



College of Business

**SERVICE QUALITY AND THEME PARKS IN THE UAE:
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE QUALITY, DELIGHT
AND LOYALTY FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE**

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By

Lamya Abbas Darwish Lari

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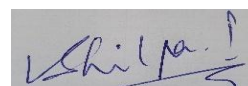
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LOYALTY FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE**

Lamya Abbas Darwish Lari



Approved:



Dr. Shilpa Iyanna

Associate Professor of Marketing, College of Business
Abu Dhabi University
Committee Chair



Prof. Fauzia Jabeen

Professor of Management, College of Business
Abu Dhabi University
Committee Member



Prof. Barry O'Mahony

Dean, College of Business
Abu Dhabi University

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Name and Signature: Lamya Abbas Lari

Date: December 12, 2020

Email: 1055495@students.adu.ac.ae, lamyalari@hotmail.com

Abstract

Service quality in theme parks may affect cost, profits, and customer satisfaction, delight, retention and loyalty. The marketing literature suggests that service quality is influenced by customers' cultural background. This suggests that service quality from an Islamic cultural perspective is a multi-dimensional construct, covering both general service quality (e.g. physical environment, access, employee interaction) and Islamic service quality (e.g. Islamic facilities, Halal food). There is limited research on service quality from an Islamic perspective, especially its relationship with customer delight and customer loyalty in theme parks, or the moderating effect of demographic characteristics (e.g. nationality, gender) on the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty. This study therefore aimed to fill that gap.

A conceptual model integrating service quality dimensions, delight and loyalty was used as a framework for analysis. The measurement of perceived service quality was developed from the literature. A survey was conducted among visitors to theme parks in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates to investigate the proposed hypotheses. In total, 506 questionnaires were suitable for the data analysis including exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), structural equation modeling (SEM) and multigroup analysis.

The study found that “physical environment quality”, “Islamic facilities quality”, “employee interaction quality”, and “access quality” all affected

customer delight in theme parks in the United Arab Emirates. However, consumables quality had no relationship with customer delight. There was also a significant relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty. The relationship between customer delight and loyalty was fully moderated by the nationality of respondents, but not gender.

This study adds to the current knowledge on perceived service quality in terms of the significant effect of Islamic dimensions. It shows that service quality is based on integrated dimensions that are responsive to culture and religion. It has also established a framework for the interrelationships among general and Islamic service quality dimensions, customer delight and customer loyalty, and tested it in the context of theme parks in the United Arab Emirates. It also demonstrates that nationality, but not gender, plays a role in the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty. This study will help managers of theme parks to develop a market-oriented service strategy to improve service and customer delight, and therefore increase customer loyalty.

Key words: Service Quality, Islamic Service Quality, Customer Delight, Customer Loyalty, Theme parks, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

List of Abbreviations

CFA- Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CFI- Comparative Fit Index

DIEDC- Dubai Islamic Economy Development Centre

EFA- Exploratory Factor Analysis

EMEA- Europe, Middle East and Africa

ESMA- Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

GIES- Global Islamic Economy Summit

GMTI- Global Muslim Travel Index

IAAPA- International Association of Amusement Parks and Attraction

IFI- Incremental Fit Index

KMO- Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test

KPIs- Key Performance Indicators

MENA- Middle East and North Africa

MGA- Multi-Group Analysis

RMSEA- Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

SEM- Structural Equation Modeling

TEA- Themed Entertainment Association

UAE- United Arab Emirates

WOM- Word-of-mouth

Declaration

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standards required by Abu Dhabi University as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration.

Dedication

Every challenging work needs self-efforts as well as guidance of elders especially those who are very close to my heart.

My humble effort I dedicate to my sweet and loving

father (Abbas Darwish Lari) and

mother (Mariam Abdulla Khalifa)

along with all love and respect to

my brother (Fuaad) and

my sisters (Layla, Sameera, Raffeea, Dr. Shayma and Fatema)

whose affection, love, encouragement and prayers supported and enabled me to get such success and honor

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Publication Arising From this Dissertation

During the preparation of this dissertation, the author developed two publications:

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The main purpose of this research is to examine the effect of dimensions of service quality on customers' delight and loyalty in the context of theme parks in an Islamic setting such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These service quality dimensions may be both general (e.g. physical environment quality, access quality, employee interaction quality) and Islamic (e.g. Islamic facilities quality). The study also explores the moderating role of nationality and gender on the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty.

Note: *The study has been conducted before Covid-19 Pandemic, therefore the estimates and projection in the current study are based on literature and data collection before the “New Normal” lifestyle.*

1.1 Service Quality and Theme Parks in the UAE

Theme parks have become an important part of the tourist offering in cities and regions (Ali et al., 2018; Başarangil, 2018), and attract millions of visitors to locations. They are known to serve psychological and social needs (Ali et al., 2018; Başarangil, 2018; Milman, 2009; Milman et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2018). Theme parks are defined as “entertainment facilities where a specific theme such as the world of future, science, science fiction, history, culture, tradition and accumulations, world geography, etc. is introduced through an international visual and auditory technology and offered for watching” (Başarangil, 2018, p. 415). They

may include sports facilities (e.g. swimming pools), souvenir shops/outlets and food and beverages facilities, all of which fit the general theme (Başarangil, 2018). Theme parks make both direct and indirect contributions to local and regional economies through infrastructure, physical environment, sociocultural interaction between the local population and foreign visitors, transport, and accommodation provision (Başarangil, 2018; Milman et al., 2010). Milman et al. (2010) suggested that theme parks contribute to the sustainability of destinations through investments in infrastructure, creating jobs, generating revenue, and social support. The UAE is a well-known example of a destination that has spent millions of dollars building and attracting world-class theme parks to operate within the country.

Theme parks in the UAE have demonstrated major growth in recent years. Existing and new generation theme parks were expected to attract more than 19 million visitors by 2020 (emirates247, 2016). The UAE is a major theme park market in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and the fastest growing region for theme park visitor spending (The First Group, 2017). Visitors' spending was expected to grow six-fold from \$105 million in 2016 to \$637 million by 2020 (The First Group, 2017). Theme parks in the UAE are modern tourism destinations that aim to delight and satisfy visitors' leisure and entertainment needs through an experiential atmosphere. Well-designed and managed parks contribute to the sustainability of destinations (Milman et al., 2010), catalyzed by high service quality.

Service quality is significant, because theme parks could benefit from repeat visit behavior and the spread of positive word-of-mouth reviews from satisfied and delighted visitors (Ali et al., 2018; Başarangil, 2018; Chen et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2016; Tsang et al., 2012; Wu, Li, & Li, 2018). Site visitors entering theme parks search for a “high-quality environment—a smooth surrounding, proper customer service, easy accessibility, a variety of on-site attractions to satisfy a family with different tastes and preference, good catering, light-hearted entertainment, clean environment and value for money product” (Swarbrooke, 2012, p. 14). A high-quality theme park can genuinely be competitive, construct an excellent image, and meet challenges from other theme parks (Tsang et al., 2012).

There have been attempts to provide appropriate measures of service quality. Some models have also been examined in the context of theme parks, including the Nordic model by Grönroos (1984), the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al. (1988), SERVPERF model by Cronin and Taylor (1992), the tri-component model of Rust and Oliver (1994), the integrated model of Brady and Cronin (2001) and THEMEQUAL by Tsang et al. (2012). However, all these were developed in Western settings and may be limited in their ability to assess service quality in other cultural and religious contexts. Many cross-cultural studies (Diallo et al., 2018; Pantouvakis & Renzi, 2016; Valaei et al., 2016) have argued that perceived service quality varies across cultural groups. In an Islamic setting, several studies have found that consumers’ religious views influenced

their perception of service quality in different parts of the tourism and hospitality sector (Battour et al., 2014; Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Gayatri et al., 2011; Han et al., 2019; Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). However, the existing instruments for measuring service quality do not adequately incorporate cultural and religious elements (e.g. Islamic attributes such as availability of halal food) in the context of theme parks.

This research was carried out in the UAE and therefore extends the existing literature on this area. Eid (2015) and Eid and El-Gohary (2015) investigated perceived value among Muslim customers and its relationship with satisfaction and loyalty in the tourism industry in the UAE. The reason for selecting the UAE is that it is the third most popular destination country for Muslim tourists, the second-best developed Islamic economy for travel and ranked third for Muslim tourism expenditure (USD 11.2 million) (Battour, 2017). Islam is the predominant religion in the country: about 80% of the population, and 100% of Emiratis, are Muslim (World Population Review, 2019). The population also contains about 8% Hindu, 5% Christians, and some Buddhist and Sikh minorities (World Population Review, 2019).

This study provides insights for theme park operators, including international theme parks, about the role of religion in customer responses to theme parks and facilities within them. Theme park operators and managers can use the findings to develop a strategy that caters for the religious needs of Muslim

customers. This will help them to target this large market segment and provide competitive advantages.

1.2 An Overview of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry in the UAE

1.2.1 Islamic Economy in the UAE

Islamic economics is “a study of the representative Muslim’s behavior in a modern Muslim society” (Naqvi, 2013, p. 20). Islamic principles have a growing significance in today’s international business environment, with the size of the Islamic economy expected to increase from USD 2.1 trillion in 2017 to USD 3 trillion by 2023 and the Muslim population to increase by 35% to reach 2.2 billion by 2030 (Al Ghurair, 2018).

The Islamic economy includes sectors such as Islamic finance, halal food, travel, pharmaceuticals, and modest clothes. It is growing around the world (The Dubai Advantage, 2019, p. 3). The UAE has rapidly built a strong ecosystem around the Islamic economy by focusing on Islamic-compliant sectors and standards (The Dubai Advantage, 2019). Dubai announced its vision to be the capital of the Islamic economy in 2013 by launching the Dubai Islamic Economy Development Centre (DIEDC) (The Dubai Advantage, 2019). The DIEDC’s refreshed Islamic economy strategy (2017–2021) focuses on identifying new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the growth of three core elements of the Islamic economy: Islam-compliant finance, halal products, and supporting an Islamic lifestyle. The latter includes culture, art, fashion and family tourism (The

Dubai Advantage, 2019). In 2018, the Islamic economy accounted for 8.3% of Dubai's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Townsend, 2018).

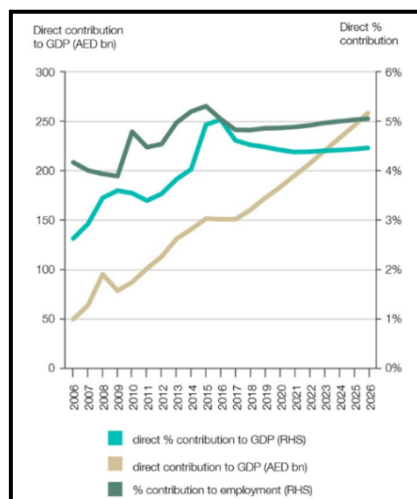
Dubai is among the most popular international destinations for family tourism. This strategy will help further streamline Dubai's tourism sector, and make it a preferred destination globally for family tourism (The Dubai Advantage, 2019).

1.2.2 The Tourism Industry in the UAE

The UAE has long been recognized as a premier global tourism and leisure destination, with a reputation for attracting wealthy tourists (The Dubai Advantage, 2019). Over the past decade, the tourism sector has experienced rapid and sustained growth, turning into a key element of the UAE's thriving economic diversification strategy. From 2007 to 2017, the tourism and hospitality sector's direct contribution to the country's GDP increased by 138%, with sectoral employment growing by 119% over the same period (US-UAE Business Council, 2019). By 2026, its

expected to increase related employment (Knight Frank,

Figure 1. 1 The hospitality and employment in the



direct contribution is by a further 72% and by 16% to over 659,000 2018) (Figure 1.1).

contribution of tourism to GDP and UAE

Source: Knight Frank, 2018, p. 1

The entertainment industry in the UAE and in particular in Dubai is full of opportunities because of the rising numbers of tourists in the region. Two-thirds of the world's population lives within an eight-hour flight of the UAE (US-UAE Business Council, 2019). Tourists are attracted to the UAE by its tourism products and services, including entertainment, shopping, business and conferences, but also because of its safety, security, political stability, economic prosperity and high quality infrastructure (emirates247, 2019). The 2019 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, posted via the World Economic Forum, ranked the UAE as seventh globally in the Safety and Security Index, and fourth for air transport infrastructure (World Economic Forum, 2019).

Dubai is therefore competing with some of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the world. In a 2018 list of the top five most visited cities in the world, Dubai ranked fourth with 16.6 million visitors (Globalmediainsight, 2019). It has the world's highest visitor-per-resident ratio, up from 4.9 visitors per resident in 2009 to 5.7 in 2015 (Go-Gulf, 2015). Several factors have propelled the growth of the UAE's tourism and hospitality industry. First, the UAE has

positioned itself as a leading cultural destination in the Middle East, Europe and North Africa (MENA) region. It has also many natural islands, stunning beaches and landscapes to entice international tourists. The increasing number of chains of global international hotels and resorts has resulted in a boom in the tourism sector (COMMITBIZ, 2019). Advancements in technological developments have made the country a vital hub for medical tourism (COMMITBIZ, 2019). With over 300 regular annual events, sport is also supporting the boom in tourism and leisure in the UAE (US-UAE Business Council, 2019).

As a developing tourist hub, the UAE has spent billions of dollars on a range of unique theme parks that redefine the concept of roller coasters and attractions. It has therefore quickly become an important center for entertainment and leisure in the MENA region (US-UAE Business Council, 2019).

1.2.3 The Theme Park Industry in the UAE

The theme park industry in the UAE has experienced strong growth over the ten years to 2019, largely driven by an increase in international and domestic visitor numbers and rising consumer spending (US-UAE Business Council, 2019). Theme parks companies operate mechanical rides, water rides, games, shows, themed exhibits, refreshment stands and other sights for visitors' entertainment. Six major players dominate the industry in the UAE: Wild Wadi Waterpark, Aquaventure Waterpark, IMG World of Adventure, Dubai Park and Resorts, Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Yas Waterworld and Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi.

A recent report from the Themed Entertainment Association (2019) shows that good attendance growth has been seen at two water parks in 2018 in the UAE. Dubai's Aquaventure Waterpark is one of the Top 20 Water Parks in the Worldwide list (Themed Entertainment Association, 2019). Wild Wadi Waterpark tied for eighth place in the Top 10 water parks in Europe, Middle East and Africa and had a 3.3% increase in attendance in 2018 (Themed Entertainment Association, 2019).

The world-class theme parks therefore put the UAE on the map for international visitors. The UAE's leisure and entertainment market potential is expected to reach 45 million visitors by 2021, including 30 million international tourists, and a further 15 million residents, friends and families (Sadaqat, 2018). Dubai's theme parks were expected to generate around USD 5 billion in annual revenue by 2020 (Sadaqat, 2018).

UAE is a well-known global tourist destination, with visitors of different religions and ethnic groups. Islam is the predominant religion in the UAE, and the country has been classified as the third most popular destination country for Muslim tourist. In 2014–15, it had 2,143,000 Muslim tourists according to the Global Islamic Economy Summit (GIES) report (Battour, 2017). This suggests that theme parks, like any other tourism and hospitality providers in the UAE, should develop and market their products and services using Islamic teachings and principles.

1.2.4 Islamic-Friendly Theme Parks Overview

The Mastercard-Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2019 conducted a survey where the participants were asked to score venues that should have faith-based services. The respondents prioritized services in several groups (GMTI, 2019). Priority 1 included airports and accommodation (e.g. hotels, villas, resorts). Priority 2 included destinations such as religious sites (e.g. heritage sites), leisure sites (e.g. attractions, shopping, beaches, parks, nature, adventure sites, and live events), business sites (event venues) and healthcare (e.g. hospitals, healthcare services). Priority 3 included highway rest areas, planes and railway stations.

The UAE was the fifth most important destination in the global Muslim travel market in 2019 (GMTI, 2019). Leisure services, including theme parks, shopping malls, and beaches, were categorized as Priority 2 in the survey, important facilities that should have faith-based services. The UAE is in the world's fastest growing region for theme park visitor spending (The First Group, 2017), and theme parks in the UAE provide Muslim guests with services that are compliant with Islamic teachings. These include halal food, prayer rooms, and calls for prayers. Availability of Islamic-compliant services is considered an important way to attract Muslim travelers (Han et al., 2018) and encourage them to visit the country and particular attractions (e.g. theme parks). Prayer rooms, availability of halal food and water-usage-friendly toilets and washrooms are the

three attributes that are considered most important for Islam-compliant theme parks (Gayatri & Chew, 2013; GMTI, 2019).

1.3 Problem Statement

Service quality is an essential element of service marketing (Grönroos, 1984), and a way to attract new customers.. There are several problems in existing studies on theme park service quality (Chen et al., 2011; Tsang et al., 2012; Wu, Li, & Li, 2018). First, most of the substantial studies on theme park service quality (Başarangil, 2018; Chen et al., 2011; Tsang et al., 2012; Wu, Li, & Li, 2018) during the last decade have focused on general dimensions such as physical environment quality, employee interaction quality, and access quality. However, there is growing evidence that culture influences buying habits and consumer behaviors in the tourism and hospitality industry (Diallo et al., 2018; Han et al., 2019). Researchers around the world have acknowledged that the impact of culture on service quality has been neglected (Gayatri & Chew, 2013). A review of the literature showed that the existing instruments for measuring theme park service quality (e.g. THEMEQUAL, developed by Tsang et al., 2012) have not adequately incorporated cultural and religious elements such as Islamic elements (e.g. availability of halal food and prayer rooms). Gayatri and Chew (2013) developed an Islamic service quality scale across three service sectors (retail, restaurants and hotels) in Indonesia and recommended that it should be tested in other Muslim countries and other sectors or industries such as banking, theme parks, legal services and online services. This potential gap provides opportunities

for research on the influence of culture and religion on service quality in theme parks.

A high level of service quality is an antecedent of a high level of customer delight (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Ali et al., 2018; Slåtten et al., 2009). It therefore plays an essential role in successful customer retention (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Ali et al., 2018; Slåtten et al., 2011). The relationship between service quality, customer delight and customer loyalty has previously been explored in different parts of the tourism and hospitality sector (Ahrholdt et al., 2017) including theme parks (Ali et al., 2018; Jin et al., 2016; Slåtten et al., 2009, 2011). However, most of the studies on the relationship between service quality, customer delight and customer loyalty have been in a Western context (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Slåtten et al., 2009). No previous studies have explored service quality in an Islamic context or its effect on customer delight. A recent study by Gayatri and Chew (2013) called for more research on the role of Islamic service quality in various important outcomes, such as customer delight and loyalty. This study is a response to this call, and examines the relationships among service quality dimensions, including both general and Islamic dimensions, customer delight and customer loyalty.

Nationality is an important element, because an individual's national identity is closely related to cultural dimensions (Steenkamp & Geyskens, 2012). Customers from different nationalities may have different levels of satisfaction, delight and loyalty because of their varied cultural background and experience (Cheng et al., 2018; Papastathopoulos et al., 2020; Torres et al., 2014b). Torres et

al (2014b) examined the drivers of customer delight among international guests. They found that there were some universal elements, but also some clear differences between guests from different cultures. It is therefore recommended that companies dealing with multinational customers should have strategies addressing different product categories and customer nationalities (Pantouvakis & Bouranta, 2013). This study contributes to the literature on the moderating role of nationality on the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty in the context of theme parks.

Previous studies have tried to examine links between delight and loyalty. Researchers have examined this relationship in tourism (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Ali et al., 2018), including airports (Ali, Kim et al., 2016). There are, however, few studies comparing the strength of the delight–loyalty relationship by gender (Torres et al., 2014a). This study therefore aims to develop a conceptual model that includes the potential moderating role of gender.

Finally, previous theme park service quality studies have focused on European countries such as Norway (Slåtten et al., 2009, 2011) and Far East Asian countries such as Malaysia (Ali et al., 2018), Hong Kong (Dong & Siu, 2013; Tsang et al., 2012), South Korea (Jin et al., 2016) and Taiwan (Chen et al., 2011; Wu, Li, & Li, 2018), with few studies in countries closer to the Middle East such as Turkey (Başarangil, 2018). The UAE is a well-known theme park destination in the Middle East region because of its world-class theme parks such as Ferrari World Abu Dhabi. However, only a few studies on theme parks in the

UAE have been conducted (Lari et al., 2019, 2020). Lari et al. (2019) proposed a theoretical framework that examines the relationship between service quality dimensions, including general and Islamic dimensions, customer delight and customer loyalty in the context of theme parks in the UAE. They called for an empirical study to examine the proposed framework. This study is therefore a response to this call, because the UAE is an area that has not been fully explored in the literature.

1.4 Research Objectives

To narrow down the gaps in the literature, and provide solutions to the identified problems, this study proposed five research objectives:

- To develop an instrument to measure customers' perceptions of theme park service quality from an Islamic perspective.
- To examine the effect of customers' perceptions of the dimensions of theme park service quality on their delight.
- To investigate the effect of delight on customers' loyalty to theme parks;
- To examine the moderating effect of nationality on the relationship between visitors' delight and loyalty; and
- To examine the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between visitors' delight and loyalty.

1.5 Research Questions

This research attempted to answer four research questions and test eight hypotheses about the relationship between service quality dimensions, customer

delight and customer loyalty in the context of theme parks in an Islamic setting (see Table 1.1). The research questions were:

(RQ1) Which dimensions of theme park service quality in an Islamic cultural context significantly influence customer delight?

(RQ2) To what extent are customer delight and customer loyalty related in the context of theme parks?

(RQ3) Does nationality moderate the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty to theme parks?

(RQ4) Does gender moderate the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty to theme parks?

To address these questions, this research examined the direct relationship between five dimensions of service quality (physical environment quality, Islamic facilities quality, consumables quality, employee interaction quality and access quality) and customer delight in the context of theme parks. It also examined the direct relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty. Finally, it aimed to investigate the indirect relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty through the potential moderating role of nationality and gender.

Table 1. 1 Research Objectives, Questions and Hypotheses

Research Objective (RO)	Research Question (RQ)	Research Hypotheses (RH)
To develop an instrument to measure customers' perceptions of theme park service quality from an Islamic perspective		Literature Review
To examine the effect of customers' perceptions of the dimensions of theme park service quality on their delight.	Which dimensions related to theme park service quality in Islamic cultural context significantly influence customer delight?	H1: Theme park physical environment quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context. H2: Islamic-friendly facilities quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context. H3: Theme park consumables quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context. H4: Theme park employee interaction quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context. H5: Theme park access quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context.
To investigate the effect of delight on customers' loyalty in the context of theme parks	To what extent are customer delight and customer loyalty related in the context of theme parks?	H6: Customer delight has a significant positive impact on customer loyalty in theme parks in an Islamic context.
To examine the moderating effect of nationality on the relationship between visitors' delight and loyalty.	Does nationality moderate the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty to theme parks?	H7: Nationality moderates the effect of customer delight on customer loyalty to theme parks
To examine the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between visitors' delight and loyalty.	Does gender moderate the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty to theme parks	H8: Gender moderates the effect of customer delight on customer loyalty to theme parks

1.6 Research Significance

This study aims to provide both theoretical contributions and practical insights for researchers and practitioners in the field of theme park service quality. The first theoretical contribution of this study is that it aims to expand the range of studies that suggest that religious and cultural background can affect customers' evaluation of service quality. Muslim customers are more likely to use service providers that are sensitive to their religion. Previous research has focused on service quality from an Islamic perspective in destinations (Battour et al., 2014; Han et al., 2019), fast food restaurants (Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015), and retail and hotels (Gayatri and Chew, 2013; Gayatri et al., 2011). This study tested Muslim customers' perception of service quality in theme parks in the UAE. Ahmad et al. (2019, p. 364) suggested that consumer behavior studies in the Middle East region would "add new insight and fresh evidence to the existing cross-cultural research on consumer behaviour research that is still in its infancy".

Some previous studies have identified that customer delight is a result of service quality, and an antecedent of loyalty in the tourism and hospitality industry (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Ali et al., 2018). This study contributes to the literature by extending the research on the relationship between service quality dimensions (both general and Islamic) and delight to theme parks in an Islamic context such as the UAE.

The third significant contribution of this study is that it examines the moderating effect of nationality in the relationship between customer delight and loyalty to theme parks using multigroup analysis. It is hoped that this will

encourage other scholars to compare the significance of the path in structural equation modelling in Islamic service quality research.

Finally, this study expands knowledge on the effect of demographic characteristics, especially gender, on the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty, by adapting the moderating concept to the theme park context. It therefore adds to the few studies (Torres et al., 2014a) that have empirically suggested that gender moderates the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty.

The results of this study have several practical implications. Theme park operators and managers will need to consider Islamic values when developing services for Muslim customers. By adopting a strategy that integrates religious awareness, theme park operators will improve customers' perceptions of service quality and therefore probably long-term loyalty. For example, Muslim theme park customers would prefer to consume foods that are halal-certified. Muslims are bound by fixed and obligatory religious activities such as praying, so would appreciate theme park operators that cater to their spiritual needs. High levels of customer delight achieved by using appropriate marketing strategies should increase customers' loyalty.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The study and its conceptual model involve several specific terms. This section provides definitions to help readers to understand those terms in the context of this study.

Theme parks. Pearce (1988, p. 60) defined theme parks as “extreme examples of capital intensive, highly developed, user-oriented, man-modified, recreational environment”. The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attraction (IAAPA) defines a theme park as “an amusement park that has themed attractions, be it food, customers, entertainment, retail/stores and/or rides” (Wong & Cheung, 1999). Theme parks are distinguished from other amusement parks by a theme that runs through all or most of the attraction (Wong & Cheung, 1999). Theme parks generally reflect their theme in their architecture, landscaping, costumed personnel, rides, shows, food provision, and merchandising (Milman, 2008).

Physical environment quality. Bitner (1992, p.58) first defined the term ‘servicescape’ as “the man-made, physical surrounding as opposed to the natural or social environment”. She stated that physical circumstances included all the objective physical factors that can be controlled by service firms to affect customers’ responses, both internal (e.g. level of satisfaction) and external (e.g. intention to revisit). A physical environment construct therefore consists of variables such as layout accessibility, facility aesthetics, functionality, ambient conditions, and cleanliness (Ali et al., 2018; Wu, Li, & Li, 2018).

Islamic facilities quality. The five daily prayers are very important to practicing Muslims. They require facilities such as a mosque (Muslim house of worship) or prayer rooms and related facilities such as indication of the direction of Qibla, and availability of purifying facilities (Battour et al., 2011 2014; Han et al., 2019).

Consumables quality. Consumables quality describes the general quality of food and halal food, including characteristics such as variety (Lee et al., 2014; Yoon et al., 2010). Value for money is also an important aspect in evaluating food quality (Yoon et al., 2010). For Muslims, the rule prohibiting certain foods and regulating procedures for food preparation is centered on the concept of halal. Halal food is “food that can be lawfully consumed when conditions for Islamic food preparation are met” (Battour et al., 2011, p. 531). Food that is unlawful for Muslims includes pork and pork-derived food. Consumption of any food or drinks with alcoholic content is also prohibited. Several studies have concluded that catering to Muslim tourists’ need for halal food may increase their overall satisfaction and loyalty (Battour et al., 2014).

Employee interaction quality. Interaction quality describes an evaluation of the process of interaction between service provider and customer (Ali et al., 2018; Wu, Li, & Li, 2018). Hospitality services usually involve customer and service provider being together in the service environment. The interaction may therefore influence customers’ experience of the service (Ali et al., 2018).

Access quality. Access quality describes visitors’ ability to find a theme park that is well suited to needs (Shonk & Chelladurai, 2008; Wu, Li, & Li, 2018). Theme parks may be more convenient to visit because of their location, hours of operation, and parking facilities (Wu, Li, & Li, 2018), for example.

Delight. Delight is a combination of high pleasure (joy, elation) and high activation or surprise as one of the second level emotions (Ali et al.,

2018). This study defined theme park visitors' delight as a high level of satisfaction that exceeds visitors' expectations, and a combination of high pleasure (joy, elation) and high activation (surprise) (Ali et al., 2018).

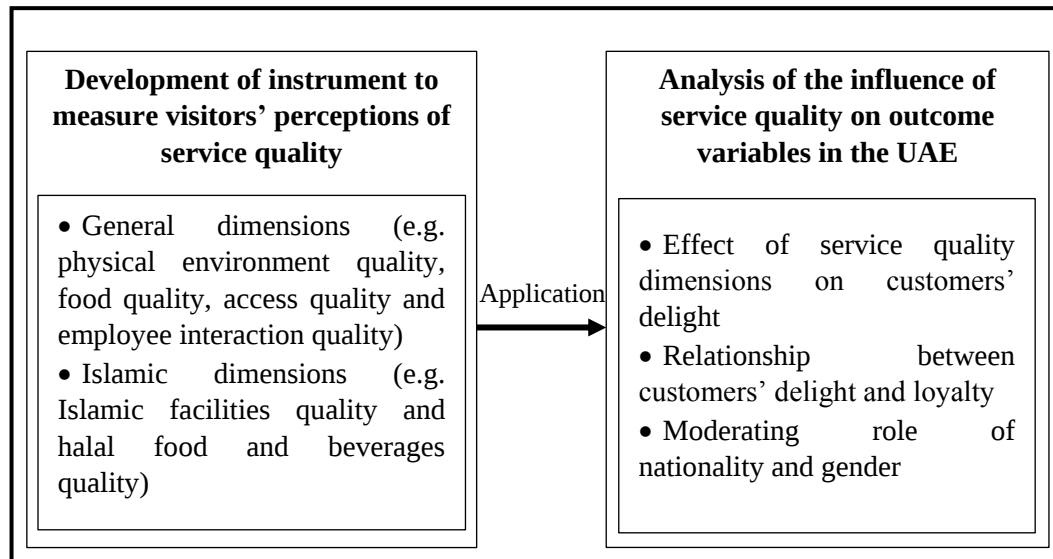
Loyalty. Oliver (1999, p. 34) provided the most comprehensive definition of loyalty as “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situation influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour”. Customers are considered loyal to a brand when they return to the service provider for repeat purchases, share positive experiences with friends and family and recommend that others support the service establishment.

1.8 Overall Structure of the Research

This dissertation consists of two parts. Figure 1 shows the overall structure of this study. The first part developed an instrument to measure visitors' perceptions of service quality from an Islamic perspective in the context of theme parks. This instrument was designed to be applicable in diverse sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry, including hotels and restaurants as well as theme parks.

The second part focused on testing the influence of this scale in the UAE theme park industry. It examined the effects of visitors' perceptions of service quality on their delight and loyalty to theme parks in the UAE. The study also tested the moderating effect of visitors' nationality and gender on the relationship between delight and loyalty.

Figure 1. 2 Overall Structure of the Study



1.9 Research Process

This research used a process based on the hypothectico-deductive method proposed by Sekaran and Bougie (2016) (see Figure 1.3). The steps used were:

- The research process started with general phenomena, including the research problem, research questions and research objectives. The analysis of the research gap in the literature on service quality from an Islamic perspective and its dimensions in the context of theme parks noted that there were very few empirical studies. This suggested that a deeper understanding was needed to recognize the importance of the Islamic dimensions of service quality in theme parks and their relationship with delight and loyalty.
- The literature review focused on analyzing information about the research phenomena. Information was sought on five issues: (1) service quality definition, generic models and the relationship with culture and

religion, (2) generic theme park service quality models, (3) Islamic service quality dimensions, (4) components of theme parks' service quality model in an Islamic context, and (5) the relationship between service quality dimensions and delight, and delight and loyalty, in the context of theme parks (see Chapter 2).

- Third, the research framework and hypotheses were created, drawing on the literature review. A theoretical framework was developed, incorporating the most relevant factors relating to service quality in theme parks in an Islamic context, and their relationship with delight and loyalty (see Chapter 3).

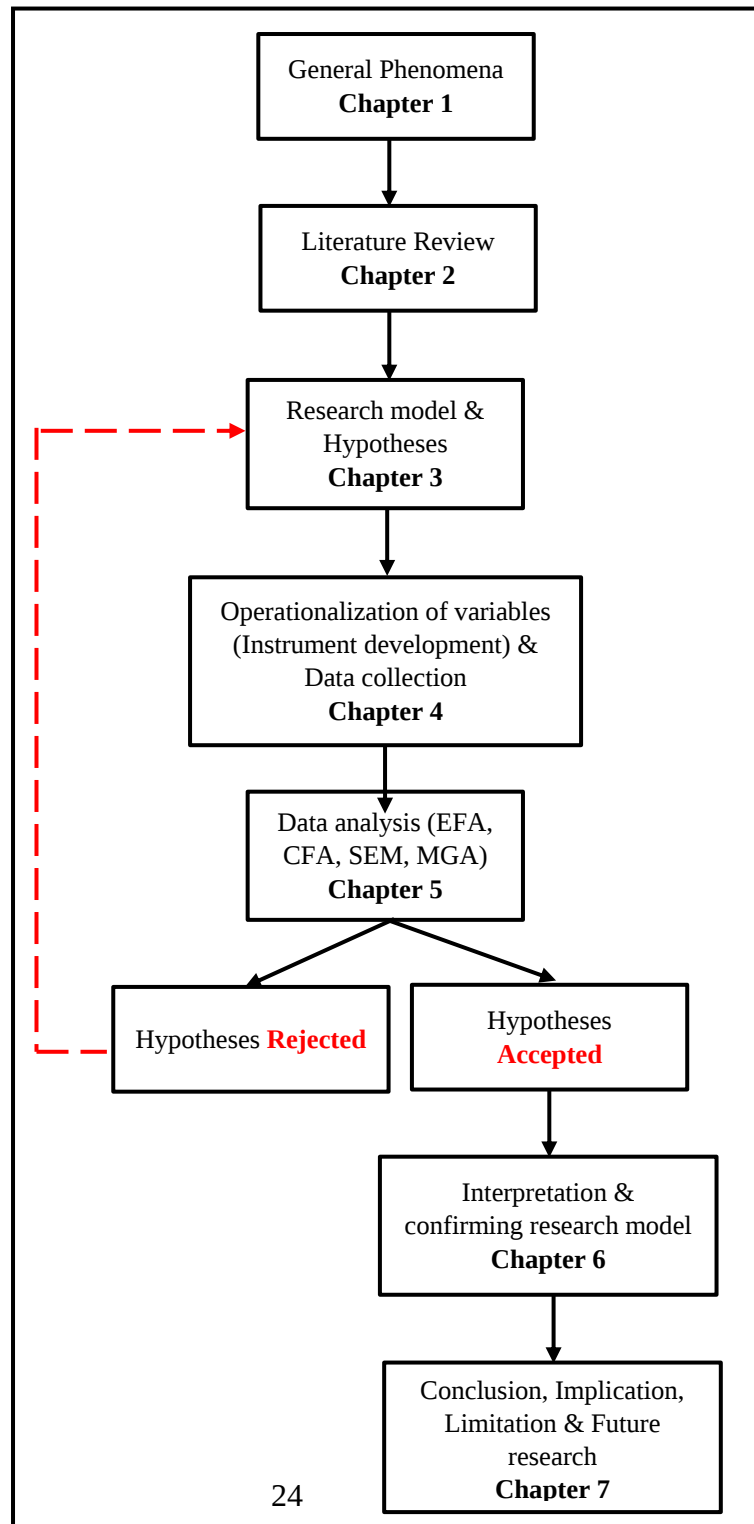
- Fourth, a research instrument was developed from the literature and operationalized using a five-point Likert-type scale. The reliability and validity of the instrument were tested on a pilot sample. The questionnaire was distributed to visitors of theme parks in the UAE (see Chapter 4).

- Fifth, the collected data were analyzed to find which service quality dimensions influenced visitor perceptions of service quality in theme parks in an Islamic context. Structural equation modelling, confirmatory factor analysis, and regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses (see Chapter 5).

- Sixth, the findings were considered in the context of previous studies (see Chapter 6), and the conceptual framework revised if necessary.

- Finally, deductions and implications were developed (see Chapter 7). This phase of the research process shows the features of the deductive approach, along with the theoretical and managerial implications of the study.

Figure 1. 3 Research Process



1.10 Organization of the Dissertation

The structure of the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter sets out the background to the problem, the research setting, the problem statement, the purpose of the research, the research questions, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and the study's contribution.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. This chapter explains the purpose of the literature review and describes the review methodology (literature search). It discusses general service quality dimensions, Islamic service quality dimensions, delight and loyalty and the associated empirical research in the context of theme parks.

Chapter 3: Research Model and Hypotheses. This chapter uses the literature review to develop a conceptual model that integrates service quality dimensions, delight, and loyalty in the context of theme parks. It also presents the research hypotheses and supporting rationale about relationships among the variables.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology. This chapter provides a detailed description of the research methodology. It explains the design, questionnaire development, sample description, data collection method, and analytical strategies including descriptive statistics, factor analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis and moderation analysis.

Chapter 5: Results. This chapter describes the findings from the analysis of the quantitative data collected through the survey instrument. It includes the results of reliability and validity testing, and analysis of the relationship between dependent and independent variables, including both direct and indirect relationships.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Implications. This chapter provides a discussion of the findings in the context of previous research. It also discusses the theoretical and practical implication of the findings.

Chapter 7: Conclusions. This chapter provides a brief summary of the research and discusses how managers and operators in the theme park industry can use the findings to delight and increase customer loyalty through providing exceptional service, especially Islamic service quality dimensions. It also describes the study limitations and provides some recommendation for future research.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has set out the background to a study in service quality in the theme park industry and a brief introduction of the relationship between religion and service quality. It also set out the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, theoretical and practical contribution of this study, and an overview of the terms used in this study. The next chapter reviews the literature in the field to expand on the ideas outlined in this chapter. It discusses in more detail how religion and culture influence perceptions of service quality and related constructs such as delight and

loyalty in the theme park industry. It therefore provides the basis for model construction and hypothesis development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on service quality and its relationship with religion in the tourism and hospitality industry. The main areas discussed include general theme park service quality dimensions, Islamic dimensions of service quality, customer delight and customer loyalty in the theme park industry. The chapter also reviews the literature on the moderating effect of demographic characteristics such as nationality and gender on the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty.

2.1 Service Quality, Culture, and Islam

2.1.1 Service Quality Definition

Service quality has attracted considerable attention from both academics and practitioners over many years, because of its impact on cost, financial performance, customer satisfaction, customer delight and customer retention and loyalty (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Ali et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2011; Famiyeh et al., 2018). It has therefore been widely discussed in the service management literature (Ryu & Han, 2010). Many researchers have tried to define service quality and have generally agreed that it should be studied from the customer's perspective (Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Zeithaml (1988, p. 3) explained that service quality is the “consumer’s judgment about a [service]’s overall excellence or superiority”. This is the

most widely-quoted definition of service quality (Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). Later, Bitner and Hubbert (1994, p.77) defined service quality as “the customer’s overall impression of the relative inferiority and superiority of the organization and its services”.

Service quality is therefore essentially a customer comparison of the superiority of service performance provided by a service company (Zeithaml, 1988). Theme park service quality is therefore the theme park customers’ evaluation of the services provided by the theme park.

2.1.2 Generic Service Quality Models

To date, there is little or no agreement on how to measure service quality (Ahmad et al., 2019; Al-Neyadi et al., 2018; Diallo et al., 2018; Famiyeh et al., 2018). However, researchers have agreed that service quality is a multidimensional construct (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Farooq et al., 2018). The various dimensions of service quality are all service components that are vital for consumers (Wong et al., 2015).

Several researchers have proposed generic service quality models. These have been used to measure the quality of various services (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1988). SERVQUAL is one of the most popular generic models, proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), and has been widely used by service quality researchers (Ali & Raza, 2017; Al-Neyadi et al., 2018), including in the context of theme parks (O’Neill & Palmer, 2003; Tsang et al., 2012). The SERVQUAL scale consists of five dimensions: tangibles, assurance, empathy, reliability and responsiveness (Parasuraman et al., 1988). However, it has some problems. First, the model

only includes service quality dimensions that can be categorized as functional dimensions, and the technical quality dimensions are excluded (Nagata et al., 2004). Second, the stability of SERVQUAL's dimensions has also been questioned, because the number of dimensions changed when other researchers retested the model (Nagata et al., 2004). Third, several researchers have reported inconsistency in the application of SERVQUAL dimensions across contexts and cultures (Zhao et al., 2002). Fourth, the (dis)confirmation paradigm can be unsuitable for use in measuring service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Another generic service quality model is the Nordic Model. This was proposed by Grönroos (1984) and identifies two main dimensions of service quality: technical and functional. Grönroos (1984) defined technical quality as the outcome of services and functional quality as how services are delivered. The Nordic model included corporate image as a way to develop customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality (Grönroos, 1984).

Both the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and the Nordic model (Grönroos, 1984) measure service quality using a disconfirmation paradigm. This paradigm explains that service quality is best measured by comparing customers' expectations with their perception of the quality of the services received (Gayatri et al., 2011). However, Cronin and Taylor (1992) questioned the use of the disconfirmation paradigm when measuring service quality, because it only functions to mediate customers' perception of service quality. Satisfaction is also different from service quality, so the disconfirmation paradigm is better as a measure of satisfaction

than quality of service (Gayatri et al., 2011). Carman (1990) confirmed that the 22-items of the SERVQUAL model are empirically valid, so Cronin and Taylor (1992) used them in a revised model called SERVPERF. SERVPERF measures service quality through performance only, so may be a more accurate assessment of customers' perception of overall service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Brady and Cronin (2001) proposed a hierarchal and multi-level format service quality model. They combined the existing models and addressed three service quality measurement requirements: using a performance-only approach (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), setting the service quality model into a multi-level format and extending the ideas of Grönroos (1984) by adding an additional service quality dimension, i.e. environment quality, which focuses on the servicescape where the service is provided (Brady & Cronin, 2001). According to Brady and Cronin (2001), service quality has three dimensions, outcome quality (another name for Grönroos' (1984) technical quality), interaction quality (Grönroos' (1984) functional quality) and environment quality. The hierarchal model of Brady and Cronin (2001) has been used by many other researchers to measure service quality (Wong & Wan, 2013; Wu & Ai, 2016a; Wu & Li, 2017), including theme park service quality (Chen et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2018). To date, Brady and Cronin's (2001) model is believed to be the most useful service quality model, although other researchers have made a few modification and adjustments when applying it contextually (Wu & Cheng, 2013).

The generic service quality models (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1988) have been used by researchers in different industries, including healthcare (Al-Neyadi et al., 2018) and airlines (Wu & Cheng, 2013). However, the generic models have some theoretical and practical issues. Theoretically, researchers have proved that customers' evaluation of quality of service depends on the context, including service type and customers' culture (Chen et al., 2011; Farooq et al., 2018; Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015; Tsang et al., 2012). Practically, the use of generic service quality models may lose information that is specific to the service being studied (Brady & Cronin, 2001). These arguments suggest that a theme park service quality model should be specifically designed to fit both theme parks and the cultural context.

2.1.3 The Relationship between Religion and Service Quality

Hofstede (1980, p. 4) defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from another”. Hofstede (1991) declared that a culture may be a collective phenomenon, since it is shared with others within the same social environment.

Cultural influence on service quality perceptions is important for services marketing (Gayatri & Chew, 2013). Studies have found that cultural background influences customers' assessment of service quality (Diallo et al., 2018; Pantouvakis & Renzi, 2016). Cultural dimensions have been used in assessing service quality by Diallo et al. (2018) and Pantouvakis and Renzi

(2016), who highlighted the difference in behavioral characteristics between Asian, Middle Eastern and Western customers.

Pantouvakis and Renzi (2016) examined the service quality components affecting traveler satisfaction with international airports. They evaluated the degree to which passengers' perception of airport facilities, and their levels of satisfaction, vary by nationality. There were significant differences between Italian and English-speaking passengers in all underlying dimensions of airport service quality, suggesting that evaluations of elements of the service offering varied with nationality.

Diallo et al. (2018) investigated how cultural context moderates the relationship between service quality dimensions in a mall (e.g. physical aspects, reliability, personal attention and problem solving), perceived value, satisfaction with the mall and loyalty toward the mall in three developing countries (Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia). They found that mall service quality drove customer loyalty only in Morocco and Senegal, and customer satisfaction had a positive effect on customer loyalty, but only in Senegal and Tunisia. They concluded that this was the result of the different cultural contexts.

Religion is one of the most important cultural components influencing consumer behavior (Battour et al., 2011, 2014; Eid, 2015; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). It sets behavioral norms that directly and indirectly shape customers' behaviors, for example, certain food taboos or dietary requirements (Battour et al., 2014; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015) and also guide purchasing behavior (Han et al., 2019).

In business terms, failure to understand the significance of religion may cause service providers to offend customers (Gayatri & Chew, 2013). Religion affects people's habits, perceptions and consumption behaviors (Battour et al., 2011, 2014; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; Han et al., 2019; Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). This research therefore focused on investigating the effects of service quality on Muslim customers' perceptions and behavior (e.g. delight and loyalty) in the context of theme parks.

2.2 Theme Park Service Quality Model

2.2.1 Generic Theme Park Service Quality Model

Theme park service quality has been investigated by several researchers. Some have used SERVQUAL (O'Neill & Palmer, 2003), and others have tried to develop service quality models to cover the specific characteristics of theme parks. For example, Tsang et al. (2012) modified the SERVQUAL model to create THEMEQUAL. This measures the gap between perceived and expected service quality for visitors to theme parks in Hong Kong. The THEMEQUAL model has six dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness and access, assurance, empathy and courtesy.

Several studies have examined service quality in the theme park industry using different methodologies. Chen et al. (2011) used a hierarchical model with four dimensions: personal interaction, physical environment, technical quality and access quality. Personal interaction included the responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy dimensions of THEMEQUAL. Physical environment covered the tangibles dimension, and technical quality drew on some items of empathy and assurance. The fourth

dimension, access quality, did not come from the THEMEQUAL scale, and covered availability of public transport, parking, food and beverages, restrooms and variety of activities. Access quality was considered separately because it is generally agreed to be qualitatively different from the other aspects. Table 2.1 shows service quality models used to measure service quality in theme parks.

Table 2. 1 Theme Park Service Quality Dimensions

Reference	Dimensions
Slåtten et al. (2009)	• Ambiance • Interaction with staff • Design
Slåtten et al. (2011)	• Ambiance • Participating in activities • Interaction with other customers • Interaction with staff • Design
Jin et al. (2016)	• Responsiveness • Empathy • Assurance
Wu et al. (2018)	• Interaction quality • Physical environment quality • Outcome quality • Access quality

None of these studies of theme park service quality included any consideration of satisfying Muslim customers' needs related to Islamic values. This is surprising because Eid (2015), Eid and El-Gohary (2015), Gayatri and Chew (2013) and Gayatri et al. (2011) all showed that service quality and perceived value are influenced by the Islamic values of Muslim customers. Gayatri and Chew (2013) and Gayatri et al. (2011) suggested that service

quality models for Muslim customers should include both general service quality dimensions (e.g. ambiance, design, layout, accessibility) and Islamic service quality dimensions (e.g. availability of halal food and prayer rooms). Theme parks operating in Islamic countries, and the international theme parks that attract thousands of Muslim customers every year, should therefore consider both general and Islamic service quality dimensions.

2.2.2 Theme Park Service Quality Models in an Islamic Context

Service quality involves three main dimensions, outcome quality (the results of services provided), environment quality (the servicescape where the service is provided) and interaction quality (service delivery) (Brady & Cronin, 2001). Brady and Cronin's (2001) model is considered the most useful service quality model, and has been examined by marketing researchers with some modifications and adjustments for different sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry (Wu & Ai, 2016a, b; Wu & Li, 2017). Chen et al. (2011) and Wu et al. (2018) adjusted Brady and Cronin's (2001) model to examine service quality in theme parks (see Table 2.3).

Service quality perceptions, and therefore measurement, are influenced by customers' values, including those related to religion (Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Gayatri et al., 2011; Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). These studies suggest that Muslim customers view service quality from two aspects: general service quality and aspects specifically related to Islam. This study aimed to evaluate theme park service quality in an Islamic context, so needed to incorporate Islamic service quality dimensions. The two most important Islamic service

quality dimensions for theme parks were considered to be Islamic facilities and halal food and beverages.

The operational definition of each of the proposed dimensions of theme park service quality is shown in Table 2.2. Table 2.3 shows the proposed theme park service quality model in an Islamic context, with five dimensions (Figure 2.1). These include three general service quality dimensions (physical environment quality, employee interaction quality and access quality), one Islamic service quality dimension (Islamic facilities quality) and one additional dimension, consumables quality, that includes both general (food quality) and Islamic (halal food quality) items (Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). The consumables quality dimension is also an outcome quality dimension (Brady & Cronin, 2001), as is the general service quality dimension on access quality. The environment quality dimensions are one general service quality dimension (physical environment quality) and one Islamic service quality dimension (Islamic facilities quality). The model also has one interaction quality dimension, the general service quality dimension on employee interaction quality. The next few sections will discuss each dimension in turn.

Figure 2. 1 Proposed model of theme park service quality in an Islamic context

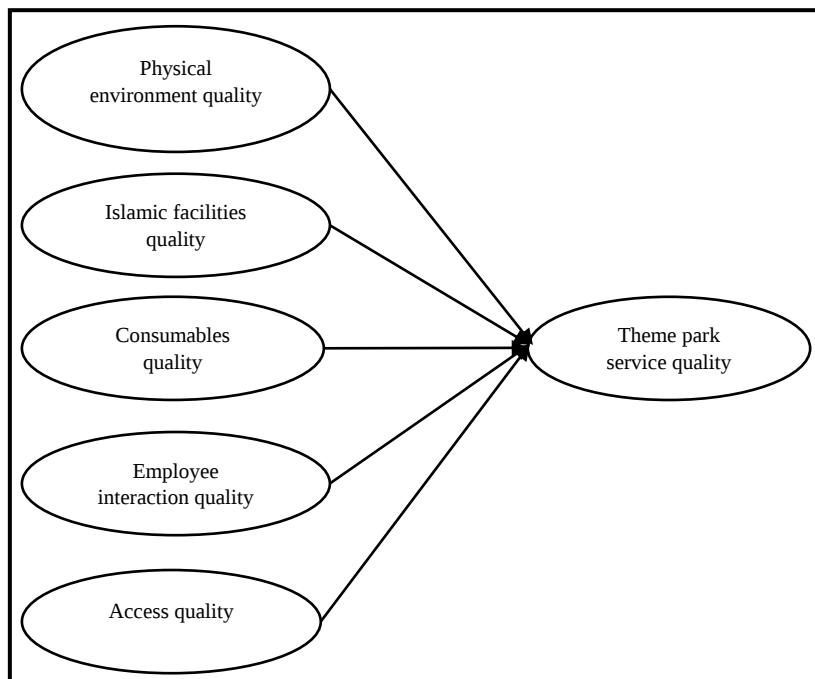


Table 2. 2 The Operational Definition of Theme Park Service Quality in Islamic Context

Theme parks service quality dimension		Operational definition	Related literature
Physical quality	environment	Physical facilities and equipment used to provide the services such as ambiance, layout, cleanliness, decoration etc.	Bitner (1992); Ali, Kim, and Ryu (2016); Ali et al. (2018)
Islamic facilities quality		Physical facilities and equipment that are specifically designed to fulfill customers' Islamic value-related needs such as prayer rooms, availability of markers indicating the direction of Qibla, and washrooms and toilets with water supply and purifying facility.	Battour et al. (2011; 2014); Gayatri and Chew (2013); Sumaedi and Yarmen (2015)
Consumables quality		The taste, variety, quality and value for money of the food and beverages provided. It also includes the quality of halal food.	Sumaedi and Yarmen (2015); Yoon et al. (2010)
Employee interaction quality		The attitude, behavior, willingness to help customers and appearance of employees. It also covers the process arranged for delivering the service and interacting with customers.	Ali et al. (2018); Sumaedi and Yarmen (2015)
Access quality		The location, operating hours, and parking lot of the tourist attraction	Shonk and Chelladurai (2008); Wu et al. (2018)

Table 2. 3 Proposed Theme Park Service Quality Dimensions

Source/ Brady and Cronin's (2001) dimension	Environment quality	Outcome quality	Interaction quality
Brady and Cronin (2001)	Environment quality • Ambient conditions • Facility design • Social conditions	Outcome quality • Waiting time, • Tangible elements • Valence	Interaction quality • Attitude • Behavior • Expertise
Chen et al. (2011)	Physical environment • Physical facilities • Environment quality	Technical quality • Recreational facilities • Venue quality Access quality • Convenience • Information quality	Personal interaction • Personal services • Interpretation service
Wu, Li and Li (2018)	Physical environment quality • Ambiance design • Equipment	Outcome quality • Waiting time • Valence • Tangibles Access quality • Convenient location • Information • Destination	Interaction quality • Employees' conduct • Employees' ability • Visitor interaction
Gayatri and Chew (2013)	General service quality Islamic service quality	General service quality Islamic service quality	General service quality Islamic service quality
Sumaedi and Yarmen (2015)	Physical environment Islamic physical environment	Food quality Waiting time Halal quality	Personnel Process Islamic-related expertise
Proposed theme park service quality dimension	Physical environment quality Islamic facilities quality	Consumables quality Access quality	Employee interaction quality

2.3 Physical Environment Quality

2.3.1 Definition of Physical Environment Quality

Kotler's (1973) study is considered the foundation for studies on environmental psychology. He used the term 'atmospherics' to explain the conscious designing of space that creates certain effects in buyers, and defined atmospherics as "the effort to design buying environment to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his/her purchase probability" (Kotler, 1973, p. 50). The term atmosphere is colloquially used to describe the quality of the surrounding. It is understood through the senses and described in sensory terms (Kotler, 1973). It may therefore include visual (e.g. color, brightness, size and shape), aural (e.g. volume), olfactory (e.g. scent, freshness) and tactile (e.g. softness, temperature) channels (Kotler, 1973). Bitner (1992, p. 58) used the term 'servicescape' to explain "the man-made, physical surroundings as opposed to the natural or social environment". Customer responses to the dimensions of the physical environment shape their behavioral intentions i.e., loyalty and positive recommendations (Bitner, 1992). Physical environment is therefore an important aspect of service settings.

Like any other service industry, theme parks must invest in the interiors and exteriors of their facilities to create a pleasant, unique ambiance for their customers and enhance their sense of well-being (Slåtten et al. ,2009; Slåtten et al. ,2011; Wu et al. ,2018). The next section describes the effect of physical environment on customer behavior.

2.3.2 Previous Studies on Physical Environment Quality

There are three main empirical studies on the impact of physical environment in service settings. They are in the context of grocery stores (Barnes et al., 2016), the airline industry (Farooq et al., 2018) and restaurants (Ryu & Han, 2011). Başarangil (2018), Chen et al. (2011), Tsang et al. (2012), and Wu et al. (2018) all examined the effect of physical environment on visitors' emotions, satisfaction and behavioral intention in the context of theme parks.

Barnes et al. (2016) examined the impact of tangibles in grocery stores in the United States (US). Tangibles included grocery store layout and cleanliness. Structural equation modelling suggested that tangibles had a significant relationship with joy and surprise, but a slightly stronger influence on customer joy than surprise.

Farooq et al. (2018) investigated the effect of the service provided by Malaysian Airlines on customer satisfaction. Researchers designed a self-administered questionnaire using five dimensions of the AIRQUAL scale (airline tangibles, terminal tangibles, personal services, empathy and airline image). They used partial least squares structural equation modelling to show that all five dimensions of AIRQUAL had a positive, direct and significant impact on customer satisfaction. Airline tangibles included the quality of the aircraft's interior and exterior equipment, catering service, comfortable seats and cleanliness. Terminal tangibles covered the quality of services available at airport

terminals, such as effective boarding, clean toilets, good air-conditioning and friendly security and control system (Farooq et al., 2018).

Ryu and Han (2011) examined the impact of the overall physical environment at upscale Korean restaurants in Seoul, South Korea. Using structural equation modelling, they showed that facility aesthetics, lighting, layout and service staff had significant effects on disconfirmation. However, the paths from ambiance and table setting to perceived disconfirmation were not significant. The study also examined the indirect effects of components of the physical environment and perceived disconfirmation. Perceived disconfirmation mediated the relationship between physical environment (facility aesthetics, lighting, layout and service staff) and customer satisfaction. These elements of the physical environment also affected customer loyalty through perceived disconfirmation and satisfaction.

Başarangil (2018) analyzed the dimensions of servicescape (communicative staging and substantive staging) and experiential quality to determine the influence of these dimensions on visitors' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and behavioral intention for a theme park in Istanbul, in Turkey. Substantive staging is the physical environment aspects such as layout and ambiance. The study identified a positive relationship between servicescape and perceived service quality (Başarangil, 2018).

Chen et al. (2011) measured visitors' satisfaction and its link with service quality using a hierarchical model combining four primary determinants (physical

environment, personal interaction, technical quality and access quality) and eight sub-dimensions. The study sample included 616 visitors to Kinmen National Park in Taiwan. The physical environment dimension consisted of two sub-dimensions, physical facilities (e.g. layout, equipment quality) and environment quality (e.g. atmosphere and ambiance). There was a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and overall physical environment, as well as both sub-dimensions.

Tsang et al. (2012) adapted the five-dimension SERVQUAL model to create a THEMEQUAL model to examine the impact of six dimensions on visitor satisfaction. The six dimensions are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness and access, assurance, empathy, and courtesy. Visitors were satisfied with the physical environment, but tangibles had little impact on visitors' satisfaction.

Wu et al. (2018) extended research on the effect of physical environment on customer behavior in the context of theme parks (Chen et al., 2011). They used a hierarchical model to examine the relationships between experiential quality, experiential value, experiential satisfaction, image and revisit intention. Their multidimensional and hierarchical model suggests that visitors form separate perceptions of each dimension: interaction quality, physical environment quality, outcome quality and access quality. Wu et al. (2018) found that the three sub-dimensions of primary physical environment quality (ambiance, design, and equipment) positively affected perceived overall physical environment quality. They also found that physical environment quality is the most important dimension of experiential quality for theme park visitors.

These empirical studies established the importance of the physical environment in service industries including theme parks. However, the studies used different physical environment dimensions, revealing lack of agreement on the most important aspects of physical environment across service organizations.

2.3.3 Measurement of Physical Environment Quality

Bitner (1992) separated the ‘servicescape’ into three dimensions:

- (a) **Ambient conditions**, or the characteristics of the environment that may stimulate consumers’ senses (temperature, lighting, noise, scent and music);
- (b) **Spatial layout and functionality**, or the size, shape and arrangement of machinery, equipment and furnishings and the ability of those things to satisfy customers’ needs; and
- (c) **Signs, symbols and artifacts**, or tools that provide information about service facilities (Moon et al., 2016).

Other researchers have used the term ‘servicescape’, or an extension of the term, to reflect characteristics of the physical environment of specific service industries. For example, Lee et al. (2008) used the term ‘festivalscape’ to describe the characteristics of the physical environment at festivals. Their ‘festivalscape’ scale included ambient conditions, space/facilities, and signs, symbols and artifacts. Similarly, studying restaurants, Ryu and Jang (2007) developed a physical environment scale, ‘Dinescape’, with dimensions including facility aesthetics, lighting, ambiance, layout, table setting and service employees.

Ali, Kim and Ryu (2016), Ali et al. (2018) and Chen et al. (2011) examined physical environment as a global variable. Other researchers, however, have examined it in terms of its attributes (Table 2.4).

Table 2. 4 Previous Studies on Dimensions of Physical Environment

Reference	Physical environment attributes	Industry	Country
Ali, Kim and Ryu (2016)	• Layout accessibility • Facility ambiance and aesthetics • Functionality • Cleanliness	Airport	Malaysia
Wu and Ai (2016b)	• Tangibles • Ambiance and design • Environment	Food festival	China
Wu and Li (2017)	• Tangibles • Facilities • Location	Heritage tourism	China

This study drew on previous work and adopted the global concept of physical environment including items related to spatial layout, cleanliness, ambient conditions, and facility aesthetics.

Spatial layout describes the arrangement, shape and size of furnishings, equipment and service area (Bitner, 1992). Moon et al. (2016) found that layout accessibility in an airport noticeably influenced pleasure, which in turn affected customer satisfaction. Beside the studies in Table 2.3, studies have also found that spatial layout is an important factor in theme park settings (Chen et al., 2011; Dong & Siu, 2013; Tsang et al., 2012).

Cleanliness is a vital element of leisure service settings, particularly those settings where customers will spend extended periods of time (Ali, Amin, & Cobanoglu, 2016). Cleanliness was considered crucial in most of the previous

studies. Park and Park (2018) examined the effect of six attributes on perceived servicescape, emotional response, customer satisfaction, airport image and behavioral intention in airport industry. Cleanliness turned out to have positive effects on perceived servicescape. Ali and colleagues (Ali, Kim & Ryu, 2016; Ali et al., 2018) and Moon et al. (2016) also found that cleanliness was a statistically important factor in customer satisfaction and delight.

Ambient conditions covers the background conditions, such as smell, background music, temperature, noise level, and lighting, which are often not even consciously registered by individuals (Jeon & Kim, 2012). However, they may have a subconscious impact on customers' perception and influence their response to the environment. Ali et al. (2018) examined the effect of physical setting on visitors' delight and satisfaction in Malaysian theme parks. They found that physical setting (ambient conditions) had a significant impact on both outcomes.

Facility aesthetics describes the interior and architectural design, which can enhance physical environment attractiveness (Ali, Kim & Ryu, 2016). Slåtten et al. (2009) examined the relationship between three atmospheric constructs (ambiance, interaction and design), and joy and customer loyalty. They found that design and interaction were linked to customers' feeling of joy. Design had the strongest impact on customers' emotions. All the empirical studies in Table 2.4 also found facility aesthetics to be an important factor in customer delight, satisfaction and loyalty. In this study, facility aesthetics includes the color

scheme, architecture and decorations, pictures and paintings, and landscape of the park.

2.4 Islamic Facilities Quality

2.4.1 Definition of Islamic Facilities Quality

Islamic facilities includes all physical facilities and equipment that are designed to fulfil needs related to customers' Islamic values, such as prayer rooms and water supply in toilets (Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). Availability of religious services and provisions in service industries may attract new customers and increase the loyalty of existing customers.

2.4.2 Previous Studies on Islamic Facilities Quality

Four empirical studies were examined to explore the importance of Islamic facilities quality on customers' perception of service quality and the effect on customers' emotion, satisfaction and behavioral intention.

Eid (2015) examined the effect of Muslim customer perceived value on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and customer retention among 221 Muslim tourists. Islamic values, including the availability of prayer facilities, had a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Eid (2015) also found that the strength of the relationship between Islamic value, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are crucial to achieving Muslim customer retention in the tourism industry.

Battour et al. (2011) explored the Islamic attributes of destinations. Qualitative data were collected from two focus group discussions and 53

interviews in Malaysia. Availability of prayer rooms and related facilities such as Qurans (the Islam Holy Book), Qibla direction pointer and toilets with water supply were important aspects that may attract Muslim tourists.

Battour et al. (2014) developed a measurement scale for Islamic attributes of destinations, and examined their influence on overall tourist satisfaction. A total of 508 questionnaires were distributed among international hotels and tourist sites in four Malaysian cities: Kuala Lumpur, Kula Terengganu, Penang and Johor Bahru. The study found a positive relationship between worship facilities and overall tourist satisfaction.

Eid and El-Gohary (2015) suggested that perceived value is a subjective construct that varies between customers and cultures. They developed a scale to measure Muslim Tourist Perceived Value (MTPV), which evaluates both traditional and religious aspects of value for Muslim tourists. The measurement scale contains 24 items grouped into six dimensions: quality, price, emotional, social, Islamic physical and Islamic non-physical attributes. The scale was tested and validated using a sample of 537 Muslim tourists. Availability of Islamic physical attributes (e.g. availability of prayer facilities and Shari'a-compatible toilets) were very important dimensions in Muslim tourists' decisions. In particular, Muslim tourists chose not to purchase or visit because of the absence of these facilities.

Very few academic studies have explored the importance of quality of Islamic facilities on Muslim customers' satisfaction and loyalty in the tourism and

hospitality industry. However, scholars such as Battour et al. (2011, 2014), Han et al. (2019) and Eid (2015) found that it was important, so it seems worth further study in the context of theme parks operating in a Muslim country.

2.4.3 Measurement of Islamic Facilities Quality

Praying five times daily is mandatory for Muslims. Muslims around the world are expected to practice this routine in the right time frames and should not delay their prayers without good reason. They have to face Kaabah (the holy place in the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia) during these prayers. Tourism and hospitality industries and destinations that target Muslim tourists should therefore provide facilities and services to enable Muslims to perform their daily prayers on time. A prayer room is considered to be crucial for Muslim tourists (Battour et al., 2014; Eid & El-Ghohary, 2015; Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Gayatri et al., 2011). Battour et al. (2014) found that the availability of prayer rooms was one of the attributes that encourage Muslim tourists to travel to a specific destination.

Facilities such as segregated prayer rooms that can accommodate male and female guests separately is another important aspect for Muslim tourists (Battour et al., 2011; Han et al., 2019). Han et al. (2019) designed a study to explore halal-friendly destination attributes in South Korea and identify the role of attributes in forming destination image and behavioral intentions. They found that availability of segregated prayer rooms had a significant impact on Muslim travelers' image of South Korea.

Destinations and tourist attractions may also add a way of calling guests to prayer, such as playing Azan (words that are used to call people to prayer) through indoor and outdoor speakers. Another attribute related to prayer facilities is the availability of markers indicating the direction of Qibla (the direction of the Kaabah). Battour et al. (2014) suggested that availability of these facilities in key areas such as airports, hotels and parks contributed to the satisfaction of Muslim tourists. The ease of access to Islamic services are also important where the availability of mosques at tourist destinations may increase satisfaction levels (Battour et al., 2014; Eid & El-Ghohary, 2015; Gayatri & Chew, 2013).

The washrooms and toilets in tourist destinations need to have a water supply and purifying (Wudhu before prayer) facilities to please Muslim tourists (Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Han et al. ,2019). Gayatri and Chew (2013) considered availability of purifying facilities to be an important attribute of perceived service quality.

This study therefore considered that attributes of Islamic-friendly facilities were availability of prayer facilities, presence of Azan, Qibla direction indicators and availability of water supply in toilets.

2.5 Consumables Quality

Consumables quality describes the quality of food. According to Islamic values and norms, all food consumed should be halal. The halal status of food offered at tourism venues is therefore very important to Muslim customers.

The UAE has established itself as global market leader in the halal industry. It has an Emirati Dirhams (AED) 69 million halal food industry, providing products for both domestic consumption and export (Stanley, 2018). In this study, therefore, consumables quality combined both general food quality, including the quality, variety and price of the food, with the halal status of food provided in theme parks.

2.5.1 Definition of Consumables Quality

2.5.1.1 Food Quality

Food quality includes the quality of both food and beverages. It is an important factor in customer satisfaction, delight and loyalty in the tourism and hospitality industry (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Yoon et al., 2010). Food and beverages are therefore a key aspect of service quality evaluation in tourism and hospitality services (Amin et al., 2013; An & Noh, 2009; Ha & Jang, 2010; Qin & Prybutok, 2009). All contemporary theme parks supply some catering options because their operators have long realized that consumers need food and beverages while at the theme park (Milman, 2009). Dining has become a significant experience for theme park customers (Milman, 2009). Favorable food quality service has been linked to customer satisfaction (Lee et al., 2008; Qin & Prybutok, 2009; Yoon et al., 2010), emotions (Lee et al., 2008) and loyalty (An & Noh, 2009).

2.5.1.2 Halal Food Quality

Dugan (1994) explored food services requirement among Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians. Certain Buddhist traditions emphasize the

important of a meat-free diet. For example, Chinese (Ch'an) and Japanese (mostly Zen) Buddhists have a primarily, if not exclusively, vegetarian diet (Steele & Kaza, 2007). However, most Tibetan (Vajrayana) Buddhists eat meat (Steele & Kaza, 2007).

For Muslims, the issue is centered on the concept of halal. Battour et al. (2011, p.530–531) defined halal food as “food that can lawfully be consumed when conditions for Islamic food preparation are met”. Food that is unlawful for Muslims includes pork, pork-derived foods including lard and bacon, and meat and other products from carnivorous animals or these that feed on carrion (Battour et al., 2011). Beverages and drinks should also be alcohol-free. Consumption of any food or beverages with alcoholic content is prohibited by Islamic law (Battour et al., 2011, 2014). Most scholars have not considered halal food and beverages, but there are a few studies that highlighted the importance of these consumables (Amin et al., 2013; An & Noh, 2009; Ha & Jang, 2010; Qin & Prybutok, 2009) in the context of food quality in the tourism and hospitality industry.

2.5.2 Previous Studies on Consumables Quality

This section examines five empirical studies (Amin et al., 2013; An & Noh, 2009; Lee et al., 2008; Qin & Prybutok, 2009; Yoon et al., 2010) to determine the role of food quality in shaping customer satisfaction, delight and loyalty. It also discusses four empirical studies (Battour et al., 2014; Eid, 2015; Eid & El-Ghohary, 2015; Han et al., 2019) on the importance of halal food in determining customers' behavior (e.g. satisfaction, loyalty).

2.5.2.1 Food Quality

Qin and Prybutok (2009) examined the relationship between service quality (tangibles, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy and recovery), food quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction and behavioral intention in fast-food restaurants. They gathered data from an online survey of 282 college students in a large southwestern university in the USA, and found that food quality and service quality were the two main determinants of customer satisfaction.

Yoon et al. (2010) collected data from 444 visitors to Punggi Ginseng Festival in South Korea using a seven-point Likert-type scale. The aim of the study was to examine whether quality dimensions affect perceived value, which in turn, affects satisfaction and loyalty. The authors found that festival quality dimensions such as program, souvenir, food and facilities affected value, which contributed to visitors' satisfaction and loyalty.

An and Noh (2009) attempted to pinpoint the impact of in-flight service quality on airline customer satisfaction and loyalty. They considered seven dimensions of service quality: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, food quality, alcoholic beverages quality, and non-alcoholic beverages quality. Data were gathered from passengers in two classes: business (139 passengers) and economy (355 passengers). Food quality influenced business class passengers' satisfaction and loyalty. Among economy class passengers, however, food quality affected satisfaction but not loyalty.

Amin et al. (2013) examined the relationship between service quality dimensions (ambiance and staff courtesy, food and beverages products and service quality, staff presentation and knowledge, reservation services and overall financial value) and customer satisfaction in the Malaysian hotel industry. They found that food and beverages and service quality significantly affected customer satisfaction.

Lee et al. (2008) linked festivalscape (convenience, staff, information, program content, facility, souvenirs and food) with visitors' positive and negative emotions, satisfaction and loyalty in a theoretical model. Food at the festival was positively associated with positive emotions and satisfaction, and negatively associated with negative emotions. Food quality also had a significant indirect positive relationship with continuance loyalty via the mediating effect of emotions.

2.5.2.2 Halal Food Quality

The provision of halal food and beverages is an extremely significant issue for Muslims (Battour et al., 2014; Gayatri & Chew, 2013). This is true both in Islamic countries and internationally. Han et al. (2019) found that lack of availability of halal food in most tourist places is a serious obstacle in South Korea, and a major concern for Muslim travelers. They suggested that availability of halal food and beverages is a crucial condition for the high-level image and overall image of a destination among Muslim customers, as well as affecting their revisit and recommendation intentions.

According to Eid (2015) and Eid and El-Ghohary (2015), availability of halal food and beverages is a vital attribute of Muslim customers' perceived value, which in turn influences customer satisfaction and loyalty. This relationship is important for retaining Muslim customers in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Battour et al. (2014) found that halal food and beverages were the second most important Islamic attribute of destinations in influencing the satisfaction of Muslim tourists. Availability of halal food and beverages may be considered a competitive advantage that can help a destination to differentiate itself (Battour et al., 2014).

Consumption of halal food and beverages is a compulsory requirement in Islam. It is therefore important for tourism destinations and service providers to understand the attributes of food and halal food quality that contribute to customer satisfaction and behavioral intention in the context of theme parks.

2.5.3 Measurement of Consumables Quality

2.5.3.1 Food Quality

Researchers have examined food quality in terms of its attributes, especially variety, quality and price (Amin et al., 2013; Yoon et al., 2010). This study therefore defined food quality as a variety of products (food and beverages) that are high quality at a reasonable price.

Food prices describe how reasonable customers consider the prices of food and beverages compared to the quality of the products. Amin et al. (2013)

and Yoon et al. (2010) found that food prices were important attributes in evaluating service quality.

Food quality describes the freshness, taste, and presentation of the food served in restaurants or food outlets, and the availability of healthy options. Ha and Jang (2010) and Qin and Prybutok (2009) defined food quality at restaurants and fast-food restaurants as the taste and freshness of the food, and availability of healthy options. Both studies found that the quality of food had a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Food variety describes the availability of different options on the menu of restaurants to serve different tastes and preferences of customers. It also covers restaurants that serve food and beverages for customers from different cultural backgrounds. Wan and Chan (2013) studied a food festival in Macau, and found that having “Many varieties [of food] from different cultures” enhanced tourists’ satisfaction.

2.5.3.2 Halal Food Quality

Three attributes of halal food and beverages quality were identified from the literature: cleanliness of halal food, availability of food that is halal and halal certification. Most of the studies that discussed halal food in destinations and tourist attractions have focused on availability (Battour et al., 2011, 2014; Eid, 2015; Eid & El-Ghohary, 2015) and ignored other important aspects such as certification and cleanliness.

Han et al. (2019) made a detailed study of halal food and beverages quality. This was a critical factor for Muslim travelers in South Korea. Han et al. (2019) concluded that tourist locations should not provide non-halal food or items containing pork and alcohol, to enable tourists to comply with Islamic law. They suggested that restaurants and hotels should display halal certificates and logos in their menus to gain Muslim customers' confidence.

Gayatri and Chew (2013) collected data from consumers in three service sectors (retail, restaurants and hotels). Their halal/haram factor consisted of items such as halal certificates, and separation of halal food. It was therefore considered important to include these attributes in this study to test the impact of halal food and beverages quality on satisfaction, delight and loyalty, because these factors were found to be important to Muslim travelers to South Korea and Indonesia.

2.6 Employee Interaction Quality

2.6.1 Definition of Employee Interaction Quality

Services (e.g. tourism and hospitality, healthcare, transportation) usually involve customers and employees being in the same service environment. Their interaction may therefore affect customers' service experience. Several researchers (Bitner, 1992; Roberts-Lombard & Petzer, 2018) found that the interaction between customers and employees affects the customer experience and the degree of emotional commitment, satisfaction and behavioral intention. It is considered important for service providers to meet or even exceed customer expectations (Slåtten et al., 2011).

Interaction quality is defined as the cognitive evaluation of service delivery dimensions, especially empathy, responsiveness and assurance (Parasuraman et al., 1988). It describes the interaction between employees and customers. The role of the service encounter (interaction between customers and service providers) has been highlighted in service literature (Ali et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2011; Ladhari et al., 2017). Grönroos (1984) considered quality to be bi-dimensional, involving both process (functional) quality and technical (output) quality. Output quality describes what is delivered and functional quality how the service is delivered (Ladhari et al., 2017; Grönroos, 1984). It would be difficult to provide a service with a high functional value propositions without having service-oriented employees (Ladhari et al., 2017). Enhancing the quality of employee–customer interactions helps create a favorable service experience (Ladhari et al., 2017; Slåtten et al., 2011).

2.6.2 Previous Studies on Employee Interaction Quality

Two empirical studies were examined to explore the importance of interaction quality during service encounters (Roberts-Lombard & Petzer ,2018; Wu and Ai ,2016a). Four studies were in the theme park context (Chen et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2016; Slåtten et al., 2011; Tsang et al., 2012). These studies also examined the relationship between interaction quality and customer behaviors (e.g. satisfaction, delight and loyalty) toward service providers. They were conducted in South Africa (Roberts-Lombard & Petzer ,2018), Taiwan (Chen et

al., 2011), China (Wu and Ai ,2016a), Norway (Slåtten et al., 2011), Hong Kong (Tsang et al., 2012) and South Korea (Jin et al., 2016;).

Roberts-Lombard and Petzer (2018) studied cell phone network service provider customers. They found that perceived employee service delivery skills had a positive influence on customer satisfaction/delight. In turn, customer satisfaction/delight significantly and positively influences customers' behavioral intention.

Wu and Ai (2016a) empirically examined the relationships between experiential quality dimensions (interaction quality, physical environment quality, outcome quality and access quality), excitement, equity, experiential satisfaction and experiential loyalty among golf tourists in China. They defined three sub-dimensions of interaction quality: employee performance, tourists' interactions with other tourists and employee ability. Interaction quality overall and the three sub-dimensions were all related to experiential quality in the golf industry.

Chen et al. (2011) found that personal interaction was a statistically significant determinant of satisfaction. They used a regression model to analyze the relationship between customer satisfaction and the main determinants of service quality (personal interaction, physical environment, technical quality and access quality). There was a significant positive relationship between personal interaction and customer satisfaction. Higher satisfaction with each personal interaction sub-dimension (personal service, interpretation service) positively affected overall satisfaction with the interaction.

Jin et al. (2016) investigated the effect of delight and service quality as mediators in the relationship between image and customer loyalty in the water park industry in South Korea. Responsiveness, assurance and empathy were key dimensions of service quality. The park's image also directly influenced perceptions of service quality. Service quality was a significant determinant of loyalty. The results suggested that service quality had a partial mediating effect in the relationship between water park image and customer loyalty.

Slåtten et al. (2011) attempted to measure the effect of customer interaction with employees on customers' emotions in a winter park in eastern Norway. Data were collected from 162 customers through personal interviews. The results showed that interaction between employees and customers had a positive relationship with customers' positive emotions. However, the effect was less important than interaction with other customers and customers' participation in activities, because of the self-explanatory nature of winter park activities.

Tsang et al. (2012) modified the SERVQUAL model to THEMEQUAL and tested it among visitors to Hong Kong's Disneyland. The THEMEQUAL model has six dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness and access, assurance, empathy and courtesy. The authors examined the impact of the THEMEQUAL dimensions on visitors' satisfaction and found dissatisfaction with employee performance. The critical predictors of visitor satisfaction were the dimensions related to interaction between customers and employees (responsiveness and access, empathy and assurance).

Interaction quality is therefore an important determinant of satisfaction, delight, and loyalty. This suggests that it is a vital dimension of service quality and an important antecedent of customer delight, satisfaction and loyalty regardless of service context.

2.6.3 Measurement of Employee Interaction Quality

The dimensions of employee interaction quality identified from the literature were smiling employees, suggestive selling, friendliness, competent employees and willingness to help. Theme park employees are often advised to engage in effective social behaviors, such as smiling, making eye contact, greeting the visitors, and expressing sympathy for visitors (Slåtten et al. ,2011; Wu et al. ,2018). These behaviors have a considerable impact on customers' evaluation of the business (Roberts-Lombard & Petzer, 2018). In the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), interaction quality is evaluated using the dimensions of empathy, responsiveness and assurance. Parasuraman et al. (1988) defined these attributes as:

- **Empathy:** employees focus fully on customers when providing a service;
- **Responsiveness:** employees are willing to guide customers and look fully engaged while they perform a service; and
- **Assurance:** employees are knowledgeable, courteous, inspiring and trustworthy.

A theme park cannot provide high quality services to its customers without well-trained, competent staff, covered by the assurance dimension in the

SERVQUAL model (Ali et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2011; Slåtten et al., 2009; Tsang et al., 2012). This also applies in other sectors. For example, the presence of competent and knowledgeable employees had a significant positive relationship with inpatients' satisfaction in UAE hospitals (Al-Neyadi et al., 2018). Ali and Raza (2017) studied customers of Islamic banks in Pakistan and found that the assurance dimension of service quality was positively associated with customer satisfaction. Several studies have explored the effect of employee competence on perceptions of service quality in theme parks. Chen et al. (2011), Tsang et al. (2012) and Slåtten et al. (2009) conducted their studies in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Norway, and all concluded that assurance is an important contributor to customer satisfaction and delight, and a significant dimension of perceived service quality. It was therefore considered important to include this attribute in this study.

Friendliness and personal warmth toward customers are significantly associated with perceptions of higher service quality, and high levels of joy and delight, and are also among the most important drivers of positive experiences in theme parks (Chen et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2016; Slåtten et al., 2009; Tsang et al., 2012; Wu et al., 2018). Wu et al. (2018) found that employee friendliness can enhance experiential quality in the theme park industry.

Theme park employees should appear willing to listen to customers (Chen et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2016; Tsang et al., 2012). Employees' willingness to help customers was important in judgements of service quality in the fast food industry

in Malaysia (Bougoure & Neu, 2010). Satisfaction with employees was positively related to customer loyalty in theme parks in Hong Kong (Tsang et al., 2012). Tsang et al. (2012) concluded that in people-based industries such as theme parks, responsiveness is a significant factor in customer satisfaction, because customers want staff members who can answer questions quickly and are accessible. Employees' willingness to help customers has been found to be vital in theme parks in Malaysia (Ali et al., 2018), Hong Kong (Tsang et al., 2012), Turkey (Başarangil, 2018), South Korea (Jin et al., 2016), Taiwan (Chen et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2018) and Norway (Slåtten et al., 2009). However, it has never been tested in an Islamic country such as the UAE.

Empathy is one of the core dimensions of the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988). It describes the attention, caring and individual service given to customers (Ali & Raza, 2107). Javed and Ilyas (2018) assessed the influence of patients' expectations of healthcare service quality on their satisfaction in public and private hospitals in Pakistan. They found that patient satisfaction was strongly related to empathy in public hospitals. In theme parks, Başarangil (2018), Chen et al. (2011) and Tsang et al. (2012) found that employees' attention to customers and individual service were important attributes of perceived service quality and had a strong impact on customer satisfaction.

This study therefore included friendliness, competent employees, caring, attention and employees' willingness as attributes of employee interaction quality in the context of theme parks in the UAE.

2.7 Access Quality

2.7.1 Definition of Access Quality

In the service marketing literature, Shonk and Chelladurai's (2008) study is considered the foundation for defining access quality. They defined access quality as "the ease and speed with which the tourist can reach the desired location" (Shonk & Chelladurai, 2008, p. 592). Many other researchers have used Shonk and Chelladurai's (2008) concept to examine the importance of access quality in evaluating perceived service quality, and its impact on customer satisfaction, delight and loyalty in the tourism and hospitality sector, including theme parks. A positive and statistically significant relationship has been identified between access quality and customer perception (Wong et al., 2015; Wu & Ai, 2016a, b).

2.7.2 Previous Studies on Access Quality

This section discusses nine studies that have empirically examined the importance of access quality in the context of food festivals (Wan & Chan, 2013; Wong et al., 2015; Wu & Ai, 2016b), heritage tourism (Wu & Li, 2017), golf industry (Wu and Ai, 2016a), sport tourism (Ahrholdt et al., 2017), cosmetic and beauty exhibitions (Song et al., 2017) and theme parks (Chen et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2018).

Wan and Chan (2013) interviewed 40 tourists who visited the tenth Macau Food Festival to investigate the factors that affect tourists' satisfaction with the festival. Location and accessibility were among the eight factors that affected satisfaction. In total, 85% of the tourists indicated that food festivals should be easily accessible through various modes of transport. Wu and Ai (2016b) collected data from respondents who visited the 2014 Guangzhou International Food Festival in China via a self-administered questionnaire. They found that attendees perceived access quality as the most important dimension of festival quality.

However, Wong et al. (2015) collected data from 454 attendees at the twelfth Macau Food Festival to examine the relationships among festival quality dimensions, festival quality, emotion, festival image, festival satisfaction and festival loyalty. Their findings disagreed with both Wan and Chan (2013) and Wu and Ai (2016b) on the importance of access quality. In particular, they noted that attendees may not need to be able to access every event using any form of transport.

Wu and Li (2017) determined the most important dimensions of experiential quality among heritage tourists. They found a positive relationship between access quality and experiential quality and identified access quality as the second most important dimension of experiential quality. Wu and Ai (2016a) conducted a similar study in the golf industry. Their results were consistent with

Wu and Li's (2017) finding that access quality is one the most important dimensions of experiential quality.

However, Ahrholdt et al. (2017) drew different conclusions about the influence of access quality on customer delight and satisfaction. They concluded that dimensions such as accessibility that exist before a visit to a sporting event do not influence post-event satisfaction or delight judgments. Song et al. (2017) found similar results on the relationship between convenience and customer satisfaction at the 2013 Osong Cosmetics and Beauty Expo in South Korea. This suggests that in some settings, perceived service consumption may only begin after customers enter the event. The relationship between access quality and satisfaction therefore depends to some extent on the setting. For example, Wong and Wan (2013) concluded that accessibility is a key influence on satisfaction with tourist shopping.

Two studies in the context of theme parks examined the importance of access quality in customers' evaluation of perceived quality and level of satisfaction. The findings of Chen et al. (2011) and Wu et al. (2018) support the suggestion by Shonk and Chelladurai (2008) that access quality is the most important element of an overall assessment of quality in theme parks. Shonk and Chelladurai (2008) indicated that it should be easy for the visitor to reach the destination whether traveling by plane, train or car, and appropriate signage should be displayed at transport nodes to provide directions to points of interest.

2.7.3 Measurement of Access Quality

These empirical studies therefore established the importance of access quality in the context of theme parks. Aspects of access quality in theme parks include location and factors such as parking, hours of operation and access to transport.

Theme park location describes the ease with which theme park visitors can reach the park. Location is an important factor in customer satisfaction in service sectors. Wu and Ai (2016a, b) and Wu and Li (2017) found location is a frequent determinant of positive experiences. In the context of theme parks, Wu et al. (2018) found that a convenient location was perceived as an important part of access quality, and an important factor in whether visitors plan to return or revisit the theme park.

Another important consideration in access quality is the theme park's operating hours, or the opening and closing times. Wu and Ai (2016a, b) found that hours of operation were an important factor in access quality. However, no single academic study has explored the importance of hours of operation in theme parks on customer perceptions of access quality and their influence on customer satisfaction and delight. Availability of parking is another aspect of access quality. Ahrholdt et al. (2017) and Song et al. (2017) agreed that parking can affect customer satisfaction and perceptions of service quality.

2.8 Delight

Five issues in the marketing environment can be traced to the development of the delight concept (Barnes et al., 2013):

- (a) Satisfaction is no longer enough to confirm behavioral outcomes.
- (b) Increasing competitiveness of the business environment.
- (c) Advancement in service quality management made satisfaction easier to attain.
- (d) The realization that affect is a powerful force in the marketing environment; and
- (e) Customers are considered the firm's most valuable asset.

These conditions mean that high service quality has become increasingly important for companies. This is thought to deliver increased levels of positive emotions that go beyond customer satisfaction, to a concept known as delight (Barnes et al., 2013). However, there is limited research on the concept of delight and some inconsistencies in its definition (Ali et al., 2018).

2.8.1 Definition of Delight

The psychoevolutionary theory of emotion model (Plutchik, 1980) suggests that delight is a function and a combination of two emotions: surprise and joy. Other psychologists such as Russell (1980) and Watson and Tellegan (1985) identified delight as a high-arousal positive (pleasure) emotion. Bigné et al. (2005, p. 834) defined pleasure as “the degree to which a person feels good, joyful or happy in a situation”, and arousal as “the extent to which a person feels

stimulated and active”. Delight is therefore a combination of happiness and surprise. Verma (2003, p. 124) stated that “joy and surprise mix to create a feeling of delight in consumption situations”.

The second view of delight stems from its definition of extreme satisfaction. Patterson (1997, p. 54) proposed that “customer delight involves going beyond satisfaction to delivering what can be best described as a pleasurable experience for the client”. Some researchers suggest that customers have a certain tolerance or level of comfort. If the satisfaction level exceeds the upper thresholds of this zone, it generates customer delight (Keiningham et al., 1999). This view does not fundamentally distinguish between satisfaction and delight. Instead, delight is simply assumed to be an extreme level of satisfaction (Kumar & Iyer, 2001).

Previous studies have therefore suggested two possible definitions or characteristics of delight (Torres et al., 2014b):

- (a) Delight is the result of memorable, positive reproducible events. It lasts longer than mere satisfaction; and
- (b) Delight is closely associated with customer loyalty and the intent to repeat a purchase. Compared to customers who are merely satisfied, delighted customers tend to be loyal and more likely to return.

This study adopted a definition and conceptualization of delight as a positive emotional response to a service or product that provides unexpected value or unanticipated satisfaction (Ali et al., 2018).

2.8.2 Previous Studies on Delight

Two empirical studies were identified that explored the importance of delight in the context of hotels (Ali & Amin, 2014; Ali, Amin & Cobanoglu, 2016). In the context of theme parks, two studies were identified (Ali et al., 2018; Jin et al.; 2016) on the effect of delight on customer satisfaction, image, perceived value and customer loyalty.

Ali and Amin (2014) examined the influence of physical environment on emotions, customer satisfaction and customer behavioral intention in Chinese resort hotels. They found that customers with better perceptions about the physical environment were more likely to have positive emotions, and that this in turn was associated with increased customer satisfaction and behavioral intention.

Ali, Amin and Cobanoglu (2016) investigated the relationship between service experience, emotions, satisfaction and price acceptance in resort hotels in three cities in China. They found a significant relationship between service experience and emotions. Together, these affected customer satisfaction, which in turn influenced customers' price acceptance.

Ali et al. (2018) proposed a model to assess the impact of visitors' experience on delight, satisfaction and loyalty in two Malaysian theme parks. They found that customer delight was affected by the physical environment, and interaction with staff and other customers. In turn, customer delight influenced customer satisfaction and loyalty. These results suggest that theme park managers

need to focus on three main issues: maintaining the physical environment, managing staff and managing the behavior of customers.

Jin et al. (2016) empirically examined a model of the relationships between image, price fairness, delight, service quality and loyalty among 346 waterpark patrons in South Korea. They found a positive relationship between water park image and delight. They suggested this was because customers who had a better image of the water park were more likely to perceive the cost of admission as fair. Delight had no significant impact on price fairness, because price fairness in water parks is determined primarily by the image of the park and not the associated feeling of delight realized through the experience. The study also showed that delight was a significant determinant of loyalty.

2.8.3 Measurement of Delight

Scholars have defined the concept of delight in different ways, and therefore used different scales to measure it (Ali et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2015). To fit the first view of delight, it has been measured using a scale of emotions (Ali et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2015). Initially, the concept was measured using a single item (*feel delighted*) (Oliver et al., 1997). However, this approach was criticized as insufficiently broad to measure delight as a construct (Finn, 2005). Finn (2005) therefore improved the measurement of delight by using three items (*delighted, gleeful, elated*). This approach was used by Kim et al. (2015) in a recent study of the hospitality industry. They reported high validity for these measurement items. They also added three items that described the delightful experience with the

product/services (*surprise, overjoy and unexpected experience/service*). These three items were consistent with the literature on the conceptual definition of delight (Finn, 2005; Oliver et al., 1997). Ahrholdt et al. (2017) used Finn's (2005) three-item scale to measure consumer delight and added one other item to capture an arousal aspect (i.e., unforgettable experience), in line with Oliver et al.'s (1997) concept. Ali, Kim and Ryu (2016) also used Finn's (2005) three-item scale to study the effect of physical environment on passengers' delight in Malaysian international airports. Researchers who viewed delight as an extreme form of satisfaction have usually measured it as the highest level of satisfaction, rather than as a separate concept (Kim et al., 2015).

In the context of theme parks, researchers have measured delight as a scale of emotion. Ali et al. (2018) adopted Kim et al.'s (2015) measurement scale and included three items (*delighted, gleeful and elated*) to operationalize customer delight in the context of theme parks. Jin et al. (2016) measured it indirectly for water parks, and viewed it as 'surprise'. Slåtten et al. (2009) conducted a quantitative study on the relationship between three elements of atmosphere (ambiance, interaction and design), delight and loyalty. Delight items included *I felt joyful during my visit to the winter park* and *I felt excitement during my visit to the winter park*. Delight was viewed as a mixture of fun (excitement) and happiness (joy).

2.9 Loyalty

Customer loyalty has been studied across different industries including tourism and hospitality. There is a consensus that customer loyalty develops if people believe they are getting the best possible service (Ryu & Han, 2010). Business survival is dependent on creating loyal customers through retention of existing customers (Deng et al., 2010). McMullan and Gilmore (2008) stated that some companies have focused on retaining customers as a strategy to remain competitive and increase customer loyalty. Customers who are loyal to a brand will often pay more for products and services and are less sensitive to prices (Umashankar et al., 2017). Loyal customers create a competitive advantage for a business by reducing marketing expenses normally required to attract new customers. It costs less for a business to retain existing customers than to obtain new customers (Lenka et al., 2009). Gee et al. (2008) reported three advantages of customer loyalty:

- (a) The cost of retention is less than attracting a new customer.
- (b) Loyal customers will pay more for products; and
- (c) Loyal customers are likely to recommend the service to others.

2.9.1 Definition of Loyalty

Studies have resulted in several conceptualization and definitions of customer loyalty. Customer loyalty has been operationalized as both a behavioral measure and an attitude (Kaura et al., 2015). Attitudinal loyalty is “customers’ favorable inclination towards a product/service based on the cumulative

experience” (Lenka et al., 2009, p. 51). If an alternative brand/service provider with better attributes and price enters the market, customers may defect (Kaura et al., 2015; Lenka et al., 2009). Behavioral loyalty is a strong commitment of customers to purchase the product or service regardless of the availability of alternatives in the market (Kaura et al., 2015; Lenka et al., 2009). Behavioral loyalty describes the actual purchase behavior of customers and is revealed through the willingness of customers to recommend the product or service to others (Kaura et al., 2015; Lenka et al., 2009).

Previous studies have understood the concept of customer loyalty as a combination of customers’ favorable attitude and behavior or repurchase. Oliver (1999) provided a comprehensive conceptual definition of loyalty by including both attitudinal and behavioral aspects. In this study, loyalty was defined using Customer loyalty is “a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour” (Oliver, 1999, p. 34). Oliver’s (1999) concept, which includes both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty.

2.9.2 Previous Studies on Loyalty

Previous studies have therefore shown that loyalty is an important attribute that is related to customer behavior such as satisfaction, image, delight and perceived value. Three studies were reviewed to explore the effect of loyalty in fitness centers (García-Fernández et al., 2018), the banking industry (Özkan et al.,

2019) and the hotel industry (Keshavarz & Jamshidi, 2018). Two further studies in the context of theme parks were also reviewed (Jin et al., 2015; Kao et al., 2008).

García-Fernández et al. (2018) examined the relationship between perceived quality and service convenience, and perceived value, satisfaction and client loyalty in low-cost fitness centers. They found that satisfaction had a significant effect on future behavioral intention.

Özkan et al. (2019) investigated the impact of customer satisfaction, service quality, the perceived value of services, corporate image and corporate reputation on customer loyalty in the Turkish banking industry. They examined the indirect relationship between customer satisfaction, service quality and loyalty through the mediation effect of perceived value, corporate image and corporate reputation. They found that customers' perceived quality and satisfaction affected loyalty through perceived value, image and reputation.

Keshavarz and Jamshidi (2018) explored loyalty among international tourists who had stayed at least one night in four- and five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. They examined the effect of process quality (tangibles, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy and convenience) and outcome quality (valence or intrinsic attractiveness, waiting time and sociability) on perceived value, tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty. The study also examined the mediating effect of perceived value and tourist satisfaction on the relationship between process quality, outcome quality and loyalty. Process quality and

outcome quality both had a significant relationship with perceived value and satisfaction, and loyalty was related to perceived value and satisfaction. However, process quality and outcome quality had no direct effect on loyalty, only an indirect effect through the mediation of perceived value and satisfaction.

In context of water parks, Jin et al. (2015) proposed a model to examine the relationship between experience quality, perceived value, water park image, customer satisfaction and behavioral intention for first-time and repeat customers. They found that perceived value, water park image and customer satisfaction positively affect behavioral intention.

Kao et al. (2008) studied visitors to Hualien Ocean Park in Taiwan. They proposed a model for the effect of theatrical elements of the theme park (including attractiveness of scripts, charm of setting, planning of activities and consistency of theme) on customers' experiential quality (including immersion, surprise, participation and fun), experiential satisfaction and loyalty. They found that experiential satisfaction was positively related to customer loyalty. Loyalty is therefore an important consequence of customer satisfaction, perceived value, customer delight and image.

2.9.3 Measurement of Loyalty

Recent research has attempted to explain customer loyalty as an integrated form of both the attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of loyalty as two distinct but important constructs (Ali *et al.*, 2018; Ryu & Han, 2010). To measure loyalty in the behavioural sense, researchers use a repurchase or revisit probability

(Famiyeh *et al.*, 2018; Moon *et al.*, 2017) or switching behaviour (Akamavi *et al.*, 2015).

On the other hand, attitudinal loyalty is operationalized as brand preference or emotional commitment, and thus it is measured with repeat purchase intention (Liat *et al.*, 2014; Moon *et al.*, 2017), resistance against better alternatives (Akamavi *et al.*, 2015), intention of word-of-mouth (WOM) (Famiyeh *et al.*, 2018; Liat *et al.*, 2014; Wong *et al.*, 2015), or willingness to pay premium prices (Liat *et al.*, 2014; Moon *et al.*, 2017). These measures of loyalty provide insights into the nature of loyal customers. According to Yi and La (2004), loyal customers tend to show special preference, attachment, commitment, positive word-of-mouth recommendations, low switching to competitive brands, and willingness to pay premium prices. This study therefore assumed that loyal customers would faithfully and consistently purchase a product or service again and spread positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

2.10 The Moderating Effect of Demographic Characteristics

Cha and Borchgrevink (2019) and Diallo *et al.* (2018) identified variables that might affect the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty in the context of restaurants and shopping malls. They suggested that this was important to facilitate firm growth via the acquisition of new customers and retention of existing customers. Similarly, it is necessary to consider the demographic differences in the relationship between delight and loyalty among theme park customers in the UAE, to shed light on factors that may influence this

relationship. Many researchers have explicitly recommended investigating satisfaction and loyalty across different demographic characteristics (Báez-Montenegro & Devesa-Fernández, 2017; Diallo et al., 2018; Promsivapallop & Jarumaneerat, 2018). One of Cha and Borchgrevink's (2019) main objectives was to examine the moderating role of gender in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. They found significant differences between men and women. Diallo et al. (2018) found that the cultural context moderated the relationship between satisfaction with and loyalty towards malls in three developing countries (Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia).

Researchers' interest in the moderating effect of different demographic characteristics of customers in management and marketing research has a long history. Several different demographic characteristics have been examined in marketing research in the tourism and hospitality industry, including age (Al-Jazzazi & Sultan, 2017), education level (Al-Jazzazi & Sultan, 2017), monthly household income (Al-Jazzazi & Sultan, 2017), nationality (Ali, Kim, & Ryu, 2016; Hammad et al., 2019; Papastathopoulos et al., 2020) and gender (Al-Jazzazi & Sultan, 2017; Cha & Borchgrevink, 2019; Karatepe, 2011).

Several studies have investigated nationality and gender as moderators in models of customer purchasing behavior. Researchers have explored the relationship between service quality, delight, satisfaction, perceived value, image and behavioral intention in different sectors including shopping malls (Diallo et al., 2018), restaurants (Cha & Borchgrevink, 2019) and banks (Al-Jazzazi &

Sultan, 2017). However, none have examined this in theme parks from an Islamic perspective.

2.10.1 Nationality

Papastathopoulos et al. (2020, p.1122) defined nationality as “owning legal documents issued by the government of a country”. It is the demographic variable that perhaps has one of the strongest effects on individual perceptions (Diallo et al., 2018; Pantouvakis & Renzi, 2016). Residents are usually attached to the country of their citizenship and nationality. National residents are also referred to in the tourism literature as local or native residents (Papastathopoulos et al., 2020). According to Soontayatron (2010), national residents represent the host culture that is presented to tourists. Tourist activities can therefore change the local culture, and negative changes will negatively influence the perception of national residents.

Almost all studies on theme park service quality have assumed that the responding visitors would hold similar opinions and valuations of quality or satisfaction despite having different characteristics (Ali et al., 2018; Jin et al., 2016). However, characteristics like culture and nationality have a significant influence on opinions and this may act as a serious limitation on the generalization of results (Pantouvakis & Renzi, 2016). A high degree of subjectivity therefore affects the results and causes ambiguity in their validation. This is because the measuring of attitude may not be independent of the

characteristics of the respondents or the instrument items themselves (Pantouvakis & Renzi, 2016).

Marketing studies contain arguments that different national and cultural characteristics can strongly affect customers' perception of satisfaction with the service offered (Diallo et al., 2018; Pantouvakis & Renzi, 2016). In the field of tourism and hospitality in particular, it has been proven that individual preferences and expectations (Pantouvakis & Renzi, 2016) and level of satisfaction (Diallo et al., 2018; Báez-Montenegro & Devesa-Fernández, 2017) can vary significantly between customers and visitors from different countries. For example, Dedeoğlu et al. (2018) examined how nationality influenced tourists' perception of service quality, affective image perceptions, and intention to revisit Alanya, a beach resort city in Turkey. Activities were more important for a destination's effective image for Russian tourists, whereas accommodation, hospitality, and language communication services had a larger effect on German tourists.

Papastathopoulos et al. (2020) examined how the demographic profile of 631 UAE residents (gender, level of education, nationality, length of residency and age) moderated the relationship between perceptions of the impact of tourism and support for tourism development. Gender, education, and nationality all influenced the perceptions of residents. However, length of residency and age had no significant effect.

Hammad et al. (2019) investigated the moderating effect of nationality in 979 UAE residents' perceptions of the social, cultural, environment and economic impact of tourism development. Nationality moderated the relationship between perceptions of negative social impacts, positive cultural impacts, negative and positive economic impact and support for tourism development.

Bihamta et al. (2017) investigated the impact of service quality (physical quality and staff behavior) and brand equity (brand quality, brand awareness and brand image) on satisfaction with hotel restaurant food quality and brand loyalty. They compared international and local travelers in Malaysia. Travelers' nationality moderated the relationship between physical environment, staff behavior and brand image, and food quality satisfaction. However, it did not have any effect on the relationship between brand quality and brand awareness and food quality satisfaction. There are therefore important distinctions between international and local travelers in their reactions to service quality and brand equity.

2.10.2 Gender

Men and women react differently to the same marketing stimuli. Arnold and Bianchi (2001) suggested that gender identity affected the success of relationship marketing strategies in business-to-consumer relations. Men and women appear to need different products, and are likely to have different ways of thinking about obtaining these (Joung et al., 2016).

Park and Park (2018) analyzed the servicescape of an airport duty-free shop and its relationship with emotional response, perceived value, customer satisfaction, customer trust and loyalty. Functionality, amenities and cleanliness had positive effects on the emotional response among male customers. However, among women, functionality and attractiveness were more influential.

Al-Jazzazi and Sultan (2017) assessed differences in perceptions of banking service quality across demographic subgroups of Islamic and conventional banking consumers in Jordan. They found no difference in any perception of service quality by gender.

Joung et al. (2016) investigated the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between perceived quality and perceived value of campus food service on customer satisfaction among 346 participants at a large public university in the southwest United States. Gender had a significant moderating role in the relationship between perceived quality and perceived value. However, it had no effect on the relationship between perceived quality and customer satisfaction, or between perceived value and customer satisfaction. These findings suggest that gender may have a moderating effect depending on the research construct and service context. It is therefore valuable to examine the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty.

2.11 Chapter Summary

The literature review has shown that there are many empirical studies on the importance of customer delight and satisfaction in different parts of the tourism and hospitality sector, including theme parks. These studies have examined the impact of different dimensions of service quality, including physical environment, interaction quality, and access quality, on customer satisfaction. However, no study has been conducted in theme parks in an Islamic context, where customers' religious values require special facilities such as prayer rooms. This study therefore aims to fill this gap. The literature on perceived service quality in theme parks has focused on generic dimensions (environment, interaction quality, access quality and outcome quality). In an Islamic context, customers need specific facilities and services such as prayer rooms, toilets with water supply and halal food and beverages. Industry experts and practitioners have stressed the importance of these dimensions to generate delight in the theme park environment. It is therefore important to study the effect of Islamic facilities quality and halal food and beverages quality on customer delight in an Islamic context. Finally, no study has been found that considered all the variables (physical environment quality, Islamic facilities quality, consumables quality, employee interaction quality and access quality) and their effect on customer delight in the theme park industry. The literature also suggests that demographic characteristics such as nationality and gender may have a moderating role on the

relationship between customers' delight and loyalty. The next chapter describes the development of the conceptual framework and hypotheses.

Chapter 3: Research Model and Hypotheses

This chapter describes the process of developing an Islamic service quality instrument. It derives the conceptual framework for the study by highlighting the hypotheses and potential relationships among constructs.

3.1 Development of Theme Park Service Quality Scale

The hierarchical service quality model introduced by Brady and Cronin (2001) shows a comprehensive and integrated understanding of service quality. Brady and Cronin (2001) suggested that a service quality model should cover three main elements, outcome (e.g. result of service provided), environment (e.g. the servicescape where the service is provided) and interaction (e.g. service delivery). The scale developed by Brady and Cronin (2001) has been supported empirically by researchers in different parts of the tourism and hospitality industry (Wu & Ai, 2016a, b; Wu & Li, 2017) including theme parks (Chen et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2018). According to Lari et al. (2019, 2020) and Gayatri and Chew (2013), service quality measurement is influenced by customers' cultural and religion values (e.g. Islamic values). These authors suggest that Muslim customers view service quality from two aspects, general and Islamic. The scale proposed by Brady and Cronin (2001) therefore cannot be applied directly in this study, because neither the original study nor any follow-up studies (Wu & Ai, 2016a, b; Wu & Li, 2017) considered the religious and cultural aspects of service quality.

Spending by Muslim travelers is expected to rise to US\$220 billion by 2020, with the number of Muslim tourists growing to 156 million from 121 million in 2016 (Belopilskaya, 2020). Research on Islamic service quality in the tourism industry has therefore rapidly expanded in response to the significant need for marketers and practitioners to understand Muslim customers' needs and requirements. Developing a specific measurement for theme park Islamic service quality will help to reflect theme park marketing and research trends.

3.2 Hypothesis Development

In this study, eight hypotheses were developed, including six to test the direct relationships in the model, and two to examine the moderating role of nationality and gender on the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty.

Several researchers have suggested that dimensional structures need to be investigated for each research setting because customer delight and service quality are culturally sensitive (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Ali et al., 2018; Jin et al., 2016; Slåtten et al., 2009). The proposed set of service quality dimensions in this study (physical environment quality, Islamic facilities quality, consumables quality, employee interaction quality and access quality) were therefore specifically identified from the literature to fit the theme park sector in an Islamic context, the UAE.

3.2.1 Relationship between Physical Environment Quality and Delight

Customers use physical environment in service settings as a basis for judgments (Ali, Amin & Cobanoglu, 2016; Ladhari et al., 2017). Various studies have demonstrated that physical environment can elicit positive emotions and satisfaction in customers (Bitner, 1992). The physical environment in a service setting contains multiple elements, including ambient conditions, functionality, cleanliness, spatial layout and facility aesthetics (Ali, Kim & Ryu, 2016; Ali et al., 2018; Slåtten et al., 2009). These factors are related, and work together to holistically influence consumers' delight and behavior (Bitner, 1992; Ladhari et al., 2017). In a study in optometry clinics, Ladhari et al. (2017) found that service environment (atmosphere and layout) increased positive emotional satisfaction. Ali, Kim and Ryu (2016) found that physical environment in an international airport had a significant influence on passengers' delight and satisfaction.

Empirical studies have therefore established that there is a significant relationship between physical environment and delight in airport and optometry clinics. Ali et al. (2018) and Slåtten et al. (2009, 2011) found that physical environment is also an important factor in customer delight in theme parks. This is because theme parks provide hedonic services (Dong & Siu, 2012). The first hypothesis in this study was therefore:

Hypothesis 1: Theme park physical environment quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context.

3.2.2 Relationship between Islamic Facilities Quality and Delight

Various measures of customer perceptions of service quality (e.g. physical environment quality, employee interaction quality, souvenir quality, and access quality) are positively correlated with delight (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Başarangil, 2018; Lee et al., 2008; Slåtten et al., 2011). However, none of these measures included items related to Islamic dimensions of quality. For example, Battour et al. (2014) identified Islamic attributes of destinations that may attract Muslim tourists such as worship facilities, halal food, free from alcohol and gambling and showing Islamic morality. Han et al. (2019) identified five halal-friendly destination attributes in South Korea, including halal-friendly social environment, halal-friendly facilities, halal food and beverages, halal-friendly services and halal-friendly locals and staff. This study aimed to explore customer perceptions of service quality dimensions in theme parks in an Islamic context, so a measure of Islamic theme park service quality was required (Islamic facilities quality). Han et al. (2019) noted that almost 60% of tourists from Malaysia, Saudi Arabi, and the UAE reported that halal-friendly tourism services and products were extremely important when they selected a destination.

A key question is therefore whether Muslim customers' perception of these Islamic dimensions (e.g. Islamic facilities quality) leads directly to delight. Battour et al. (2014), Gayatri and Chew (2013) and Han et al. (2019) found that Islamic attributes had a significant impact on Muslim customers' satisfaction. The study therefore hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2: Islamic facilities quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context.

3.2.3 Relationship between Consumables Quality and Delight

Very few studies on delight have discussed consumables quality (e.g. food and beverages price, souvenir variety) and how it may influence customers' emotional commitment and overall experience (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Crotts et al., 2008; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010). Ahrholdt et al. (2017) proposed that perceptions of food and beverages services among visitors to sporting events may influence their emotions and satisfaction. Crotts et al. (2008) studied the Charleston Food and Wine Festival, and found that aspects related to food and beverages such as wine and food diversity or taste, and the quality of food samples were key drivers of guest delight. Mohsin and Lockyer (2010) also confirmed that quality of food has an important effect on delight among luxury hotel customers. There is therefore a need to examine the relationship between customer perceptions of food quality on specific emotions, such as delight, in the context of theme parks in Islamic context such as the UAE. This study expects customers' perceptions of food quality to provoke delight.

Another aspect related to Islamic attributes of service quality that has significant influence on customers' perception of service quality in the tourism and hospitality industry is the availability and quality of halal food and beverages. According to Lari et al. (2020), availability of halal food and beverages was the most important sub-dimension of food quality in theme parks in the UAE. Battour

et al. (2014) stressed that Muslim tourists consider the availability of halal food in hotels and restaurants when selecting destinations. Battour et al. (2014), Gayatri and Chew (2013) and Han et al. (2019) all found that availability of halal food had a strong impact on satisfaction of Muslim tourists. The study therefore hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3: Theme park consumables quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context.

3.2.4 Relationship between Employee Interaction Quality and Delight

The interaction between customers and staff members has attracted the attention of many scholars (Ali et al., 2018; Ladhari et al., 2017; Slåtten et al., 2011) because of its influence on customers' emotional commitment, satisfaction and overall experience. Ali et al. (2018) and Slåtten et al. (2009, 2011) confirmed the effect of interaction with staff on customers' delight in the context of theme parks. In an optometry clinic, Ladhari et al. (2017) confirmed that perceived service quality (reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) increased positive emotional satisfaction (delight).

The main objective of visitors to theme parks is to be entertained, including by the activities of the employees. According to Ali et al. (2018), employees have an important role in creating positive emotions and evaluations. Zeithaml et al. (2006) noted that service environments facilitate interactions between customers and employees. Details such as smiling, a pleasant voice, and solving customers problems could all influence customers' emotions and

perceptions of the experience (Ali et al., 2018; Ladhari et al., 2017). The study therefore hypothesized:

Hypothesis 4: Theme park employee interaction quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context.

3.2.5 Relationship between Access Quality and Delight

Several researchers have noted that few studies have examined the effect of access quality on customer delight (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Foroughi et al., 2019). Access quality is an important element in the tourism and hospitality industry (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Wu & Ai, 2016a, b; Wu & Li, 2017; Wu et al., 2018). Ahrholdt et al. (2017), however, found that it did not have a positive effect on customer delight at sporting events. Foroughi et al. (2019) investigated the effect of process and outcome quality on fitness center members' delight in Malaysia. Process quality included items related to parking services, and had a positive influence on customer delight. To understand whether access quality influences customer delight in theme parks in an Islamic context, the study hypothesized:

Hypothesis 5: Theme park access quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context.

3.2.6 Relationship between Customer Delight and Customer Loyalty

The literature review found five empirical studies from 2009 to 2018 that examined the relationship between customer delight and loyalty in different industries (theme parks, restaurants, hotels, cell phone services, utilitarian

services and sporting events). Three studies were in theme parks (Ali et al., 2018; Jin et al., 2016; Slåtten et al., 2009), one in wineries (Bufquin et al., 2018), and one in utilitarian services (Ladhari et al., 2017). All these studies suggested that delight has a positive impact on loyalty.

In the theme park industry, Ali et al. (2018), Jin et al. (2016), and Slåtten et al. (2009) used a variety of methods to explore the relationship between customer delight and loyalty. All three studies provided empirical support for a positive and significant relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty in theme parks. This robust positive relationship between delight and loyalty has also been found in other service-oriented businesses. For example, Bufquin et al. (2018) found a relationship between delight and loyalty in wineries. They found that both arousal and delight had a positive influence on behavioral intention.

The role of emotions and their relationship to loyalty is not as well-established in utilitarian service settings as hedonic service settings such as theme parks, hotels and restaurants. However, Ladhari et al. (2017) studied an optometry clinic in Canada. They found that positive delight leads to high recommendation, patronage intention, and likelihood to purchase. All these findings suggest that there is a positive and significant relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty, regardless of the type of service industry. This study hypothesized:

Hypothesis 6: Customer delight has a significant positive impact on customer loyalty in theme parks in an Islamic context.

3.2.7 Moderating Effect of Nationality on the Relationship between Customer Delight and Customer Loyalty

Customer nationality plays a vital role in customer satisfaction and delight. National identity is the extent to which a given culture recognizes and identifies with its unique characteristics (Ariffin & Yahaya, 2013). Several researchers have examined the influence of nationality (e.g. cultural context) on the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty (Báez-Montenegro & Devesa-Fernández, 2017; Diallo et al., 2018; Promsivapallop & Jarumaneerat, 2018). Tourism and hospitality service sectors (e.g. hotels, festivals, theme parks) welcome customers from different cultural backgrounds, who may have different perceptions of satisfactory services.

Promsivapallop and Jarumaneerat (2018) compared holiday experiences in Phuket between Chinese and Australian visitors. They found more differences than similarities between the two in destination satisfaction. The Chinese tourists were less satisfied with most aspects of their holiday (e.g. food, local transportation) than the Australian tourists. However, there were no differences in their destination loyalty.

Diallo et al. (2018) investigated whether mall service quality affected perceived value, loyalty toward the mall and satisfaction with the mall, as well as how the cultural context moderated the relationship in three developing countries

(Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia). They found that the cultural context moderated the relationship between satisfaction with and loyalty towards the mall.

Previous studies showed a vast difference in the nature of the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty in customers from different cultural backgrounds. Tourism marketers and operators need to understand these differences to design appropriate service offers to satisfy all their customers (Promsivapallop & Jarumaneerat, 2018). The literature review showed that local and international customers may have different levels of satisfaction and loyalty. Whether individuals are from the UAE or elsewhere may therefore have a moderating role in this study. This study therefore hypothesized:

Hypothesis 7: Nationality moderates the effect of customer delight on customer loyalty in theme parks.

3.2.8 Moderating Effect of Gender on the Relationship between Customer Delight and Customer Loyalty

This study proposed to investigate whether the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty in the context of theme parks varied by gender. Gender moderates satisfaction and loyalty relationships in some consumer behaviors (Cha & Borchgrevink, 2019; Park & Park, 2018).

Cha and Borchgrevink (2019) investigated the relative effect of perceived value and food safety on customer satisfaction and loyalty in restaurants. One of the main objectives of the study was to examine the moderating role of gender in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, and it found significant

differences between men and women. In general, previous studies have found that there is a difference between men and women in the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty. Karatepe (2011) examined gender as a moderator in the relationship between service quality dimensions (service environment, interaction quality, empathy and reliability) and customer satisfaction among customers of the retail bank Northern Cyprus. Gender moderated the effect of empathy and reliability on customer satisfaction.

There is growing recognition of the moderating effect of gender in the marketing literature, but there is very little empirical research on the role of gender on the relationship between customer delight and loyalty. This study aimed to fill this gap in the theme park context, and hypothesized:

Hypothesis 8: Gender moderates the effect of customer delight on customer loyalty in theme parks.

3.3 Conceptual Framework

Figure 3.1 sets out the proposed conceptual framework for this study, drawing on four research streams: theme park generic service quality (Ali et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2016), theme park service quality from an Islamic perspective (Lari et al., 2020), customer delight (Torres et al., 2014b) and customer loyalty (Hwang et al., 2019). Previous studies suggest that service quality in the tourism and hospitality industry is a multidimensional construct, across four main areas: physical environment quality, food quality, employee interaction quality and access quality (Ali, Amin & Cobanoglu, 2016; Dong &

Siu, 2013; Hwang et al., 2019; Yoon et al., 2010). In the context of theme parks, service quality covers features such as physical environment quality, access quality and employee interaction quality (Ali et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2018). Islamic service quality attributes have been adapted from studies in the tourism and hospitality industry, including in hotels, shopping malls, destinations and fast food restaurants (Battour et al., 2014; Eid, 2015; Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Gayatri et al., 2011; Han et al., 2019; Lari et al., 2020; Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). In previous studies the two main features of Islamic service quality were Islamic facilities (e.g. prayer rooms) and halal food and beverages. Consumers' positive evaluation of these features as a reflection of the quality of theme parks is likely to improve their attitude and behavior toward the theme park (Ali et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2016; Slåtten et al., 2009, 2011).

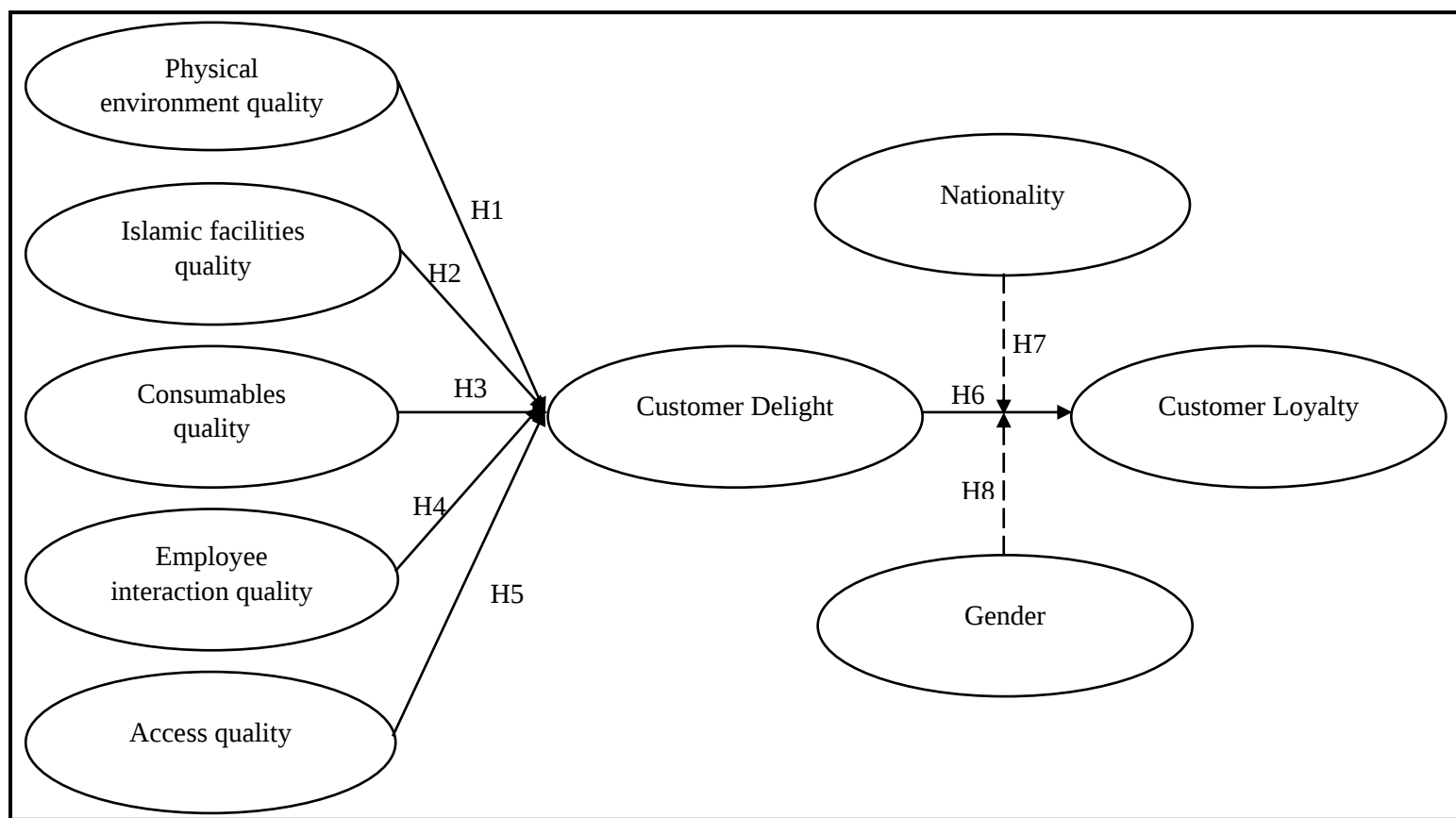
The customer delight model developed in this study is based on the delight model of Torres et al. (2014b), which describes two characteristics of delight:

- (1) It is the result of memorable, positive reproducible events and lasts for longer than mere satisfaction; and
- (2) Compared to those who are merely satisfied, delighted customers tend to be more loyal and more likely to return.

Finally, customer loyalty describes customers' favorable attitude and commitment toward a theme park that may result in different marketing outcomes (Ali et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2016). Combining these research

streams, the study's conceptual model suggests that customers' overall evaluation of theme park service quality in an Islamic context is likely to be influenced by their evaluation of various features of theme park services. Their overall evaluation of theme park quality is also expected to influence their delight in the theme park, which in turn will influence their loyalty. The model also suggests that gender and nationality will have a moderating impact on the relationship between customer delight and loyalty.

Figure 3. 1 Proposed Conceptual Framework



3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the theoretical foundation for this research, and the study constructs. It has introduced the conceptual model, and described and developed eight testable hypotheses. The next chapter describes the methodology used to test the conceptual model empirically to investigate the relationship between theme park service quality in an Islamic context, customer delight and customer loyalty, and the moderating effect of nationality and gender on the relationship between customer delight and loyalty.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used to achieve the objectives of this study. It describes the sampling design, including the sample population, sample size, survey sites, data collection process, survey development, and statistical analyses used for both the pilot test and the main survey.

4.1 Research Design

The research design is a plan of how the study will fulfil the research objectives (Frazer & Lawley, 2001). Cooper and Schindler (2006) suggested that it can be difficult to choose a suitable research design because there are so many possible methods, techniques, procedures, protocols, and sampling plans. William (2006) described the research design as the glue that holds a research project together. The aim of the research design is to structure the research and to ensure that all the main components of the research project (e.g., the sample, measures, and methods of assignment) work collectively to address the central research questions and objectives (William, 2006).

To ensure that the research design is consistent with the research objectives, the first step in this study was to select a theme park in the UAE as a sample to examine the factors affecting visitors' perception of Islamic service quality dimensions. Secondly, the literature was reviewed to develop a suitable questionnaire. Third, a self-administered questionnaire was considered an appropriate approach to collect the data for this research. Fourth, the

questionnaire was validated, and its reliability tested using a pilot sample before the questionnaire was distributed to study respondents. Finally, the collected data were analyzed to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses.

4.2 Population, Sample and Sample Size

4.2.1 Population

O’Leary (2017) defined population as all members of a defined class of people, objects, or events. He stated that it is important to have a well-defined population in mind before sampling. The population of this study was visitors to one of the three main theme parks in Abu Dhabi city (Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Yas Waterworld, Warner Bros. World). The aim in population analysis is to collect information from everyone within the population. However, this can be impractical unless the population is a small defined, accessible cluster (O’Leary, 2017). The three theme parks serve thousands of visitors every year, so it is unrealistic to collect data from all visitors. Sampling techniques were therefore used to ensure that the study population was represented by the sample.

4.2.2 Sample and Sample Size

Sampling is the method of choosing parts of a population for inclusion in a research study. Samples should be representative, which means that the sample distribution and characteristics allow findings to be generalized to the whole population (O’Leary, 2017). Sampling is therefore the method of choosing a sample that represents the population. Sampling also provides advantages over

whole-population studies such as lower costs, accurate results, and greater speed of data collection (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

The sample size depends on the number of measurement variables per construct. Hair et al.'s (2018, p. 102) rule of thumb for sample size was that "[t]he minimum is to have five times as many observations as the number of variables to be analyzed". For example, if the number of measurement items is 40, then the minimum sample size is 200. Table 4.1 shows that the number of proposed items in the survey is 45, so the minimum sample size was 225. However, a small sample size could generate problems with the use of the planned method of analysis (structural equation modelling). Hair et al. (2018) stated that large samples usually generate more reliable outcome and reduce sampling error. However, the sampling plan should be based on the study time and budget.

As well as Hair et al.'s (2018) rule of thumb for sample size, this study also considered previous studies using on-site surveys in the UAE to decide the sample size. A sample size of 350 was considered adequate to represent hotel guests in the UAE (Ahmad et al., 2019), and a sample of 160 to represent patients in public and private hospitals there (Al-Neyadi et al., 2018). Hammad et al. (2019) used a sample size of 1,000 to investigate residents' perceptions of the impact of tourism and whether nationality moderates the relationship between these perceptions and support for tourism development in the UAE. This study eventually settled on a sample size of 1,000.

This study's sample included male and female visitors to one of the three main theme parks in Abu Dhabi city in the last six months of 2019 (June–December 2019). Following approval from the IRB team at Abu Dhabi University (Appendix A), an online survey was developed to be distributed to potential respondents. Adult visitors aged 18 years and over were selected to participate in the study. Theme park visitors under 18 years old were excluded from the sample because it is assumed that they would not have sufficient theme park experience to answer all the questions in the questionnaire. The online survey platform Survey Monkey was used for data collection. In total, 658 surveys were collected. After a careful review of the responses, 152 were deleted because the participants responded to 9% of the survey or less. The questionnaire was subsequently restricted to allow only a single response to each question. The final count of usable responses was 506, a response rate of 77%. The response time was set at a minimum of 10 minutes to ensure the respondents took time to respond carefully.

4.3 Research Instrument Development

A questionnaire was developed from previous studies. Relevant measurement items were compiled into a prototype questionnaire with eight major sections. Section A included demographic information of respondents. Sections B to F asked the respondents to evaluate items related to five dimensions of theme park service quality in an Islamic context (i.e., physical environment quality, Islamic facilities quality, consumables quality, employee interaction quality and

access quality). In the last two sections (Sections G and H), respondents evaluated their levels of delight and loyalty to the theme parks that they had visited.

The questionnaire was developed in English. However, the study was conducted in the UAE and Arabic is the first language there, so the questionnaire was translated into Arabic. All questions were translated and back-translated from English to Arabic by a bilingual editor, Ms. Zahraa Zuhair, from an online translation service agency www.Khamsat.com, to avoid language-related errors in the analysis. Bilingual experts from academia and the theme park industry translated the original items into Arabic and then used a backward translation method into English to confirm consistency between the Arabic and English versions of the questionnaire.

Both English and Arabic versions of the questionnaire were distributed to the study sample. Participants were able to choose their preferred language to complete the survey (see Appendix B for the English version and Appendix C for the Arabic version of the questionnaire). Table 4.1 summarizes the constructs and variables used in the survey.

4.3.1 Physical Environment Quality

Physical environment quality of a theme park was conceptualized as related to the ambient conditions, spatial layout, cleanliness, and facilities aesthetics. It was measured using 12 items (Table 4.1) (e.g. “The background music was pleasant”, “The theme park was clean” and “The facilities were maintained well”) adapted from Dong and Siu (2013). Respondents evaluated all

12 items on a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree.

4.3.2 Islamic Facilities Quality

Islamic-friendly facilities quality of a theme park was the availability of prayer rooms and purifying facilities. Islamic-friendly facilities quality was measured using six items (Table 4.1) (e.g. “The theme park provides a clear place for saying prayers” and “The theme park signposts the direction of Qibla”), taken from Gayatri and Chew (2013). Respondents evaluated all six items on a five-point Likert-type scale from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree.

4.3.3 Consumables Quality

To measure consumables quality, the study used a seven-item scale on both general and halal food quality (Table 4.1). Three items evaluated the general quality of food and beverages (e.g. “Food and beverages tasted good in the theme park” and “Food and beverages were varied in the theme park”) and were taken from Yoon et al. (2010). Halal food quality was measured using four items (e.g. “Halal food outlets/restaurants in the theme park clearly display a halal logo” and “Halal food and beverages offered in the theme park were clean, safe, and hygienic”), taken from Han et al. (2019). Respondents rated all seven items on a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree.

4.3.4 Employee Interaction Quality

Employee interaction quality describes the behavior of employees toward theme park visitors. The construct was measured using eight items (e.g. “The

employees are willing to help”, “The employees are polite and friendly” and “The employees are neat and nicely dressed”) from Meng and Choi (2017). Respondents evaluated all eight items on a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree.

4.3.5 Access Quality

The scale for access quality consisted of four items (e.g. “ Parking close to the theme park was quick and easy” and “The opening hours of the theme park are convenient for my needs”) from Martín-Ruiz et al. (2010). Respondents evaluated all eight items on a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree.

4.3.6 Delight

Delight was measured using three items (Table 4.1) (e.g. “I felt delighted at some time during my visit to the theme park”) from Ali et al. (2018). Respondents evaluated the three items on a five-point Likert type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree.

4.3.7 Loyalty

Loyalty was conceptualized as a general construct that captured both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty of participants. It was measured using five items (e.g. “I say positive things about the theme park to other people” and “I intend to visit the theme park more often in the future”) from Hwang et al. (2019). Respondents rated all five items on the same five-point Likert-type scale from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree.

4.3.8 Demographic Information

Demographic information included gender, age, marital status, level of education, nationality, country of residence, and monthly household income in AED. Demographic information was assessed using categorical scales.

Table 4. 1 Details of the Constructs used in the Study

Construct/Variable	Description	Reference	Journal	Scopus Index/Rank
Physical Environment Quality	PEQ1: The background music was pleasant PEQ2: The theme park has a nice smell PEQ3: The atmosphere was cheerful PEQ4: The theme park was clean PEQ5: The theme park has up-to-date facilities. PEQ6: The architecture was attractive PEQ7: The signs used were helpful to me. PEQ8: The layout makes the facilities easy to use. PEQ9: The color scheme was attractive PEQ10: The style of the decoration was fashionable. PEQ11: The facilities were maintained well PEQ12: In general, the physical environment pleased me	Dong and Siu (2013)	<i>Tourism Management</i>	SNIP=3.374
Islamic Quality	IFQ1: The theme park provides a clear place for saying prayers IFQ2: The theme park provides purifying (Wudhu before prayer) facilities IFQ3: The theme park provides Sajahah/Mukena for praying tools IFQ4: The theme park provides the direction of Qibla/Mecca IFQ5: The theme park provides proper prayer facilities IFQ6: The theme park understands that accommodating Islamic religious activities is important for me	Gayatri and Chew (2013)	<i>Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics</i>	SNIP=0.669
Consumables Quality	CQ1: Food and beverages were varied in the theme park CQ2: Food and beverages tasted good in the theme park CQ3: Food and beverages prices were reasonable in the	Yoon et al. (2010)	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	SNIP=2.078

	theme park CQ4: Halal food outlets/restaurants in the theme park clearly display a halal logo CQ5: Halal food and beverages offered in the theme park were clean, safe, and hygienic. CA6: Halal food providers in the theme park are accredited with halal certification. CQ7: Availability of halal food attracted me to visit the theme park	Han et al. (2019)	<i>Tourism Management</i>	SNIP=3.374
Employee Interaction Quality	EIQ1: The employees are willing to help EIQ2: The employees are polite and friendly EIQ3: The employees give customers personal attention. EIQ4: The employees are passionate EIQ5: The employees provided relief and comfort to me when I felt bored because of the long queues. EIQ6: The employees are neat and nicely dressed. EIQ7: The employees look attractive EIQ8: The park brings the local culture to visitors	Meng and Choi (2017)	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	SNIP=2.078
Access Quality	AQ1: In general, it was easy to find and reach the theme park. AQ2: Parking close to the theme park was quick and easy. AQ3: It took little time to enter the theme park AQ4: The opening hours of the theme park are convenient for my needs.	Martín-Ruiz et al. (2010)	<i>Tourism Management</i>	SNIP=3.374
Customer Delight	Delight1: I felt delighted at some time during my visit to the theme park Delight2: I felt gleeful at some time during my visit to the theme park Delight3: I felt elated at some time during my visit to	Ali et al. (2018)	<i>Journal of Destination Marketing and Management</i>	SNIP=1.945

	the theme park				
Customer Loyalty	Loyalty1: I say positive things about the theme park to other people. Loyalty2: I would recommend the theme park to someone who seeks my advice. Loyalty3: I encourage my friends and relatives to visit the theme park Loyalty4: I consider the theme park to be my first choice in theme park entertainment Loaylty5: I intend to visit the theme park more often in the future	Hwang	et	al.	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i> SNIP=2.078

4.4 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

Testing the validity and reliability of survey instruments is essential in any empirical study (Lai, 2015). Validity measures the level of systematic errors and reliability measures the level of random errors (O’Leary, 2017). A pilot test was conducted, and industry experts were consulted to ensure that the survey instrument was valid and reliable.

4.4.1 Validity

A valid instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. This means that it should be free from systematic influences on the responses (Vavra, 1997). This study focused on content and construct validity. Content validity is whether the questions are appropriate to the measured construct, and cover the whole construct (Vavra, 1997). Construct validity describes how much the question actually relates to other constructs, and not the measured one (Vavra, 1997).

To ensure the validity of the instrument, two theme park marketing heads, two academic experts and three people who had visited a theme park more than six times were invited to a focus group discussion. They were asked to comment on the meaningfulness, relevance, and clarity of the survey instrument. All focus group members agreed that the content and construct of the survey instrument were valid and relevant to the theme park industry.

4.4.2 Reliability

A reliable instrument has few random errors. It therefore produces the same response repeatedly (Vavra, 1997). Reliability gives confidence that the

questionnaire scores reliably reflect the underlying construct. It is assessed using internal consistency tests such as Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This tests how closely each item or question in the instrument is related to other items (Vavra, 1997).

A pilot test was used to test Cronbach's alpha for each of the constructs. The pilot test was carried out with 50 random visitors to one of the three theme parks in Abu Dhabi city (Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Yas Waterworld and Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi).

Table 4.2 shows that all the Cronbach's alpha values were greater than or equal to 0.716 for each of the constructs. Nunnally (1978) stated that anything over 0.7 is acceptable. It can therefore be concluded that the instrument used in this study is highly reliable.

Table 4. 2 Cronbach's alpha of the pilot test

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha value (α)
Physical environment quality	12	0.887
Islamic facilities quality	6	0.927
Consumable quality	7	0.840
Employee interaction quality	8	0.884
Access quality	4	0.716
Delight	3	0.926
Loyalty	5	0.907

4.5 Data Collection Procedure

4.5.1 IRB Approval

Abu Dhabi University (ADU) requires all research activities involving human subjects carried out by ADU faculty, staff or students to be reviewed and approved by the ADU Institutional Review Board (IRB). The completed

application, which includes the original signatures of researcher and advisors, proposal, questionnaire, and informed consent/assent forms, was submitted to the office on December 6, 2019 and approved on January 3, 2020 (Appendix A).

4.5.2 Data Collection

The sample included theme park visitors to the three main theme parks in Abu Dhabi city, UAE. Abu Dhabi is the capital of the UAE and is famous for its world class theme parks. Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Yas Waterworld and Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi are in Yas Island, a popular leisure island and one of the top tourism projects in Abu Dhabi. Ferrari World Abu Dhabi and Yas Waterworld follow international theme park standards and have been recognized by a number of leading industry awards since their opening in 2010 and 2013 (Appendix D). Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi is the world's first-ever Warner Bros.-branded indoor theme park.

Having obtained formal permission from Farah Experience (LLC) (the operating company of the theme parks), the author requested access to the theme parks database of visitors. From this, 1,000 random visitors who met the criteria for inclusion were selected.

The 1,000 participants were selected based on their frequency of visits to the theme parks. They had to have visited more than three times between June and December 2019. The structured survey was prepared (English and Arabic version) and made available through Survey Monkey, an online survey application, which collects responses and interfaces with *Statistical Package for the Social Science*

(SPSS).The study survey web-link was emailed to the participants on March 15, 2020, with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and noting that participation in the survey was voluntary. Two reminder emails were sent to the participants. The web-based survey was conducted over a 12- week period between March 15 and May 15, 2020.

Of the 1,000 questionnaires, 658 were returned. Of these, 152 questionnaires were not suitable for analysis because they were incomplete, or the respondents had given contradictory answers. This left 506 for analysis in the study.

4.6 Statistical Data Analysis

Sulek and Hensley (2004) described data analysis as the process of reducing collected data to a suitable size, summarizing them, looking for patterns, and applying statistical techniques. The analysis in this study was designed to answer the research questions, and test the study hypotheses by developing statistical techniques using *Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)* version 25 and *Analysis of a Moment Structures (AMOS)* version 25. Rigorous descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were carried out. According to Creswell (2011), descriptive analysis shows general tendencies in the data (the spread of scores, or a comparison of how one score relates to others), and inferential statistics analyze data from a sample to draw conclusions about the population.

Before the descriptive and inferential analysis, data were analyzed for missing data. The suitability of collected data was assessed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett’s test of sphericity. The KMO test assesses the sample adequacy, and Bartlett’s test examines the identity of the correlation matrix. A KMO value of 0.5 or higher indicates that the sample is adequate (Child, 2006). A value of < 0.05 for Bartlett’s test of sphericity shows that data are appropriate for factor analysis (Field, 2017).

4.6.1 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to consolidate data to determine the mean and standard deviation of the attributes of service quality (e.g. physical environment quality, consumables quality), customer delight and customer loyalty. A frequency analysis was used to examine the distribution of respondents’ demographic information such as age and gender.

4.6.2 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics provided answers to the research questions and helped to test the hypotheses. This study used structural equation modeling (SEM), regression analysis and the goodness of fit of the model.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed on constructs with multiple dimensions (e.g. physical environment quality). Items with a factor loading of at least 0.4 on a single factor were retained. Items that significantly cross-loaded on other factors were eliminated to produce relatively pure indicators (Hair et al., 2016).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to determine how well the measured variables represented the construct. A minimum factor loading of 0.5 was used as a cutoff (Hair et al., 2016). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to define the individual constructs, confirming that they were unidimensional (Hair et al., 2016). The results of CFA were used to assess the validity and reliability of the measure. Two types of validity were assessed: convergent and discriminant validity.

Convergent validity is present when the scale correlates positively with other measures of the same construct (Malhotra, 2019) and shares a high proportion of variance (Hair et al., 2016). Convergent validity was assessed using the strength of the factor loadings (i.e., t-value) of each observed variable on the latent construct. Convergent validity is considered to be present when factor loadings of the observed variables for the underlying latent constructs are high and statistically significant (Bagozzi et al., 1991). Ideally, factor loadings should be higher than 0.7 (Malhotra, 2019).

Discriminant validity is present when a measure does not correlate with other constructs from which it is supposed to differ (Malhotra, 2019). It means that the construct is considered distinct from other constructs (Hair et al., 2016). The average variance was used to examine discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The variance extracted test requires the squared correlation between two constructs to be smaller than the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct.

Composite reliability (CR) is the relationship between true score variance and total score variance (Malhotra, 2019). It is therefore the shared variance among a set of observed variables measuring an underlying construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Composite reliability was assessed using the CFA results, and estimates of between 0.6 and 0.7 were considered acceptable if the estimates of the model validity were good (Malhotra, 2019).

These analyses were used to confirm the measurement model, and ensure that it was suitable for SEM. This technique was then used to examine the relationships between variables including multiple relationships and latent variables (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). It was used to identify the causal relationship between dimensions of service quality in theme parks (physical environment quality, Islamic facilities quality, consumables quality, employee interaction quality, access quality), customer delight and customer loyalty. A multi-group analysis was used to identify the moderating effect of nationality and gender on the relationship between customer delight and loyalty.

Multiple indices were used to evaluate whether the hypothesized relationships fit the data, including chi-squared ($\chi^2 = \text{CMIN}/\text{df}$), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and incremental fit index (IFI). The chi-squared is a fundamental fit index for evaluation in SEM and measures differences between observed and estimated covariance matrices. According to Hair et al. (2016), a chi-squared value of 1 to 5 is considered a good fit. The RMSEA is the difference between actual and predicted variance (Hair et

al., 2016). It is adjusted for degrees of freedom and sample size. A model is deemed acceptable if the value of RMSEA is less than or equal to 0.08 (Malhotra, 2019). CFI includes degrees of freedom for model complexity but is negatively affected by sample size (Malhotra, 2019). CFI values vary from 0 to 1 and values of 0.90 or greater are considered a good fit (Malhotra, 2019). Finally, the difference between the chi-squared values of the independent model (in which variables are uncorrelated) and the target model is calculated. The difference between the chi-squared value and degrees of freedom of the target model is then calculated (Moss, 2016). The ratio of this value is IFI. Values range between 0 and 1, and 0.90 or higher indicates a good fit (Hair et al., 2016).

4.7 Assumptions

This study made several important assumptions. First, it was assumed that the respondents answered questions truthfully about both their own characteristics, and their experiences visiting theme parks. The researcher also assumed that the selection of the three participating locations in the study represented all demographic groups of the overall customer base of the theme parks.

4.8 Ethical issues

de Vaus (2001) stated that all social research should conform to four ethical principles: voluntary participations, informed consent, no harm to participants and confidentiality. A wide variety of steps was taken to ensure that these standards were met in carrying out this study.

Approval of the research protocol used in the study was obtained from the IRB to meet the research requirement at Abu Dhabi University. This is the institutional body at Abu Dhabi University that reviews research protocols for the university community (faculty, staff and students) to make sure that the rights and safety of research participants are protected. Participants had to be at least 18 years old. Before completing the survey, participants were shown a letter explaining that participation was voluntary, and that their anonymity would be strictly maintained (Survey Cover Letter, Appendix B and C). Data were collected via Survey Monkey, and no computer IP addresses were collected to maintain confidentiality. The survey responses were stored in electronic format on a flash drive. The data will be deleted permanently after 3 years, as recommended by de Vaus (2001).

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the instrument used in the study, which was developed after a review of the literature. To ensure its content and construct validity, two theme park marketing heads, two academic experts and three frequent visitors of theme parks reviewed it. The instrument was also tested on a pilot basis, and its reliability was checked through an internal consistency test, using Cronbach's alpha. The chapter also discussed the rationale for selecting the population, sample size, and sampling strategy. The chapter concluded with a discussion of data collection, data analysis, the assumptions made for the study

and ethical issues. The next chapter will set out the results of the study and answer the research questions.

Chapter 5: Results

This chapter provides the results of the statistical analysis used to test the hypotheses developed in Chapter 3. It begins with a description of the respondents' characteristics including demographic information, then provides the results of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). It then sets out the results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) used to validate the constructs, and the results of the structural equation modelling (SEM). It considers all these results in the context of the study hypotheses. Finally, it describes the results of the multigroup analysis used to investigate the moderating effect of nationality and gender.

5.1 Demographic Characteristics

Table 5.1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents in the main survey ($n = 506$). Six demographic characteristics were investigated: gender, age, marital status, education level, nationality, and average monthly income. The frequency analysis indicated that 77.7% of the respondents were female and 22.3% were male. Most respondents were under 45 years old (87.0%), 49.6% were single, 44.5% were married, 5.3% divorced and 0.6% widowed. Approximately 25.3% of the respondents had only high school or equivalent degree, 3.2% had a diploma degree, 55.5% had a bachelor's degree and 16.0% a postgraduate degree. Respondents were categorized into Emiratis (UAE nationals) (73.9%) and non-Emiratis (26.1%). A total of 91.9% of the respondents reported an average monthly income below 50,000 AED, and 8.1% reported an average monthly income more than 50,000 AED.

Table 5. 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	113	22.3
Female	393	77.7
<i>Age</i>		
18–24 years	133	26.3
25–34 years	197	38.9
35–44 years	110	21.7
45–54 years	56	11.1
55–64 years	9	1.8
65+ years	1	0.2
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	251	49.6
Married	225	44.5
Divorced	27	5.3
Widowed	3	0.6
<i>Education Level</i>		
High school or equivalent	128	25.3
Diploma	16	3.2
Bachelor's Degree	281	55.5
Master's Degree	66	13.0
Doctoral Degree	15	3.0
<i>Nationality</i>		
Emirati	374	73.9
Non-Emirati	132	26.1
<i>Monthly Income (AED)</i>		
Under 5,000 AED	158	31.2
5,000–10,999AED	101	20.0
11,000–49,999 AED	206	40.7
50,000–100,000 AED	37	7.3
Over 100,000 AED	4	0.8

5.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis

The EFA for service quality dimensions, delight and loyalty value used the principal component method with varimax rotation to determine the dimensions of the scale (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Items with factor loading less than 0.5 and items that cross-loaded on one or more factors were removed, as recommended by Hair et al. (2018) and Malhotra (2019). Factors with

eigenvalues of less than 1.0 were not selected. Seven items were removed from physical environment quality, two from employee interaction quality, one from access quality and one from loyalty as a result (Table 5.2).

Table 5. 2 Items Removed from the EFA Analysis

Construct	Items
Physical Environment Quality	PEQ1: The background music was pleasant PEQ2: The theme park has a nice smell PEQ3: The atmosphere was cheerful PEQ4: The theme park was clean. PEQ7: The signs used were helpful to me. PEQ10: The style of the decoration was fashionable PEQ12: In general, the physical environment pleased me.
Employee Interaction Quality	EIQ2: The employees are polite and friendly EIQ8: The theme park brings the local culture to visitors
Access Quality	AQ3: It took little time to enter the theme park
Loyalty	Loyalty4: I consider the theme park to be my first choice in theme park entertainment.

The EFA was rerun after removing the 11 items. Table 5.3 shows the findings of the factor analysis of items associated with service quality dimensions, delight, and loyalty. This factor analysis used 27 items for service quality, three for delight and four for loyalty. It generated five underlying domains for service quality, one for delight and one for loyalty, and the eigenvalues were all greater than 1.0. The factor model explained 71.71% of the variance. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy was 0.938, and the results of Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was $\chi^2 = 15,506.33$ (df = 561, $p = 0.000$), which indicates that at least one factor existed in the factor structure. Communalities of each variable, which indicated the variance explained by the factors, ranged from 0.543 to 0.888. The reliability values (Cronbach’s alpha) for all domains were within the range of

0.722 to 0.927. These values were higher than the 0.7 criterion recommended by Hair et al. (2018). The five domains of service quality were labelled “Physical environment quality”, “Islamic facilities quality”, “Consumables quality”, “Employee interaction quality”, and “Access quality”. The one domain in delight was labelled “Delight” and the loyalty domain “Loyalty”. Overall, the constructs were considered ready for further analysis using CFA.

Table 5. 3 EFA Analysis Results

KMO = 0.938; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2 = 11506.33$, df = 561, p = 0.00; total variance explained = 69.15%				
Construct/ Measurement item	Factor loading	Communalities	Cronbach's alpha (α)	Reference
Physical Environment Quality (PEQ)			0.824	Dong and Siu (2013)
PEQ5: The theme park has up-to-date facilities	0.673	0.543		
PEQ6: The architecture was attractive	0.795	0.707		
PEQ8: The layout makes the facilities easy to use	0.601	0.568		
PEQ9: The color scheme was attractive	0.717	0.649		
PEQ11: The facilities were maintained well	0.635	0.605		
Islamic Facilities Quality (IFQ)			0.927	Gayatri and Chew (2013)
IFQ1: The theme park provides a clear place for saying prayers	0.822	0.771		
IFQ2: The theme park provides purifying (Wudhu before prayer) facilities	0.855	0.815		
IFQ3: The theme park provides Sajadah/Mukena for praying tools	0.820	0.760		
IFQ4: The theme park provides the direction of Qibla/Mecca	0.805	0.737		
IFQ5: The theme park provides a proper prayer facility	0.823	0.805		
IFQ6: The theme park understands that accommodating Islamic religious activities is important for me	0.662	0.637		
Consumables Quality (CQ)			0.840	Yoon et al. (2010) Han et al. (2019)
CQ1: Food and beverages were varied in the theme park	0.816	0.753		
CQ2: Food and beverages tasted good in the theme park	0.763	0.755		
CQ3: Food and beverages prices were reasonable in the theme park	0.713	0.642		
CQ4: Halal food outlets/restaurants in the theme park clearly display a halal logo	0.782	0.716		

CQ5: Halal food and beverage offered in the theme park were clean, safe, and hygienic.	0.691	0.713		
CQ6: Halal food providers in the theme park are accredited with halal certification.	0.796	0.787		
CQ7: Availability of halal food attracted me to visit the theme park	0.736	0.685		
Employee Interaction Quality (EIQ)			0.882	Meng and Choi (2017)
EIQ1: The employees are willing to help	0.612	0.634		
EIQ3: The employees give customers personal attention.	0.734	0.726		
EIQ4: The employees are passionate	0.782	0.759		
EIQ5: The employees provided relief and comfort to me when I felt bored because of the long queues.	0.716	0.668		
EIQ6: The employees are neat and nicely dressed	0.658	0.642		
EIQ7: The employees look attractive	0.634	0.601		
Access Quality (AQ)			0.722	Martín-Ruiz et al. (2010)
AQ1: In general, it was easy to find and reach the theme park	0.733	0.724		
AQ2: It took little time to enter the theme park	0.675	0.636		
AQ4: The opening hours of the theme park are convenient for my needs	0.624	0.605		
Delight			0.926	Ali et al. (2018)
Delight1: I felt delighted at some time during my visit to the theme park	0.779	0.821		
Delight2: I felt gleeful at some time during my visit to the theme park	0.813	0.888		
Delight3: I felt elated at some time during my visit to the theme park	0.801	0.880		
Loyalty			0.892	Hwang et al. (2019)
Loyalty1: I say positive things about the theme park to other people.	0.685	0.757		
Loyalty2: I would recommend the theme park to someone	0.769	0.867		

who seeks my advice.		
Loyalty3: I encourage my friends and relatives to visit the theme park	0.735	0.822
Loyalty5: I intend to visit the theme park more often in the future	0.637	0.685

5.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

SEM includes two basic components:

- (1) The measurement model (CFA); and
- (2) The structural/path model (SEM).

Hair et al. (2018) stated that the measurement model is an integration of several indicators for a variable. In this study, the measurement model was analyzed using CFA before carrying out the path analysis of the structural model. CFA was applied to the data set ($n = 506$) to confirm the underlying dimensions and items extracted, and guide the model specification (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The model fit in CFA must be examined to identify how well the proposed measurement model fits the data (Kline, 2015). The chi-squared ($\chi^2 = \text{CMIN}/\text{df}$) statistic, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and incremental fit index (IFI) were used to examine the model fit (Hair et al., 2018; Malhotra, 2019).

Chi-squared determines the difference between the assessed covariance matrices to test the null hypothesis that the observed sample and SEM-estimated covariance matrices are equal (Hair et al., 2018). The model's fit is good when the two metrics are not significantly different. However, chi-squared is sensitive to the sample size because significance value is reduced when the sample size increases (Hair et al., 2018). Other fit indices are therefore often examined in CFA analysis.

One item in the consumables quality dimension had a very low standardized loading, below the acceptable value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2018) (see Table 5.4). It was therefore removed from the analysis.

Table 5.4 Items Removed from the CFA Analysis

Construct	Items	Standardized factor loading
Consumables Quality	CQ1: Food and beverages were varied in the theme park	0.448

Figure 5.1 shows the CFA model. The standardized factor loading of the CFA model is shown in Table 5.5. The CFA model goodness-of-fit results are shown in Table 5.6. Table 5.6 therefore shows the fit of the complete model (n = 506), and the models based on gender (female, male) and nationality (Emirati and non-Emirati).

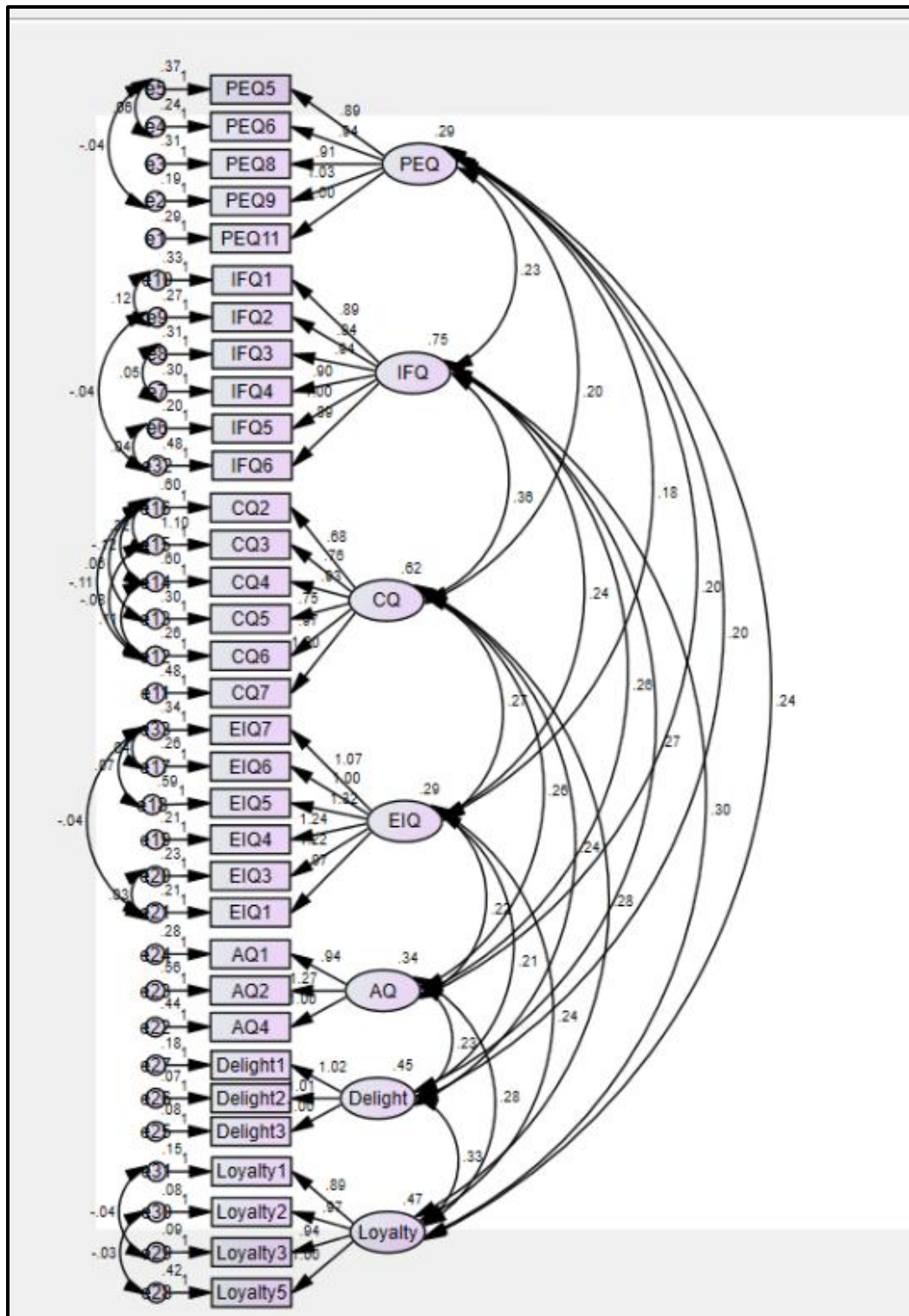


Figure 5. 1 CFA Measurement Model

Table 5. 5 CFA analysis standardized factor loadings

Construct/ Measurement item	Standardized factor loadings
Physical Environment Quality (PEQ)	
PEQ5: The theme park has up-to-date facilities	0.621
PEQ6: The architecture was attractive	0.719
PEQ8: The layout makes the facilities easy to use	0.661
PEQ9: The color scheme was attractive	0.784
PEQ11: The facilities were maintained well	0.703
Islamic Facilities Quality (IFQ)	
IFQ1: The theme park provides a clear place for saying prayers	0.803
IFQ2: The theme park provides purifying (Wudhu before prayer) facilities	0.843
IFQ3: The theme park provides Sajahah/Mukena for praying tools	0.823
IFQ4: The theme park provides the direction of Qibla/Mecca	0.819
IFQ5: The theme park provides proper prayer facilities	0.888
IFQ6: The theme park understands that accommodating Islamic religious activities is important for me	0.742
Consumable Quality (CQ)	
CQ2: Food and beverages tasted good in the theme park	0.568
CQ3: Food and beverages prices were reasonable in the theme park	0.500
CQ4: Halal food outlets/restaurants in the theme park clearly display a halal logo	0.688
CQ5: Halal food and beverage offered in the theme park were clean, safe, and hygienic	0.732
CQ6: Halal food providers in the theme park are accredited with halal certification	0.833
CQ7: Availability of halal food attracted me to visit the theme park	0.750
Employee Interaction Quality (EIQ)	
EIQ1: The employees are willing to help	0.755
EIQ3: The employees give customers personal attention.	0.810
EIQ4: The employees are passionate	0.829
EIQ5: The employees provided relief and comfort to me when I felt bored because of the long queues.	0.681
EIQ6: The employees are neat and nicely dressed	0.732
EIQ7: The employees look attractive	0.703
Access Quality (AQ)	
AQ1: In general, it was easy to find and reach the theme park	0.722
AQ3: It took little time to enter the theme park	0.700
AQ4: The opening hours of the theme park are convenient for my needs	0.657
Delight	
Delight1: I felt delighted at some time during my visit to the theme park	

Delight2: I felt gleeful at some time during my visit to the theme park	0.849
Delight3: I felt elated at some time during my visit to the theme park	0.935
	0.922
Loyalty	
Loyalty1: I say positive things about the theme park to other people	0.847
Loyalty2: I would recommend the theme park to someone who seeks my advice.	0.917
Loyalty3: I encourage my friends and relatives to visit the theme park	0.908
Loyalty5: I intend to visit the theme park more often in the future	0.727

Table 5. 6 CFA goodness-of-fit results on study constructs based on nationality and gender

Model (all hypothesized seven-factor models)	χ^2	df	p value (<0.001)	CMIN/df	CFI	IFI	RMSEA
Full sample model (<i>n</i> = 506)	961.079	456	0.000	2.108	0.954	0.954	0.047
Female model (<i>n</i> = 393)	958.997	456	0.000	2.103	0.944	0.945	0.053
Male model (<i>n</i> = 113)	814.369	456	0.000	1.786	0.849	0.853	0.084
Emirati model (<i>n</i> = 374)	881.720	456	0.000	1.934	0.949	0.949	0.050
Non-Emirati model (<i>n</i> = 132)	771.903	456	0.000	1.693	0.892	0.895	0.793
Acceptable level and source of this assessment				1.0–5.0	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≤ 0.08
				Hair et al. (2018)	Malhotra (2019)	Hair et al. (2018)	Malhotra (2019)
Notes: CFI = comparative fit index; IFI = incremental fit index; RMSEA= root mean square error of approximation							

5.3.1 Validity and Reliability of Measurement Model

Construct validity is the “extent to which a set of measured variables actually represent the theoretical latent construct they are designed to measure” (Hair et al., 2018, p. 606). Convergent and discriminant validity were examined at the CFA stage to examine construct validity. Convergent validity is the “extent to which indicators of a specific construct converge or share a high proportion of variance in common” (Hair et al., 2018, p. 606). Convergent validity was checked in three ways:

- (1) Standardized factor loading should exceed 0.5 (Hair et al., 2018);
- (2) Average variance extracted (AVE) should exceed 0.5 (Hair et al., 2018);
- and
- (3) Composite reliability (CR) should exceed 0.7 (Hair et al., 2018).

Hair et al. (2018, p. 606) defined discriminant validity as the “extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs both in terms of how much it correlates with other constructs and how distinctly measured variables represent only this single construct”. Squared multiple correlation measures the extent to which a measured variable’s variance is explained by a latent variable (Hair et al., 2018). Discriminant validity is confirmed when the estimated AVE for each construct is greater than the highest squared multiple correlation coefficients for corresponding construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 5.7 shows the correlations among constructs, AVE values, composite reliability values (CR), means and standard deviations. All

standardized factor loadings (Table 5.5) for the observed variables measuring the construct were above the threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2018), ranging from 0.5 to 0.935. The AVE values exceeded the critical value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2018). This suggests the presence of convergent validity. The results also confirmed the presence of discriminant validity for all constructs. Table 5.7 shows that the composite reliability of each variable is greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2018), which confirms the reliability of the measurement model.

Table 5. 7 Correlations, Composite Reliability, Descriptive, Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity statistics

Variable	PEQ	IFQ	CQ	EIQ	AQ	Delight	Loyalty	CR	AVE	Square of AVE	Root	Mean	SD
PEQ	1.000							0.827	0.698	0.835		4.267	0.736
IFQ	0.505***	1.000						0.925	0.820	0.905		3.965	0.979
CQ	0.471***	0.522***	1.000					0.839	0.678	0.823		3.401	0.989
EIQ	0.631***	0.506***	0.630***	1.000				0.887	0.752	0.867		3.918	0.818
AQ	0.645***	0.516***	0.573***	0.697***	1.000			0.710	0.784	0.725		3.984	0.890
Delight	0.549***	0.497***	0.452***	0.580***	0.589***	1.000		0.930	0.902	0.950		4.198	0.750
Loyalty	0.660***	0.472***	0.513***	0.647***	0.699***	0.711***	1.000	0.914	0.850	0.922		4.157	0.773

Note:

PEQ = physical environment quality; **IFQ** = Islamic facilities quality; **CQ** = consumables quality; **EIQ** = employee interaction quality; **AQ** = access quality

CR = composite reliability; **AVE** = average variance extracted; **SD** = standard deviation

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

5.4 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

CFA therefore established that there was a secure measurement model in terms of model fit, reliability and validity. SEM was then used to test the main conceptual model covering the six main study hypotheses. A maximum likelihood estimation method was used to check whether the hypothesized model was consistent with the data collected. The model's goodness-of-fit was assessed before testing the hypotheses. The values for goodness-of-fit, such as normed chi-squared (χ^2), CFI, IFI and RMSEA, supported the conceptual model (Table 5.8).

5.4.1 Hypothesis testing

Six direct relationships between paths were investigated. Multi-group analysis was then used to examine the moderating effect of nationality and gender. The direct regression paths among the seven constructs were examined to test the six hypotheses. The results are shown in Table 5.9. The overall structural model is shown in Figure 5.2. Five of the six estimated path coefficients were statistically significant at either the 0.05 or 0.001 level.

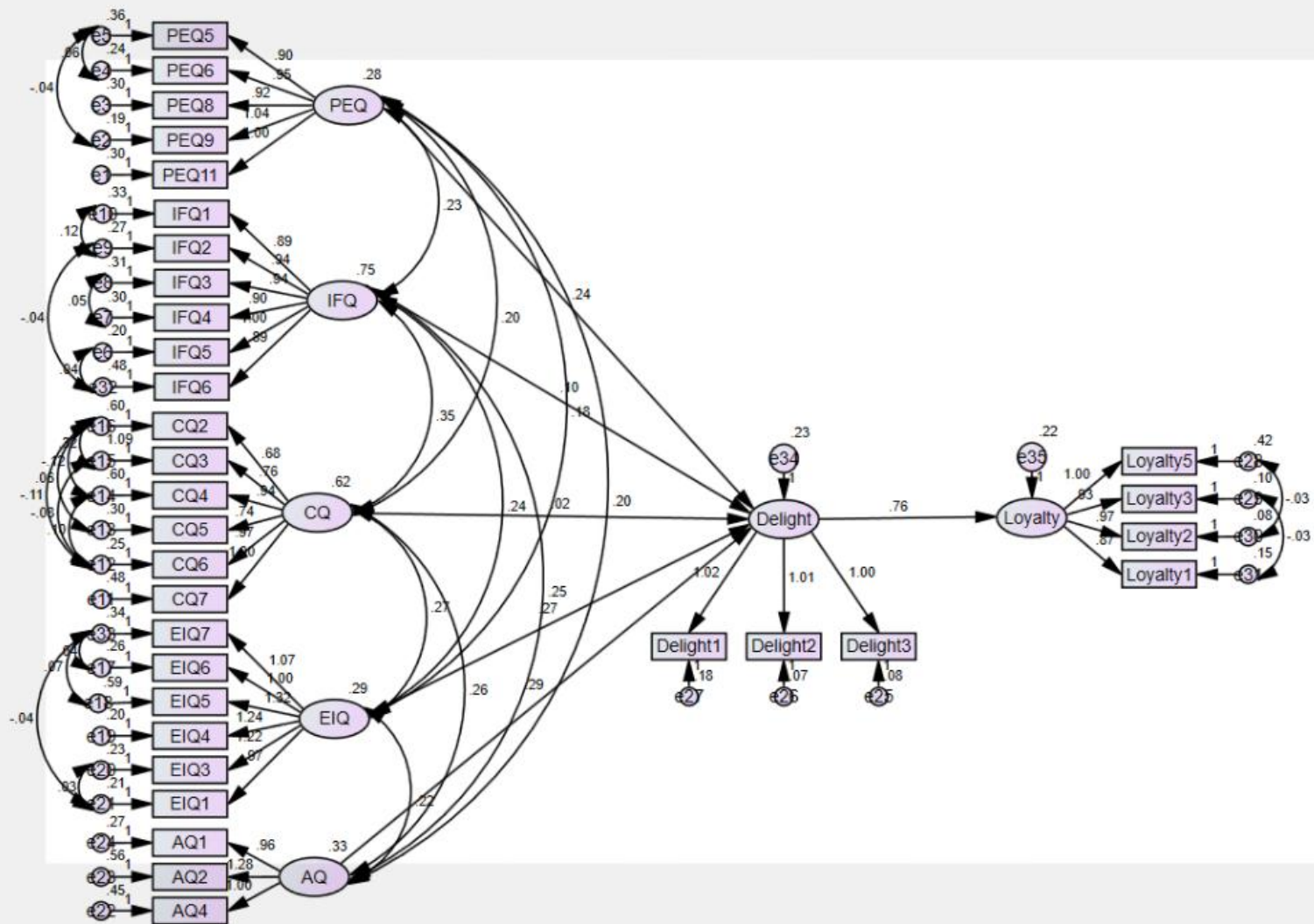


Table 5. 8 SEM goodness-of-fit results on study construct based on nationality and gender

Model (hypothesized seven-factor model)	χ^2	df	p value (< 0.001)	CMIN/df	CFI	IFI	RMSEA
Full sample model (n = 506)	964.769	460	0.000	2.097	0.954	0.954	0.047
Female model (n = 393)	967.358	460	0.000	2.103	0.944	0.944	0.053
Male model (n = 113)	844.532	460	0.000	1.832	0.838	0.843	0.086
Emirati model (n = 374)	1000.449	460	0.000	2.170	0.935	0.936	0.056
Non-Emirati model (n = 132)	791.007	460	0.000	1.716	0.887	0.890	0.074
Acceptable level				1.0–5.0	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≤ 0.08
				Hair et al. (2018)	Malhotra (2019)	Hair et al. (2018)	Malhotra (2019)
Note: CFI= comparative fit index; IFI= incremental fit index; RMSEA= root mean square error of approximation							

Table 5. 9 Result of hypothesis testing for the direct paths in the structural model

Hypothesis Path	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Test
H1 PEQ → Delight	0.277	4.463	***	Supported
H2 IFQ → Delight	0.066	2.346	0.019*	Supported
H3 CQ → Delight	0.027	0.762	0.446	Not Supported
H4 EIQ → Delight	0.210	3.277	0.001**	Supported
H5 AQ → Delight	0.320	4.556	***	Supported
H6 Delight → Loyalty	1.185	13.898	***	Supported

Note: PEQ = physical environment quality; IFQ = Islamic facilities quality; CQ = consumables quality; EIQ = employee interaction quality; AQ = access quality

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Hypothesis 1 states that physical environment quality is likely to positively affect visitors' delight. This was tested by examining the path coefficient between "physical environment quality" and "delight". The path coefficient was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.277$, $t = 4.463$, $p < 0.001$). Respondents with favorable views of physical environment quality were therefore likely to have a positive emotion (delight) towards the theme park, supporting Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 states that Islamic facilities quality is likely to positively affect visitors' delight. This was tested by examining the path coefficient between "Islamic facilities quality" and "delight". The path coefficient was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.066$, $t = 2.346$, $p = 0.019 < 0.05$). Respondents with favorable perceptions of Islamic facilities quality are therefore likely to feel delight towards the theme park, supporting Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 states that consumables quality is likely to positively affect visitors' delight. This was tested by examining the path coefficient between "consumables quality" and "delight". This was statistically insignificant ($\beta = 0.027$, $t = 0.762$, $p = 0.446$). This means that respondents who had favorable perceptions of food quality did not necessarily feel delight towards the theme park. Hypothesis 3 was therefore not supported.

Hypothesis 4 states that employee interaction quality is likely to positively affect visitors' delight. This was tested by examining the path coefficient between "employee interaction quality" and "delight". The path

coefficient was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.210$, $t = 3.277$, $p = 0.001 < 0.01$). Respondents with favorable perceptions of employee interaction quality were therefore likely to feel delight towards the theme park, supporting Hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5 states that access quality is likely to positively affect visitors' delight. This was tested by examining the path coefficient between "access quality" and "delight". The path coefficient was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.320$, $t = 4.556$, $p < 0.001$). Favorable perceptions of access quality are therefore likely to be associated with delight towards the theme park, supporting Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 6 states that delight is likely to positively affect visitors' loyalty toward theme parks. This was tested by examining the path coefficient between "delight" and "loyalty". The path coefficient was statistically significant ($\beta = 1.185$, $t = 13.898$, $p < 0.001$). This means that respondents who felt a high level of delight also had a high level of loyalty to the theme park, supporting Hypothesis 6.

5.4.2 Multi-Group Analysis (MGA)

MGA in SEM was used to examine the moderating role of nationality and gender on the relationship between customer delight and customer loyalty. MGA evaluates the whole model across different samples (Emirati vs. non-Emirati; male vs. female) and compares the structural relationship across these samples. The pairwise parameter comparison technique was used in this study. The value

of critical ratios for differences between men and women and Emiratis and non-Emirati indicated the moderating effect.

Two null hypotheses were framed:

Hypothesis 7a: Nationality does not moderate the effect of customer delight on customer loyalty to theme parks in the UAE.

Hypothesis 8a: Gender does not moderate the effect of customer delight on customer loyalty to theme parks in the UAE.

The acceptance or rejection of the study hypotheses (Hypotheses 7 and 8), will depend on the status of the null hypothesis. If the critical ratio of difference of the null hypothesis is between the threshold value of -1.96 to 1.96 (Hair et al., 2018), then the null hypothesis will be accepted, which means there is no moderating effect. If not, the null hypothesis will be rejected, and the study will conclude that there is a moderating effect.

Table 5.10 shows the critical ratio of differences for nationality. For the null hypothesis, the critical ratio of differences value is -2.151 , which is not between the threshold of -1.96 to 1.96 (Hair et al., 2018). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, which mean there is a significant difference between Emiratis and non-Emiratis on the path between customer delight and customer loyalty. Figure 5.3 confirms the moderating effect of nationality on the path between customer delight and customer loyalty, because the two lines are not parallel. At high delight level, Emirati visitors are more loyal than non-Emirati visitors. These findings support Hypothesis 7.

Table 5.11 shows the result of the multi-group analysis of gender as a moderator. The critical ratio of differences value is 1.942 for the null hypothesis, which is between the threshold values of -1.96 to 1.96 (Hair et al., 2018). The null hypothesis is therefore accepted, which means there is no significant difference between men and women on the path between customer delight and customer loyalty. Figure 5.4 shows a parallel line, indicating that gender does not moderate the path between customer delight and customer loyalty, and Hypothesis 8 is not supported.

Table 5. 10 Moderating effect of nationality

Path	Emirati (n = 374)	Non-Emirati (n = 132)	Path Significance			Critical Ratio of Differences	Test
	Estimate (CR)	Estimate (CR)	Δx^2	df	$\Delta x^2/df$		
H7 Delight → Loyalty	1.265 (12.391***)	0.904 (6.786***)	1672.545	920	1.818	-2.151	Supported

Figure 5.3 Moderating effect of nationality on customer delight–customer loyalty relationship

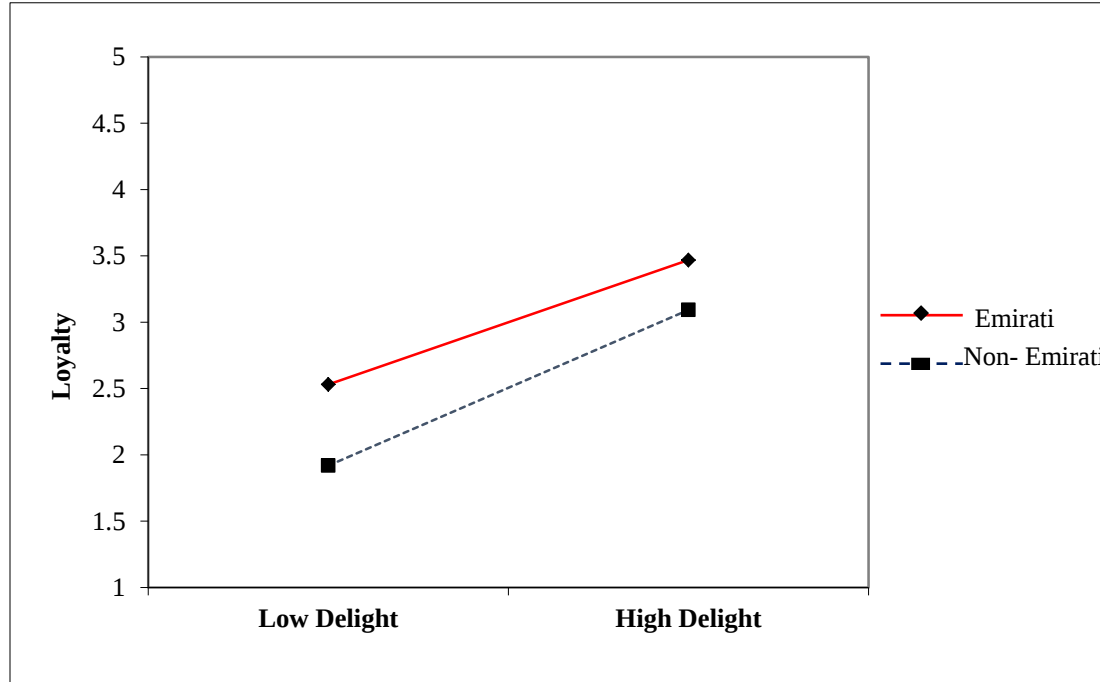
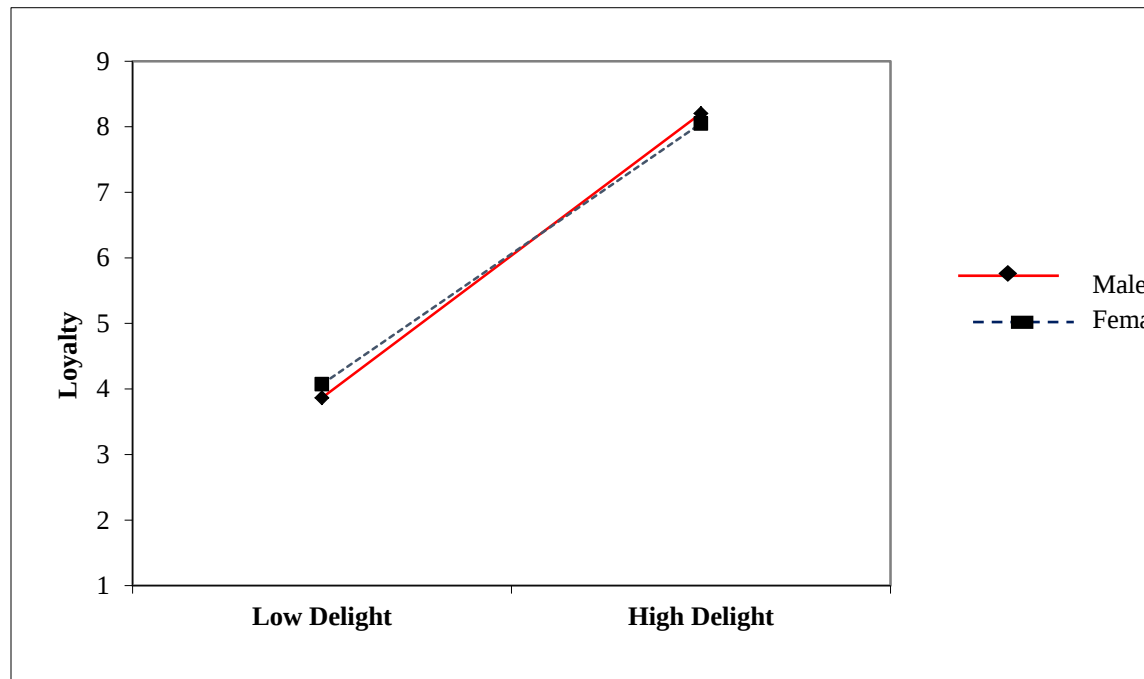


Table 5. 11 Moderating effect of gender

Path	Male (n=113)	Female (n=393)	Path Significance			Critical Ratio of Differences	Test
	Estimate (CR)	Estimate (CR)	Δx^2	df	$\Delta x^2/df$		
H7 Delight → Loyalty	1.002 (6.536***)	1.233 (12.314***)	1786.549	920	1.942	1.259	Not Supported

Figure 5.4 Moderating effect of gender on customer delight–customer loyalty relationship



5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analysis (descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling) and findings related to hypotheses proposed in Chapter 3. The next chapter will discuss these findings and set out their theoretical and managerial implications.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Implications

This chapter revisits the research objectives of this study and discusses how they have been addressed. It also sets out the theoretical and practical implications of the study before conclusions are drawn in the final chapter.

6.1 Research Objective 1: Development of an instrument to measure customers' perceptions of theme park service quality from an Islamic perspective

The instrument of measuring theme park service quality from an Islamic perspective was done through extensive literature review about general service quality dimensions and Islamic service quality dimensions. The instrument incorporates five dimensions as follows: physical environment quality, Islamic facility quality, consumable quality, employee interaction quality and access quality. "Physical environment quality" is considered one of the basic dimensions when it comes to measuring customers perception of service quality. Current study results are supported by prior research, which addresses the importance of "physical environment quality" in the context of theme parks (Chen et al., 2011; Tsang et al. ,2012; Wu et al. ,2018).

Second, "Islamic facilities quality" is a dimension that highlights the availability of Islamic facilities such as prayer rooms. Islamic facilities are crucial to Muslim customers, as they are need to perform their daily prayers on time, thus understanding of customers' perception of these facilities are the major interests of tourism and hospitality industries and destinations that target Muslim tourists (Battour et al. ,2011; Eid ,2015; Eid & El-Gohary ,2015).

Third, the findings of this study on “consumable quality” are not consistent with previous studies (An & Noh, 2009; Amin et al. ,2013; Battour et al. ,2014; Eid ,2015). Previous studies show that consumable quality which include general food quality (An & Noh , 2009; Amin et al. ,2013) and halal food quality (Battour et al. ,2014; Eid ,2015) to be an important dimensions of service quality to satisfy and delight customers including Muslim customers. This is referred to the unique setting of theme parks as they provide entertainment and leisure and food are considered ancillary service.

Fourth, “employee interaction quality” was identified as one of the dimensions of theme park service quality. The results is supported by previous studies in tourism and hospitality industry (Chen et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2016; Roberts-Lombard & Petzer ,2018; Wu & Ai ,2016a). In golf industry, Wu and Ai (2016a) study revealed that interaction quality overall and the three sub-dimensions (employee performance, tourists’ interactions with other tourists and employee ability) were all related to experiential quality. In the context of theme parks, Chen et al. (2011) found that personal interaction was a statistically significant determinant of satisfaction.

Finally, “access quality” was measured as one of the dimensions of theme parks service quality. Shonk and Chelladurai (2008, p. 592) defined access quality as “the ease and speed with which the tourist can reach the desired location”. Shonk and Chelladurai (2008) indicated that it should be easy for the visitor to reach the destination whether traveling by plane, train or car, and appropriate signage should be displayed at transport nodes to provide directions to points of interest. Thus, two studies in the context of theme park

by Chen et al. (2011) and Wu et al. (2018) support the suggestion by Shonk and Chelladurai (2008) that access quality is the most important element of an overall assessment of quality in theme parks.

“Physical environment quality” in the present study was composed of twelve items. “Islamic facilities quality” had six items, and “Consumable quality” was composed of seven items. “Employee interaction quality” was comprised of eight items. Finally, “Access quality” incorporated four items. The mean score of physical environment quality (4.27) was highest, followed by those of access quality (3.98), and Islamic facilities quality (3.97). The mean score of employee interaction quality was 3.92, followed by consumable quality (3.40). customers perception of theme park service quality from Islamic perspective was applied in the context of theme parks in the UAE.

6.2 Research Objective 2: Examination of the effect of visitors’ perceptions of theme park service quality dimensions on delight

Five hypotheses were developed to examine the effect of theme park service quality (both general and Islamic dimensions) on delight in an Islamic setting. The study found that “physical environment quality”, “Islamic facilities quality”, “employee interaction quality” and “access quality” significantly and positively affected “delight” in the context of theme parks in the UAE. However, “consumables quality” did not influence “delight” in this context.

Hypothesis 1, that theme park physical environment quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context, was supported ($\beta = 0.277$, $t = 4.463$, $p < 0.001$). This result is consistent with

previous studies (Ali et al., 2018; Barnes et al., 2016; Farooq et al., 2018; Slåtten et al., 2009, 2011). Barnes et al. (2016) found that tangibles (e.g. layout, cleanliness) had a significant impact on joy and surprise in the context of grocery stores. In the context of theme parks, several researchers have examined the influence of physical environment on customers' satisfaction, emotions and loyalty. Ali, Amin and Cobanoglu (2016) tested the relationship between physical environment, price perceptions, consumption emotions and customer satisfaction in Chinese resort hotels. They found that the physical environment had a strong effect on consumption emotions and price perceptions, which in turn affected customer satisfaction. Ali et al. (2018) indicated that ambient elements (e.g. lighting, cleanliness, temperature, and color scheme) of the physical environment have a significant impact on customer delight and satisfaction with theme parks. Also in the context of theme parks, Slåtten et al. (2009, 2011) and Chen et al. (2011) found that physical environment was an important influence on outcomes including customer satisfaction, emotion, perceived value and loyalty.

Hypothesis 2, that Islamic facilities quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in theme parks in an Islamic context, was also supported ($\beta = 0.066$, $t = 2.346$, $p = 0.019 < 0.05$). The role of Islamic facilities (e.g. prayer rooms) on customers' satisfaction and loyalty in the tourism and hospitality industry has been demonstrated by previous studies (Battour et al., 2011, 2014; Eid, 2015; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Han et al., 2019). Islamic facilities such as prayer rooms are important to Islamic customers (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). Availability of

religious services and provisions in service industries may attract new customers and increase the loyalty of existing customers (Eid, 2015). This study showed that facilities related to Islamic norms and values, such as prayer rooms, are important for Muslim customers visiting theme parks.

Hypothesis 3, that theme park consumables quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context, was not supported ($\beta = 0.027$, $t = 0.762$, $p = 0.446$). This result is different from previous studies which found that food quality is a significant predictor of delight and satisfaction (Amin et al., 2013; Yoon et al., 2010). However, the unique setting of theme parks offers some plausible explanations. In general, the purpose of visiting theme parks is entertainment and leisure. Food and beverages are therefore ancillary services, and not crucial to achieving visitors' objectives. The result was different from expectations because a number of previous studies have shown that halal food is important for Muslim customers in the tourism and hospitality industry (Battour et al., 2014; Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Han et al., 2019; Lari et al., 2020). Lari et al. (2020) found that availability of halal food was the most important service quality attribute for Muslim customers in the context of theme parks in the UAE. The non-significant relationship between consumables quality and delight in this study can be attributed to the country and study participants. In the UAE, all foods and beverages sold must be recognized by the Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA) as meeting the standards of the Accreditation Body for the UAE halal certification scheme (jas-anz, 2020). The UAE Halal Certification Scheme was established by ESMA to underpin

the importance of halal certified products in the UAE, so that consumers can have greater confidence in the status of the food they consume (jas-anz, 2020). Non-halal food must be displayed on a separate page in restaurant menus, in both English and Arabic (Malek, 2013). This may explain the non-significant relationship, because visitors are confident that the food is halal. Another plausible explanation relates to the study sample, which included non-Muslims, for whom halal food is not vital.

Hypothesis 4, that employee interaction quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in theme parks in an Islamic context, was supported ($\beta = 0.210$, $t = 3.277$, $p = 0.001 < 0.01$). The study findings are consistent with previous studies that found that employee interaction quality is an important factor in the tourism and hospitality sector because it contributes to consumers' satisfaction, emotions and behavioral intentions (Ali et al., 2018; Slåtten et al., 2011; Wu & Hsu, 2012; Wu & Li, 2017; Wu, Li, & Li, 2018). In this study, the majority of respondents were UAE nationals ($n = 423$) rather than Western. The findings support the suggestion of Hofstede et al. (2005) that Asian cultures are collectivist and Western cultures are individualist.

Hypothesis 5, that theme park access quality has a significant positive impact on customer delight in an Islamic context, was also supported ($\beta = 0.320$, $t = 4.556$, $p < 0.001$). This supports Shonk and Chelladurai's (2008) views on the importance of access quality in evaluating service quality. It is also in line with previous studies in the theme park context. Chen et al. (2011) found a positive significant relationship between access quality and customer

satisfaction, and Wu, Li and Li (2018) found that access quality was the fourth most important dimension of experiential quality.

6.3 Research Objective 3: To investigate the effect of customer delight on customer loyalty toward theme parks

Hypothesis 6 was that customer delight has a significant positive impact on customer loyalty in theme parks in an Islamic context. This was supported ($\beta = 1.185$, $t = 13.898$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is in line with previous studies in the tourism and hospitality industry (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Bufquin et al., 2018; Ladhari et al., 2017). In the context of theme parks, Ali et al. (2018), Jin et al. (2016), and Slåtten et al. (2009) all found a significant relationship between delight and loyalty.

A possible explanation for the finding is that the experiences offered in the theme park are pleasure-driven or hedonic. They therefore induce a range of emotional responses (Ali et al., 2018). Theme parks involve a lot of interaction between visitors and employees, which in turn creates either positive or negative emotions. This will form attitudinal and emotional commitments (Slåtten et al., 2011). Several scholars have emphasized the importance of delight in the marketing literature (Ali et al., 2018; Jin et al., 2016; Ladhari et al., 2017; Slåtten et al., 2009). Oliver et al. (1997) suggested that delight produces an emotional bond between customers and the service provider, providing additional psychological benefits to the customers.

6.4 Research Objective 4: Examination of the moderating effect of visitors' nationality on the relationship between visitors' delight and loyalty

Hypothesis 7, that nationality moderates the effect of customer delight on customer loyalty in theme parks in the UAE, was supported. The study findings suggest that theme park managers and operators in the UAE have addressed the needs of their multinational visitors. Understanding the differences allows managers to allocate resources more efficiently by providing appropriate services and facilities for visitors from different backgrounds. Visitor satisfaction with a service that meets their cultural and religious needs will increase their delight, and in turn have a significant effect on their loyalty toward the theme park. Another explanation for the moderating effect of nationality is that Emiratis consider theme parks 'in-house' tourism attractions, and may be more attached to them than their non-Emirati counterparts.

This finding is consistent with previous marketing studies (Promsivapallop & Jarumaneerat, 2018; Diallo et al., 2018). Promsivapallop and Jarumaneerat (2018) found more differences than similarities between Chinese and Australian tourists in terms of destination satisfaction. Chinese tourists were less satisfied with most aspects of their holiday (e.g. food, local transportation) than Australian tourists. Papastathopoulos et al. (2020) examined how the demographic profile of UAE residents (gender, level of education, nationality, length of residency and age) moderated the relationship between perceptions of the impact of tourism and support for tourism development. They found that nationality influenced the perceptions of

residents. Hammad et al. (2019) drew similar conclusions, and suggested that nationality moderated the relationship between residents' perception of negative social impacts, positive cultural impact, and negative and positive economic impact, and their support for tourism development.

6.5 Research Objective 5: Examination of the moderating effect of visitors' gender on the relationship between visitors' delight and loyalty

Hypothesis 8, that gender moderates the effect of customer delight on customer loyalty in theme parks in the UAE, was not supported. Theme park attraction and facilities are usually designed to be age- but not gender-sensitive. Attractions at theme parks usually apply restrictions by visitors' age. Most theme parks in the UAE have specified one day of the week for women only (Yas Waterworld, 2020a). In an Islamic context such as the UAE, this means that women have the same opportunities to use the theme park facilities as men, which should mean that their reactions are similar. Another reason could be that theme parks target families, so all family members are expected to participate in the activities. Theme park operators therefore usually set up the facilities and games in the theme park to appeal to all, with some age-based restrictions where necessary for safety.

This finding is consistent with that from Al-Jazzazi and Sultan (2017) in the context of banks. They found no differences between male and female customers in their perception of bank service quality. This is related to the context of the study, since banks, like theme parks, provide services to customers regardless of their gender. However, Cha and Borchgrevink (2019) found that assessment of food safety in restaurants had a significantly stronger

impact on customer satisfaction among women than men. This may be because women have more food safety concerns, and are more likely to engage in safe behaviors related to food.

6.6 Contribution of the Study

This study offers valuable and significant implications for both academics and practitioners.

6.6.1 Theoretical Implications

The study has several theoretical implications for service marketing research. First, it is one of the first empirical studies on the relationship between service quality perceptions from an Islamic perspective and delight, and the first in a theme park context. It extends the conceptualization of service quality (both general and Islamic dimensions), specifically from an Islamic perspective, and confirms that delight is a distinct construct (Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Lari et al., 2019).

Second, previous studies have shown mixed results on the relationship between delight and loyalty. This study supports previous findings in both the tourism and hospitality industry (Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Bufquin et al., 2018; Ladhari et al., 2017) and the theme park sector in particular (Ali et al., 2018; Jin et al., 2016; Slåtten et al., 2009) in confirming that there is a strong positive significant relationship between customer delight and loyalty.

Third, service quality research in the tourism and hospitality industry has disproportionately used models derived in a Western context (Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Tsang et al., 2012). This can limit their use in assessing service quality from different cultural and religious perspectives.

This study supports literature showing the benefits of incorporating both general dimensions (e.g. physical environment quality, employee interaction quality, access quality) and Islam-related dimension (e.g. Islamic facilities quality, halal food quality) when measuring customers' perception of service quality, especially in Islamic countries and non-Islamic countries that attract Muslim visitors (Battour et al., 2011, 2014; Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Lari et al., 2019; Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015).

Fourth, the findings of this study provide new insights by integrating service quality dimensions (both general and Islamic) with customer delight and loyalty. The relationship among general service quality dimensions (e.g. physical environment quality, employee interaction quality, access quality), delight and loyalty has previously been established and empirically examined in the tourism and hospitality industry, including theme parks (Ali, Kim, Ryu, 2016, 2018; Ladhari et al., 2017; Slåtten et al., 2011). However, the relationships among Islamic service quality dimensions (e.g. Islamic facilities quality, halal food quality), delight and loyalty have not previously been examined. This study provides support for previous work that suggests that service quality affects customers' delight and loyalty but shows the importance of incorporating Islamic dimensions for Muslim customers.

Fifth, there is evidence in the marketing literature of the influence of customers' cultural background on the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty (Promsivapallop & Jarumaneerat, 2018). However, very few studies have empirically examined this relationship. This study is the first of which

the author is aware to examine the influence of nationality on the relationship between delight and loyalty.

Sixth, this study has demonstrated that the moderating effect of gender depends to some extent on the context. Theme parks attract visitors regardless of their gender, and provide the same service and facilities for men and women. This study therefore adds to the marketing knowledge about the effect of gender on customers' behavior such as delight and loyalty in different circumstances.

Seventh, this study contributed to the body of knowledge by enhancing the existing scale used to measure physical environment from an Islamic perspective. A few previous studies have examined the quality of the physical environment from an Islamic perspective in various industries including fast food restaurants (Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015) and shopping malls (Gayatri & Chew, 2013). However, a focus on the physical environment of theme parks from an Islamic perspective is relatively rare. Lari et al. (2019) proposed physical environment quality and Islamic facilities quality as two dimensions of theme parks' physical environment from an Islamic perspective. These dimensions included items related to the color scheme, layout, and availability of prayer rooms in the theme parks. This study's findings provide empirical support that physical environment from an Islamic perspective should combine both general aspects such as sound and cleanliness, and Islamic aspects such as availability of prayer rooms.

Finally, this study is considered one of the few in the service quality literature that have investigated the quality of food and beverages from both a

general perspective and a cultural and religious point of view. Han et al. (2019) and Lari et al. (2020) measured food quality from both a general and Islamic perspective. This study provided empirical evidence about the relationship between consumables quality, including the quality of food and beverages from both a general and Islamic perspective, and customer delight in the context of theme parks.

6.6.2 Practical Implications

The study also has several practical implications. First, it makes clear that there are several dimensions in theme park service quality. This should enable theme park operators in Muslim and non-Muslim countries to develop more sophisticated marketing strategies. The study shows the importance of both generic service quality dimensions (e.g., physical environment quality, food quality, employee interaction quality and access quality) and Islamic service quality dimensions (e.g., Islamic facilities quality and halal food quality) for Muslim customers' delight in theme parks in the UAE. Theme park managers can increase their customers' level of delight by managing their general physical environment, interaction between customers and employees, Islamic facilities, and halal food quality within the parks.

Customer delight is strongly influenced by physical environment, including cleanliness, architecture, layout, color scheme and decoration. Theme park operators can capitalize on this by improving aesthetics on a regular basis, for example by redecorating, and ensuring that facilities such as restrooms and rest areas are well-maintained. It may be possible for managers

to adjust elements of the overall environment and evaluate the effect of these changes on customers' attitudes and behavioral intentions.

The SEM findings show that Islamic facilities (e.g. prayer rooms, availability of purifying facilities, availability of praying tools and Qibla direction indicators) are a major positive and significant influence on customer delight. This outcome is in line with previous research (Battour et al., 2014; Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Han et al., 2019). Theme parks in non-Muslim countries may need to pay more attention to such facilities in future, because Muslim tourism is a fast-developing market segments, and these customers' needs cannot be ignored.

This study's findings also show the significant role of interaction with staff on customers' delight. Research shows that employee satisfaction improves delivery of services, resulting in customer satisfaction (Wu et al., 2018). This suggests that one very important way to improve customer delight is to improve employee satisfaction by providing good training, rewards and motivation (Slåtten et al., 2009; Slåtten et al., 2011).

Consumables quality did not have a significant impact on customer delight, conflicting with previous studies on the importance of food quality (Yoon et al., 2010) and halal food quality (Battour et al., 2014; Gayatri & Chew, 2013; Han et al., 2019). This finding suggests that food quality and halal food quality did not affect customer emotions in the theme parks. This could be because the study was conducted in an Islamic country and visitors are confident of the quality and halal nature of the food. This factor may be more important in non-Muslim countries developing a theme park industry, and they

should focus their marketing campaigns to Muslim tourists on the availability of halal food.

In a multinational country such as the UAE, attraction operators should be clear about aspects that delight visitors of different nationalities. For example, one of the main theme parks in the UAE, Dubai Park and Resorts, operates four themed parks, including Bollywood Park Dubai. There are around 2.623 million Indian expats in the UAE (Globalmediainsight., 2020), so this park aims to address the needs of that particular group.

There is an additional implication associated with the imperative for tourism organizations to readdress their products to meet culturally oriented particularities and distinctions. This type of innovation needs investment in product development, research, and marketing. This is integral to a broader trend of considering Islam as a cultural philosophy (Eid, 2015; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). Merging components of the conservative Islamic lifestyle with the modern tourism industry could present new tourism options and spheres.

Theme park operators and management teams should also use regular market research and focus group interviews to understand customers' needs and expectations about the performance of the theme park. This applies particularly to niche markets (e.g. Muslim customers visiting theme parks in non-Muslim countries) or revenue-generating markets, such as repeat visitors.

6.7 Chapter Summary

This study emphasizes the importance of understanding customers' delight in relation to dimensions of service quality and loyalty in a theme park context. Four dimensions of service quality, physical environment quality,

Islamic facilities quality, employee interaction quality and access quality, had a significant impact on customer delight. Customer delight in turn had a significant impact on customer loyalty. The ability of theme parks to ensure customer delight by developing and offering appropriate services can therefore act as a competitive advantage, and in turn lead to customer loyalty.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter draws conclusions about the study. It also sets out the limitations of the research, and makes suggestions for future studies.

7.1 Overview of the Study

This study aimed to contribute to understanding about the effects of service quality, including both general and Islamic dimensions, on delight, and the relationship between delight and loyalty, using theme parks in the UAE as an example.

Few studies have examined theme park service quality and its relationship with delight and loyalty, especially the relationship between Islamic service quality dimensions and delight. Previous studies have not constructed models for the relationship between service quality dimensions (general and Islamic), delight and loyalty, nor empirically tested the relationships between the constructs. This study aimed to fill these gaps by addressing clear research objectives:

- (1) To develop an instrument that can measure customers' perception of theme park service quality from an Islamic perspective.

- (2) To examine the effect of customers' perception of theme park service quality dimensions on their delight.
- (3) To investigate the effect of delight on customers' loyalty in the context of theme parks;
- (4) To examine the moderating effect of customers' nationality (Emirati vs. non-Emirati) on the relationship between visitors' delight and loyalty; and
- (5) To examine the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between visitors' delight and loyalty.

The literature review showed that there was likely to be a link between general service quality dimensions, Islamic service quality dimensions, delight, and loyalty. It also showed the importance of evaluating customers' perceptions of Islamic service quality dimensions, because culture and religion can both influence perceptions of service quality in the tourism and hospitality industry.

The study set out a conceptual framework and eight hypotheses, including six direct hypotheses and two moderating hypotheses. Five dimensions of service quality were proposed to positively affect customer delight. Customer delight was hypothesized to positively affect customer loyalty toward themes park in the UAE. Finally, nationality and gender were proposed to have a moderating effect on the relationship between delight and loyalty. The study divided respondents into UAE nationals (Emiratis) and non-Emiratis.

The study instrument and individual items were generated from the literature, to cover general service quality dimensions, Islamic service quality dimensions, delight and loyalty. The sampling design, including sample size, survey sites, data collection process, data analysis method of the instrument and the procedures of the statistical analysis, were carefully selected to enable the study to answer the research questions. In total, 1000 potential respondents who satisfied the screening criteria of frequency of visits to the theme parks were sent emails inviting them to complete the questionnaire. In total, 658 questionnaires were returned, of which 506 were considered suitable for analysis. The results of EFA and CFA analysis were satisfactory, so SEM was used to test the proposed hypotheses. Five of the six paths specified in the structural model for the direct relationships were statistically significant, with only consumables quality not being significant. Nationality, but not gender, moderated the relationship between delight and loyalty. These findings have some significant theoretical and practical implications for academics and theme park operators. The study has therefore successfully developed a measurement model for perceptions of service quality from an Islamic perspective and confirmed the hypothesized outcomes in the final model.

7.2 Limitations and Suggestion for Future Studies

This study contributes to understanding of service quality from an Islamic perspective in the tourism and hospitality industry. However, the study had several limitations, which provide potentially interesting avenues for further research. This section discusses these limitations and makes suggestions for future research in the area of Islamic marketing.

First, the study was limited by its sampling frame. The data used to test the study hypotheses were collected from people identified from the database of visitors to three theme parks in Abu Dhabi city, UAE. The study was exploratory, and designed to test a theory, so convenience sampling was considered suitable as a basis for further research. However, caution must be used when generalizing the results of this study. Future studies should consider using a more systematic approach such as probability sampling to better represent the target sample. Systematic sampling allows researchers to guarantee that each unit of the sample represents an equal portion of the whole population.

Second, this study could be extended to other parts of the UAE to ascertain whether local culture plays a part in the determination of service quality. Dubai is the most cosmopolitan city in the world, and 83% of its population is foreign-born (emirates247, 2016). The findings of this study should therefore be generalized to the rest of the UAE with considerable caution, because visitors may have very different perceptions because of their cultural or regional backgrounds.

Third, the effectiveness of Islamic service quality dimensions should be studied in other Muslim countries (e.g. Malaysia, Indonesia) and non-Muslim countries (e.g. South Korea, France) to establish how to improve the emotional and behavioral intention of Muslim visitors. Perception of Islamic service quality dimensions may vary in other Muslim and non-Muslim countries because of the influence of other conditions (e.g., culture, environment). Further quantitative studies may therefore be useful for the

generalization of results about the importance of Islamic dimensions of service quality.

Fourth, the moderating effect of religion was not examined. This may, however, have a significant impact on consumer behaviors, especially in multi-religion countries. Fifth, an assessment of the perceptions of service quality (e.g., general and Islamic dimensions) in other sectors (such as healthcare, hotels, and museums) could also add to knowledge about service marketing.

Sixth, future research might wish to investigate whether the number of prior visits to other theme parks and/or the number of children in a family have a moderating role on the relationship between delight and loyalty. Finally, future studies might investigate the role of Islamic service quality dimensions on various outcomes that are important to marketers, such as customer loyalty and repeat purchase.

7.3 Conclusion

This study has addressed its five research objectives. It has examined the relationships between service quality dimensions (both general and Islamic), customer delight and loyalty to theme parks in an Islamic context. It has also developed a valid and reliable measurement instrument for service quality incorporating both general and Islamic dimensions.

All the service quality dimensions except consumables quality had a positive effect on visitors' delight in theme parks. This, in turn, positively affected visitors' loyalty to the theme parks. These findings may help theme park managers to improve their marketing to specific segments. This study

recommends further consideration of consumables quality, particularly halal food quality, among Muslim customers.

This study extends the literature about perceptions of service quality from an Islamic perspective in the international tourism and hospitality industry. It also provides a model integrating general and Islamic service quality dimensions, delight and loyalty. It therefore provides both an academic contribution and useful information and recommendations for practitioners in service marketing.

Finally, this study paves the way for future research in the field of Islamic service quality in other sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry. It should therefore be considered as an initial step towards enhancing knowledge on this topic.

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Appendices

Appendix- A

IRB Approval


جامعة أبوظبي
ABU DHABI UNIVERSITY

Abu Dhabi University Ethical Approval

Date(mm/dd/yyyy)

File Number: COBA – 20-03-00003 03/01/2020

Ethical Approval Notice

Principal Investigator/ Supervisor/ Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Lamya	Abbas Lari	Abu Dhabi University	Principal Investigator
Dr. Fauzia	Jabeen	Abu Dhabi University	Co-Investigator
Dr. Shilpa	Iyanna	Abu Dhabi University	Co-Investigator

File Number: COBA – 20-03-00003

Type of Project: PhD Degree

Title: Service Quality and Theme Parks in the UAE: Relationship between Service Quality, Delight and Loyalty from an Islamic Perspective

<u>Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</u>	<u>Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</u>
03/01/2020	02/28/2021

Special Conditions / Comments

NA

IRB Chair

Dr. Rania Al Dweik



Office of Research & Sponsored Programs
مكتب البحث العلمي

Appendix- B

Survey Questionnaire (English Version)

Service Quality and Theme Parks in the UAE: Relationship between Service Quality, Delight and Loyalty from an Islamic Perspective

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Lamya A. Lari. As part of my doctoral research, I am conducting a survey on the topic “*Service Quality and Theme Parks in the UAE: Relationship between Service Quality, Delight and Loyalty from an Islamic Perspective*”. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceived service quality of theme parks from an Islamic cultural perspective and its relationship with delight and loyalty. The findings will be applied to improve service quality in theme parks. The study will help theme park owners and managers to improve their services in response to customer need. The survey will require no more than 10 minutes of your time.

Your response will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for academic purposes only. The survey contains no personally identifying information. If you agree to participate, you may decline to answer any questionnaire item(s) you choose and may stop participating at any time. If you require additional information or have questions about this research, please feel free to contact me.

Your co-operation is very much appreciated and will be a valuable contribution towards the success of this research project.

Doctoral Candidate:

Lamya Abbas Lari

DBA Candidate

College of Business

Abu Dhabi University

E-mail: lamyalari@hotmail.com or 1055495@students.adu.ac.ae

DBA Committee Chair:

Dr. Shilpa Iyanna

Associate Professor of Marketing

College of Business, Abu Dhabi University

E-mail: shilpa.iyanna@adu.ac.ae

DBA Committee member:

Dr. Fauzia Jabeen

Associate Professor of Management

College of Business, Abu Dhabi University

E-mail: fauzia.jabeen@adu.ac.ae

Section A: Demographic Information

☐ **I am over 18 years and I am participating voluntarily**

The following questions are about demographic information. Please choose the one answer per question that you consider most applies to you.

1. What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. What is your age?

☐ 18–24 years old ☐ 25–34 years old
☐ 35–44 years old ☐ 45–54 years old
☐ 55–64 years old ☐ + 65 years old

3. What is your marital status?

☐ Single ☐ Married
☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

☐ High school or equivalent ☐ Bachelor's degree
☐ Master's degree ☐ Doctoral degree
☐ Other (please specify) -----

5. What is your nationality?

☐ Emirati ☐ Non-Emirati (please specify) -----

6. ☐ Where is your current residence?

(If you are resident in the UAE, please answer question 7 and 8)

☐ UAE ☐ Other (please specify) -----

7. How many years have you lived in the UAE?

☐ Fewer than 5 years ☐ Between 5 and 9 years
☐ Between 10 and 19 years ☐ 20 years or more

8. What is your average monthly income in Emirati Dirhams (AED)?

☐ Below 5,000 AED ☐ 5,000 AED–10,999 AED
☐ 11,000 AED–49,999 AED ☐ 50,000 AED–100,000 AED
☐ Over 100,000 AED

9. Which theme parks have you visited?

☐ Yas Waterworld ☐ Ferrari World, Abu Dhabi ☐ Warner Bros. World

In Sections **B** to **H**, please **CIRCLE** the appropriate number to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on a scale of **1** to **5**. If you are unable to answer a question, use the neutral value of **3** on the scale.

① **Strongly disagree** ② **Disagree** ③ **Neutral** ④ **Agree** ⑤ **Strongly agree**

Section B: Physical Environment Quality

The following questions are about the quality of the physical environment (e.g. facilities, layout) of the theme park you visited most recently. The scale ranges from **1 (strongly disagree)** to **5 (strongly agree)**. Please circle only one number per statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The background music was pleasant	1	2	3	4	5
2. The theme park has a nice smell	1	2	3	4	5
3. The atmosphere was cheerful	1	2	3	4	5
4. The theme park name was clean.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The theme park name has up-to-date facilities.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The architecture was attractive.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The signs used were helpful to me.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The layout makes the facilities easy to use	1	2	3	4	5
9. The color scheme was attractive.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The style of the decoration was fashionable	1	2	3	4	5
11. The facilities were maintained well.	1	2	3	4	5
12. In general, the physical environment pleased me.	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Islamic-Friendly Facilities Quality

The following questions are about the quality of the Islamic-friendly facilities (e.g. prayer rooms) of the theme park you visited most recently. The scale ranges from **1 (strongly disagree)** to **5 (strongly agree)**. Please circle only one number per statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The theme park provides a clear place for saying prayers	1	2	3	4	5
2. The theme park provides purifying (Wudhu before prayer) facilities	1	2	3	4	5
3. The theme park provides Sajadah/Mukena for praying tools	1	2	3	4	5
4. The theme park provides the direction of Qibla/Mecca	1	2	3	4	5
5. The theme park provides a proper prayer facility	1	2	3	4	5
6. The theme park understands that accommodating Islamic religious activities is important for me	1	2	3	4	5

Section D: Consumables Quality

The following questions are about the quality of the consumables (e.g. food and beverages) of the theme park you visited most recently. The scale ranges from **1 (strongly disagree)** to **5 (strongly agree)**. Please circle only one number per statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Food and beverages were varied in the theme park	1	2	3	4	5
2. Food and beverages tasted good in the theme park	1	2	3	4	5
3. Food and beverages prices were reasonable in the theme park	1	2	3	4	5
4. Halal food outlets/restaurants in the theme park clearly display a halal logo	1	2	3	4	5
5. Halal food and beverage offered in theme park were clean, safe, and hygienic	1	2	3	4	5
6. Halal food providers in the theme park are accredited with halal certification.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Availability of halal food attracted me to visit the theme park	1	2	3	4	5

Section E: Employee Interaction Quality

The following questions are about the quality of the employee interaction (e.g. behavior, attitude of employees) of the theme park you visited most recently. The scale ranges from **1 (strongly disagree)** to **5 (strongly agree)**. Please circle only one number per statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The employees are willing to help.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The employees are polite and friendly	1	2	3	4	5
3. The employees give customers personal attention.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The employees are passionate	1	2	3	4	5
5. The employees provided relief and comfort to me when I felt bored because of the long queues	1	2	3	4	5
6. The employees are neat and nicely dressed.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The employees look attractive.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The theme park brings the local culture to visitors	1	2	3	4	5

Section F: Access Quality

The following questions are about the quality of the access (e.g. location, operating hours) of the theme park you visited most recently. The scale ranges from **1 (strongly disagree)** to **5 (strongly agree)**. Please circle only one number per statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. In general, it was easy to find and reach the theme park	1	2	3	4	5
2. Parking close to the theme park was quick and easy.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It took little time to enter the theme park	1	2	3	4	5
4. The opening hours of the theme park are convenient for my needs	1	2	3	4	5

Section G: Customer Delight

The following questions are about your level of delight in the theme park you visited most recently. The scale ranges from **1 (strongly disagree)** to **5 (strongly agree)**. Please circle one answer per statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I felt delighted at some time during my visit to the theme park	1	2	3	4	5
2. I felt gleeful at some time during my visit to the theme park	1	2	3	4	5
3. I felt elated at some time during my visit to the theme park	1	2	3	4	5

Section H: Customer Loyalty

The following questions are about your loyalty toward the theme park you visited most recently. The scale ranges from **1 (strongly disagree)** to **5 (strongly agree)**. Please circle one answer per statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I say positive things about the theme park to other people.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I would recommend the theme park to someone who seeks my advice.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I encourage my friends and relatives to visit the theme park	1	2	3	4	5
4. I consider the theme park to be my first choice in theme park entertainment.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I intend to visit the theme park more often in the future.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix- C

Survey Questionnaire (Arabic Version)

تحية طيبة وبعد،

اسمي لمياء عباس لاري. جزء من رسالة الدكتوراه الخاص بي، أقوم بإجراء مسح حول موضوع "جودة الخدمة في المدن الترفيهية بدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة: العلاقة بين جودة الخدمة والبهجة والولاء من منظور إسلامي". الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو التحقق في نوعية الخدمات المقدمة من قبل المدن الترفيهية من منظور إسلامي وعلاقتها بالبهجة والولاء. سيتم تطبيق النتائج لتحسين جودة الخدمة في المدن الترفيهية. ستساعد الدراسة مالكي ومستثمري المدن الترفيهية على تحسين خدماتهم استجابة لاحتياجات العملاء. لن يتطلب الاستبيان أكثر من 15 دقيقة من وقتك. سيتم الاحتفاظ بإجاباتك بسرية تامة واستخدامها فقط للأغراض الأكاديمية. لا يحتوي الاستبيان على معلومات التعريف الشخصية.

يمكنك رفض الإجابة على أي عنصر (عناصر) تختاره من الاستبيان والتوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت. إذا كنت بحاجة إلى معلومات إضافية أو لديك سؤال حول هذا الاستبيان ، فلا تتردد في الاتصال بي. إن تعاونك يحظى بتقدير كبير وسيكون إسهاماً قيماً في نجاح هذا المشروع الاستبياني

الباحثة:

لمياء عباس درويش لاري

طالبة دكتوراة

كلية الإدارة، جامعة أبوظبي

البريد الإلكتروني: lamiyalari@hotmail.com or 1055495@students.adu.ac.ae

القسم A: البيانات الأولية

□ أقر بأنني عمري 18 سنة وهذه المشاركة تطوعية من قبلي.

الأسئلة التالية تدور حول البيانات الشخصية. يرجى اختيار إجابة واحدة لكل سؤال.

1. الجنس:

□ ذكر □ أنثى

2. كم عمرك؟

□ 24-18 سنة □ 34-25 سنة
□ 44-35 سنة □ 55-45 سنة
□ 55-65 سنة □ أكثر من 65 سنة

ما هي حالتك الاجتماعية؟

□ أعزب □ متزوج
□ مطلق □ أرمل

3. ما هو أعلى مؤهل تعليمي حصلت عليه؟

□ الثانوية العامة أو ما يعادلها □ درجة بكالوريوس
□ درجة الماجستير □ درجة الدكتوراه
□ (غير ذلك، يرجى التحديد) -----

4. أما هي جنسيتك؟

□ إماراتي □ غير إماراتي (يرجى التحديد) -----

5. ما هي محل إقامتك: (إذا كنت مقيم في الإمارات، يرجى الإجابة على السؤال رقم 7 و 8)

□ الإمارات □ غير ذلك (يرجى التحديد) -----

6. ما هو عدد السنوات التي قضيتها في الإمارات؟

□ أقل من 5 سنوات □ 9-5 سنوات
□ 19-10 سنة □ أكثر من 20 سنة

7. ما هو متوسط دخلك الشهري بالدرهم الإماراتي (د.إ.)؟

□ أقل من 5000 (د.إ.) □ 10499-5000 (د.إ.)
□ 49999-11000 (د.إ.) □ 100000-50000 (د.إ.)
□ أكثر من 100000 (د.إ.)

8. أي من المدن الترفيهية قمت بزيارتها:

□ حديقة ياس المائية □ عالم فيراري-أبوظبي □ وارنر برانرز - أبوظبي

في الأقسام من A إلى IH، يرجى وضع دائرة حول الرقم المناسب للإشارة إلى مدى موافقتك أو عدم موافقتك مع كل من العبارات التالية من المقياس 1 إلى 5. إذا لم تتمكن من الإجابة على السؤال، فاستخدم القيمة المحايدة 3 من المقياس

① لا أوافق بشدة ② لا أوافق ③ محايد ④ أوافق ⑤ أوافق بشدة

القسم B: جودة البيئة المادية المحيطة

تتعلق الأسئلة التالية بجودة البيئة (على سبيل المثال، المرافق، التخطيط) للمدينة الترفيهية التي قمت بزيارتها مؤخرًا. يتراوح المقياس من 1 (لا أوافق بشدة) إلى 5 (أوافق بشدة). يرجى اختيار رقم واحد فقط لكل عبارة.

العبارات	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
الموسيقى بخلفية المكان كانت مبهجة	1	2	3	4	5
المدينة الترفيهية لها رائحة لطيفة	1	2	3	4	5
الجو العام كان مبهجًا	1	2	3	4	5
المدينة الترفيهية كانت نظيفة	1	2	3	4	5
المدينة الترفيهية تحتوي على مرافق حديثة تواكب العصر	1	2	3	4	5
التصميم الهندسي كان جذابًا	1	2	3	4	5
العلامات واللافتات الإرشادية المستخدمة في المدينة الترفيهية كانت مفيدة	1	2	3	4	5
الترتيب والتنسيق يجعل من المرافق سهلة الاستخدام	1	2	3	4	5
تنسيق الألوان في المدينة الترفيهية كان جذابًا	1	2	3	4	5
طراز ديكور المدينة الترفيهية كان جذابًا	1	2	3	4	5
المرافق تم صيانتها بشكل جيد	1	2	3	4	5
بشكل عام، البيئة المادية المحيطة تسعدني	1	2	3	4	5

القسم C: جودة المرافق المتوافقة مع الشريعة الإسلامية

تتعلق الأسئلة التالية بجودة المرافق المتوافقة مع الشريعة الإسلامية (على سبيل المثال، غرف الصلاة) للمدينة الترفيهية التي قمت بزيارتها مؤخرًا. يتراوح المقياس من 1 (لا أوافق بشدة) إلى 5 (أوافق بشدة). يرجى اختيار رقم واحد فقط لكل عبارة.

العبارات	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
توفر المدينة الترفيهية غرف/ مرافق للصلاة	1	2	3	4	5
توفر المدينة الترفيهية مرافق للوضوء	1	2	3	4	5
توفر المدينة الترفيهية مستلزمات الصلاة مثل سجادة الصلاة في مرافق الصلاة	1	2	3	4	5
يوجد ملصقات توضح اتجاه القبلة في مرافق الصلاة	1	2	3	4	5
توفر المدينة الترفيهية مرافق مناسبة للصلاة	1	2	3	4	5
تدرك المدينة الترفيهية أهمية استيعاب الشعائر الدينية بالنسبة لي	1	2	3	4	5

القسم D: جودة المواد الاستهلاكية

تتعلق الأسئلة التالية بجودة المواد الاستهلاكية (على سبيل المثال، الهدايا التذكارية) للمدينة الترفيهية التي قمت بزيارتها مؤخرًا . يتراوح المقياس من 1 (لا أوافق بشدة) إلى 5 (أوافق بشدة). يرجى اختيار رقم واحد فقط لكل عبارة.

العبارة	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
كانت المأكولات والمشروبات متنوعة في المدينة الترفيهية	1	2	3	4	5
كانت المأكولات والمشروبات ذات مذاق جيد في المدينة الترفيهية	1	2	3	4	5
كانت أسعار المأكولات والمشروبات مناسبة / مقبولة في المدينة الترفيهية	1	2	3	4	5
يعرض شعار (حلال) بالمطاعم المتواجدة في المدينة الترفيهية	1	2	3	4	5
المأكولات والمشروبات الحلال المقدمة في المدينة الترفيهية نظيفة و آمنة و صحية	1	2	3	4	5
المطاعم المتواجدة في المدينة الترفيهية معتمدة بشهادة (حلال)	1	2	3	4	5
توافر المأكولات الحلال في المدينة الترفيهية جذبني لزيارتها	1	2	3	4	5

القسم E: جودة معاملة الموظفين

تتعلق الأسئلة التالية بجودة معاملة الموظفين (على سبيل المثال، سلوك الموظفين) في المدينة الترفيهية التي قمت بزيارتها مؤخرًا . يتراوح المقياس من 1 (لا أوافق بشدة) إلى 5 (أوافق بشدة). يرجى اختيار رقم واحد فقط لكل عبارة.

العبارة	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
موظفي المدينة الترفيهية على اتم الاستعداد	1	2	3	4	5
موظفي المدينة الترفيهية مهذبين وودودين	1	2	3	4	5
أعطى موظفي المدينة الترفيهية اهتماما شخسيا للعملاء	1	2	3	4	5
موظفي المدينة الترفيهية متحمسين	1	2	3	4	5
قدم موظفي المدينة الترفيهية سبل الراحة لي أثناء فترات الانتظار في الصفوف الطويلة	1	2	3	4	5
موظفي المدينة الترفيهية يرتدون ملابس أنيقة	1	2	3	4	5
موظفي المدينة الترفيهية جذابين	1	2	3	4	5
تضفي الحديقة الترفيهية بثقافتها المحلية (الأماراتية) على الزوار	1	2	3	4	5

القسم F: جودة الوصول للمكان

تتعلق الأسئلة التالية بجودة الوصول للمكان (على سبيل المثال، الموقع، ساعات العمل) في المدينة الترفيهية التي قمت بزيارتها مؤخراً. يتراوح المقياس من 1 (لا أوافق بشدة) إلى 5 (أوافق بشدة). يرجى اختيار رقم واحد فقط لكل عبارة.

العبارات	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
بشكل عام ، كان من السهل الوصول إلى المدينة الترفيهية والعثور عليها	1	2	3	4	5
وقوف السيارات بالقرب من المدينة الترفيهية كان سهلاً	1	2	3	4	5
استغرق الدخول إلى المدينة الترفيهية وقتاً قليلاً	1	2	3	4	5
كانت ساعات عمل المدينة الترفيهية ملائمة لي	1	2	3	4	5

القسم G: البهجة و السعادة

تتعلق الأسئلة التالية بمدى البهجة التي شعرت بها أثناء زيارتك للمدينة الترفيهية. يتراوح المقياس من 1 (لا أوافق بشدة) إلى 5 (أوافق بشدة). يرجى اختيار رقم واحد فقط لكل عبارة.

العبارات	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
شعرت بقيمة السعادة أثناء زيارتي للمدينة الترفيهية	1	2	3	4	5
شعرت بالمرح أثناء زيارتي للمدينة الترفيهية	1	2	3	4	5
شعرت بالبهجة أثناء زيارتي للمدينة الترفيهية	1	2	3	4	5

القسم H: الولاء للمدينة الترفيهية

تتعلق الأسئلة التالية بجودة المأكولات الحلال (على سبيل المثال، النظافة) في المدينة الترفيهية التي قمت بزيارتها مؤخراً. يتراوح المقياس من 1 (لا أوافق بشدة) إلى 5 (أوافق بشدة). يرجى اختيار رقم واحد فقط لكل عبارة.

العبارات	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
أنا أتحدث بأشياء إيجابية حول الحديقة الترفيهية مع الأشخاص الآخرين	1	2	3	4	5
أوصي بمن يطلب نصيحتي بالذهاب الى المدينة الترفيهية	1	2	3	4	5
أوصي أصدقائي وأقربائي على زيارة المدينة الترفيهية	1	2	3	4	5
ساعتبر المدينة الترفيهية خياراً الأول في مجال التسلية و الترفيه	1	2	3	4	5
أنوي القيام بزيارة المدينة الترفيهية بصورة أكثر تكراراً في المستقبل	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix- D

Awards received by Ferrari World Abu Dhabi and Yas Waterworld

Ferrari World Abu Dhabi Awards List		
Award	Year	Description
IAAPA (<i>International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions</i>)- Brass Ring Winner	2011	For Productions & Entertainment Category for Formula Rossa in 2011 (The award recognizes the best new product in the amusement parks industry)
World Travel Award	2015, 2016	The Middle East's Leading Tourist Attraction (The award is recognized globally as the ultimate hallmark of quality)
Top Brand Health (UAE)	2016	The Leisure and Entertainment Category - 3rd place in 2016 (550 brands were ranked, and the measure is based on brand's quality and reputation)
World Travel Award	2017, 2018, 2019	The Middle East's Leading Theme Park (The award acknowledges excellence in the global tourism industry)
TripAdvisor	2017, 2018, 2019	Trip Advisor's Certificate of Excellence (The award honors hospitality businesses that deliver consistently great services)
MENALAC	2018	The Best Theme Park Award from MENALAC in 2018 (The award honors quality operations, safety practices and exceptional personnel)
MENALAC	2019	Most Innovative New Product/Indoor Installation (Ferrari World Abu Dhabi's Winterfest activation)

Source: Ferrari World (2020)

Yas Waterworld Abu Dhabi Award List		
Award	Year	Description
World Travel Award	2018	The Middle East's Leading Water Park

		(The award honors excellence in tourism and hospitality industries globally)
TripAdvisor	2018	Trip Advisor's Certificate of Excellence (The award for earning a certificate of Excellence every year for the past five years)
MENALAC	2018, 2019	The Best Waterpark Award for the Year 2018, 2019 (The award honors quality operations, safety practices and exceptional personnel)
World Travel Award	2019	The World's Leading Water Park (The award serves to acknowledge excellence in the global tourism industry)

Source: Yas Waterworld (2020b)

Appendix- E

Proofreading Certificate

MELISSA LEFFLER

258 Rectory Road
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
B75 7SA

melissa.leffler@virginmedia.com

Freelance writer and editor

All types of editing and writing work undertaken

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To whom it may concern,

I certify that I have edited a draft of the dissertation "Service quality and theme parks in the UAE: relationship between service quality, delight and loyalty from an Islamic perspective" for Lamya Lari.



Melissa Leffler