a large themed casino resort on the Las Vegas strip; 670 (53.6%) are employed at a mega resort on the Las Vegas strip; 68 (5.4%) are employed at a small themed casino located at the Fremont Street Experience in downtown Las Vegas; 8 (0.6%) are employed at a large themed casino located at the Fremont Street Experience in downtown Las Vegas; and 20 (1.6%) are employed at a small themed property located one block off the strip in Las Vegas.

Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Front Desk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>245</td>
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<td>Food Servers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>434</td>
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<tr>
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<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showroom Dancers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>485</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population = 1251

Note: The population and sample include part time as well as full time employees.
Design of the survey instrument was polished through a collection of information from a variety of different sources which included focus groups with customer contact employees, as well as interviews with uniform manufacturers and academic researchers.

When the study was at the thesis proposal stage, the original 13 item questionnaire specifically designed for this study containing uniform design questions was presented to a forum of academicians and graduate students at a conference on Advances in Hospitality & Tourism Research held at the University of Houston Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management (January, 1996).

Focus groups were conducted with themed casino resort employees to stimulate the intended audience's thinking and elicit ideas about the topic (Salant & Dilman, 1994). Focus groups were conducted late afternoon for all positions that employed people for more than one shift in order to meet with employees from both day and evening shifts. Each focus group contained a minimum of eight employees. The five focus groups represented each position studied: showroom dancer (March 16, 1996), bell station (March 26, 1996), front desk (March 26, 1996), cocktail server (April 4, 1996), and food server (April 4, 1996). (See Appendix A for transcript of meetings.)

Nineteen uniform manufacturers, specializing in design of hospitality uniforms, were chosen from the National Association of Uniform Manufacturers & Distributors 1996 Membership Directory & Resource Guide. Manufacturers were presented (via fax) with a draft of questions on the survey instrument pertaining

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only to uniform design. Uniform designers were asked to read the questionnaire and evaluate the questions. Additionally, they were encouraged to make suggestions and/or comments. Job attitude questions were not included. Six uniform manufacturers responded to the questionnaire. Telephone interviews were conducted with Marsha Hishcke, executive designer for Uniforms to You, Susan Alman, designer for Angelica Uniform Group, and Steve Kallenbach, designer with Red Kap Industries.

Academicians who had conducted research and published articles on effects of clothing on behavior (Gwendolyn S. O'Neal, 1991); impression formation (Cynthia M. Smith, 1981); organizational dress (Anat Rafaeli and Michael G. Pratt, 1993); customer contact employees (Anat Rafaeli, 1993); as well as Hazel Jackson, Ph.D., Apparel Design and Merchandising, California State University, Long Beach were interviewed over the telephone. Once interviewed, these individuals were then faxed questionnaires to evaluate and participants were encouraged to make comments and suggestions for change.

Informal interviews were conducted with hospitality employees currently employed at various casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada in the positions being studied. These interviews included open ended questions about both uniform design and job attitude.

The 34 item questionnaire specifically designed for this study (see Appendix B) measured the following information by measuring multiple items on a five point Likert-type scale:

---

Appearance

Color

The color data variable was measured through one item that measured an employee's attitude about the color of uniform he/she is required to wear.

Question #19. The color of the uniform I wear is one I would choose myself for this uniform.

Materials

The materials data variable in relation to appearance was measured through one item that measured the quality of fabrics used in the construction of the uniform.

Question #26. The uniform I wear is made of natural materials such as wool and cotton.

Fit

The fit variable was measured through one item that measured employee's attitude about the tailoring to their specific body of the uniform they are wearing.

Question #24. The uniform I wear is tailored to fit my body.

Conspicuousness

The conspicuousness data variable in relation to appearance was measured through two items that measured how well the overall appearance of the uniform contributed to the employee taking pride in his/her appearance as well as pride in the appearance of the uniform.

Question #11. I can take pride in my appearance when at work.

Question #31. I can take pride in the appearance of my uniform.
Function

Materials

The materials data variable in relation to maintenance was measured through one item that measured the degree to which the uniform is easy to clean.

Question #25. The uniform I wear is easy to clean.

Performance

The performance data variable was measured through two items that measured the uniform’s ability to enable or interfere with job performance.

Question #15. The uniform I wear enables me to better perform my job.

Question #30. The uniform I wear interferes with my ability to perform.

Symbol

The symbol data variable was measured through three items, two measured how well the uniform represents the property theme and the employee’s position. One item measures the employee’s understanding of the original design concept.

Question #13. The uniform I wear accurately represents the theme of the property.

Question #14. The uniform I wear accurately represents my position.

Question #33. I understand the original design concept as it relates to my uniform.

Character

Style

The style data variable was measured through four items. Two items measured customer behavior:

Question #18. The style of uniform I wear elicits rude behavior.

Question #20. The style of uniform I wear elicits negative behavior.

while two items measured the employee’s self-concept:
Question #22. The style of uniform I wear enhances my credibility with customers.

Question #23. The style of uniform I wear enhances my professionalism with customers.

**Integrity**

The integrity data variable was measured through two items that measured the uniforms ability to impact the credibility of the wearer.

Question #16. The uniform I wear helps create a role for me to play while performing my job.

Question #21. The uniform I wear increases my level of self-confidence while performing my job.

**Comfort**

The materials data variable in relation to comfort was measured through three items that measured the fabric’s contribution to body temperature, breatheability, and the uniform’s ability to be flexible enough to offer year round comfort.

Question #27. The uniform I wear makes me perspire.

Question #28. The uniform I wear breathes easily.

Question #29. The uniform I wear provides me with year round comfort.

**Construction**

The construction data variable in relation to comfort was measured through two items that measured how well the overall design of the uniform (excluding footwear) provided comfort as well as the overall design of required footwear.

Question #17. The uniform I wear (excluding footwear) is comfortable.

Question #32. The specifications for footwear allow me to wear a comfortable footwear design.
Job Attitude

The job attitude dependent variable was measured through twelve items. Three items measured the employee's perception of the relationship between the uniform he/she is wearing and the attitudes he/she has about the job he/she is performing.

Question #1. The kind of uniform I wear has a very favorable influence on my overall attitude toward the job.

Question #12. The kind of uniform I wear impacts my overall attitude toward the job.

Question #34. Before the next uniform design change, management will discuss the changes with the employees. (J. T. Bowen, personal communication, March 16, 1996)

The remaining nine data variables were taken from various job attitude/satisfaction survey instruments and measured job attitude through the following questions:

Question #2. Considering everything, most days I am very satisfied with my job at the present time.

Question #3. I am always able to maintain a positive attitude when interacting with customers. (S. Shoemaker, personal communication, March 26, 1996)

Question #4. Most days I am enthusiastic about my job (Lenz, 1982).

Question #5. I consider my job pleasant (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin 1991).

Question #6. My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored.

Question #7. I get the positive feedback I deserve and expect.

Question #8. Communication between me and my boss is good.
Question #9. Overall my working conditions are healthy (Bruce & Blackburn, 1992).

Question #10. I feel good about my future with this organization.

**Moderating Variable**

The moderating variable, which modifies the originally expected relationship between the independent and dependent variable (Sekaran, 1992), for this study is *degree of guest interaction* based on an employee’s position and the intrinsic barriers between employee and guest.

**Scales**

A 5 point Likert-type scale was used to measure all of the variables, ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Consideration was given, where applicable, to Sharpe’s (1963) Clothing Interest & Importance Scale.

**Survey Method**

The drop-off survey method was used in this study. Salant and Dillman (1994) point out that this method combines features of the face-to-face interviews with mail surveys. Salant and Dillman add, “The personal contact enables the surveyor to encourage respondents to complete the questionnaire” (p. 43). The number of surveys dropped-off at each property were calculated as a percentage of the total population per employee position.

**Survey Administration and Sample Selection**

The survey instrument was administered to a representative sample of hospitality employees, currently employed in the positions of bell station, front desk, food server, cocktail server and showroom dancer. A minimum sample size of 139
was determined before data were collected. The minimum sample size was calculated using the following formula:

The z value associated with the confidence level of 95% is 1.96 (Parasuraman, 1991). The typical ranges of variance for a 5 point scale are 1.2 - 2.0 (Churchill, 1992). The desired precision level is .25.

\[
(1.96)^2 \frac{(1.5)^2}{(.25)^2} = 138.29
\]

The desired sample size was increased to 200 in anticipation of any unusable or incomplete surveys. A total of 201 surveys were collected.

The survey instrument was examined by the author's thesis committee and submitted to the Office of Research Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas for approval. After receiving University approval, it was pre-tested during the third week of April, 1996.

The questionnaire was given to 75 students at the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration, University of Nevada, Las Vegas as a pretest to determine response rate, question clarity, and completion time. The students who participated were currently employed by Las Vegas casino resort properties in positions used in this study. Additionally, all students participating in the pretest were students who were required to wear a uniform while performing their job. Forty-eight questionnaires were completed and returned. The response rate was 64% and completion time for each survey averaged less than five minutes.

**Data Collection**

The data were collected over a five-week period. The unit of analysis was each individual employee.

**Tabulation and Evaluation of Data**

Responses were coded and categorized as well as entered into a Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheet. When raw data were entered into Lotus, they were imported into the
SPSS statistical program for analysis to test goodness of the data as well as the hypotheses.

Data Analysis

Research Hypotheses:

Rafaeli & Pratt's (1993) aspects of dress theory indicates the relevance of dress attributes in the behavior of customer contact employees. Authors cite the importance of design attributes such as color (Burgoon & Saine 1978; Ketcham 1958); materials (Fussel 1983; Molloy 1975); and style (Bitner 1990) because of the non-verbal messages they have been shown to communicate. Based on these studies, it is hypothesized that:

**H1:** There is a significant linear relationship between the design factors (appearance, function, character, and comfort) used to create mandatory uniforms and attitude toward the job of employees who wear them at themed casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Multiple regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis.

Chapter Two discusses effects of organizational dress on the perceiver-wearer relationship. Joseph (1986) contends that the perceiver is vital for the wearer's self image, which is based on the perceiver's reaction. Based on this, it is hypothesized that:

**H2:** There will be significant differences in the linear relationship between the design factors (appearance, function, character, and comfort) used to create mandatory uniforms and attitude toward the job, across positions, based on the degree of guest interaction of hospitality employees who wear them at casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada.

To test this hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was conducted using uniform design factors (appearance, function, character, and comfort) as the independent variable and job attitude as the dependent variable.
A chow test was conducted on the regression models to determine if they were significantly different (Dillon & Goldstein, 1984).

**Summary**

The survey instrument was designed to collect data to test these hypotheses about mandatory uniforms and employee attitude toward the job. Research data were collected from a representative sample of employees at themed casino hotel properties in Las Vegas, Nevada. Data were collected over a five week period at five themed casino hotel properties during different times of the day.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will examine results of the survey of uniformed employees at themed casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada employed in positions of bell person, front desk, food server, cocktail server and showroom dancer. It will also test the two hypotheses listed in Chapter 3.

Survey Response

A response rate for survey sampling was not possible to determine because of the drop-off survey method used which required individual properties to implement the surveys. Properties A, B, and C maintained control over departments participating in the survey (see Table 4.1).
Table 4.1

Participation in Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Cocktail Servers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food Servers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Bell Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Front Desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cocktail Servers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food Servers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Bell Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Front Desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cocktail Servers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food Servers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Showroom Dancers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Showroom Dancers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis

This section describes the data analysis including tests of hypotheses described in Chapter 3.

Factor analysis was used to reduce the data on a large number of variables into a relatively small set of factors. Given data on a large number of variables, at least some of which are highly correlated with one another, factor analysis can provide a more parsimonious set of factors (Parasuraman, 1991).

Other studies on uniforms have used similar analyses. For example, Mauro (1984) used VARIMAX rotation to discern differences between subjects’ reactions to officers wearing a traditional uniform and subjects’ reactions to officers wearing a blazer uniform. O’Neal and Lapitsky (1991) used principal components factor
analysis (VARIMAX rotation) to identify credibility factors to determine the relationship between respondents' attitude toward clothing and assigned credibility. Perception of credibility of message source is a frequently researched variable in advertising and communication studies. Also, Thomas, Cassill, & Forsythe (1991) used principal components factor analysis (VARIMAX rotation) to identify dimensions of apparel involvement. Two apparel involvement factors emerged and were labeled *Dress to Express Personality* and *Dress as a Signaling Device*.

As a result of factor analysis in the current study (see Table 4.2), five factors emerged with eigenvalues (total standardized variance accounted for by the factor) ranging from 7.43 to 1.06 (see Table 4.3). The sixth factor had an eigenvalue of 0.82, therefore, it was decided to use factors with 1.06 and higher because of this fairly large drop. The only variable that didn't load at 0.5 or higher on a factor was tailoring. It loaded at 0.48 on two variables and 0.26 on a third variable. Since it loaded across a number of factors and did not load over 0.5 on any factor, it was dropped from analysis. Factor analysis was then run again to produce the factors used in this study.
Table 4.2

Factor Analysis (Varimax Rotation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>F1</th>
<th>F2</th>
<th>F3</th>
<th>F4</th>
<th>F5</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Character</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Increases Self-Confidence</td>
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<td>Enables Performance</td>
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<td>Enhances Credibility</td>
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<td>Creates a Role</td>
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<td>Enhances Professionalism</td>
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<td>.41018</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Appearance</strong></td>
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<td>Represents Position</td>
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<td>Uniform Appearance</td>
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<td>Overall Appearance</td>
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<td>Represents Theme</td>
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<td>Original Concept</td>
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<td>Color</td>
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<td><strong>Comfort</strong></td>
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<td>Breathes Easily</td>
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<td>Perspire</td>
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<td>Year Round Comfort</td>
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<td>Easy to Clean</td>
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<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
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<td>Natural Fabrics</td>
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<td><strong>Function</strong></td>
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<td>Elicits Rude Behavior</td>
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<td>Interferes with Performance</td>
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Table 4.3
Factor Analysis

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<th>Cum Pct</th>
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</thead>
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<td>61.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>F₅</td>
<td>1.06132</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>66.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis I

There is a significant linear relationship between the design factors (appearance, function, character and comfort) used to create mandatory uniforms and attitude toward the job of employees who wear them at themed casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada.

H₁A: There is a significant linear relationship between the design factors used to create mandatory uniforms and attitude toward the job, measured by the favorable influence on overall attitude variable.

H₁B: There is a significant linear relationship between the design factors used to create mandatory uniforms and attitude toward the job, measured by the impacts overall job attitude variable.

Since there are six independent variables (F₁(Character), F₂(Appearance), F₃(Comfort), F₄(Materials), F₅(Function) and Tailoring) in our multiple regression equation, we must test six sets of hypotheses (Parasuraman, 1991):

H₀ : β₇_Character = 0 and Hₐ : β₇_Character ≠ 0
Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the association between independent uniform design variables and the dependent variable: attitude toward the job. This study used two variables to test attitude toward the job: Question #1. *The kind of uniform I wear has a very favorable influence on my overall attitude toward the job*, and Question #12. *The uniform I wear impacts my overall attitude toward the job*. Two multiple regressions were run in order to measure each variable independently.

The *favorable influence on overall job attitude* multiple regression analysis (See Table 4.4) reveals there was a significant relationship (.05 or lower) between the design factors and attitude toward the job. Independent design variables F1 (Character), F2 (Appearance), F5 (Function) and Tailored are significant. Hypothesis 1A is supported.
Table 4.4

Multiple Regression

Dependent Variable: Favorable Influence On Overall Job Attitude. Independent Variables:
F1(Character), F2(Apppearance), F3(Comfort), F4(Materials), F5(Function), Tailored

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>.456</td>
<td>7.866</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>.546</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td>7.303</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td>.4201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>1.847</td>
<td>.0666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>-.186</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>-.148</td>
<td>-2.749</td>
<td>.0067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailored</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>2.486</td>
<td>.0140</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.359</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.248</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F = 31.07523  Significant F = .0000

The impacts overall job attitude variable multiple regression analysis (See Table 4.5) reveals there was a significant relationship between the design factors on attitude toward the job. Independent design variables F1 (Character) and F2 (Appearance), are significant. Hypothesis 1B is supported.
Table 4.5

Multiple Regression

Dependent Variable: Impacts Overall Job Attitude, Independent Variables: F1(Character), F2(Appearance), F3(Comfort), F4(Materials), F5(Function), Tailored

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>Analysis of Variance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.44768</td>
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<td>35.41508</td>
<td>5.90251</td>
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<tr>
<td>.20042</td>
<td>Residual</td>
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<td>141.28795</td>
<td>.89423</td>
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</table>

F = 6.60068 Significant F = .0000

Variables In The Equation

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<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>.300601</td>
<td>.079261</td>
<td>.289824</td>
<td>3.793</td>
<td>.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
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<td>.079185</td>
<td>.192157</td>
<td>2.551</td>
<td>.0117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>.099428</td>
<td>.074916</td>
<td>.095743</td>
<td>1.327</td>
<td>.1864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>.085166</td>
<td>.077253</td>
<td>.080810</td>
<td>1.102</td>
<td>.2720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>.138987</td>
<td>.073647</td>
<td>.134305</td>
<td>1.887</td>
<td>.0610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailored</td>
<td>.067335</td>
<td>.060457</td>
<td>.092713</td>
<td>1.114</td>
<td>.2671</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.226003</td>
<td>.207336</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.736</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 2.

There will be significant differences in the linear relationship between the design attributes (appearance, function, character and comfort) used to create mandatory uniforms and attitude toward the job, across positions, based on the degree of guest interaction of hospitality employees who wear them at themed casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada.

H2A: There will be significant differences in the linear relationship between the design attributes (appearance, function, character and comfort) used to create mandatory uniforms and attitude toward
the job (measured by the favorable influence on overall job attitude variable), across positions, based on the degree of guest interaction of hospitality employees who wear them at themed casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada.

**H2B:** There will be significant differences in the linear relationship between the design attributes (appearance, function, character and comfort) used to create mandatory uniforms and attitude toward the job (measured by the impacts overall job attitude variable), across positions, based on the degree of guest interaction of hospitality employees who wear them at themed casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Since there are six independent variables \( F_1(\text{Character}), F_2(\text{Appearance}), F_3(\text{Comfort}), F_4(\text{Materials}), F_5(\text{Function}) \text{ and } \text{Tailoring} \) in our multiple regression equation, we must test six sets of hypotheses (Parasuraman, 1991):

\[
H_0: \beta_{\text{Character}} \times \text{GI} = 0 \text{ and } H_a: \beta_{\text{Character}} \times \text{GI} \neq 0
\]

\[
H_0: \beta_{\text{Appearance}} \times \text{GI} = 0 \text{ and } H_a: \beta_{\text{Appearance}} \times \text{GI} \neq 0
\]

\[
H_0: \beta_{\text{Comfort}} \times \text{GI} = 0 \text{ and } H_a: \beta_{\text{Comfort}} \times \text{GI} \neq 0
\]

\[
H_0: \beta_{\text{Materials}} \times \text{GI} = 0 \text{ and } H_a: \beta_{\text{Materials}} \times \text{GI} \neq 0
\]

\[
H_0: \beta_{\text{Function}} \times \text{GI} = 0 \text{ and } H_a: \beta_{\text{Function}} \times \text{GI} \neq 0
\]

\[
H_0: \beta_{\text{Tailoring}} \times \text{GI} = 0 \text{ and } H_a: \beta_{\text{Tailoring}} \times \text{GI} \neq 0
\]

Multiple regression analysis was used to examine association between independent uniform design variables and the dependent variable: attitude toward the job. Multiple regression analysis was also used to examine contingent effect of degree of guest interaction (moderating variable) on the independent uniform design variables and the dependent variable: attitude toward the job relationship.

Chow tests were used to test if regression models based on different levels of guest interaction were significant. To perform the chow tests, two sets of three
regression analyses were run. Set one included the favorable influence on overall job attitude variable using all five positions studied; favorable influence on overall job attitude variable using positions containing a low degree of guest interaction (showroom dancer, bell person, and front desk); and favorable influence on overall job attitude variable using positions containing a high degree of guest interaction (food servers and cocktail servers). Set two included the impacts overall job attitude variable using all five positions studied; impacts overall job attitude variable using positions containing a low degree of guest interaction (showroom dancer, bell person, and front desk); and impacts overall job attitude variable using positions containing a high degree of guest interaction (food servers and cocktail servers). Results of regression analysis are found in Tables 4.6 - 4.11. Results of the chow tests are found in Table 4.12. As one can see from results of the chow tests, Hypothesis 2A and 2B were not supported.
Table 4.6

### Multiple Regression--Set 1

**Dependent Variable:** Favorable Influence On Overall Job Attitude, **Independent Variables:** 
F1(Character), F2(Appearance), F3(Comfort), F4(Materials), F5(Function), Tailored

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>.73422</th>
<th>Analysis of Variance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>.53907</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>135.81947</td>
<td>22.63658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Error</td>
<td>.86839</td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>116.13084</td>
<td>.75410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F = 30.01815   Significant F = .0000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables In The Equation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variable</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The favorable influence on overall job attitude analysis reveals the independent design variables F1 (Character), F2 (Appearance) F5 (Function) and Tailored, are significant.
Table 4.7

**Multiple Regression—Set 1 (Low Guest Interaction)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>Analysis of Variance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.81772</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>58.03763</td>
<td>9.67294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.68161</td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28.75783</td>
<td>.77724</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F = 12.44526  Significant F = .0000

**Variables In The Equation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>.683424</td>
<td>.133377</td>
<td>.571088</td>
<td>5.124</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>.670390</td>
<td>.170076</td>
<td>.448090</td>
<td>3.942</td>
<td>.0003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>-.046392</td>
<td>.162886</td>
<td>-.029976</td>
<td>-.285</td>
<td>.7774</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>.134491</td>
<td>.162623</td>
<td>.088763</td>
<td>.827</td>
<td>.4135</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>-.177899</td>
<td>.136301</td>
<td>-.130755</td>
<td>-1.305</td>
<td>.1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailored</td>
<td>.134420</td>
<td>.115053</td>
<td>.131377</td>
<td>1.168</td>
<td>.2501</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.535127</td>
<td>.355027</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.141</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The low degree of guest interaction multiple regression test with favorable influence on overall job attitude analysis reveals the independent design variables $F_1$ (Character) and $F_2$ (Appearance) are significant.
Table 4.8

**Multiple Regression—Set 1 (High Guest Interaction)**

Dependent Variable: Favorable Influence On Overall Job Attitude, Independent Variables: 

F1(Character), F2(Appearance), F3(Comfort), F4(Materials), F5(Function), Tailored

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>Analysis of Variance</th>
<th></th>
<th>Regression</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>.69092</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77.58660</td>
<td>12.93110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Error</td>
<td>.87876</td>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>84.94332</td>
<td>.77221</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F = 16.74553  Significant F = .0000

**Variables In The Equation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>.501050</td>
<td>.097930</td>
<td>.386216</td>
<td>5.116</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>.492081</td>
<td>.089404</td>
<td>.399011</td>
<td>5.504</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>.053249</td>
<td>.094815</td>
<td>.042816</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>.5755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>.163158</td>
<td>.087322</td>
<td>.139068</td>
<td>1.868</td>
<td>.0644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
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<td>.082037</td>
<td>-.130532</td>
<td>-1.876</td>
<td>.0633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.076539</td>
<td>.174374</td>
<td>1.964</td>
<td>.0521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.280469</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.189</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The high degree of guest interaction multiple regression test with favorable influence on overall job attitude analysis reveals the independent design variables F1 (Character) and F2 (Appearance) are significant.
Table 4.9

Multiple Regression—Set 2

Dependent Variable: Impacts Overall Job Attitude, Independent Variables: \( F_1(\text{Character}) \), \( F_2(\text{Appearance}) \), \( F_3(\text{Comfort}) \), \( F_4(\text{Materials}) \), \( F_5(\text{Function}) \), Tailored

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>Analysis of Variance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.44627</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33.81449</td>
<td>5.63575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.19915</td>
<td>Residual</td>
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<td>.87165</td>
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</table>

\[ F = 6.46563 \quad \text{Significant } F = .0000 \]

Variables In The Equation

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<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
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<td>.273017</td>
<td>3.565</td>
<td>.0005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>.190593</td>
<td>.080039</td>
<td>.182467</td>
<td>2.381</td>
<td>.0185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
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<td>.074567</td>
<td>.096572</td>
<td>1.324</td>
<td>.1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
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<td>.091909</td>
<td>1.239</td>
<td>.2171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.150077</td>
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<td>.0379</td>
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</table>

The *impacts overall job attitude variable* analysis reveals the independent design variables \( F_1(\text{Character}) \) and \( F_2(\text{Appearance}) \), and \( F_5(\text{Function}) \) are significant.
Table 4.10  

**Multiple Regression—Set 2 (Low Guest Interaction)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable: Impacts Overall Job Attitude</th>
<th>Independent Variables: F₁(Character), F₂(Appearance), F₃(Comfort), F₄(Materials), F₅(Function), Tailored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
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<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
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<td>9.70883</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Residual</td>
<td>37</td>
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F = 2.06321  Significant F = .0815

### Variables In The Equation

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<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>.2476</td>
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<td>-.045040</td>
<td>-.263</td>
<td>.7937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
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<td>.163622</td>
<td>.092802</td>
<td>.586</td>
<td>.5612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
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<td>-.067920</td>
<td>-.421</td>
<td>.6763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.275879</td>
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<td>.0751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.321833</td>
<td>1.903</td>
<td>.0648</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.676202</td>
<td>.356632</td>
<td>4.700</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

The low degree of guest interaction multiple regression test with impacts overall job attitude variable analysis reveals none of the independent design variables F₁ (Character), F₂ (Appearance), F₃ (Comfort), F₄ (Materials), F₅ (Function), and Tailoring are significant.
Table 4.11

Multiple Regression--Set 2 (High Degree of Guest Interaction)

Dependent Variable: Impacts Overall Job Attitude, Independent Variables: F₁(Character), F₂(Apperance), F₃(Comfort), F₄(Materials), F₅(Function), Tailored

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Residual</td>
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<td>.89799</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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F = 5.40509  Significant F = .0001

Variables In The Equation

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<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
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<td>.0011</td>
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<td>.253590</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
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<td>.101605</td>
<td>.162593</td>
<td>1.777</td>
<td>.0783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.093613</td>
<td>.157438</td>
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<td>.0809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>.085679</td>
<td>.088328</td>
<td>.081421</td>
<td>.970</td>
<td>.3341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailored</td>
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<td>.080699</td>
<td>-.023510</td>
<td>-.222</td>
<td>.8247</td>
</tr>
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<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.531695</td>
<td>.295079</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.580</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The high degree of guest interaction multiple regression test with impacts overall job attitude variable analysis reveals the independent design variables F₁ (Character) and F₂ (Appearance) are significant.
Table 4.12
Chow Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Critical Q*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favorable Influence</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* .05 Significance Level

Summary of Survey Data and Hypothesis Testing

A response rate was not possible due to the control maintained by individual properties participating in the study. A factor analysis was conducted resulting in emergence of five design factors: character, appearance, comfort, materials, and function. A sixth variable, tailoring, did not load high enough on any of the five factors.

Hypothesis testing revealed the following:

There is a significant relationship between uniform design and attitude toward the job of employees who wear them at themed casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada.

There is no significant difference detected between positions containing a low degree of guest interaction and positions containing a high degree of guest interaction and attitude toward the job.

This chapter reported the survey data and results of the hypothesis testing. The closing chapter will examine representativeness of the survey, interpret the results, and evaluate the hypothesis testing. It will also discuss several management implications.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research attempted to analyze the effect of mandatory uniforms on attitude toward the job of employees at themed casino resort properties in Las Vegas, Nevada. Las Vegas was chosen because of the unique opportunity of being able to study a wide range of size and quality of themed casino resort properties in one location. The study also looked at the degree of guest interaction pertaining to the employee’s position as a moderating variable.

Survey Results

The study found that mandatory uniforms do impact employee attitude. Employees have strong feelings about the uniforms they are made to wear (see Appendix A and Appendix D). Based on previous research, the following factors were expected to form (see Table 5.1): appearance, function, character and comfort. Names were assigned to each factor by the researcher. The appearance factor was derived from research on impression formation (Behling, 1994; Lapitsky & Smith, 1981), as well as Rafaeli and Pratt’s (1993) aspects of dress theory. Interviews with uniform manufacturer designers and hospitality employees, in addition to a review of clothing and textile literature, provided framework for the function factor. The character factor was based on Joseph’s (1986) work on uniforms as well as a review of the literature on deindividuation. Focus groups provided groundwork for the comfort factor.
Factor analysis (VARIMAX rotation) produced five factors (see Table 5.1): character, appearance, comfort, materials, and function. The additional materials factor was originally a design aspect used in constructing both the appearance and the function factors.

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Factors</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Appearance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Appearance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color</td>
<td>Represents Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Fabrics</td>
<td>Uniform Appearance *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailored</td>
<td>Overall Appearance *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Appearance</td>
<td>Represents Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniform Appearance</td>
<td>Original Concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniform Appearance</td>
<td>Color *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Function</strong></td>
<td><strong>Function</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to Clean</td>
<td>Elicits Rude Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enables Performance</td>
<td>Interferes with Performance *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interferes with Performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represents Theme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represents Position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Concept</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Character</strong></td>
<td><strong>Character</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elicits Rude Behavior</td>
<td>Increases Self-Confidence *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elicits Negative Behavior</td>
<td>Enables Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhances Credibility</td>
<td>Enhances Credibility *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhances Professionalism</td>
<td>Creates a Role *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creates a Role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increases Self Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comfort</strong></td>
<td><strong>Comfort</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspire</td>
<td>Breaths Easily *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaths Easily</td>
<td>Perspire *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Round Comfort</td>
<td>Year Round Comfort *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Easy to Clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comfortable *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footwear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Fabrics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Dropped from Survey Instrument

* Loaded On Predicted Factors
The study also found the degree of guest interaction, based on an employee's position, had no effect on an employee's attitude toward his/her job. Barriers did not appear to be a consideration when dealing with customers. Customer contact employees are in the appearance of the public whether they are on a stage or behind a front desk. Customers may possibly interact in a more intense manner with a front desk employee than with a food server or cocktail server. According to Rafaeli (1993), customers are not only active participants in service encounters, but also have a hand in shaping behaviors of employees with whom they interact. It appears the customer contact employee/guest relationship is very situation specific rather than position based.

Limitations of the Study

All limitations of the study stem from management's sensitivity to what they perceive as potential morale problems and negative perception problems caused by surveying employees. Management is convinced they already know how employees feel and don't want to provide employees with false hope that their input will actually be taken seriously.

Hotel Constraints

The original design of the study (February, 1995) included the participation of three themed hotel properties. Property 1: A medium size property located one quarter mile off the Las Vegas strip; Property 2: A small property south of the Las Vegas strip; and Property 3: A mega resort located on the Las Vegas strip. Property 1 decided not to participate based on negative publicity they received in a local newspaper about their cocktail server uniforms. Property 2 pulled out of the study after a change in upper management (July, 1995). Property 3 remained in the study.
Property 4: A large themed property on the strip considered participating in the study (October, 1995). However, they declined stating,

We can’t believe anyone is participating in this study. We know our employees hate their uniforms. If we participate, they will expect us to do something. It will just create morale problems.

Property 5: A large themed property on the strip decided to participate (March, 1996), as well as Property 6: A small themed property located at the Fremont Street Experience in downtown Las Vegas. Property 7: A small themed property located in the block between the Las Vegas strip and the Las Vegas convention center decided to participate (only with the position of showroom dancer) as well as Property 8: A large themed property located at the Fremont Street Experience in downtown Las Vegas (only with the position of showroom dancer) in May, 1996.

Sample Size

Sample size was restricted by individual properties. Although a mutually agreed upon number of surveys were dropped off at each property, management pulled the surveys while in progress at two of the properties. Property A pulled all surveys in the position of bell staff, front desk and showroom dancer, resulting in a much smaller sample size in the lower degree of guest interaction positions. Property B allowed the dancers to complete the surveys, but stated, “We’ve decided not to have the dancers participate in the study” after the completed surveys were reviewed by management.

Response Rate

A response rate could not accurately be determined because the method used to administer the survey relied on management to distribute and collect the surveys. This decision was made by management on Properties B and C. Property A initially allowed the researcher to distribute surveys to each department, accompanied by a
uniform department manager. However, upper management pulled surveys from the bell station and front desk within twelve hours; refused to distribute the survey to showroom dancers; and collected surveys already completed by food servers and cocktail servers—threatening to shred them without allowing the researcher to view them.

**No Control Over Selection**

Once again, management controlled the selection, requiring the researcher to use the drop off method of administering the survey.

**Types of Questions Used**

Job attitude/satisfaction type questions were kept to minimum. The survey originally contained twelve attitude/satisfaction questions. Property B deleted eight questions pertaining to attitude. The researcher had to fight for the four questions that were allowed to remain on the survey. Property A pulled the survey based on the attitude questions.

Sexual harassment questions studying degree of management's involvement in sexual harassment could not be used. The literature review and personal interviews pointed to the likelihood of management contributing to a hostile work environment for female employees dressed in revealing uniforms. However, management employed at properties participating in this study would not permit any questions measuring a hostile work environment.

**Implications of the Study for Management**

Certain types of organizational structure prevail in a society because of their congruence with social values (Joseph, 1986). When uniform design factors are consistent with values of the organization, they will communicate the message of congruency (Goll, 1990). The appearance of all aspects of service should be
coordinated so the service context is obviously a complete package (Rafaeli, 1993). When the uniform of one employee suggests orderliness and professionalism, while another employee's uniform displays signs of chaos, the guest is confused. Or, when a guest's first encounter with bell station or front desk personnel, clad in classy, upscale uniforms, the guest does not expect to walk into the bar/lounge area and be greeted by cocktail servers dressed in overtly revealing uniforms with French cut or g-string styled leg openings.

Uniform design can be a powerful marketing tool. Hugh Hefner's Bunny costume was a key element in achieving product differentiation. "A company or brand image should convey a singular or distinctive message that communicates the product's major benefits and positioning" (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 1996). The Bunny uniform was also consistent with the values of the organization. However, the uniform may not have always been consistent with the values of the wearer--transmitting inaccurate messages about the wearer to the perceiver.

In addition to image differentiation, Hefner used personnel differentiation to promote his product. "Personnel differentiation requires that a company select its customer contact people carefully and train them well" (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 1996). When not carried out properly, this marketing tool has the power to detract from an organization's image. Thus, when choosing uniforms, management should be aware that employee uniforms can transmit non verbal cues about the organization to the guests/customers. These perceivers will size up the organization in the first 30 seconds of their encounter with the customer contact employee (Ludicke, 1990).

The process of conducting this study revealed much about the relationship between management and employees at themed casino resort properties. A very tenuous relationship exists between management and employees at the larger, upscale, properties (A and B) located on the strip in Las Vegas.
The mega resort property (B) used in this study has so many levels of management and the structure of the organization is so bureaucratic and mechanistic that the study suffered when major roadblocks were placed in the way of the researcher. Corporate politics further delayed the study when Vice-Presidents interrupted progress, trying to terminate all job attitude/satisfaction questions, although the researcher had the complete support of the Chief Operating Officer and President of the organization, as well as the Executive Director of Costumes and Uniforms.

Management appeared insensitive to uniform complaints. For example, most employees in the position of bell person at Property B absolutely hate the hats they are made to wear. This comes as no surprise to management, as employees have continually complained about the hats since the opening of the property. Comments from the focus groups (see Appendix A) and questionnaires (see Appendix D) reveal the following:

Guests make comments like, “I’ve got a monkey at home with a hat like that.”
(I am) humiliated and embarrassed wearing the hat. (I) have a harder time looking the customer in the eye with the hat on.
I think I move quicker without the hat.
Hats are terrible—hot and scratch our head.
Hats suck!
The hats degrade us.

The researcher was warned by management before the focus group began that the bellmen hated the hats and the hats were staying.

Property A’s Vice President of Hotel Operations has to answer to a very powerful owner who has his hand in the design of not only the hotel property, but also every design element with which a guest has contact. Therefore, uniform design
comes from the top of the organization and a tremendous amount of sensitivity is conveyed around the property regarding any criticism of the uniforms. Cocktail servers who complain about the design of their uniform are viewed by management as being primadonnas. The comments on the cocktail server questionnaires (see Appendix D) demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the uniform:

People have commented that these uniforms look like Circus Circus uniforms: pink, purple, yellow, white = clown colors.

Who picked these colors? Yuk!

Many people comment on how ugly the uniforms are. They think we work for Excalibur.

I have a decent body, but this uniform shows every flaw I have and the colors wash me out and are degrading.

I feel these uniforms are very non flattering and develop an insecurity when worn. We always want to look our best and with these uniforms we cannot.

Please change shape, style and color!!

Property C, the small downtown property, was completely supportive of the study. Permission came directly from one of the owners and cooperation was given throughout the study by everyone involved. Property C openly admitted that employees hated their new uniforms and seemed to enjoy, rather than be threatened by, the comments from employees on the questionnaire, demonstrating a genuine interest in the study.

Properties D and E both participated in the study through direct contact with a showroom dancer performing in the show. Therefore, the researcher did not establish any relationship with hotel management at either property. Showroom dancers at both properties enthusiastically participated in the study.
Design Challenges

Apparel designers face many challenges attempting to create uniforms that will look attractive on everyone. Body type has everything to do with how the uniform will look as well as the message that will be sent to the perceiver by the wearer. Clothing looks best on wearers who are built like clothing hangers: broad shoulders, straight body lines, no bustline and small hips. This is the opposite body type most men find appealing. Therefore, themed casino resorts, which cater primarily to male gamblers, are looking to employ females who possess a shapely body type. Many Las Vegas cocktail servers have undergone plastic surgery to enhance their figure. This presents many challenges for uniform manufacturers and hotel uniform departments. Hotel properties must purchase numerous size 10 - 12 in order to fit the enlarged bust lines, altering them to fit a girl's torso who would naturally wear a size 6 - 8.

Designers also face the impossible task of pleasing the uniform wearer. People expect clothing to enhance their appearance. All design elements must come together to accomplish this. For example, it is impossible to pick one color or one style that will look good on everyone. Employees at themed casino properties are given uniforms whose colors have been chosen to go with the carpet and a style chosen to represent the property theme. Individual taste and appearance is sacrificed for an overall look.

Another hurdle for the designer is balance of fashion and function. Uniforms should be functional. Employees demand functionality in uniforms, however, management has a different agenda. Management looks for uniforms that represent the property, acting as a marketing tool--enhancing image of the organization. It is paramount to allow employees to be involved in uniform choices regarding both function and projected image. Uniforms to You, a popular career apparel...
manufacturing company which supplies hospitality uniforms to many themed casino resort properties in Las Vegas, surveys their client’s employees through a mailer asking employees to identify benefit features (Hischke, personal communication, February 16, 1996).

Employees can also be brought in on the final phase of the uniform selection process. Management can narrow the search, choosing uniforms that are all acceptable to management, and allow employees to choose from the narrowed down choices. After all, employees are the ones who have to wear the uniform.

**Implications of the Study for Future Research**

This study, combined with previous studies, indicates the need for further research in the area of mandatory uniforms and dress codes and their ultimate effects on the customer as well as the employee. Studies on back of the house employees at themed casino resort properties would provide a different look at degree of guest interaction. An examination of hostile work environments that contribute to sexual harassment in the casino industry, in relation to provocative uniforms, could provide valuable information for human resource departments. Additionally, research on employee uniforms at non-gaming properties and gaming properties located outside of Las Vegas would allow researchers to compare the relationship between management and employees.

**Concluding Remarks**

Uniforms can be a powerful marketing tool for themed casino resort properties, but there are more considerations when choosing uniforms than how well theme of the property is represented. Overall theming needs to be weighed against negative effects on employee attitude. A system mentality (Goll, 1990) needs to be used when designing uniforms. Employee input at the design stage and employee
freedom (stratified homogeneity) at the wearing stage is strongly recommended to accomplish balance between fashion and function.

In a hospitality organization, guest satisfaction is undoubtedly one of the organization's primary goals. Uniforms should serve as a vehicle in achieving this goal, enhancing and protecting the organization's values, while contributing to the employee's feeling of confidence when carrying out his/her job. Joseph (1986) contends these values are embodied in uniforms and assumed to rub off on the wearer. When uniforms are representative of both the organization's values and the individual employee's values in the hospitality industry, the guest will ultimately be the benefactor.
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Durocher, J. (1990). Uniforms: Styles have changed but the purpose is the same. Restaurant Business, 7, 94-96.


Hersch, V. (1993). You are what you wear: "Uniforms" are now fashion statements as operators stake out choosy customers. Restaurant Business, 92(7), 184-197.


Appendix A

Focus Groups

Bell Staff

Winter: would like to wear loose jackets and hats.

Guests make comments like, “I’ve got a monkey at home with a hat like that.”

Would like to see more variety in hats.

It is too hot to wear a bow tie in the summer.

Humiliated and embarrassed wearing the hat. Have a harder time looking the customer in the eye with the hat on.

I think I move quicker without the hat.

With the hat on I get overheated and it hinders my movement.

In the summer time I would like to leave my collar opened.

I would like two sets of uniforms, one for the winter and one for the summer, wearing shorts and short sleeves.

Need shoes that are comfortable for wearing outside.

Wants the shoes like they had last year.

Complained about turn around time for cleaning.

Hats and shades should be optional because of the wind.

Jackets are not warm enough in the winter especially at night.

“Make us look nice, not like clowns.”

“Happier feet bring a bigger smile.”

Set up a contract with a store to purchase shoes.
Front Desk

Would like to wear a vest in the summer time instead of a jacket.

Would like to have year around uniforms to wear. The long sleeves are too hot to wear in the summertime.

You have to have all the buttons done up on the uniform or you will be written up.

Need more flexibility on the shoes.

The jackets pop open with the button closed. But, you have it closed or you get written up.

The uniforms are easy to care for.

Suggestion that pants be worn by the women.

Front desk gets too hot in the summer with the sun coming in. Need cooler uniforms, vest or unlined jacket in the summer.

The hats are poorly made.

The lining of the skirts ride up and are uncomfortable.

We want the option of wearing pants. Panty hose are too hot in the summer time.

Customers love our scarves and ties.

Themed uniforms for local city-wide events like the Hoe Down.

Would like to have summer and winter uniforms.

Would like to wear just a hat and a vest in the summertime.

The image could be more theatrical to go with the theme of the property.

I like wearing uniforms.

I think the front desk uniforms are the nicest of all the departments.

We need faster turnaround time on cleaning and alterations.
**Food Server**

We have to purchase our own apron, shirts and pants. We would like the hotel to provide them.

**Cocktail Server**

The shoes are very uncomfortable to wear.

The serving trays are way too heavy.

We are having to run from place to place.

Would like to wear open toe shoes because of corns and toenail problems.

There is too much pressure on the neck and shoulders the way the uniform is designed.

The metallic fabric pricks at the neck and is too rough.

Shoes hinder serving drinks in a timely manner.

Uniform is not comfortable, the metallic trim on the neck is rough. The biggest problem with the shoes is that they are 2 1/2 inches high.

**Showroom Dancer**

Costumes need to have more breatheability.

Shoes are uncomfortable: toes are too pointed and do not have flexible enough soles for dancing.

Hooks and eyes catch on fishnets during quick changes.
Appendix B

Please indicate the extent in which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the uniform you are required to wear while performing your job. Circle the appropriate number using the scale listed below:

1--I Strongly Agree with this statement (SA).
2--I Agree with this statement (A).
3--I Neither agree nor disagree with this statement (N).
4--I Disagree with this statement (D).
5--I Strongly Disagree with this statement (SD).

SA  A  N  D  SD

1. The kind of uniform I wear has a very favorable influence on my overall attitude toward my job. 1  2  3  4  5
2. Considering everything, most days I am very satisfied with my job at the present time. 1  2  3  4  5
3. I am always able to maintain a positive attitude when interacting with customers. 1  2  3  4  5
4. Most days I am enthusiastic about my job. 1  2  3  4  5
5. I consider my job pleasant. 1  2  3  4  5
6. My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored. 1  2  3  4  5
7. I get the positive feedback I deserve and expect. 1  2  3  4  5
8. Communication between me and my boss is good. 1  2  3  4  5
9. Overall, my working conditions are healthy. 1  2  3  4  5
10. I feel good about my future with this organization. 1  2  3  4  5
11. I can take pride in my appearance when at work. 1  2  3  4  5
12. The kind of uniform I wear impacts my overall attitude toward my job. 1  2  3  4  5
13. The uniform I wear accurately represents the theme of the property. 1  2  3  4  5
14. The uniform I wear accurately represents my position. 1  2  3  4  5
15. The uniform I wear enables me to better perform my job. 1  2  3  4  5
16. The uniform I wear helps create a role for me to play while performing my job. 1  2  3  4  5
17. The uniform I wear (excluding footwear) is comfortable. 1  2  3  4  5

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18. The style of uniform I wear elicits rude behavior from customers.
   1  2  3  4  5

19. The color of the uniform I wear is one I would choose myself for this uniform.
   1  2  3  4  5

20. The style of uniform I wear elicits negative behavior from customers.
   1  2  3  4  5

21. The uniform I wear increases my level of self-confidence while performing my job.
   1  2  3  4  5

22. The style of uniform I wear enhances my credibility with customers.
   1  2  3  4  5

23. The style of uniform I wear enhances my professionalism with customers.
   1  2  3  4  5

24. The uniform I wear is tailored to fit my body.
   1  2  3  4  5

25. The uniform I wear is easy to clean.
   1  2  3  4  5

26. The uniform I wear is made of natural materials such as wool and cotton.
   1  2  3  4  5

27. The uniform I wear makes me perspire.
   1  2  3  4  5

28. The uniform I wear breathes easily.
   1  2  3  4  5

29. The uniform I wear provides me with year round comfort.
   1  2  3  4  5

30. The uniform I wear interferes with my ability to perform my job.
   1  2  3  4  5

31. I can take pride in the appearance of my uniform.
   1  2  3  4  5

32. The specifications for footwear allow me to wear a comfortable footwear design.
   1  2  3  4  5

33. I understand the original design concept as it relates to my uniform.
   1  2  3  4  5

34. Before the next uniform design change, management will discuss the changes with the employees.
   1  2  3  4  5

The following demographic information will help us analyze the data, however, it is your option as to whether you fill out this section or not:

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF BY PUTTING AN X BESIDE THE CHOICE THAT DESCRIBES YOU.

1. I am
   _______male   _______female

2. My age is
   _______30 & Under _______31 to 40 _______41 to 50 _______51 to 60 _______60 +
3. The length of time I have worked in my current position is
   _____ less than one year       _____ 1 to 3 years    _____ 4 to 6 years    _____ more than 6 years

4. My current position is
   _____ Bell Staff      _____ Front Desk    _____ Food Server
   _____ Cocktail Server    _____ Showroom Dancer

5. Comments: ________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

6. Date __________________
I am conducting a study as a research associate for the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration, University of Nevada, Las Vegas on mandatory uniforms worn by themed casino resort employees. The purpose of the study is to analyze the effect of mandatory uniforms on the attitude towards the job of the hospitality employees who wear them. Your participation, therefore, is critical to the success of this project. However, your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at any time.

This survey is easy to complete. It should take no longer than ten minutes of your time. All surveys will be anonymous and will supply me with worthwhile information. Your input is both greatly valued and appreciated.

If you have any questions, or require additional information about the study, please contact me at the following address:

Kathleen S. Nelson  
Hospitality Research and Development Center  
William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
4505 Maryland Parkway  
Box 456014  
Las Vegas, NV 89154-6014

Telephone: (702) 895-3903

For information about the rights of research subjects, please contact:

Office of Sponsored Programs  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Telephone (702) 895-1357

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Kathleen S. Nelson

Enclosure
Appendix D

Comments from Questionnaire

Property A.

Food Servers

These uniforms make you look like you have 30 extra pounds on you.

We got a bunch of good people on swing, and I enjoy working with all of them. I really don't like my uniform especially summer time. Though I appreciate it being free and they clean it for us.

I would prefer to pay for my uniform and clean it myself and be able to wear clothes which fit well and look good.

We should be able to leave one button undone. The shirts choke me sometimes. Too hot in the summertime!

This uniform is not very flattering. I feel we'd look better in black slacks and vest of some sort. It has yards and yards of fabric and adds 10 lbs. to your frame.

Cocktail Servers

The uniform is much too bright and gaudy, and very uncomfortable and unflattering. It shows every flaw. As for shoes to match, they are sometimes hard to find. So we have to dye them, which is more expensive.

Would like to have a uniform with more of a (themed property A) look---short shirt, lace up blouse, puffy sleeves, and black flat boots.

Purple shoes are extremely hard to find for comfort. I've been cock tailing for a long time and my feet have never been in so much pain everyday I work.

I think that they could make our uniforms either more towards the theme of the casino or more classy.

The cocktail uniforms are very uncomfortable, but most of all does not flatter even the best of figures! Most of us feel a more suitable (themed property A) theme would be a black skirt that ties on one side with a white ruffly long sleeve blouse, maybe a vest and black pirate boots.
I have a decent body but this uniform shows every flaw I have and the colors wash me out and are degrading to wear. Imagine if you had to wear a pink, purple, yellow and white suit everyday. I'm assuming a man will be reading this.

The high collar is a clean approachable appearance. My uniform is not tailored for me but I am comfortable. I do not like our colors it reminds me of Circus Circus cocktails. We need more of a (themed property A) theme. Our thin polyester material is great.

I think and most everybody thinks are uniforms are ugly. The guests tell us and so do our friends. They are also too conservative.

I think with all the problems with this uniform and money spent, that they could of had a better outfit and that all of us could take pride in ourselves. Otherwise this is a great place.

People have commented that these uniforms look like Circus Circus uniforms pink, purple, yellow, white = clown colors.

We should wear Black, red, white, gold. But please don't put us in pink!! We look like giant "Fruit Loops", so bright, we could bring planes in at the airport.

The outside uniforms for summer in the outside bar are very uncomfortable, not appropriate and Hot Hot Hot!! Wearing heals is ruining my feet.

Who picked these colors! Yuk!!!

Many people comment on how ugly the uniforms are. They think we work for Excalibur.

I have a decent body but this uniform shows every flaw I have and the colors wash me out and are degrading.

The uniforms we wear are made to fit average shaped women and no one here is average shape. They have been put together poorly and they do not hold up to day to day wear.

The uniforms are ok but the costumes, the cartoon characters next to the mirrors in the hallway fit the theme better.

These uniforms are hugely unflattering to anyone's figure and close-toed pumps are murder. Black would be so much classier.
I feel these uniforms are very non flattering and develop an insecurity when worn. We always want to look our best and with these uniforms we cannot.

**Property B**

**Bell Staff**

My winter uniform is so hot inside the hotel. I sweat through the jacket and when I go outside in cold weather, I freeze. We are bellmen who work in the world’s largest hotel, cover the world’s largest distances (12 to 15 miles a night), handle the world’s largest amount of luggage and we do it in a suit, tie and dress shoes.

The most uncomfortable parts of my uniform are the shoes and hat. The heavy jackets should not be worn unless it is extremely cold and windy outside.

Hats suck.

Our uniforms are not suitable for the type of work we do.

I would just like to work in a much more comfortable uniform with style so I could perform a better job--and without the hat.

Need lighter material. Please exclude hat.

Summer uniforms are too hot to wear long pants--long sleeve shirts and vests. Shorts and dress short sleeved shirts are more appropriate. Many other 4 star resorts use this type of summer uniform. Winter uniforms: hats must go. They are not only uncomfortable, they are impractical and make our body temperature go way above normal--not to mention the guests hate them.

We need real bellmen uniforms, not the chesterfield look nor wanabe bartender. We labor a lot and need a specific uniform that will enable us to move around freely, keep us cool in the summer and warm in the winter--not this tuxedo that we currently wear and especially those ridiculous hats.

We work in the world’s largest hotel. Should it follow we have the hardest uniforms to work in? The only people nostalgic for those 1930’s “Bell Boy” uniforms are old and do not stay here.

I feel this uniform is not practical in the amount of physical work we do.

Uniforms are very hot. Hats are terrible--hot and scratch our head.

Uniforms are too hot. It’s unpleasant for a guest to open their door and have a
bellman perspiring from head to toe, checking their luggage. Comfortable and cool uniforms are the key. Short sleeved shirts, shorts, soft shoes. The winter uniform is too warm for indoor use but does not protect from cold when you go outside, it promotes illness. Winter uniform is much too restricting for bell services. Summer uniform is tolerable.

I understand the original design concept, but the company should understand this design is not practical for the type of work that we perform. Especially the jackets and hats that are required for a partial time during the year.

The shoes and especially the hats and jackets are poor choices for our positions. I have personally seen much grander classier uniforms in other hotels. Comfort was certainly not a question here. I personally feel a much longer, harder look needs to be taken at my uniform to see how a classier more comfortable warm/cool uniform could be designed.

Winter hats are uncomfortable and never fit right. Always blows off. Makes you sweat and thin your hair. Guests laugh at me and make jokes about our winter outfits. The hats degrade us.

I feel summer and winter uniforms are necessary at the bell desk as our doors constantly open and close causing drafts in winter and heat in summer. We need more comfort. The shirts cause us to perspire. The material is also not comfortable. We need a more practical uniform. Especially in the summer. The long sleeves and jackets are too much.

**Cocktail Servers**

We should have short shorts with cropped T-shirts with Property B logo with all white or black high tops for a uniform.

Costumes for designated positions need to have input from the workers they are designed for. They are the ones who have to wear them.

The costume I wear adds a certain elegance to the position I serve. I feel I look “feminine” in the way I carry myself.

I like our uniform (costume)!

I know that the warmer weather is upon us. Our uniforms are so uncomfortable I hope we’ll be considered for a little cooler uniform.

The temperature in the Property B is below freezing 12 months a year. The shoes restrict speed, balance and comfort. The uniform restricts movement of our bodies and the low cut style promotes our customers to act like pigs.
When people are consuming alcohol, they try to touch and grab you. We don’t need to wear a uniform that exposes our flesh or our back end.

I like the uniforms that we have now. They are flattering and over all comfortable.

We don’t want butt floss. These uniforms keep us cool in summer and warm when its cold in here. I like the style. Please don’t change it. The design is o.k., but it is not very comfortable to wear. A few minor adjustments would eliminate most problems. Black is a good color for everyone.

I feel there would be better choices available for uniforms. Style, comfort, durability are of course basic. If uniforms should be changed, please allow the cast to take part in the selection.

It can be very hard to get someone to order drinks while they are looking at my breast and tell me how fine I am. 2 inch heels with an extra 20-30 lbs on the arm is stupid. This uniform also threatens some of the women I serve. Most people don’t care what I wear they like their drinks as quickly as I can get them.

I would like to have new uniforms.

Everybody who I have come in contact with says we have the classiest and most beautiful uniforms on the strip.

No complaints from me, thank you. The costume designers did a fabulous job in creating classy, comfortable, clothing.

I am proud of my job and feel glamorous to some extent. I would be happy with any uniform that exudes sex appeal in a classy way.

Our uniforms are extremely uncomfortable, causing neck and back discomfort. To help this problem, uniforms are altered, making them less attractive. I also believe them to be very unflattering to the majority of body types. Making most people appear larger than they really are. I think this is due to the skirt.

Stop with the 2 inch heels! Why jeopardize the health of women? Men wear black tennis shoes with shirts and us in heels. Comfort should be #1 priority. If people get service with a smile, what does it matter if we have heels on or not. They don’t care, they just want the drink promptly.

Overall I am very pleased with my uniform, however, I do believe for hot summer months we could wear something a little cooler but on the same order
as we now have. We get a lot of compliments on our appearance. I think we have the nicest uniform in the whole hotel. Just needs to be a little cooler for summer months.

We have been talking of changing the jackets to vests in the showroom. Please do something about the hot jackets. Ladies should wear skirts and men tuxedo slacks. Maybe a tuxedo dress skirt look with a bow tie for ladies since the theatre is the class of Las Vegas.

**Front Desk**

We should be allowed to wear slacks during the winter just like the VIP lounge.

The uniform is extremely heavy and hot even in winter while working. When you are sweating profusely, it does not make for a professional appearance. The blouses no longer come clean and are gray and dingy. Buttons are constantly popping off jacket. Lining is always hanging below the hemline on skirt. Scarf is very hot--colors are good and basic. The cut is flattering, but please give us lightweight, short sleeved blouses for summer!

I receive frequent compliments about our ties!

Maintenance of uniform is poor--buttons do not stay on.

Pants would be nice for women too. The sizing is not for tall, slim people. When shirt sleeves are too short and you get a bigger size, then the shirt body is too wide.

**Food Servers**

Vests are made for men & don't fit the women and can't be altered.

The area I work in creates or causes stains to the white shirts I am required to wear. The cost of replacing these shirts comes from my pocket and needs to be done usually every month. I enjoy my job (for the most part) but it gets very expensive to buy 4 or 5 new shirts on a regular basis.

In the summertime we have such a long walk from the employees parking lot to the hotel. To put your bowtie on to set up tables and wipe glasses it is very uncomfortable, very hot, very sweaty.

Change uniforms to a collar and 3/4 length sleeves for bus person. Choose your color to match restaurant.

The room I work in were promised new uniforms over a year ago. That promise
has never been fulfilled.

We should have something to prevent our white shirts from becoming so soiled. Possibly they could provide cleaning them.

Need change in uniform soon!!!

Our uniform is too hot during work because it has too much material.

I think the uniforms could be more original and still give comfort.