ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I knew from the beginning that pursuing doctoral study is a difficult and challenging task. Throughout this long journey, I have gained a lot by learning to persevere despite hardship. I am grateful for all of the support and contribution along this journey. I would never have successfully completed this thesis without the assistance of numerous people who I am indebted to.

First of all, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to Professor Dr. Md. Nor Othman, whose thoughtful consideration and guidance has been invaluable. Without his guidance, support and inspiration during the most critical period of my PhD journey, I would not have been able to accomplish this study. To him, I wish to say ‘You are a wonderful supervisor, professor and researcher!’

My sincere thanks also go to Associate Professor Dr. Ong Fon Sim for her earlier guidance on this thesis. I would like to extend special thanks to Dr. Sharifah Faridah Binti Syed Alwi, who took time out of her busy schedule to provide valuable feedback and direction on the use of AMOS software during the data analysis stage. My appreciation goes to Associate Professor Dr. Nik Kamariah Nik Mat and Associate Professor Dr. Norazah Mohd Suki, for their professional advice on data analysis procedures.

As well, my sincere gratitude goes to my immediate superior, Ms. Christine Lim Yoke Snow, who has been most supportive whenever I need flexibility and time off for my study. I am grateful to my colleagues in the School of Arts and Social Sciences, KDU College, for all of their support, interest and encouragement throughout the completion of this study. Special thank to Lisa and Dominic for having faith in me. A simple ‘you can do it, keep it up!’ really means a lot to me.

Thanks to my peers, Yughee, Sabrina, Angie, Wen Jie and Suhazimah Dzazali, for the thoughtful and stimulating words they gave. A special thank also goes to Syuhaily Osman, who was generous enough to share her knowledge and information with me. My appreciation also extends to those who helped up in collecting data.

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks and appreciation to my parents for their emotional support no matter what path I choose. Saving the most important for last, I wish to give my heartfelt thanks to my husband, Adrian, whose unconditional love, patience, and continual support of my academic endeavours over the past several years enabled me to complete this thesis.

Finally, there are my children, who have given me much happiness and keep me hopping. Each one is deeply loved in a unique way. My son, Li-jin, has grown up watching me study and juggle with family and work. Exuan, the little one, who always try to do everything to make her presence felt, each has contributed immeasurably to family enjoyment in a special way. I hope I have been a good mother and that I have not lost too much during the tenure of my study.