



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***INFLUENCE OF MARKETING MIX AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT ON
GUEST EMOTION IN MALAYSIAN HOTELS***

NOOR IZZA ROZIAN BINTI SANIB

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GUEST EMOTION IN MALAYSIAN HOTELS**

By

NOOR IZZA ROZIAN BINTI SANIB

Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
Universiti Putra Malaysia in Fulfilment of the
Requirement for Degree of Master of Science

June 2014



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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science (Tourism)

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June 2014

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Several studies have been conducted on the relationship between key antecedents and guest emotion in the service industry. However, the study of the relationship of guest emotion and its key antecedents in the context of the hospitality industry are still limited. Hence, the study purposed to examine the relationship between marketing mix and physical environment with guest emotion in the context of Malaysian hotel, based on established model. Modifications were made on the model on the basis propositions that related to the current study.

Data collection was conducted at 3, 4 and 5-star hotels in the Central Region of Malaysia, which almost 31.8% of Malaysian hotels is located here. A total of 328 valid questionnaires were collected from the survey by using the convenience sampling technique. 'Statistical Package Social Sciences' (SPSS) was applied for data analysis, where Multiple and Simple regression analysis verified the hypothesis developed.

The findings of the study largely support the hypothesized relationships proposed in the theoretical model. Specifically, the results revealed that all the antecedents had positive relationship with guest emotion except price and promotion. The results also provided strong evidence of the impact of guest emotion on guest satisfaction and behavior intentions.

The study contributes to theoretical knowledge by providing a contribution to the literature regarding the usefulness of the combination of marketing mix and physical environments to influence guest emotion in the hotel industry. The study also benefits

practitioners, especially hotel organizations in understanding the needs and wants of the guests as well as how to provide them.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Sarjana Sains

**PENGARUH CAMPURAN PEMASARAN, PERSEKITARAN FIZIKAL
TERHADAP EMOSI PELANGGAN HOTEL DI NEGERI PANTAI BARAT
MALAYSIA**

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Beberapa kajian telah dijalankan ke atas hubungan di antara faktor dan emosi pelanggan dalam industri perkhidmatan. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian mengenai hubungan di antara faktor yang mempengaruhi emosi pelanggan dalam konteks industri hospitaliti masih terhad. Oleh itu, tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan di antara campuran pemasaran, persekitaran fizikal dan emosi pelanggan hotel di Malaysia berdasarkan model yang sudah dikaji. Pengubahsuaian telah dibuat ke atas model tersebut supaya selari dengan objektif kajian semasa.

Pengumpulan data telah dijalankan di hotel-hotel 3, 4 dan 5 bintang di negeri-negeri Pantai Barat Semenanjung Malaysia, berdasarkan hampir 31.8% hotel di Malaysia terletak di bahagian ini. Sebanyak 328 soal selidik yang lengkap telah dikumpulkan daripada kajian ini dengan menggunakan teknik persampelan rawak mudah. 'Pakej Statistik Sains Sosial (SPSS) telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data, di mana kaedah analisis regresi berganda dan ringkas digunakan untuk mengesahkan hipotesis.

Sebahagian besar hasil kajian ini menyokong hubungan hipotesis yang dicadangkan di dalam model teori. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa semua faktor mempunyai hubungan yang positif dengan emosi pelanggan kecuali faktor harga dan promosi. Keputusan juga menunjukkan bukti yang kukuh tentang kesan emosi pelanggan terhadap kepuasan pelanggan dan reaksi di masa hadapan.

Tesis ini menyumbang kepada pengetahuan teori mengenai peranan campuran pemasaran dan persekitaran fizikal dalam mempengaruhi emosi pelanggan di dalam industri perhotelan. Kajian ini juga memberi manfaat kepada pihak organisasi hotel terutama dalam memahami keperluan pelanggan dan cara untuk mengatasinya.



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My million's gratitude went to my beloved parents for the concern and supported me along my Master study journey. Last but not least, thank you to my family members and friends for their endless motivation and support to accomplish my study.

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on _____ to conduct the final examination of Noor Izza Rozian binti Sanib on her thesis entitle “The Relationship between Marketing Mix, Physical Environment and Guest emotion of Central Region Hotels in Malaysia”, in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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DECLARATION

Declaration by graduate student

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HR	Human Resource
IMP3	Third Industrial Master Plan
MAH	Malaysian Association of Hotels
MOTOUR	Ministry of Tourism Malaysia
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This chapter covers an overview of the research background. It begins by introducing the key concepts related to the study. The background study is provided at the beginning of the chapter, followed by the statement of the problem of the study. Therefore, based on the identified research gap, the chapter sets the objectives of the current study and leads to a discussion of the research questions. The chapter continues to discuss the definitions and concepts of the study. Later, the significance of the study in relation to academicians and practitioners are also discussed. Finally, the current chapter concludes with a summary of the chapter outlines of the study.

1.1 Background of Study

In Malaysia, the tourism sector is one of the biggest contributors to the national economy, which produced of Malaysia' Gross Domestic Products (GDP) (Malaysia Ministry of Finance, MOF, 2013). Malaysia is one of the favorite destinations for tourists to come and it attracts almost 25.03 million tourists in the year 2012 with tourist receipts of RM 60.6 billion (Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, MOTOUR, 2013).

The numbers of tourists' arrival to Malaysia are increasing every year. Malaysia tourism industry has been recognized as having potential to increase its contribution to the services sector in particular and in the economy in general (Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006-2010). The aggressive and ongoing promotion by the government and Tourism Malaysia is the main factors in the growth of the tourism industry in Malaysia. Its focus is on promoting Malaysia domestically and internationally, to promote Malaysia as an outstanding tourist destination, to encourage tourism and other related industries in Malaysia. Malaysia Truly Asia (2007) and Visit Malaysia Year (2014) are the programs launched by the government under Tourism Malaysia to promote Malaysian brand internationally.

The hotel industry is one of the critical sub-sectors under tourism industry, due to its role to provide accommodation and fulfill tourists' demand. Malaysian hotel industry faced an encouraging growth rate since early 90s due to the continuous growth of the tourism industry as mentioned before. The strong support and aggressive promotion of tourism by Malaysia's government encouraged the development of new hotels as well as the existing hotels. Growing along with the objective of enhancing Malaysia as the outstanding global tourism destinations, hotel industry serves as the backbone of the tourism industry, and plays an important part to maintain and to improve their performance by providing excellent services through the provision of accommodation facilities, food and beverage services; and others.

Hotel management has to work out with new idea and initiative in order to keep the current guest stay and to attract new guests to come to their place. Hotel guests are the persons that will assess the level of services which is provided by the hotel and the achievement of the hotel depends on the guest. According to Zairi (2000), “guests are the purpose of what we do. They are not depending on us, but we are very much depending on them” (pg. 331-335). Guests’ evaluation towards the hotel always comes through their emotion after they have experienced the stay and guest emotion expresses the perception, whether their experience meets their expectations or not (Stephens and Gwinner, 1998). According to Westbrook and Oliver (1991), emotion is the response caused after product usage or consumption experience and exerts considerable influence on the thought processes that bring to performance appraisal (Gorn et al., 1993; Mano and Oliver, 1993; Miniard et al., 1992; Mattila and Enz, 2002). In the context of hotel settings, the factors such as the environment factor, product offered, service delivered, price of product and way of promoting; are important in influencing their experience, affecting their emotion and leading to future reaction. Therefore, the current study attempts to bridge the gap by integrating the factors that influence guest emotion. This may help better understanding of guest’s requirements and needs of the hotel, and provide beneficial approaches to hotel management in providing better service. The next section identifies more of the gap related to the current study.

1.2 Problem Statement

Recently, customers’ emotional responses are becoming an area of interest in service marketing research (Ryu, 2005; Joo, 2009; Chang, 2012; Chebat and Michon, 2003; Lin and Liang, 2011). Guest emotion evaluation usually comes based on their experience of the events. However, in hospitality industry, specifically in hotel industry, there are some problems to evaluate the critical factors that affect guest emotion. Most of the hotels distributed simple surveys to their guest in order to know the feedback during their stay in those hotels. However, guest surveys found in most hotels tend to focus in asking the opinions on predefined services such as cleanliness of the room, check-in and check-out procedure, quality of food and beverage. These surveys do not cover all information about the hotel and their emotion expression is difficult to measure. The gaps might arise between the overview of features of the factors that evoke guest emotion and the kind of emotion they experienced during their stay in a particular hotel. Therefore, these major gaps bring to the current research objective to be studied further.

There are two issues related to guest emotion in hotel industry. The first issue is related to the environment factors which are more tangible, such as the interior design, layouts, decoration, furniture and scent. Previous studies emphasized on physical environment factors as the antecedent of customer emotion in the hospitality industry but different setting (Chang, 2012; Rafaeli and Yavetz, 2004; Chebat and Michon, 2003; Joo, 2003). Hence, since it was supported by previous empirical study that physical environment

factors can evoke customer emotion, this study attempts to explore the relationship between the physical environment and customer emotion in the hotel setting.

In addition, previous research usually studied the relationship of one or several elements (scent, ambient, music and lighting) of the physical environment on customer emotion. Limited exploration has been conducted on how the combination of each element's physical environment affects customer emotion within hospitality settings, specifically in the hotel service industry.

Besides that, the services in the hotel industry are often intangible and create difficulties for the customer to measure before having to experience it by themselves, and it was identified as the second issue that is related to customer emotion. Therefore, marketing strategy is the best element for hotel management to make sure their products and services are competitive. In hotel setting context, marketing strategy not only focuses on products and service people, there are other elements of marketing such as price and promotion that need to be considered. The combination of these four elements brings out the marketing tools concept, which is known as marketing mix tool and it is the most critical strategy used to pursue marketing objectives (Maarit, 2011). However, literature on the role of marketing mix dimensions in affecting customer emotion especially in the hotel industry is still limited especially on elements used to measure marketing mix's relationship with customer emotion (Meirovich and Bahnan, 2008; Izard, 1981; Munusamy; 2008; Pugh, 2001). This gap brings out the issue to be studied empirically. The following section presents the direction of the current study by identifying the objectives of the study and the research questions that need to be answered using hypothesis testing.

1.3 Objectives of Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between key antecedents, guest emotion and its outcomes in the Malaysian hotel industry.

Based on the main objective, this study focuses in detailed of the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between marketing mix dimensions and guest emotion of Malaysian hotel.
2. To investigate the relationship between physical environment factors with guest emotion of Malaysian hotel.
3. To determine the relationship between guest emotion and guest satisfaction of Malaysian hotel.
4. To identify the relationship between guest emotion and behavioral intentions of Malaysian hotel.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the relationships relationship between marketing mix dimensions and guest emotion of Malaysian hotel?
2. What are the relationships between physical environment factors with guest emotion of Malaysian hotel?
3. What are the relationship between guest emotion and guest satisfaction of Malaysian hotel?
4. What are the relationships between guest emotion and behavioral intentions of Malaysian hotel?

1.5 Significance of Study

The main concern of the current study is to explore and to create new knowledge of the marketing mix and physical environment and their role in influencing guest emotion along with the relationship with guest satisfaction and behavioral intentions. This study provides the views on the current situation of the tourism industry, particularly hotel industry, and it contributes to understanding the roles of the antecedents of guest emotion and the attributes of satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

Previous studies of guest emotion in the hospitality industry were commonly focused the relationship with future behavior (Ryu, 2005; Joo, 2009). However, in order to enhance guest emotion and build positive guest future behavior, there are several factors that affect guest emotion such as motivations and needs. Therefore, the current study intends to bridge the existing research gap of antecedents that may affect guest emotion. Later, the findings of this study are additions to the existing study on guest emotion in the hotel industry and also part of future reference for other researchers.

Besides the academic field, the study also contributes to practitioners of the field related to the study. The findings of this study will be important to plan a strategic marketing program. Hotels management would be able to use this research to set their marketing plan to exceed the needs of the hotel guest, which may affect their emotion during stays at the hotels. A well understanding of guest needs will help hotel managers to carefully consider operational possibilities and constraints (Kim, 2007). Finally, findings of the current study also offer decision-making tools for hotels' top managements that will help them maximize the value of their investment.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Before proceed further into the study, it is important to have a clear explanation of the terminologies related to the research. Based on the following definition of terms, it gives better understanding of the terms used in the context of tourism research. The following definitions of terms were based on the constructs of the theoretical model of the study (refer to Figure 3.2, p.56)

Physical environment

Physical environment refers to a quality of surrounding space, which can be generated through the human five senses, which are scent, touch, sight and sound (Kotler, 1973)

Ambient Factor

Ambient factor is the characteristic of non-visual, background conditions in the environment, including elements such as lighting, sound or music; scent and temperature in a service setting (Baker, 1987).

Design Factor

Design factors refer to the elements of store environment that tend to be more visual in nature, such as layouts, color and facilities. The design elements are the combination of aesthetic and functional aspects that facilitate high quality services (Baker, 1987).

Emotion

Emotion is defined a mental state of eagerness that arises from cognitive appraisal of events or thoughts, which often expressed physically and might be affected in certain action (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer, 1999).

Marketing Mix

According to Kotler, Armstrong, Wong and Saunders (2008), marketing mix is the set of controllable marketing elements that mixed up by the service provider in order to optimize their profit in the target market.

Product

In marketing, product is anything that is offered by service providers in the market in order to get attention and achievement as well as to satisfy the market requirement (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong, 1999) such as a hotel room.

People

In view of the current study, people in the marketing mix define it as a service which involves the employees and workers of the organizations (Amzad, Wang and Sumayya, 2012). In other words, people are the employees who are responsible for delivering the service to hotel guests.

Price

Price in marketing mix is the value of money charged for a product or the total amount that guests paid for having or using the product (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong and Saunders, 2008).

Promotion

Promotion mix of the current study refers to the activities that companies perform in order to communicate to their existing and potential customers (Kotler, 2000). The promotion mix consists of four elements which are advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and publicity.

Guest Satisfaction

Guest satisfaction can be defined as feelings of pleasure or dissatisfaction resulting from comparing a product perceived performance or outcome in relation to their expectations (Kotler, 2000)

Intentions to revisit

Intentions to revisit defined the possibility of guest using the same service provider again in the future (Fornell, 1992).

Loyalty

Loyalty refers to positive attitude of guests to return to the same hotel again in the future. (Bowen and Shoemaker, 2003)

Hotel

Hotel is a place that provides services such as accommodation, food and beverages for tourist, guest or temporary residents who intend to stay at the hotel (Medlik and Ingram, 2000)

1.7 Organization of Study

This section presents the organization of the current study. A total of six (6) chapters in the study are:

Chapter 1 provides an introduction including the background of the study and history. It explains the problem statement and the objectives of the study. The importance or significance of the study is elaborated right after. This chapter ends with a section of the organization of the research for easy referencing.

Chapter 2 discusses related variables of the current study followed by the literature on service, tourism and hotel industry. Next, this chapter continues discussing the literature of guest emotion, marketing mix, physical environment, guest satisfaction, intentions to revisit and loyalty, which are important in understanding the context of the study.

Chapter 3 presents the conceptual framework that acts as a guide of connecting the study constructs. This chapter explains the original framework which is adapted for the current study and the modification applied to achieve the objectives. Discussion is followed by explanations of the variables involved in the new proposed frameworks and Hypothesis design is also formulated.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology used in this study which includes research design, location of study, sampling design as well as survey design. The procedure of getting the data and a brief overview on how the data were analyzed also elaborated in this chapter.

Chapter 5 is the chapter, which data analysis is elaborated and its result is presented. The analyses were carried out by following the procedure for the preliminary analysis, descriptive analysis and Hypothesis testing in order to achieve the study objectives.

Chapter 6 reports on the findings and summarizes the significance of the study where it highlights both theoretical contributions and managerial implications produced from the study. Finally, it also acknowledges the limitations and suggests possible further research directions.

1.8 Summary

This chapter has provided a brief explanation of the study that covered the background of the study, problem statement, objectives, research questions and the importance of the study to justify the reason of conducting the research. The present research also defines the important terms related to the study because it is imperative to avoid any unclear meaning of the terms. It can be concluded that the current study is carried out to conduct a comprehensive approach in studying the relationships between marketing mix and physical environment with guest emotion and its outcomes of Malaysian hotel. Then, the chapter further discusses on the problem statement, objectives and the importance of the study. The next chapter discusses the relevant review of the literature related to the study.

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