

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**DETERMINANTS OF GUEST  
EXPERIENCE AND ITS INFLUENCE  
ON RESORT GUEST LOYALTY**

**NOR DIYANA BINTI MOHAMMED  
SHOBRI**

Thesis submitted in fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Faculty of Business and Management**

**February 2020**

## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

Name of Student : Nor Diyana binti Mohammed Shobri  
Student I.D. No. : 2014488752  
Programme : Doctor of Philosophy – BM950  
Faculty : Business and Management  
Thesis Title : Determinants of Guest Experience and Its Influence on  
Resort Guest Loyalty

Signature of Student : .....

Date : February 2020

## **ABSTRACT**

The premise of this study is that in a consumer purchase decision process, there must be some phenomena that trigger the consumer's mind about their future consumption experience. In other words, consumers tend to develop perception and expectation towards their consumption experience. However, the consumer's perception and expectation will only develop if they are activated by certain events. Customer-based brand equity and eWOM communication are constructs that explain possible key factors towards the development of consumer's perception and expectation, and subsequently their consumption experience. By applying Experience Economy concept, supported by functional experience and emotional experience concepts as well as recommendations from the literatures, this study sets out to investigate the determinants of guest experience in the Malaysian resort settings. A survey approach using questionnaire was applied to collect responses from 500 tourists staying for at least one night at the beach and island resorts in Malaysia. A structural equation modeling (Partial Least Square or PLS-SEM) approach was subsequently applied to examine the direct effects of guest experience. Findings from this study revealed that the hypothesized relationships between brand awareness and guest experience (service environment, service employee, esthetic experience and escapism experience) were not supported. However, brand association and perceived service quality were found interrelated with guest experience (service environment, service employee, esthetic experience and escapism experience). In relation to the eWOM, the findings indicated that the hypothesized relationship between eWOM and four dimensions of guest experience (service environment, service employee and esthetic experience escapism experience) was supported. Findings also confirmed that guest experience is related with guest loyalty. This study makes several theoretical contributions. Towards the end managerial contributions and several potential opportunities for future research are delineated.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*‘When you go in search of honey you must expect to be stung by bees.’*

-Kenneth Kaunda

PhD is such a long journey and has demanded a lot of effort and time. Life as a wife and a mother of two children make this journey become even more challenging. Thus, the completion of this thesis has been made possible only through many individual support and encouragement. First of all, I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Lennora Putit for her guidance, advice and encouragement during this journey. Working under her supervision provides an extremely rewarding experience. Her interest in research becomes an exceptional inspiration to me. I would also like to thank my co-supervisor, Dr. Amily Fikry for her guidance and feedback.

Special thanks to my husband, Ahmad Nawawi and family members especially Mak, Ayah, Abah and Umi for all the supports and prayers. To my adorable children, Ahmad Danial and Aiesyah, both of you fueled my strength throughout this journey. A very special gratitude goes to my PhD colleague Murni, for her moral and emotional support along the way. Special thanks also to the rest of my PhD colleagues, Hafiz, Kekda, Kak Syuk, Ain, Ita, Is and Kak Sri. To Shahril, thank you for introducing your students to assist me in the data collection. Appreciation also goes to all who have assisted me in the data collection.

I am also grateful to the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education and Universiti Teknologi MARA for the generous funding. Lastly, special thanks to the Faculty of Business and Management, Puncak Alam.

Thank you for all the support and encouragement!!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>AUTHOR'S DECLARATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Research Questions	4
1.4 Research Objectives	4
1.5 Significance of Study	5
1.6 Scope of the Study	6
1.6.1 Industry Setting	6
1.6.2 Unit of Analysis	10
1.7 Definition of Terms	11
1.8 Organization of the Thesis	13
1.9 Chapter Summary	13
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Customer Loyalty	14
2.3 Guest-Based Brand Equity	19
2.3.1 Aaker's Customer-Based Brand Equity Model	22
2.3.2 Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity Model	24
2.3.3 Underlying Assumptions of Aaker's and Keller's Customer- Based Brand Equity	27
2.3.4 Dimension of Customer-Based Brand Equity in the Aaker's Model	28