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## The Effect of Beauty Privilege on the Recruitment Process of Hotel Employees in Bali

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to see how beauty privilege affects the hiring process in Bali's hospitality industry as the industry plays an important role in the regional economy and the selection of high-quality human resources is crucial to the quality of service provided. The research method is qualitative, using phenomenological study, descriptive analysis and interviews. The research involved interviews and literature study with hospitality professionals, including managers and human resource management staff. The results showed that while beauty privilege may be considered when selecting candidates for employment, especially for guest-facing jobs, factors such as attitude, ability and knowledge (ASK) remain the most important. Practitioners agree that if a candidate has the necessary abilities, physical appearance is not important. Also, while appearance may be beneficial, the main focus remains on abilities that support performance and fit the company culture. The emphasis on professional demeanor and technical ability demonstrates this. To reduce biases related to physical appearance in the hospitality industry, this research suggests that recruitment standards should be more fair and inclusive.

**Keyword:** Beauty privilege, recruitment, hotel, professional looks, bali

### INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry in Bali continues to be one of the main pillars of the regional economy, especially after the pandemic. Based on data from Bank Indonesia and the Ministry of Tourism, the tourism sector contributes up to 52% to Bali's Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) by 2023. This is supported by the recovery of the accommodation, eating and drinking, and transportation sectors which grew between 6.6% to 9.5% in the same year. To be able to attract and retain guests, hotels in Bali are required to continuously improve service quality, one of which is through recruiting employees who are competent and passionate about serving guests.

Research conducted by Jasinskas et al. (2016) shows that excellent service quality is a determining factor in the success of a hotel. In the context of the hospitality industry, human resources act as the spearhead in providing services to guests. Gannon et al. (2015) also assert

that employees who have competence, positive attitudes, and high loyalty can create an unforgettable stay for guests. Based on these two opinions, superior service quality is an important factor in the success of a hotel, and human resources play a key role in providing these services. Employees who are competent, have a positive attitude, and high loyalty can create a memorable stay for guests, thus becoming an important asset in the hospitality industry.

Formally, employee selection criteria in hotels are usually listed in the job description and include educational qualifications, experience, and technical skills. However, in practice, there are often unwritten informal criteria, such as physical appearance, personality, and fit with the hotel's brand image. The phenomenon of 'beauty privilege' often arises in these informal criteria, where prospective employees who are considered physically attractive tend to be prioritized, even though they do not have better qualifications than other candidates.

The concept of 'beauty privilege' often assumes that physically attractive individuals will perform better. However, this assumption is not always supported by empirical evidence. Research in the field of social psychology shows that physical appearance is more likely to influence others' perceptions of the individual than actual performance. Others' perceptions of the individual rather than actual performance. This phenomenon is known as the 'halo effect', whereby a positive or negative first impression of a person can influence our judgment of other qualities (Batres & Shiramizu, 2023). In the work context, the halo effect may cause employers to give more favorable ratings to employees who are perceived as physically attractive, regardless of actual performance.

To reduce biases in the employee selection process, especially those related to physical appearance, companies need to implement more objective strategies. Research by Rosadi & Ali (2024) suggests the use of 'blind hiring' or blind selection, where personal identifiers such as names, photos, and other demographic information are hidden during the initial stages of selection. This allows evaluators to focus on the qualifications and experience of potential employees without being influenced by external factors such as physical appearance. In addition, companies can develop more specific and measurable selection criteria, and use valid and reliable assessment tools to measure the competencies of potential employees. While it is difficult to completely eliminate bias in the selection process, companies can take concrete steps to reduce it. One important step is to raise awareness of recruitment bias among recruiters. Anti-bias training can help recruiters to recognize and address their own biases. In addition, companies can involve employees from different backgrounds in the selection process to get a more diverse perspective. Thus, recruitment decisions can be more objective and fair.

Research conducted by Makupa et al. (2023) shows that an inclusive work environment can increase employee motivation and reduce resignation rates faster. Beauty privilege can hinder the creation of an inclusive work environment. When employees feel that their physical appearance is valued more than their competence, they tend to feel unappreciated and less engaged at work. This can lead to a decrease in employee motivation, productivity and well-being. In addition, a non-inclusive work environment can create a toxic work culture that is detrimental to all parties. From the above discussion, it is clear that "beauty privilege" has a significant impact on diversity and inclusivity in the hospitality industry. To address this issue, it is time for the hospitality industry to have a clear standard in the recruitment process. Standard in the recruitment process. These standards should emphasize the importance of competencies, skills and company values, not just physical appearance. With clear standards, it is expected that the recruitment process can be more objective, fair and inclusive. In addition, companies also need to provide anti-bias training to HR bureaus to increase their awareness of bias in recruitment and how to overcome it.

This research aims to analyze in depth through a literature review the emergence of the issue of physical beauty or what is known as beauty privilege. The main focus of this research is to review whether the concept has emerged and been recognized in previous literature and

whether the issue has been explicitly addressed by researchers. Beauty privilege refers to the advantage or preferential treatment that individuals with a physical appearance that is considered attractive by social standards receive. In the context of this study, the researcher wanted to find out the extent to which attention has been paid to this issue in various sectors, such as recruitment, career promotion and performance appraisal, and its potential impact on social injustice. By tracing previous research, this study will also explore whether beauty privilege has been a significant topic of discussion, or if there are gaps that have not been widely discussed by academics, so that it can serve as a foundation for future research.

## METHOD

The methods in this research are phenomenological studies and descriptive analysis. The phenomenological study that tries to be studied and becomes the focus of this research is the phenomenon of beauty influencers on social media that has begun to influence the community, where it makes people's awareness of maintaining their appearance higher. Furthermore, the flow of social media related to attractive dressing trends is also one of the factors. Especially for the world of hospitality which prioritizes service, of course the appearance factor is one of the separate assessments to maintain the image of the hotel. Descriptive analysis is used in this research to describe how the recruitment process is organized in Bali hotels.

This research is a literature study or library research using a qualitative research approach. This research uses secondary data derived from the publication of scientific journal articles, the results of previous studies and other reference sources relevant to the matter under study. In this study, researchers limited articles published in the last 5 years, namely from 2019 to 2024. The selection of the year was due to the increasingly swift flow of social media and the issue of beauty privilege whose emergence began to enter various lines of industry. In addition, research materials in the form of literature are limited to articles and journals that can be fully accessed. Full access is useful for researchers to analyze freely and without missing any information. In addition, articles or journals are also limited to the discussion of the hospitality industry in Bali Province. The main search source of library materials was taken from the Google Scholar site using one keyword, namely “Recruitment of the Bali hospitality industry”. Data analysis uses content analysis techniques, namely analysis of understanding of the substance of the literature sources used in the research to produce a study of the topics discussed and in drawing conclusions in order to get an explanation of what is trying to be researched.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1 Research Summary**

Year, Name, Title Research	Research Summary
Widiastini et al. (2019), Employment Opportunities of Female Hospitality Vocational High School Graduates in Bali.	This study aims to investigate the employment opportunities in hotels for female graduates from hospitality vocational high schools (SMK) in Bali. Almost all sectors in the hotel industry can be filled by SMK graduates, with attractive appearance commonly mentioned as one of the requirements, especially for female employees. However, hotels openly accept vocational school graduates, including women, provided they have sufficient skills to become permanent employees.
Gana & Maheswari (2022), Peel Through the Hiring Decision After the Covid19 Pandemic at Akmani Hotel Legian.	The purpose of this study is to thoroughly explore the changes in the recruitment process and recruitment decision criteria after the COVID-19 pandemic at Akmani Hotel Legian. This research focuses more on the systematics or flow of the recruitment process after the pandemic, without discussing appearance requirements. From the results of the research, it is concluded that there are no changes in the recruitment process or recruitment decision criteria at Akmani

	Hotel Legian, because the processes and criteria applied are considered the most effective and efficient.
Apriani et al. (2022), Strategy for the Use of Training and Daily Workers during the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Impact on Performance Improvement at The Kanjeng Hospitality Management Bali.	This study aims to examine the strategy of using training workers and daily workers and their impact on improving performance at The Kanjeng Hospitality Management. The focus of this research is on employee management, specifically the use of daily workers and training workers. The results show that this strategy is effective in saving the salary budget up to 50% of the normal budget, with good productivity because training and daily workers are able to complete tasks well. Although it does not have a significant impact on improving performance, this strategy is considered aggressive because it has great strengths and opportunities that can be maximized to improve business operations.
Kemenuh (2022), Implementation of Employee Recruitment and Selection Process at AlamkulKul Boutique Resort	The purpose of this study is to determine the implementation of the employee recruitment and selection process at AlamKulKul Boutique Resort. This research does not discuss the requirements of attractive appearance for applicants. The results of the analysis show that the implementation of the employee recruitment process at AlamKulKul Boutique Resort has gone well, but in the employee selection process, there are still several points that are not in accordance with the theory and are not listed in the hotel's standard operating procedures. Therefore, it is expected that AlamKulKul can review the employee recruitment and selection process for future improvements.
Puspitawati & Febrianti (2023), Improving Effectiveness in Recruitment, Payroll of All Day Laborers at Holiday Inn Resort Baruna Bali	This study aims to improve effectiveness in the recruitment and payment of daily workers at Holiday Inn Resort Baruna Hotel Bali. This research does not mention the requirement of attractive appearance for prospective applicants. To improve the effectiveness of recruitment, it is necessary to consider aspects such as planning labor needs, effective recruitment sources, objective and structured selection processes, and the use of relevant tools and technology. As for the payment of daily workers, it is important to apply fair and transparent principles, such as applicable wage standards, accurate calculations, and a clear payment system. The results of this study are expected to improve the effectiveness of recruitment and optimize the distribution of daily worker payments at the hotel.
Manuaba et al. (2023), Analysis of Employee Recruitment and Selection Process at Kayumanis Jimbaran Private Estate and Spa	This research aims to find out how the recruitment and selection process is carried out at Kayumanis Jimbaran Private Estate and Spa. This research only explains the flow of the recruitment process, starting from opening vacancies to the selection process, without mentioning the physical criteria of applicants or physical requirements in applying for a job. The results show that the recruitment process begins with human resource planning by the Department Head, then opening job vacancies, which begins internally and continues externally through trusted online sites and social media. The next process is the first interview with HRD for recruitment and introduction.
Pratiwi et al. (2023), The Impact of the Recruitment, Orientation and Job Placement Process on Smooth Operations at Bintang Bungalow	This study aims to determine the effect of the recruitment, orientation, and job placement process on the smooth operation of Bintang Bungalow. With the implementation of good and correct recruitment, orientation, and job placement, the company's operations are expected to run smoothly without significant obstacles. This research does not discuss physical criteria in the employee recruitment process at this hotel. The recruitment process at Bintang Bungalow is relatively simple, with minimum qualifications of high school education, honesty, discipline, willingness to learn, and responsibility, without regard to the experience and abilities of prospective employees. Orientation for new employees is not carried out because it is considered a waste of time and aims to foster a sense of independence. Job placement is also not optimal, as it is not in accordance with employee expertise. The recruitment, orientation, and job placement processes that are applied cause obstacles for employees in carrying out their duties, thus hampering the smooth operation of the company.

After describing the results of each researcher's research content, the following is a summary of the discussion about beauty privilege or attractive appearance from each study.

**Table 2**

Year, Researcher, Research Title	Discussion on beauty
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	privilege
Widiastini et al. (2019), Employment Opportunities of Female Graduates of Hospitality Vocational High School in Bali	Available
Gana & Maheswari (2022)., Thorough examination of hiring decisions after the covid-19 pandemic at Akmani Hotel Legian.	None
Apriani et al. (2022), Strategy for the Use of Training and Daily Workers during the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Impact on Performance Improvement at The Kanjeng Hospitality Management Bali	None
Kemenuh (2022), Implementation of Employee Recruitment and Selection Processes Employee Selection Process at Alamkukul Boutique Resort	None
Puspitawati & Febrianti (2023), Improving Effectiveness Recruitment, Payment Distribution of All Daily Workers at Holiday Inn Resort Baruna Bali	None
Manuaba et al. (2023), Analysis of Employee Recruitment and Selection Process at Kayumanis Jimbaran Private Estate and Spa	None
Pratiwi et al. (2023), Impact of the Recruitment, Orientation, and Placement Process on Smooth Operations at Bintang Bungalow and Job Placement on Smooth Operations at Bintang Bungalow	None

After describing the results of previous research, it was confirmed by the results of interviews conducted with practitioners Mr. Prayogo who works as a Resort Manager, Mr. Rai who works as an Operational Manager, Mrs. Wahyuni as a Human Resources practitioner, Mrs. Ari as a Huma Resources practitioner and Mr. Putu as General Manager said that recruitment where they work is carried out based on needs with a general process starting from submitting needs, after the needs are approved vacancies will be posted on customized media such as LinkedIn, Jobstreet, social media and through related Associations, then the Curriculum Vitae screening process is carried out, followed by the Interview process and selection decisions. on customized media such as LinkedIn, Jobstreet, social media and through related Associations, then the Curriculum Vitae screening process is carried out, followed by the Interview process and the decision on the selection results.

The recruitment process if it is related to Beauty Privilege, Mr. Prayogo said that it will be adjusted to the needs of each job such as the type of work and job level, if it is in direct contact with guests, it is necessary to have a good appearance, it is different if you are looking for a Manager, it is not necessary to have a good appearance, as long as you have good Attitude, Skill and Knowledge, it will not be a problem.

According to Mr. Rai, the place he works requires more candidates who have experience and competence in accordance with the job applied for, for example, looking for a driver, of course, it is necessary to have the ability to drive a vehicle even though there are candidates who have a better appearance but do not have the ability because it will take more time if they choose those who do not have the ability.

According to Mrs. Ari, where she works, Attitude or behavior and Grooming are preferred, because if you have a candidate to choose from who has an attractive and ordinary appearance, it will be seen based on attitude and neatness. If the good-looking ones have that then the appearance is a bonus, but if on the contrary they are good-looking but do not have a good attitude and neatness, it is certainly meaningless.

Almost in line with the opinion of Mrs. Wahyuni who said that in the recruitment process she was more concerned with Professional Look such as how the candidate carries himself and how the candidate creates a good First Impression, she gave an example if the candidate was said to be Good Looking but did not have Skill, Professionalism and Grooming, of course the company would not choose him. He also said that the recruitment process in each company could be different depending on the type of work as also explained by Mr. Prayogo.



Recruitment associated with Beauty Privilege according to Mr. Putu said everything depends on the position of the job itself as an example of recruitment for a flight attendant is needed who has the height and good appearance like Putri Indonesia, different from the recruitment for a room attendant is not needed who is qualified like Putri Indonesia but has knowledge and experience in the field of work knowledge and experience in that field of work. Almost in line with Mr. Prayogo's opinion, Mr. Putu also said that for certain job levels it is not necessary to have an attractive appearance but must have the Attitude, Skill and Knowledge needed for the job.

Through interviews with several practitioners who work in the hospitality industry, recruitment in their place looks more planned, starting from the submission of needs to the interview stage with candidates who have been selected. This moment None, there is some understanding in the industry that the absorption of physical beauty is very important, but not always the most important determining factor.

Mr. Prayogo also pointed out that in this industry, functional lines are face-to-face with customers, therefore it is relatively more important to have an attractive appearance, however managers require more Attitude, Skills, and Knowledge than appearance. Mr. Rai stated emphatically that the most crucial leadership is competence and relevant experience, which outweighs appearance especially in technical jobs such as driver.

Ms. Ari and Ms. Wahyuni also emphasized the factors of attitude, appearance, and attractive image as professional attitudes during the recruitment process. Their opinions support that good appearance is a plus but not a deciding factor if the candidate is unskilled and has the wrong attitude. Through Mr. Putu's vision, in the hospitality industry, the dress code is to meet the demands put forward by customers. Such as, for flight attendants, it must have a certain appearance of a flight attendant, and cleaners do not require a special appearance but rather function on practical skills and knowledge of the job.

Overall, although beauty privilege can play a role in recruitment, practitioners emphasize more the importance of qualifications, experience, and professional attitude as the main factors in selecting the right candidate for a particular role in the hotel.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis of various studies conducted show that the majority of researchers have not discussed in detail the existence of the "beauty privilege" factor in the process of assessing job applicants in the hospitality industry. In the study In the literature, only one researcher briefly mentioned that attractive appearance is one of the requirements in the recruitment process, but this issue was not discussed in depth or systematically. Most of the other studies focused more on other aspects, such as work experience, qualifications, and skills possessed by the applicants.

Furthermore, the analysis also shows that the issue of beauty privilege has not been a concern in the hospitality industry in Bali, especially in the last five years. There are no studies that explicitly highlight the tendency to treat attractive candidates preferentially during the recruitment and selection process. This indicates that the topic may still be under-recognized or even ignored in academic studies in hospitality, despite its potential existence in daily practice.

From the interviews conducted with practitioners in the hospitality industry, it can be concluded that the recruitment process in hotels is generally based on the needs of the position and relevant qualifications, although physical appearance (beauty privilege) remains a consideration in certain situations. Attractive appearance is considered important especially for guest-facing positions, such as reception, where first visual impressions can influence the guest experience. However, for more technical or managerial positions, the main factors assessed are attitude, skills, and knowledge (ASK).

In general, practitioners state that competence, experience, and a professional attitude take precedence over mere physical appearance. While appearance can be a plus, it is not a deciding factor if the candidate does not have the appropriate skills and personality. Thus, while beauty privilege can give certain candidates an advantage, the final decision is based more on the candidate's fit with the job requirements and company culture.

This phenomenon can be seen as evidence that managers, HR, or hotel leaders in Bali still prioritize professionalism in recruiting their employees. The criteria used in the recruitment process seem to prioritize competence and experience over physical appearance. This certainly gives a positive impression that the assessment of applicants is based on objective qualities relevant to the job.

However, in the future, more attention may need to be paid to the potential emergence of beauty privilege in the recruitment process. If this issue starts to emerge and influence hiring decisions, it has the potential to undermine the impression of professionalism that the hospitality industry in Bali has been holding on to. Therefore, it is important to continue to maintain transparency and fairness in every stage of the recruitment process, so that beauty privilege does not become a reality that can reduce the integrity of the industry.

In addition, the long-term effect of applying beauty privilege in Bali's hospitality industry can negatively impact the health of the industry itself. If appearance factors are prioritized without regard to the professional background, skills and experience of prospective applicants, hotels in Bali risk losing top talent who are actually capable of making significant contributions. Reliance on looks alone in the recruitment process can create a non-inclusive work environment and exclude highly competent individuals who do not meet certain beauty standards. In the long run, this can hinder the development of service quality, reduce hotel competitiveness, and create inequality in employment opportunities. As such, the hospitality industry in Bali should be careful to focus on more job-relevant aspects, such as professional skills, to maintain quality and reputation in a competitive global market.

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