

The Effect of Tourists' Shopping Experience on Their Loyalty Intention Towards Shopping Malls in Klang Valley, Malaysia

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Abstract: The fundamental aim of this study is to investigate the effect of the tourists' shopping experience on their loyalty to shopping malls in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The existing literature has been precise experiential to examine the correlation between shopping experience, service and loyalty intention. In this research, the quantitative method has been applied for data collection, and primary data collection instruments have been utilized by online questionnaire data collection methods using Google Forms and were disseminated via social media. 98 responses were gathered and used for further analysis. The methods of data analysis used are descriptive and multiple regression. The results of this investigation demonstrate a significant association between shopping experience and loyalty intention. The research findings are discussed from the viewpoint of local and international tourists.

Keywords: *Shopping Experience, Loyalty Intention, Shopping Malls*

1. Introduction

Malaysia is considered a shopping paradise because of the huge variety of goods in its malls, from high-end designer clothing and accessories to IT gadgets. Malaysian shopping malls typically have the same layout, with multiple stores that house retailers. The economic impact of shopping tourism in Malaysia is significant, which contributes to national economic growth and job creation (Azmi et al., 2022). Income from shopping tourism has increased significantly, with the sector generating billions of Malaysian Ringgit (Abidin & Mahdzar, 2021). The expansion of Malaysia's retail sector has been facilitated by the rise in the country's number of shopping malls. According to the National Property Information Centre (NAPIC), a definition of shopping complexes refers to a multi-unit retail establishment that is situated under a covered walkway, which is designed to promote pedestrian flow for the sustainability of business activity (NAPIC, 2024). Accurate tourism demand forecasting is essential to plan strategies and minimize potential negative impacts on the tourism industry, including shopping tourism (Hamzah et al., 2018). The distribution of shopping complexes by NAPIC encompasses Shopping malls, Shopping arcades, and Hypermarkets (stand-alone). Shopping malls are purpose-built retail establishments that are planned, developed, and operated as a collection of outlets within a center for commercial purposes.

The most recent data on domestic tourism trends in 2021 from the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) indicates that shopping tourism is becoming a more significant part of the tourist value chain (DOSM, 2022). This indicates that a big factor in judging the value of a vacation spot is shopping and it plays a significant role in the whole shopping experience for tourists. When a destination offers little to no shopping opportunities, it may even be the primary reason why some travelers choose to travel elsewhere. According to the DOSM's Domestic Tourism Survey conducted last year, shopping is one of the major factors influencing domestic tourists' spending in Malaysia. The following data can be used to determine how Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) is affected by shopping tourism. Shopping, hotel, and dining made up the top three categories of visitor spending in Malaysia in 2019 (33.6%, 24.4%, and 13.3%, respectively). This pattern underscores the significant role of retail in Malaysia's overall tourism economy (Tourism Malaysia, 2020). The travel and tourism industry accounts for between 6% and 10% of Malaysia's gross domestic product. Although the precise amount that retail tourism contributes to Malaysia's GDP cannot be accurately calculated, it is anticipated to have a significant impact on the overall earnings of the tourism sector, thus substantially affecting Malaysia's GDP. Apart from its economic impact, shopping tourism also has implications for other sectors of the tourism industry. Shopping malls in Malaysia have implemented themed and experiential purchases to meet consumer demands and maintain competitiveness (Wong et al., 2018).

The country has established itself as a shopping destination, attracting international tourists interested in the

shopping experience. The shopping environment in Malaysia provides tourists with the opportunity to immerse themselves in local culture and experience the uniqueness of the country's offerings (Azmi et al., 2022). A range of shopping options, including traditional markets, malls, and outlet malls, is available in Malaysia, with Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, acknowledged as one of the top shopping cities globally (Abidin & Mahdzar, 2021). Mega shopping malls have the potential to shape tourists' perceptions of their destination and behavior and the role of shopping malls in providing for the shopping needs of tourists and influencing their intention to revisit is an area that necessitates further attention (Al-Sulaiti, 2022). Additionally, exploring the relationship between tourists' shopping experience and their loyalty intentions is imperative (Abidin & Mahdzar, 2021). This raises apprehensions about the satisfaction and enjoyment of tourists during their shopping experience. However, the shopping experience of tourists in Malaysia confronts several challenges and factors in understanding. Lack of unique offerings, which some malls may not offer unique or distinctive experiences, can make them less appealing to shoppers (Ganesan, 2023). These include addressing complaints about compulsive shopping, exploring shopping expectations and experience attributes, understanding the role of shopping centers and technology-enabled amenities, examining the relationship between shopping experience and loyalty intentions, and investigating the influence of store atmosphere on tourists' revisit intentions. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effect of tourist shopping experience on loyalty intention in Malaysian shopping.

2. Literature Review

Tourist Shopping Experience

Tourists' shopping experience is an important aspect of the tourism industry, as shopping has become a major attraction and an important part of the overall tourist experience (Phucharoen et al., 2021). Tourists' shopping experiences and their intent to stick with these shopping malls may be influenced by their understanding of tourist experiences based on the theory of experiential marketing, also referred to as Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs) by Schmitt (1999). Experiential marketing provides a robust framework for integrating elements of experience and entertainment into a product or service. In the present market, consumers evaluate products or services based on more than just quality, functionality, and benefits. Consumers pursue products, communications, and marketing strategies that offer a multisensory experience, evoke emotional responses, engage cognitive processes, and correspond with their lifestyle preferences. In other words, consumers yearn for products that offer experiential value. Schmitt identified five types of experience, which he designated as SEMs: (1) Sensory experience/SENSE, (2) Affective experience/FEEL, (3) Creative cognitive experience/THINK, (4) Physical experience/ACT, and (5) Social identity experience/RELATE. Soliha et al. (2021) further describe the five experiential elements, beginning with (1) SENSE. The senses facilitate the creation of experiences for consumers by engaging the five sensory modalities. Feel. The emotional aspect is essential to the experiential marketing strategy. Consider. Companies utilize continuous customization as a method to transform commodities into experiential offerings. (4) ACT. An act is designed to create a consumer experience concerning the physical body, lifestyle, and interactions with other people. and, Relate. Relate can be measured through several indicators, consisting of taste and social relations. This suggests that the implementation of SEMs, aimed at creating satisfying and memorable experiences, can positively influence tourists' intentions to remain loyal to products (Rosanti et al., 2014). Lemon and Verhoef (2016) also added that tourism shopping experiences may also relate to shopping environment, typology of tourists, services and product attributes, as well as the overall perceptions of the products, services, and place. This study employed SEMs to enhance client satisfaction and influence their future loyalty intentions towards the mall.

Loyalty Intention

The loyalty intention of tourists in shopping tourism is a crucial aspect of the tourism industry, as it reflects their willingness to revisit a destination and recommend it to others. Huang and Bu (2022) suggest that behavioral intention is often utilized to reflect tourist loyalty in the context of tourism research. Azmi et al. (2022) emphasize the significance of comprehending tourist experiences based on experiential marketing and their impact on loyalty intentions, particularly regarding the shopping landscape in Malaysia. Abidin and Mahdzar (2021) underscore the importance of experiential marketing in shaping visitors' shopping experiences and loyalty intentions in Malaysian outlet shopping centers. Amin et al. (2020) contend that mall attributes are crucial in predicting visitors' shopping satisfaction and behavioral intentions, including repurchase intention, loyalty, and the desire to prolong their stay. Based on the above literature, this study

proposed the following hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between visitors' shopping experience and their loyalty intentions.

H1a: There is a significant relationship between Sense experience and visitors' loyalty intentions

H1b: There is a significant experience between Feel experience and visitors' loyalty intentions

H1c: There is a significant relationship between Think experience and visitors' loyalty intentions

H1d: There is a significant relationship between the Act experience and visitors' loyalty intentions

H1e: There is a significant relationship between Relate experience and visitors' loyalty intentions

3. Research Methodology

The population of this study involved shopping malls considered super regional malls, which are classified as over 750,000 square feet with three or more department stores in Klang Valley, such as Sunway Pyramid, 1 Utama, Midvalley, Ioi Citymall, The Garden, Pavilion, Paradigm Mall, Sogo, I-City and Amcorp mall. The sample size used in the study amounted to 98 performed using G-power software. A survey approach utilizing online self-administered questionnaires that were distributed via Google Forms using a link and QR code posted through social media platforms and were distributed to local and international tourists who have experienced shopping in Klang Valley shopping malls. The questionnaire's items are derived from Tsaur et al. (2007) study. A total of twenty items were used to measure shopping experience, while five items were used to measure the dependent variable, loyalty intention. A five-point Likert scale was used. Instruments were tested for reliability, and the Cronbach alpha value for all factors ranged from 0.775 to 0.944 for shopping experience and 0.855 for loyalty intentions indicating good validity and reliability. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, where descriptive and regression analyses were used to analyze the relationship between the variables.

4. Results

Descriptive Analysis

The demographic profile of respondents (Table 1) indicates that 42.1 percent of these respondents were male, while 57.7 percent were female. Most of the respondents were aged 41 to 50 years old, followed by 31 to 40 years old (23.5 percent), under 20 years old 21.4 percent, 21 to 30 years old 20.4 percent, 15.2 percent aged 50 years old and above, and 9.2 percent. In terms of level of education, most of the respondents were degree holders with 30 respondents (30.6%), then Diploma background with 23 respondents (23.5%), and others include certificate level or skill certificate holders comprising 16.3 percent. Furthermore, 12.2 percent obtained Master's degrees, 10.2 percent are from high school, and 7.1 percent hold a doctoral degree. The table also reported the type of tourists, where the respondents were local and international tourists who had visited shopping malls in the Klang Valley area. Most of the respondents were local tourists, 91 respondents (92.9%) and 7 respondents (7.1%) were international tourists.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	43	42.1
	Female	55	57.9
Age	18-20	21	21.4
	21-30	20	20.4
	31-40	23	23.5
	41-50	25	25.5
	above 51	9	9.2
Education	High School	10	10.2
	Diploma	23	23.5
	Bachelor's Degree	30	30.6
	Master's Degree	12	12.2
	Doctoral Degree	7	7.1
	Others	12	12.4
Type of Tourist	Local	91	92.9
	International	7	7.1

Table 2 shows the tourists' perceptions of their shopping experience in shopping malls. Based on Table 2, the most important aspect of sense experience among tourists is 4.00: 'Shopping malls have good scenery'. On the other hand, the lowest mean score is 3.03, indicating that Shopping malls lack sensory appeal for tourists. The highest mean score for Feel experience is 'Shopping mall tries to put me in a certain mood' (M=3.45), and the lowest score is 'I felt bored in the shopping mall' (M=3.08). The highest mean score for the think experience in shopping is 3.82 indicating that most tourists agree that shopping malls are easily accessible and the act experience is that respondents would like to invite their friends to the shopping mall (M=3.75). Furthermore, most tourists agree that shopping malls provide a related experience, with the highest mean score of 4.21, in which shopping malls have many facilities that improve their shopping experience. The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that in general, tourists tilt towards a level of agreement, thus the perception experience of sense, feel, think, act, and relate in shopping malls has an impact on their shopping experience.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations (N=98)

	Mean	SD
Sense Experience		
Shopping mall tries to engage my senses	3.48	1.16
Shopping mall has good scenery	4.00	0.90
Shopping mall lacks sensory appeal for me	3.03	1.20
Feel Experience		
Shopping mall tries to put me in a certain mood	3.45	1.09
Shopping malls make me respond in an emotional manner	3.33	1.19
Shopping mall does not try to appeal to feelings.	3.19	1.28
I felt bored in the shopping mall	3.08	1.24
Think Experience		
Shopping mall is safe	3.61	1.09
Shopping mall stimulates my curiosity	3.64	0.99
Shopping mall tries to appeal to my convenience	3.68	1.04
Shopping mall is easily accessible	3.82	0.92
Act Experience		
I would love to share what I experienced in the shopping mall	3.60	1.03
I would like to take pictures in the shopping mall as mementos.	3.55	1.01
I would invite my friend to the shopping mall	3.75	0.94
I would share my experience in a shopping mall on social media	3.58	1.07
Relate Experience		
I would buy some souvenirs that are related to the shopping mall	3.31	1.18
Shopping mall induces a sense of identity towards ecological conservation	3.26	1.21
Shopping malls give me an interesting experience	3.89	0.85
Shopping mall has a variety of shops	4.11	0.82
Shopping mall has many facilities	4.21	0.85

Regression Analysis

A single-step multiple regression analysis was performed to determine whether there is a significant correlation between visitors' shopping experiences and their intent to remain loyal to shopping malls. The twenty items in the independent (shopping experience) dimension and five items in the dependent dimension (loyalty intentions) were collapsed and entered into the equation. The outcomes demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between tourist shopping experiences and their loyalty intentions towards shopping malls. Tourists' perception of their shopping mall experience was able to explain 47.1% ($R^2 = 0.472$, F -change = 16.001, $p < 0.000$) of the variance in loyalty intentions. It shows that tourists' perceptions of shopping experience are found to significantly and positively influence their loyalty intentions. Besides that, Table 3 shows the value of the beta coefficients for this study. This study suggests that the Act experience (0.491) is the strongest influence on their loyalty intentions with shopping malls. However, out of five dimensions of experience, the Sense, Feel and Relate experiences in shopping have statistically insignificant relationships with tourists' loyalty intentions with shopping malls ($p > 0.005$). The results of hypothesis testing indicate that H1a, H1b, and H1e are not supported, whereas H1c and H1d are supported in this study.

Table 3: Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized B	Std Error	Standardized Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	1.526	.318	.195	.000
SENSE	.173	.097	.195	.076
FEEL	-.003	.086	-.003	.976
THINK	-.159	.087	-.187	.001
ACT	.434	.110	.491	.000
RELATE	.218	.121	.226	.075

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the descriptive analysis reveal that the perceived shopping experience among tourists at shopping malls is moderate to high ($M=3.03$ to $M=4.21$). The regression analysis results reveal that the independent variables, sense experience, feel experience, think experience, act experience, and usage experience in shopping malls, have a substantial impact on tourists' loyalty intentions. Among the elements of shopping experiences, their actual experiences have the greatest influence on their loyalty behavior. Thus, this study's findings indicate there is a significant association between think experience and act experience on their loyalty intentions to shopping malls. It implies that when elements of act and think are high in their shopping experiences, their loyalty intention increases. This study is in line with the study by Abidin and Mahdzar (2021) on the relationship between tourists' shopping experience and their loyalty intentions in Malaysian outlet shopping centers. They discovered a significant relationship between shopping experience and loyalty intentions, emphasizing the importance of comprehending the marketing aspects of the tourist experience. This finding indirectly corroborates the findings of Azmi et al. (2022) that focused on tourist shopping expectations, experience, satisfaction, loyalty, and country image in the Malaysian shopping landscape, highlighting the importance of shopping atmosphere, store service orientation, and merchandise in influencing shopping expectations and experiences.

Besides, on creative cognitive experience (THINK), a study by Amin et al. (2020), revealed that shopping mall attributes played a crucial role in predicting tourist shopping satisfaction and behavioral intentions, including repurchase intention, loyalty, and desire to stay longer at shopping malls. For example, shopping malls with creative personalization and design will influence and pose favorable impressions on consumers' loyalty to the site (Martínez-González & Álvarez-Albelo, 2021). This finding also aligns with a study by Huang and Bu (2022) highlighting the significance of physical experience, behavioral and lifestyle (ACT) shopping experience in influencing revisit intention and store loyalty. For example, Shopping mall operators are expected to cater to more entertainment activities and occasions by inviting celebrities, local festivals and cultural activities that cater to behavioral and lifestyle and enhance visitors' desire to visit shopping malls (Abidin & Mahdzar, 2021). Furthermore, to stay competitive, shopping malls may also develop an attractive and convincing physical environment to give great pleasure to their visitors. For example, adding other physical environments and ACT experiences of the shopping mall such as embedding state or country identity such as local art, local food, local merchandise, and souvenirs may act as a pull factor that may also enhance local and even international visitors' happiness and develop revisit intentions. Similar to any research study, this study's limitations including its results, cannot be generalized. The results of this study warrant careful interpretation when applied to various types of shopping malls or across different states. Additional studies with other shopping malls of different categories and at distinct times of the year, or on distinct population backgrounds should be conducted to increase the opportunity to make comparisons and gain further insights.

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