



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING  
IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG TOURISTS PATRONIZING  
PREMIUM OUTLETS IN MALAYSIA***

**SHARIFAH FARIDAH BT SYED ALI**

**SPE 2020 41**



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PREMIUM OUTLETS IN MALAYSIA**

By

**SHARIFAH FARIDAH BT SYED ALI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**July 2020**

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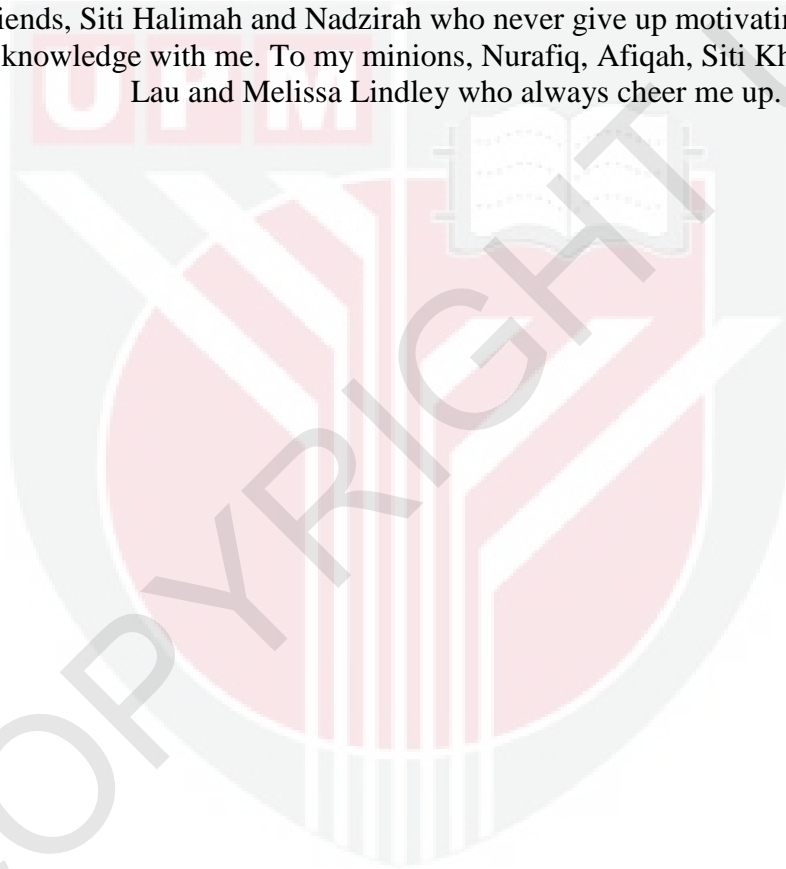


## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Syed Ali Syed Mohamed and Ramlah Bt Unnithan, who give me strength when I have a thought of giving up, who unconditionally always express the encouragement and support all the time. You sacrifice a lot to see my success.

My siblings, Zuhaimi, Zuhaizi, Zuainah and Syed Firdaus, who shared their word of advice and encouragement to finish this study.

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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PATRONIZING PREMIUM OUTLETS IN MALAYSIA**

By

**SHARIFAH FARIDAH BT SYED ALI**

**July 2020**

**Chairman : Professor Yuhanis Abdul Aziz, PhD**  
**Faculty : School of Business and Economics**

Shopping tourism in Malaysia is the major contributor to the national economy. As a matter of fact, in 2018, it contributed approximately RM28.20 million to the country economy. The establishment of premium outlets in Malaysia is one of the government initiatives to increase tourism revenue. However, this study found out that tourist did not feel satisfied with the store environment, price, discount, and the availability of variety offered by these premium outlets. Moreover, tourist expenditure on shopping in Malaysia has remained low, as compared to Seoul and London. Therefore, focusing on increasing the shopping expenditure among tourists, this study suggested impulse buying as one of the strategies to induce tourists to shop and subsequently, increase the tourism revenue. In particular, a conceptual framework that incorporated environmental, social, and personal factors, excitement, impulsiveness, and impulse buying behaviour at the premium outlets in Malaysia was proposed. The data collection was conducted at five premium outlets in Malaysia, namely Johor Premium Outlet (JPO), Mitsui Outlet Park (MOP), Freeport A'Famosa Outlet, Design Village Outlet (DVO), and Genting Premium Outlet (GPO). The sample population consisted of 440 local and international tourists who shopped and purchased at these outlets. Since there was no available list of local and international tourists at these outlets, purposive and quota sampling techniques were applied in this study. The international tourists were selected based on the Tourism Malaysia report on the top five countries with the biggest spenders in Malaysia. Then, the respondents were divided accordingly to the year of operation of these premium outlets. This study expanded the model of Floh and Madlberger (2013) through the incorporation of social and personal factors and replacement of shopping enjoyment with excitement to understand tourists' impulse buying behaviour at the premium outlets in Malaysia. PLS-SEM was used to examine the relationship of these constructs (seven hypotheses). The results revealed environmental factors (i.e. sales promotion and variety of selection) as important elements that induce tourists to make a purchase impulsively. Interestingly, this study

also confirmed the significant influence of self-concept on impulse buying behaviour. In other words, tourists are induced to make a purchase impulsively without being influenced by environmental or social factors. Additionally, this study demonstrated the full mediation effect of impulsiveness on the relationship between excitement and impulse buying behaviour. Moreover, this study provided valuable insights and understanding on the key factors that drive tourists to purchase impulsively. The retailers should provide a comfortable environment with attractive sales promotion and a variety of selection that would arouse tourists' excitement and subsequently, lead them to purchase on impulse. Besides that, a variety of products or brands at these premium outlets would allow tourists to make a selection to express their identity and better-self. As for the policymakers, good quality of shopping place would help the industry to maintain the current shopping malls and minimise issues of low occupancy rate in the industry. This study was expected to assist policymakers in generating audit criteria to direct the best practices in these premium outlets in Malaysia. However, there are several limitations of this study that are worth mentioning. Firstly, the subject of the study was limited to premium outlet only. Additionally, this study carried out only the quantitative research method and no comparisons were made between international and local tourists in terms of their impulse buying behaviour. The data collection process was likewise conducted within a short period of time and involved a few nationalities.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**FAKTOR PERSEKITARAN, SOSIAL DAN PERIBADI YANG  
MEMPENGARUHI PEMBELIAN TIDAK TERANCANG DALAM  
KALANGAN PELANCONG DI “PREMIUM OUTLET”, MALAYSIA**

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Pelancongan membeli-belah merupakan penyumbang utama kepada pertumbuhan ekonomi negara. Secara fakta, industri ini telah menyumbang sekitar RM28.20 juta kepada ekonomi negara pada tahun 2018. Penubuhan “premium outlet” di Malaysia adalah salah satu inisiatif kerajaan untuk meningkatkan hasil pelancongan. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian ini mendapati bahawa pelancong tidak berpuas hati dengan persekitaran, diskaun harga dan variasi barangan di outlet tersebut. Tambahan pula, perbelanjaan membeli-belah dalam kalangan pelancong di Malaysia masih rendah berbanding di Seoul dan London. Oleh itu, untuk meningkatkan perbelanjaan dalam kalangan pelancong, kajian ini mencadangkan pembelian tidak terancang sebagai salah satu strategi mendorong pelancong untuk berbelanja bagi meningkatkan pendapatan sektor pelancongan. Secara khusus, kerangka konsep merangkumi faktor persekitaran, sosial, dan peribadi, terhadap keterujaan, kegembiraan, impulsif dan tingkah laku pembelian tidak terancang di premium outlet telah diusulkan. Proses pengumpulan data dijalankan ke atas lima buah “premium outlet” di Malaysia iaitu *Premium Johor Outlet (JPO)*, *Mitsui Outlet Park (MOP)*, *Freeport A'Famosa Outlet*, *Outlet Village Design (DVO)* dan *Genting Premium Outlet (GPO)*. Populasi sampel terdiri daripada 440 pelancong antarabangsa dan tempatan yang telah berbelanja di cawangan-cawangan ini. Oleh sebab tiada senarai pelancong tempatan dan antarabangsa yang berbelanja di kedai-kedai tersebut, pensampelan bertujuan dan kuota telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Pelancong daripada lima buah negara yang paling banyak berbelanja telah dipilih berdasarkan laporan Pelancongan Malaysia. Kemudian, responden dibahagikan berdasarkan tahun operasi kedai-kedai premium tersebut. Kajian ini telah memperluas model Floh dan Madlberger (2013) dengan memasukkan faktor sosial dan faktor peribadi dan menggantikan keseronokan membeli-belah dengan keterujaan untuk memahami tingkah laku pembelian tidak terancang dalam kalangan pelancong di premium outlet, Malaysia. PLS-SEM digunakan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara faktor (tujuh hipotesis). Dapatan kajian

menunjukkan bahawa faktor persekitaran (promosi jualan dan kepelbagaian pilihan) merupakan unsur penting yang mendorong pelancong membuat pembelian secara impulsif. Menariknya, kajian ini telah mengesahkan bahawa konsep diri secara signifikan mempengaruhi perilaku pembelian impuls. Dalam erti kata lain, pelancong didorong untuk membuat pembelian tidak terancang tanpa dipengaruhi oleh faktor alam sekitar atau sosial. Selain itu, kajian ini menunjukkan kesan pengantaraan penuh impulsif terhadap hubungan antara keseronokan dan tingkah laku pembelian tidak terancang. Tambahan pula, kajian ini memberikan pandangan dan pemahaman yang berharga mengenai faktor-faktor utama yang mendorong pelancong untuk membeli secara tidak terancang. Peruncit boleh menyediakan persekitaran yang kondusif dengan mengadakan promosi jualan yang menarik, kepelbagaian pilihan yang akan membangkitkan keseronokan pelancong dan seterusnya membawa mereka untuk membuat pembelian tidak terancang. Tambahan pula, pelbagai jenama dan produk di kedai itu membolehkan pelancong mempunyai pilihan untuk mengekspresikan identiti dan keperibadian mereka yang lebih baik. Dari segi pembuat dasar, kualiti tempat beli-belah yang baik akan membantu industri mengekalkan pusat membeli-belah yang sedia ada dan dapat mengurangkan isu kadar penghunian yang rendah dalam industri ini. Kajian ini akan membantu pembuat dasar untuk menghasilkan kriteria audit sebagai panduan amalan terbaik di kedai-kedai premium Malaysia. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat beberapa batasan dalam kajian ini di mana subjek kajian hanya terhad kepada "premium outlet" sahaja. Selain itu, kajian ini hanya menjalankan kaedah kuantitatif tanpa membuat perbandingan tingkah laku pembelian tidak terancang antara pelancong antarabangsa dan tempatan. Proses pengumpulan data juga hanya dilakukan dalam jangka waktu yang tertentu di mana tidak meliputi pelancong antarabangsa lain dari negara yang berbeza.



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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization
MOTAC	Ministry of Tourism and Culture
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
MATTA	Malaysia Association of Tour and Travel Agents
JPO	Johor Premium Outlet
MOP	Mitsui Outlet Park
GPO	Genting Premium Outlet
ETP	Economic Transformation Plan
NKEA	National Key Economic Area
EPP	Entry Entity Point
GST	Good and Services Tax
ST-EP	Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty
10YFP	10-Year Framework of Program on sustainability consumption and production patterns
WHO	World Health Organization
S-O-R	Stimulus Organism Response model
WOM	Word of Mouth
eWOM	Electronic Word of Mouth
EXT	Excitement
IMP	Impulsiveness
IBB	Impulse buying behaviour

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Chapter Overview

This study exclusively focused on shopping tourism in Malaysia. The impulse buying behaviour among tourists at the premium outlets in Malaysia was examined in this study. This chapter presents the background of this study and problem statement, followed by research questions and objectives of this study. The subsequent sections discuss the significance and scope of this study and describe the definitions of the key terms used in this study. The thesis organisation is presented at the end of this chapter.

### 1.2 Background of the Study

Being one of the most important global industries, tourism is part of the major industries that boost the economy of a country. According to Marzuki (2010), since the mid-twentieth century, tourism has been recognised as the impetus for most of the developed countries. The Asian countries have also expanded their tourism business and compete with one another to increase the number of tourists and economic value (Advertising+Marketing Malaysia magazine, p.p 28-33). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (2013), the Asian region is one of the best performing regions in the world in terms of the growth in the number of tourists. In 2017, the Asian region recorded tourism revenue of USD 390 billion, which accounted for 29.0% of the world's total tourism revenue (UNWTO Asian Tourism Trends, 2018).

Malaysia is one of the Asian countries that has received a large number of tourists. As reported in the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy 2012–2015, Malaysia was the fifth most visited ASEAN country in 2009 and 2010. Malaysia has maintained its position until 2018 with a total of 25.8 million tourist arrivals in that year (Tourism Malaysia, 2018; UNWTO, 2019). Meanwhile, the slogan of “Malaysia Truly Asia” represents the uniqueness of the country with a multicultural and multiracial population. Malaysia is a place that offers a diversity of cultures, languages, religions, and traditions and customs for tourists to gain myriad experience. These features are the country's attractions that make it an excellent tourist destination among tourists.

The Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC) is the main ministry that is responsible for introducing Malaysia as an outstanding tourist destination. It was established in 1987 and was previously known as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Marzuki, 2010). After the 13<sup>th</sup> general election, it was then transformed into the Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC, 2015). This ministry has developed several strategies and plans to enhance the country's tourism industry. The development of tourist destination and infrastructure encourage more interstate

tourists (Marzuki, 2010). The rapid growth in the development of large-scale projects, such as Petronas Twin Towers, Kuala Lumpur International Airport, and Sepang International Circuit, has further intensified the tourism industry.

Malaysia was also awarded as Asia's leading destination at the 22<sup>nd</sup> World Travel Awards (Tourism Malaysia, 2015). Following in 2018, Malaysia was awarded by PATA with Gold Award for its best branding and marketing effort of positioning the country as a premier tourist destination (MIDA, 2018). Tourism industry continued to be the third-highest contributor in terms of foreign exchange for this country (Ganesan, 2018). Meanwhile, Singapore is one of the top tourist generating markets for Malaysia with 14 million tourist arrivals in 2014 and 10.62 million tourist arrivals in 2018 (Tourism Malaysia, 2015; Tourism Malaysia, 2018). Table 1.1 presents the statistics of tourist arrivals and receipts.

**Table 1.1 : Summary of tourist arrival and receipts to Malaysia from 2005 to 2018**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	<b>Receipts (RM)</b>	<b>Growth</b>
2018	25.83 million	84.1 billion	-0.45%
2017	25.95 million	82.17 billion	-3.02%
2016	26.76 million	82.1 billion	4.03%
2015	25.70 million	69.1 billion	-6.25%
2014	27.44 million	72.0 billion	6.7%
2013	25.72 million	65.4 billion	2.73%
2012	25.03 million	60.6 billion	1.29%
2011	24.71 million	58.3 billion	0.56%
2010	24.58 million	56.5 billion	3.94%

(Source: Tourism Malaysia, 2019)

Referring to Table 1.1, the arrival of international tourists in Malaysia continuously increased from 2005 to 2014. However, it decreased by 6.3% from 27.44 million international tourists in 2014 to 25.70 million international tourists in 2015. According to Ganesan (2015), the declining number of tourists was attributed to the sharp drop in the tourist arrivals from Singapore, China, India, and Thailand to Malaysia. The former president of Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA), Datuk Hamzah Rahmat, explained that the global economic slowdown and lower spending required contributed to the drop in the number of tourist arrivals (Kumaran and Edward, 2015). Regrettably, the number continued to drop in 2017 and 2018, where the tourist arrivals decreased by 3.02% and 0.45%, respectively. This situation has affected the economy of Malaysia and its tourism, such as hotels and retailers. Thus, the Malaysian government seeks to overcome the declining trend in tourist arrivals by encouraging tourists to spend more on shopping.

Shopping is known as the most significant contributor to tourism, which recorded revenue of RM 28.10 billion of the total market in 2018 (Tourism Malaysia, 2018). It is an exciting and entertaining activity that promotes tourism (Sirakaya-Turk, 2015).



They shop for local products, souvenirs, and items for personal use. Shopping experience plays an important role, as it potentially influences destination satisfaction and intention to recommend (Hosany and Gilbert, 2010). Shopping is one of the activities that contribute to tourism revenue. It is a natural economic practice that is influenced by the tourists' buying behaviour when they are drawn to buy products at a tourist destination (Choi et al., 2015). Choi et al. (2015) emphasised shopping as a key event of tourism. Thus, it is crucial to understand the shopping pattern among tourists to increase tourism revenue (Albayrak et al., 2016).

Malaysia has become the main shopping destination in Southeast Asia—Kuala Lumpur is home to three of the seven international shopping malls (UNWTO, 2014). Mastercard global destination index (2016) reported that tourists in Malaysia spent 30.7% of their spending portion in shopping from December 2015 to January 2016, March 2016, and July 2016. In fact, Singapore was identified as the biggest city feeder for Malaysia, which accounted USD 1.7 billion in spending, followed by Jakarta (USD 680 million), Manila (USD 342 million), Seoul (USD 329 million), and lastly, Bangkok (USD 253 million). Therefore, the shopping tourism industry is significant in enhancing the local economy and the number of investors and promoting the development of the retail sector. Table 1.2 presents Kuala Lumpur's top feeder cities.

**Table 1.2 : Kuala Lumpur top feeder cities, 2016**

<b>Cities</b>	<b>Total expenditure (USD million)</b>
Singapore	1727
Jakarta	680
Manila	342
Seoul	329
Bangkok	253

(Source: MasterCard Global Index Annual Report, 2016)

There are various places for tourists to shop in Malaysia. Back in the late 1980s, about 100 shopping malls were established and the number increased to 360 shopping malls today (Tourism Malaysia, 2015). Currently, there are about 500 shopping malls in Malaysia, which was expected to increase to 700 shopping malls in 2019 (Kaur, 2019). These shopping malls were scattered all over Peninsular Malaysia; half of these shopping malls are located at Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. According to Tripadvisor (2016), Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC), Berjaya Times Square, Pavillion Kuala Lumpur, Mid Valley Megamall, and The Curve are some of the most popular shopping destinations in Malaysia. Besides that, premium outlets are alternative shopping places in Malaysia. Currently, there are five premium outlets in Malaysia, namely Johor Premium Outlet (JPO), Freeport A'Famosa Outlet, Mitsui Outlet Park, Design Village Outlet (DVO), and Genting Premium Outlet (GPO).

A premium outlet is known as an affordable luxury shopping outlet that offers diverse brand stores. The development of premium outlets is to attract more tourists and to increase their shopping spending. In December 2011, Johor Premium Outlet (JPO)

was the first premium outlet in Kulaijaya, Johor. Mitsui Outlet Park (MOP) is the second affordable luxury outlet near KLIA, Sepang. The third outlet was established in Malacca in November 2015, which is known as Freeport A'Famosa Outlet. Recently, two premium outlets were officially launched, namely DVO and GPO.

Recently, two premium outlets were officially launched, the DVO in November of 2016 and the GPO in June of 2017. These premium outlets offer a different shopping experience. The architecture design of these affordable luxury outlets is unique and diverse from the mainstream shopping malls. Instead of offering a variety of brand store, these premium outlets provide an attractive discount to their visitors daily.

The formation of these premium outlets is one of the Malaysia government's initiatives to increase tourism revenue under the Economic Transformation Plan (ETP) (Tourism Malaysia, 2015). ETP consists of strategies to boost up the country's economy. The main objective of this plan is to achieve a developed nation status by 2020 with the target of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of USD 15,000 (about RM 62,730) (Pemandu, 2013). The ETP can be realised through the implementation of 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs) with the emphasis on the economic sector that contributes to GNI. The strategy for tourism development was addressed in NKEA in terms of 12 Entry Entity Points (EPPs)—three of them were related to shopping under the theme “affordable luxury” (Tourism Malaysia, 2015).

With respect to the 12 EPPs, the establishment of JPO in Kulaijaya, Johor, was a joint venture with the Genting Plantations Berhad and Simon Property Group. While, the establishment of Mitsui Outlet was a joint venture between the Malaysia Airport Holding Berhad and Mitsui Fudosan (ETP Report, 2014). The development of premium outlets is to boost up the tourism revenue, where revenue of RM 900 million was expected from these premium outlets including DVO by 2020 (Tourism Malaysia, 2015). The Malaysian government projected total investment of RM 355 million for the construction of these premium outlets (Pemandu, 2010). Meanwhile, the development of Freeport A'Famosa Outlet is an initiative from the company Freeport Retail, which was expected to promote the tourist market and shopping destination for local and international tourists (Luis, 2014). With that, tourists may gain new shopping experience while they travel.

Furthermore, shopping is a tourist activity that can be the main motivation for tourists to travel (Timothy and Butler, 1995; Meng and Xu, 2012; Albaryak, 2016). However, shopping is not a primary motivation for certain tourists, as some may treat their visit as entertainment, leisure, and recreation (Al-Saleh and Hannam, 2010). Nevertheless, certain factors make them fall into an unplanned purchase. Various brand stores, attractive discount, and pleasant environment offered by the shopping malls potentially stimulate the tourists' emotion to make impulse or unplanned purchase. Thus, a new environment and attractive discount at the premium outlets may also spur impulse buying behaviour. Impulse buying behaviour significantly contributes to the total sales. According to Amos et al. (2014), past studies demonstrated that unplanned purchase contributed up to 60.0% of total purchase (Inman and Winner, 1998; Mattila

and Wirtz, 2008). In addition, Clover (1950) proved the influence of impulse buying behaviour on revenue. On a similar note, Ruvio and Belk (2013) also found that impulsive buying behaviour contributed to 62.0% of sales at supermarkets and 80.0% of sales of luxury goods. Therefore, retailers need to plan and design a strategy that increases impulse buying behaviour among visitors for profits.

In the context of tourism, impulse buying behaviour plays an important role in helping retailers to improvise their strategy of increasing revenue and spending among tourists. Impulse buying behaviour among tourists was explored in several past studies (Foroughi et al., 2011; Laesser and Dolnicar, 2012; Li et al., 2015). According to Sohn and Lee (2016), understanding impulse buying behaviour allows retailers to obtain valuable information and idea to increase profit. Retail is one of the sectors that substantially contribute (43.6% of the total revenue) to the tourism industry (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2015). In addition, retail trade contributed the largest share in the tourism industry at 42.8% in 2018 (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2019). The study of impulse buying in tourism is important for retailers to develop an attractive shopping environment, design promotion strategy, and encourage tourists with individual difference score to shop. Thus, impulse buying behaviour would encourage tourists to spend more at the premium outlets to boost up the tourism revenue.

The premium outlet is new, and a part of the government's initiative to raise tourism revenue in Malaysia. In fact, its concept and marketing strategy are distinct from the conventional shopping mall, where everyday discounts are offered which make it very unique. Therefore, this research focused more on the premium outlet instead of conventional retail to study tourist's shopping behaviour.

The development of premium outlets is deemed promising to increase tourism revenue. However, there are several issues related to shopping tourism. For instance, the questions of whether tourists enjoy shopping at the premium outlets that are regarded as one of the attractive destinations for shopping and whether the environment of these premium outlets encourage impulse buying behaviour despite offering a new experience for their visitors remain inadequately explored. Thus, this study aimed to explore how premium outlets in Malaysia can attract tourists and encourage unplanned purchase. The subsequent section presents the problem statement of the current study, which led to the objectives of this study and the corresponding research questions.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Shopping tourism is one of the largest sectors in tourism that contribute to the economy—according to Tourism Malaysia (2016), shopping was identified as the highest tourist expenditure component. Tourists spent RM 28.1 billion in 2018 on shopping (Tourism Malaysia, 2018). However, the economic downturn and decreasing number of tourist arrivals have affected the tourism industry (Tourism

Malaysia, 2015; Kumaran and Edward, 2015; Ganesan, 2015). According to Li (2016), Chinese tourists spent less, as compared to two years ago. Meanwhile, according to Mok (2016), local traders highlighted lower spending among tourists, which may be due to the economic slowdown, higher costs, and the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST). The haze phenomenon in September 2019 also affected tourist spending in various sectors, such as hotels, restaurants, transports, and even shopping itself (Mohsen, 2019).

The Malaysian government has tried to overcome this problem by providing duty-free shopping destination (Tourism Malaysia, 2015). However, the total tourist spending on shopping in Malaysia (31.3%) remained far behind, as compared to other countries like Seoul (58.7%), and London (46.7%) (National Transformation Programme Annual Report, 2015; Mastercard Global Destination Cities Index, 2016). Despite its increase to 33.4% in 2018, the percentage remained lower than the tourist spending on shopping (of more than 40.0%) in the mentioned countries (Monti, 2018). Therefore, there is a need for Tourism Malaysia to develop or plan a strategy to increase tourist spending. With that, impulse buying was proposed in this study as a mechanism to increase the total tourist spending.

The oversupply of shopping malls in Malaysia, especially in Kuala Lumpur, leads to rental issues and high occupancy rate of retail space (Mahalingam, 2016; Li, 2016). Su Ann (2016) indicated that the Malaysian industry experienced a loss of 4.4% annually in sales due to the unoccupied units. Therefore, shopping malls should be developed in other regions, apart from Kuala Lumpur, to position Malaysia as the world's top shopping destination. On the other hand, the sustainability of the quality provided by the shopping malls is more important than the number of shopping malls.

The establishment of premium outlets is the Malaysian government's initiative to increase tourist spending as well as to increase tourism revenue. The government expected to gain RM 900 million from these outlets by 2020 (Tourism Malaysia, 2015). However, these premium outlets have received numerous negative reviews on the popular travel site known as Tripadvisor (2019). Based on the reviews, three main issues were highlighted. Firstly, tourists expressed dissatisfaction towards the price offered by the premium outlets. The price did not meet their expectations and did not capture their intention to make a purchase. Secondly, tourists noted that the outlets did not offer a variety of choices. Thirdly, tourists did not feel comfortable with the environment, as the open concept does not seem to fit with the hot and humid weather in Malaysia. These issues have affected the tourists' excitement level, which reduces their intention of impulse buying.

Although impulse buying behaviour has been studied for the last 60 years (Sohn and Lee, 2016), the role of impulse buying behaviour in the context of shopping tourism has remained inadequately explored in recent studies. Most of the past studies focused more on shopping destination, shopping motivation, re-patronage intention, and behavioural intention (Kinley et al., 2012; Lo and Qu, 2015; Sirakaya et al., 2015; Albayrak, 2016). As a result, the role of impulse buying behaviour has been widely



underexplored in the field of shopping tourism. Meanwhile, very little is known on the phenomenon of impulse buying in Malaysia (Lee and Kacen, 2008). Insights on the impulse buying behaviour among tourists in Malaysia are needed to increase tourist spending as well as tourism revenue.

Interestingly, although past studies provided valuable insights on the influence of the emotional state on impulse buying behaviour, the findings on the role of excitement on impulse buying behaviour have remained scarce. These past studies focused on certain emotion states, such as happy, unhappy, and stress (Li et al., 2015; Seinauskene et al., 2015). Basically, prior studies only focused on the general emotional state, such as positive and negative emotion (Mohan et al., 2013; Sohn and Lee, 2016). Beatty and Ferrell (1998) signified that impulse buying is often accompanied by a feeling of excitement, while Jayawardhena and Wright (2009) indicated that excitement leads to the intention to purchase among consumers. Therefore, this study scrutinised the role of excitement in evaluating impulse buying behaviour.

Apart from that, past studies generally found store environment as the main factor that influences impulse buying behaviour (Vieira, 2013; Mohan et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2013; Singh et al., 2014; Vieira and Torres, 2014). However, these studies only focused on the characteristics of the store environment, such as ambient, layout, design (Mohan et al., 2013; Koo and Kim, 2013; Saad and Metawie, 2015), to examine impulse buying behaviour. Besides that, a variety of selection and sales promotion were other identified factors that can influence impulse buying behaviour (Chang et al., 2011; Park et al., 2012; Singh et al., 2014; Nagadeepa et al., 2015). Kotler et al. (2005) emphasised the significance of a variety of choices and sales promotion in influencing the purchase behaviour of consumers. Nevertheless, studies on the influence of a variety of selection and sales promotion on impulse buying behaviour have remained scarce. A variety of selection and sales promotion in shopping malls may induce the temptation to make a purchase (Sharma, 2010; Lee and Tsai, 2014). Past studies failed to include these factors as part of the environmental factors in understanding impulse buying behaviour.

The stimulus-response theory explains how one acts to a known stimulus (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000). On the other hand, the pull and push motivation theory explains how consumers are motivated by internal and external triggers (Li et al., 2015). These theories underscore the process of how consumers respond in a particular situation. Nevertheless, past studies have not been able to integrate both of these theories into the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model. The combination of the stimulus-response theory and pull and push motivation theory with the SOR model would provide a better understanding of the process of impulse buying behaviour. Hence, in order to fill this identified gap, the stimulus-response theory and pull and push motivation theory were employed in this study to assess the tourists' impulse buying behaviour.

The advent of social media and social networking site have created new opportunities for consumers to interact and share their thoughts and opinions (Gfrerer and Pokrywka, 2012; Husnain et al., 2016). With that, recent studies focus on examining the phenomenon of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and tend to overlook the power of traditional word of mouth (WOM) (Gfrere and Pokrywka, 2012). There have been limited studies on the role of traditional WOM, especially in the context of impulse buying behaviour. Chauhan et al. (2015) emphasised the different propensity of WOM across different generations, where younger generations were found to be more likely to rely on eWOM than the older generations. Clearly, not all consumers would obtain information from the internet (eWOM).

On the other hand, most of the past studies did not include perceived crowding as an element to understand impulse buying behaviour. Perceived crowding is a density of crowd in a particular place that may attract more consumers to visit the store when the store is crowded with customers. However, most of these past studies focused more on the influence of time pressure (Muruganatham and Bakat, 2013; Raju et al., 2015) and employee friendliness (Tinne, 2011) on impulse buying behaviour. There is a need for more studies on perceived crowding to help retailers to improvise their retail settings and educate the employees to manage the crowd.

Basically, the personality traits of consumers often affect their purchase behaviour (Rook, 1987). Self-concept is part of the personality traits that can stimulate shopping behaviour. According to Sirgy (1982), self-concept was found to influence the consumers' product choice and purchase intention. However, there have been very limited studies on the role of self-concept on impulse buying behaviour. Moreover, no attempts have been made to examine the influence of self-concept in terms of actual-self, ideal-self, and social-self on impulsiveness. Previous studies (see Swati and Singh, 2012; Singh et al., 2015) assessed the relationship between self-concept and impulsiveness and found unclear findings. Therefore, the lack of studies on the influence of self-concept on impulsiveness highlights the need to examine this relationship in the context of shopping tourism.

Furthermore, very few studies assessed the relationship of excitement and impulsiveness in the context of impulse buying behaviour. Most of the past studies (Floh and Madlberger, 2013; Mohan et al., 2013; Li et al., 2014) did not assess how pre-purchase mood can affect impulsiveness trait. Moreover, very limited studies assessed the mediating impact of impulsiveness on the relationship between excitement and impulse buying behaviour. According to James (1890), if people maintain their emotion, they tend to act immediately. Besides that, positive emotion may translate one's tendency to act (Izzard 1991, as cited in Herter et al., 2014). Therefore, there is a need to understand how the mediating impact of impulsiveness in the relationship between excitement and impulse buying behaviour.

Besides that, only a few studies explored these premium or factory outlet malls. Moreover, consumer purchase behaviour at these premium outlets, especially in Malaysia, was not explored in prior studies. In fact, no empirical studies that compared

the tourists' impulse buying behaviour among those outlets were conducted. Thus, with respect to the objective of 12 EPPs, the tourists' purchase behaviour at the premium outlets in Malaysia were explored. Insights on the impulse buying behaviour, specifically in terms of which outlets have the most influence on impulse buying among tourists, would aid practitioners to develop effective strategies to stimulate tourists to make an impulse purchase.

In view of the above, this study aimed to assess the impulse buying behaviour of local and international tourists at all five premium outlets in Malaysia using the SOR model that combined both stimulus-response theory and pull and push motivation theory. This study aimed to identify the relationship of stimulus factors, specifically the environment, social, and personal factors, and the mediating role of impulsiveness in the relationship between excitement and impulse buying behaviour.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

In general, this study aimed to examine the relationship of stimulus factors, excitement, and impulsiveness with impulse buying behaviour at the premium outlets in Malaysia. The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1) To examine the relationship of environmental factors, social factors, and excitement
- 2) To investigate the relationship between self-concept and impulsiveness
- 3) To investigate the mediating role of impulsiveness in the relationship between excitement and impulsive buying behaviour
- 4) To examine the impulse buying behaviour of tourists at different premium outlets in Malaysia

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

With respect to the specific objectives, this study addressed the following research questions:

- 1) What are the factors that influence tourists to make a purchase impulsively?
- 2) Which premium outlet has the most significant influence on the tourist's impulse buying behaviour?

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This section discusses the importance of this study in terms of theoretical and practical significance and how this study can benefit all key stakeholders.

### 1.6.1 Theoretical significance

The purpose of this study was to identify significant factors that contribute to impulse buying behaviour. A comprehensive framework on these factors that influence impulse buying behaviour was proposed. This study also contributed to the literature by first extending the SOR model by Floh and Madlbeger (2013) that previously measured the influence of environmental factors on the online consumers' impulse buying behaviour. The developed model in this study incorporated social and personal factors as antecedents of impulse buying behaviour.

Secondly, the assessed personal factors in this study included all components of self-concept, namely actual-self, ideal-self, and social-self. Only a few studies examined self-concept in the context of impulse buying behaviour. Singh et al. (2015) was not able to provide conclusive finding on the relationship between self-concept and impulsiveness. Therefore, the inclusion of these factors into the model was expected to provide valuable insights on the significant factors that influence tourists to make impulse buying.

Thirdly, this study postulated the connection between excitement and impulsiveness. Insights on this relationship were expected to provide a better understanding on how excitement can lead to impulse buying behaviour among tourists. Excitement is a condition where consumers are frantically happy. It is a combination of highly pleasure and highly arouse (Russell, 1988). However, past studies were not able to measure the relationship between excitement and the tendency of consumers to make impulse buying, which was addressed in this study. In fact, only a few studies assessed impulse buying behaviour among tourists. Therefore, this study attempted to bridge the gap by adding excitement and impulsiveness into the model to understand the tourists' impulse buying behaviour. In other words, the obtained findings of this study would extend the existing body of knowledge on impulse buying behaviour. This study would serve as a reference for future research to examine the tourists' impulse buying behaviour.

Lastly, this study focused on shopping behaviour among tourists in relation to impulse buying behaviour. The identified factors in this study would offer insights on the decision-making process of impulse buying behaviour with respect to the concept of consumer behaviour, specifically on the reasons why consumers make a purchase and what influence their behaviour. Furthermore, the combination of the stimulus-response theory and pull and push motivation theory with S-O-R model in this study was expected to provide a better understanding on the flow of how tourists make a purchase impulsively. Grounded on the motivation theory, this study assessed environmental factors and social factors as a pull factors, whereas, personal factor was measured as push factor. These factors are cues in the SR theory that encourage tourists to make a purchase. Thus, this study provided essential insights into the body of knowledge in the context of consumer behaviour.



### **1.6.2 Practical significance**

This study provided a better understanding on the tourists' impulse buying behaviour at the premium outlets in Malaysia, which would benefit the practitioners. For instance, marketers would be able to identify the most important factors that influence impulse buying behaviour. The development process of impulse buying behaviour, from the stimulus factors to the emotional state, served as a significant point in designing a successful marketing strategy to encourage tourists to spend more. This process enables the marketing team to design an encouraging environment that can induce positive emotional state for tourists to stay longer and make a purchase.

An attractive environment with a variety of products and brands and attractive sales promotion would generate excitement. The feeling of excitement would encourage tourists to stay longer at the premium outlet and subsequently, trigger their impulsiveness trait to make impulse buying. This study highlighted the important role of excitement in encouraging impulse buying behaviour. In fact, understanding the feeling of excitement and impulsiveness would help the retailers to identify effective strategies to encourage tourists to revisit their outlet in order to sustain their business in the retail sector.

Additionally, the concept of self-concept was assessed in this study, which would benefit practitioners, especially the retailers and manufacturers, in their efforts of segmenting consumers based on their personality traits. Moreover, this study would help the marketing manager and its team at the premium outlets to plan a marketing strategy and improvise their sales and promotional strategies to trigger tourists to purchase more. Most importantly, practitioners would be gain a better understanding on how to create a good image that encourages tourists to spread positive WOM to their family or friends to shop at the premium outlets in Malaysia. The findings of this study were expected to assist marketers in creating an attractive shopping environment that encourages impulse purchase.

### **1.6.3 Policy implications**

The tourism industry is one of the important income sources for a country. Related studies would provide significant insights for the policymakers to map a good strategy to boost the tourism industry. Understanding the impulse buying behaviour among tourists would aid the policymakers to improve and restructure the existing policy for higher shopping spending. Moreover, this would help the policymakers to formulate a sustainable policy to enhance economic growth and social development by controlling the development of shopping malls and improving the quality of existing shopping malls. Besides that, this study was expected to also assist policymakers to effectively segment the market by actively promoting shopping malls or places that are located outside Kuala Lumpur. The policymakers would be able to introduce a sustainable policy that would increase the socio-economic benefits for the local communities and local business in tourism. Appendix A summarises the research problem, research gaps, research objectives, and research significance.

## **1.7 Scope of Study**

The establishment of premium outlets serves to increase tourist spending, with the target of gaining RM 900 million from these premium outlets by 2020. Thus, impulse buying behaviour was suggested in this study as one of the approaches to increase tourist spending. Since the outlets are part of the government move to attract shoppers regardless whether they are local or international, the target population for this study involved local and international tourists at Johor Premium Outlet (JPO), Mitsui Outlet, Freeport A'Famosa Outlet, Genting Premium Outlet (GPO), and Design Village Outlet (DVO) in Malaysia. Moreover, as claimed by Department of Statistic Malaysia and MOTAC, both groups spent more on shopping rather than other activities. A total of 460 questionnaire sets were distributed from November 2018 to January 2019.

## **1.8 Definition of the Key Terms**

The following operational definitions of the key terms used in this current study are presented in the following subsections:

### **1.8.1 Store environment**

Store environment refers to the physical characteristics of a store, such as layout, design, colour, light, sound, smell, and temperature, which create an image and attract customers (Berman and Evans, 2004).

### **1.8.2 Sales promotion**

Sales promotion refers to a major element in a marketing campaign that is designed to stimulate quicker or greater purchase of a particular product or service (Kotler and Keller, 2003).

### **1.8.3 Variety of selection**

Variety of selection refers to a diversity of brands or products provided by the retailer (Menon and Khan, 1995; Park et al., 2012).

### **1.8.4 Word of Mouth**

WOM refers to the communication between consumers in an unofficial way to gain information after they use or purchase a particular product or service (Westbrook, 1987).

### **1.8.5 Perceived crowding**

Perceived crowding refers to the feeling of being cramped in a particular space (Eroglu and Machlet, 1990; Hui and Bateson, 1991).

### **1.8.6 Self-concept**

Self-concept refers to the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to oneself as an object (Rosenbergh, 1979; Phau and Lo, 2004).

### **1.8.7 Excitement**

Excitement refers to the awake state that comprises a large amount of happiness and encouragement (Russell, 1980).

### **1.8.8 Impulsiveness**

Impulsiveness refers to the degree of tendency of an individual to make an unintended, immediate, or unplanned purchase (Weun et al., 1997).

### **1.8.9 Impulse buying behaviour**

Impulse buying behaviour is when a consumer has no intention to make a purchase for a category of goods or services before approaches the retailer (Berman and Evans, 2004). Besides that, it also refers to an unplanned purchase that is not planned by the consumer in advance (Stern, 1962).

## **1.9 Thesis Organization**

This section describes the organisation of the thesis. Overall, the thesis consists of seven chapters:

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter presented an overview of this study. In addition, this chapter described the background of this study, problem statement, objectives of this study and research questions, significance of this study, and definitions of key terms used in this study.

## **Chapter 2: Malaysia's Tourism Industry**

This chapter discusses the tourism industry in Malaysia and provides insights on shopping tourism as the biggest contributor to tourism revenue. This chapter also discusses the global tourism industry and its challenges and accomplishments. In addition, this chapter explains the growth of shopping tourism and its challenges and contributions. The final part of this chapter highlights the issues of shopping tourism in Malaysia.

## **Chapter 3: Literature review**

This chapter presents the ideas or viewpoints of the previous studies on the variables under study. Following that, this chapter presents the literature on consumer behaviour and environmental, social, and personal factors. This chapter also reviews excitement, impulsiveness, and impulse buying behaviour. The research gaps are also discussed in detail at the end of this chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Conceptual framework and hypotheses development**

This chapter presents the details of conceptual framework in relation to the connections of the variables under study. It further explains the formulated hypotheses. This chapter also explains the origin of the actual model that was adapted for this study and the modified model with respect to the objectives of this study. This chapter deliberately explains each construct within the proposed conceptual framework. It further explains the theories applied for this study, namely the stimulus-response theory and push and pull motivation theory.

## **Chapter 5: Methodology**

This chapter presents an overview of the methodology applied in this study. This chapter explains research paradigm, research design, sampling process, and sampling size, including the target population for this study and questionnaire design. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the variables under study, the applied measurement scale, and techniques used to analyse the data.

## **Chapter 6: Analysis and Findings**

This chapter presents the obtained results of this study and methods used to analyse the raw data. This chapter discusses the response rate of the survey, preliminary analysis, assumptions of multivariate analysis, descriptive analysis, and structural equation model (PLS-SEM). This chapter also provides the results of reflective measurement model, formative measurement model, and the reliability and validity of this study.

## **Chapter 7: Discussion, Findings, Contribution, Limitation, Recommendation and Conclusion**

This chapter discusses the obtained findings and presents the practical contributions of this study. The chapter also summarises the results of the testing of hypotheses. Following that, the final part of this chapter presents the limitations, recommendations, and conclusions.

### **1.10 Chapter Summary**

The background of this study, including the development of the tourism industry and shopping tourism in Malaysia, was first presented in this chapter. This chapter also presented the details of the tourists' shopping spending in Malaysia and the significance of shopping tourism, especially for the country's economy. Moreover, this chapter presented the problem statement, objectives of this study, and the corresponding research questions. Furthermore, the key terms used in this study were clearly defined. The next chapter presents the literature review, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework.

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## LIST OF PUBLICATION

Sharifah Faridah Syed Ali, Yuhanis Abdul Aziz, Raja Nerina Raja Yusuf, Ng Siew Imm (2019). Evaluation the role of sales promotion in influencing impulse buying behaviour: A comparison of international and local tourist at Premium outlet in Malaysia, *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management*, 4(15).

Sharifah Faridah Syed Ali, Yuhanis Abdul Aziz, Ng Siew Imm, Raja Nerina Raja Yusuf (2018). The conceptual exploration on the role of impulse buying behaviour in shopping tourism industry In: *Perspective in Entrepreneurship, Marketing and Tourism*, Universiti Putra Malaysia Press, 240 – 252.





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