SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS ON DOMESTIC TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR DURING
PANDEMIC COVID-19

AMANIE HUSNA BINTI MOHD AZLEE

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School of Tourism Planning
Faculty of Built Environment and Surveying
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic brings tragedy to all aspect of life globally and tourism industry has been hit hardly as national boarder are closed with restricted travel permitted. From the current situation, domestic tourism started experience dramatic booming after government turns to domestic front and introduce various measures after the MCO being loose in RMCO phase. Since then, Malaysian have been encouraged to spend their leisure or their holiday to visit local destination to release their stressed after being lock up at their resident. The main objective for this study is to know the Malaysia behavior when they start travel during pandemic situation. This study was conducted by observing Malaysian review posting through Facebook about their journey that been done during RMCO phase in June 2020 until before the total lockdown on May 2021 was implemented. The result showed 423 reviews posting been collected during the time period. The data were analyzed using SPSS with descriptive analysis and cross-tabulation analysis to knew their behavior and destination preferred when they travel during COVID-19. It showed that they prefer travel with their own vehicles, stay at resort, family members as their fellow travel and travel in the city or urban area was the main chosen in this study. Furthermore, all the tourist were positively accepting the current restricted SOP for their own goods and aware about the current disease. It discovers, among others things, Malaysian are mainly made up of urban travelers, prefer to engage in rather conventional activities. The finding suggests to tourism industry player to focus more in promote with a good campaign and vouchers and improve their facilities since Malaysian are searching and ready for a fresh destination in new norm.

ABSTRAK

Pandemik COVID-19 merupakan tragedi kepada seluruh dunia dan industri pelancongan hampir terjejas keseluruhan kerana penutupan sempadan negara dan perjalanan terhad dilaksanakan. Dari situasi semasa, pelancongan domestik mula mengalami ledakan dramatik selepas kerajaan beralih ke sektor domestik dan memperkenalkan pelbagai kelonggaran selepas PKP di dalam fasa PKPP. Sejak itu, rakyat Malaysia telah digalakkan untuk meluangkan masa lapang atau percutian mereka untuk melawat destinasi tempatan untuk melepaskan tekanan mereka selepas dikurung di kediaman mereka. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengetahui tingkah laku rakyat Malaysia apabila mereka memulakan perjalanan semasa situasi pandemik. Kajian ini dijalankan dengan memerhatikan ulasan Malaysia yang disiarkan melalui Facebook tentang perjalanan mereka yang telah dilakukan semasa fasa PKPP pada Jun 2020 sehingga sebelum penutupan keseluruhan pada Mei 2021 dilaksanakan. Hasilnya menunjukkan 423 ulasan penyiaran telah dikumpulkan dalam tempoh masa. Data dianalisis menggunakan SPSS dengan analisis deskriptif dan analisis penjadualan silang untuk mengetahui tingkah laku dan destinasi yang digemari semasa mereka melakukan perjalanan semasa COVID-19. Ia menunjukkan mereka lebih gemar melancong dengan kenderaan sendiri, menginap di resort, ahli keluarga sebagai peneman sepanjang perjalanan dan melancong di bandar atau kawasan bandar menjadi pilihan utama dalam kajian ini. Tambahan pula, semua pelancong secara positif menerima SOP terhad semasa untuk barangan mereka sendiri dan sedar tentang situasi semasa. Ia turut mendapati, rakyat Malaysia kebanyakannya terdiri daripada pengembara bandar, lebih suka melakukan aktiviti yang agak konvensional. Penemuan itu mencadangkan kepada pemain industri pelancongan untuk lebih fokus dalam mempromosikan dengan kempen dan baucar yang baik serta menambah baik kemudahan mereka memandangkan rakyat Malaysia sedang mencari dan bersedia untuk destinasi baharu dalam norma baharu.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN   -   Association of Southeast Asian Nations

CMCO   -   Conditional Movement Control Order

COVID-19   -   Coronavirus Disease 2019

DOSM   -   Department of Statistic Malaysia

EMCO   -   Enhanced Movement Control Order

MATTA   -   Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents

MCMC   -   Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission

MCO   -   Movement Control Order

MOH   -   Ministry of Health

MKN   -   Majlis Keselamatan Negara

MOTAC   -   Ministry of Tourism, arts and Culture

RMCO   -   Recovery Movement Control Order

RM   -   Ringgit Malaysia

SOP   -   Standard Operating Procedure

SARS   -   Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

UNWTO   -   World Tourism Organization (United Nations)

WHO   -   World Health Organization

WTTC   -   World Travel and Tourism Council

LIST OF SYMBOLS

%	-	Per cent
+	-	Plus
#	-	Hashtag
>	-	More than
<	-	Less than

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is to explain the introduction of this study. It is containing the background of study, problem statement, research question, aim & objective, conceptual framework, research flowchart, research limitation, research significant and expected outcome for this study.

1.1 Background of Study

Tourism is a fascinating, essential, and massive field that has to be researched and expanded. It generates clear economic benefits (Ninemeier & Perdue, 2008) and job prospects in the services manufacturing industry. Until now, the tourism industry has risen considerably, and in 2000 and succeeding years, it was classified as the second largest foreign money earner behind manufacturing (Tourism Malaysia, 2003)

Tourism is an important area for every country's economic development. The UNWTO describes tourism as a social, cultural, and economic phenomena that includes individuals travelling to countries or places outside of their usual surroundings for personal or business/occupational purposes. Through the creation of employment and businesses, export profits, and infrastructure development, tourism has become a vital engine of socioeconomic improvement in a growing number of places across the world (UNWTO, 2015).

Tourism industry which was consider as a growth engine for future socio-economic is facing challenging situation as a result from tourism crises (UNWTO, 2013). After string some tourism crises that affect international arrivals on recent years, domestic tourism industry in Malaysia started to be given priority by Malaysia government (Mohamed & Yusof, 2005). To make domestic tourism became more well-known especially in rural area, an understanding of domestic tourist is crucial in generating specific and right promotion of destination. According to UNWTO (2008), domestic tourism can be concluding as activities of resident visitor within the country reference, either as part of domestic tourism trip or part of an outbound tourism trip.

The institutions and companies responsible for the development and promotion of domestic destination need to determine the factors influencing tourists' destination choices. It is recognised that destination is not only a tourism product, offering an integrated experience to customers, but it is a perceptual concept, which is interpreted subjectively by the consumers and is dependent on a wide range of factors (Buhalis, 2000). Social, cultural, personal and psychological factors, the number of tourists' attractions, available amenities, price, human resources and various types of tourism destinations are examples of the elements which can be considered in decision-making.

Weaver and Oppermann (2000) highlighted that the number of domestic tourists taking vacation is massive compare to international tourist in certain country. Statically domestic tourism in Malaysia had achieved a higher record in number of visitor arrival and expenditure. A total of 221.3 million domestic visitors for 2018 was been recorded with growth of 7.7% than 2017 (Tourism Malaysia, 2019). Domestic tourism expenditure continued growth with 11.4% in 2018 with total of RM92,561 million was spent (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019).

The common definition for domestic tourist is a person or resident of country visiting their own country or travelling to a place within his/her country other than his/her usual residence for a period of not less than 24 hours but less than one year for purpose of recreation, leisure, holiday, sport, business, meeting, conventions, study, visiting friends and relative, health or religion (Chadwick, 1994). According to Smith (1988), domestic tourist is a tourist travelling in his/her country of residence for any of the reason.

However, there are still some differences in the characteristic of tourist which can be differentiated through their socio demographic, motivation, tourist activities, travel experience and lifestyles, and values characteristic (Woodside and Pitts, 1976). Kattiyapornpong (2009) emphasised that tourist lifestyle patterns in comparison to demographic in influencing tourist behaviour.

Maslow had explained that individuals are motivated to do something in order to satisfy their different levels of needs. According to Venkatesh (2006), travel motivation creates integral part of travel behaviour which they need to see unseen and know the unknown drives people to travel to new places and motivates them to visit new destination. understanding of travel behaviour and motivation may assist in product development, marketing, services and creating competitive advantage (Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011).

Saayman (2006) had identify seven factor that influencing the motivation of tourist to travel which are escape from everyday environment, discovery and evaluation of oneself, relaxing or participation in recreational activities, gaining a certain level or prestige, for the purpose of regression, families bonding and facilitating their social level.

The prediction of travel behaviour and travel motivation knowledge play importance role in order to create demand and assist tourist in decision-making which by can be develop and implementation to increase the demand (March &

Woodside, 2006) although the factor such as tourism crises can influence the demand of tourist to travel (Ooi et al., 2013)

According to Ooi et al., (2013) tourism crises included SARS outbreak, tsunami, politician and bombing are the crises that would endanger the safety of tourist when travelling to a destination, as well as crises which could constitute to the inability of tourist to travel for instance economic or financial downturn. In others word, tourism crisis can be considered as the condition that cognate term safety and secure should not be isolated (Hall, 2010).

Since 2020, world facing new tourism crisis that causes the massive closure of the tourism sector. According WHO (2020), the novel severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) epidemic outbreak emerged in December 2019 from Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and spread to the rest of the world.

On the 25th January 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was detected in Malaysia and traced back to 3 Chinese nationals who previously had close contact with an infected person in Singapore (New Straits Times, 2020). The first Malaysian was confirmed with COVID-19 on the 4th February 2020. The 41-year-old man had recently returned from Singapore when he started to develop a fever and a cough.

To date (01 September 2021), total cases in Malaysia was 1,765,016 with R value 1.02 (MOH, 2021). Since the cases increase, Malaysia government imposed a nationwide lockdown known as Movement Control Order (MCO) which effect on March 2020, followed by Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) on May 2020 and Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) on June 2020 (MKN, 2020). Under MCO, all Malaysian were prohibited from leaving the country while foreigners were prohibited from entering the country including

interstate movement and most sector were closed especially tourism sector that depend on movement of tourist.

After government announce RMCO, tourism sector starts to get active and promote the destination and product for domestic tourist since the international boarder still close. Tourist start to searching the places for release the MCO stress. Most of them travel into their state since the state boarder still close. The destination chosen was fully under strict SOP due safety and hygiene issue.

Social media analysis is the process of collecting the valuable data from social media channels (Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and etc) and drawing actional conclusion. Social media is a platform used not only by ordinary users but also by entrepreneurs who are interested in increasing the visibility of their business in the market.

Social media in Malaysia has provided many benefits from a marketing perspective. This is because there is an increase in the number of social media users in Malaysia and it is proven that social media marketing is the best method in attracting more Malaysian social media customers (MCMC, 2020)
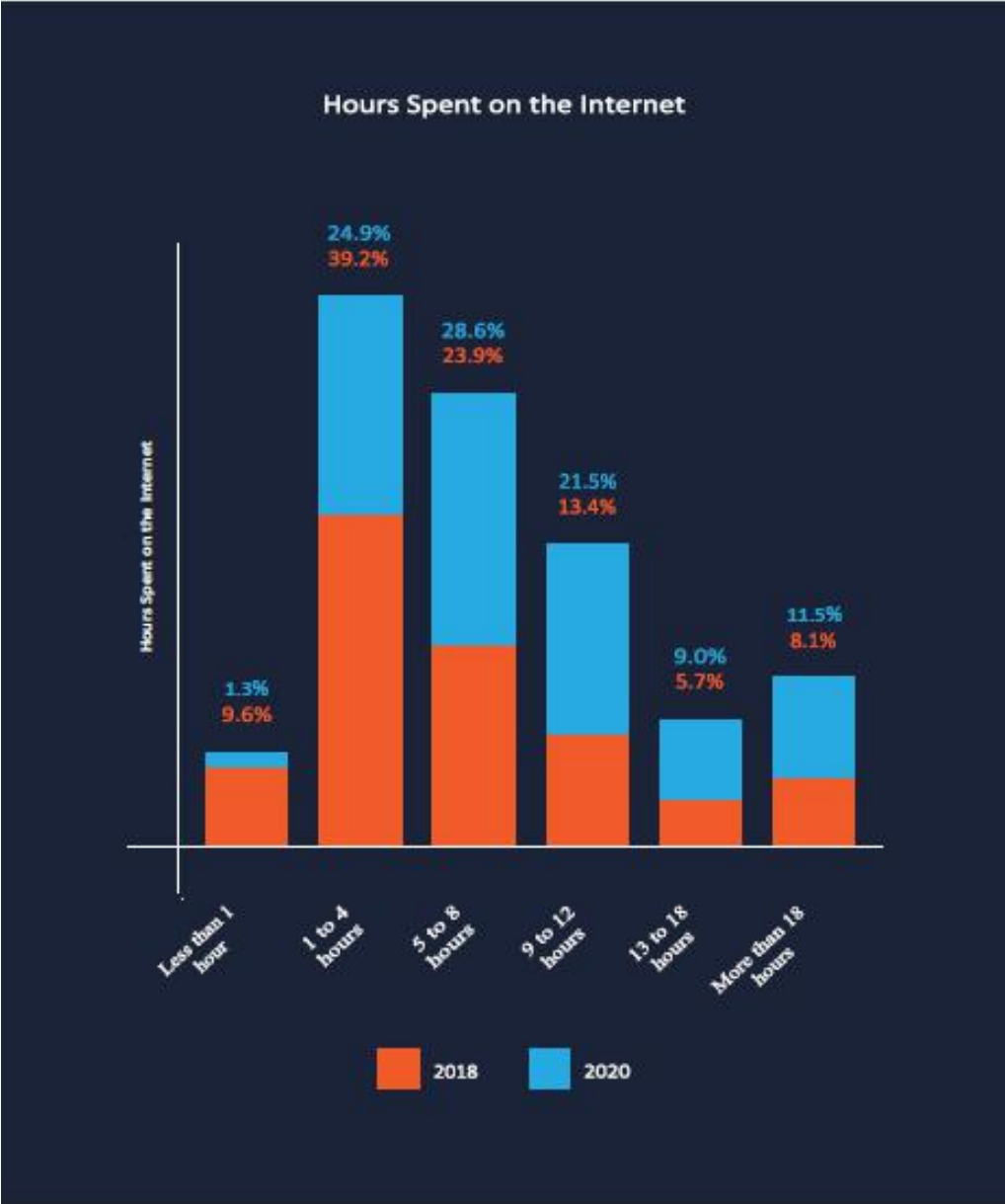
Figure 1.1: Hours spent on the internet

According to MCMC (2020), the average daily time of Malaysian spent using social media was reported to be almost 3 hours on average and the daily time spent using the internet through various devices is at least 8 hours (Figure 1.1). Meanwhile, the number of active social media users is 25 million people in Malaysia with the Facebook user for 2020 24.85 million (91.7%) increase from 20.65 million of user on 2018. Meanwhile Youtube particularly has significant increase from 48.3% in 2018 to 80.6% in 2020. Instagram user climbed from 57% in 2018 to 63% in 2020, whereas Twitter user have arisen from 23.8% to 37.1% in the same period (Figure 1.2).
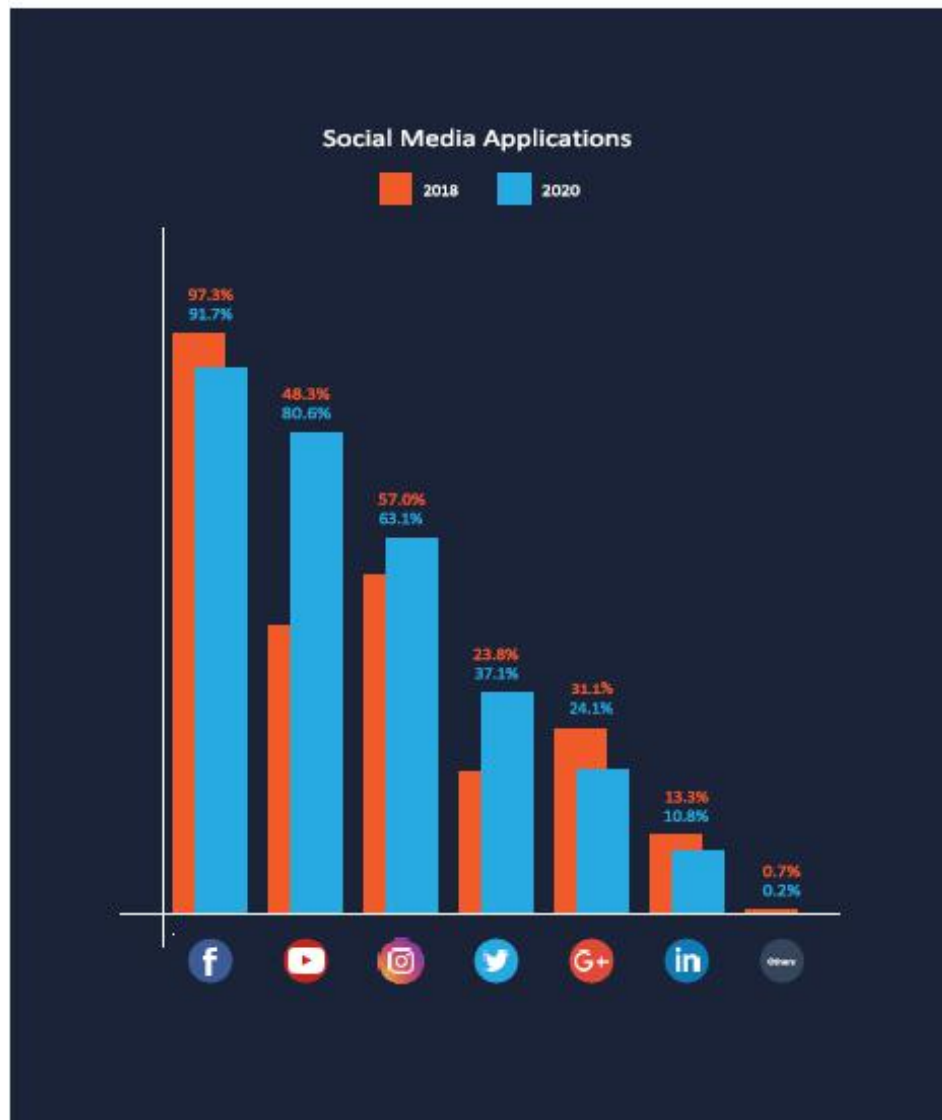
Figure 1.2: Social media application by ranking

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the Malaysian economy. Numerous sectors including the entertainment, retail, hospitality, and tourism sectors were affected by various lockdown and social distancing restrictions in response to outbreaks of COVID-19 throughout 2020 and 2021.

1.2 Problem Statement

UNWTO reported that there a few countries do collect travel and tourism statistic related to domestic movement (Cooper et al, 1996). According to Goeldner and Ritchie (2003), many countries especially developing country are lack in measuring the domestic demand due to consideration of its insignificancy compared to international counterpart. This is because the movement of international travels was believed to have higher contribution in terms of foreign exchange earning promise as well as consequently effects on country's balance of payment (UNWTO, 2012)

Malaysia has been ignored and neglected the importance of domestic tourism since a string of tourism crises which encounter the economic downturn and spreads affecting international arrivals (Lu, 2013). From all this previous research, there was lack of study related to domestic tourist travel behaviour with tourism crises that country faces.

In order to create the solution, domestic tourism have importance role in tourism resilience especially in times of tourism crisis by sustaining service and job, offsetting the loss of inbound tourism and reducing the disparity among regions development

Most of research that had been done in Malaysia just touch about travel behaviour using specific segmentation. Jang and Wu (2006) investigated the behaviour pattern of senior traveller on vacation pattern, examining models or travel destination, length of vacation and accommodation. The impact of tourism crises shown the ASEAN traveling decision may have affected by different factor either from perspective of traveling cost or their judgement on personal safety issue during the time of tourism crises (Ooi et al., 2013)

This is the reason to understanding the Malaysian travel behaviour during tourism crises in order to develop marketing strategies or tourism product for Malaysia tourism industry

Previous study has concentrated on issue of motivation factors in tourist destination loyalty (Rahman, 2014) and factors that influence tourist and their choice of tourism destination (Khan, 2013). However, there were minimal numbers of study done in understanding the social media attribute as sharing content on tourist decision making to travel in domestic sector. This is because social media has become a required tools in restructure the tourism industry since it is able to create an impact especially in marketing and promoting strategies (Xiang et al, 2008).

1.3 Research Question

The following research questions are proposed in this study to comprehend the domestic tourist travel behaviour during tourism crisis in Malaysia.

1. What are the quotes that domestic tourist used on their social media?
2. What is the domestic tourist travel behaviour during pandemic COVID-19?
3. What is the destination preferred that been chosen as domestic travel decision?

1.4 Research Aim and Objective

The research is aimed to comprehend the domestic tourist travel behaviour during pandemic COVID-19. In order to achieve this aim, the objectives proposed are:

1. To identify the domestic tourist using quotes while travelling during pandemic.
2. To determine the behaviour that domestic tourist travel respond during pandemic COVID-19.
3. To examining the destination preferred that been chosen as domestic travel decision during pandemic COVID-19.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

Based on the research aim and objective, a conceptual framework was developed to understanding the overall concept of research.
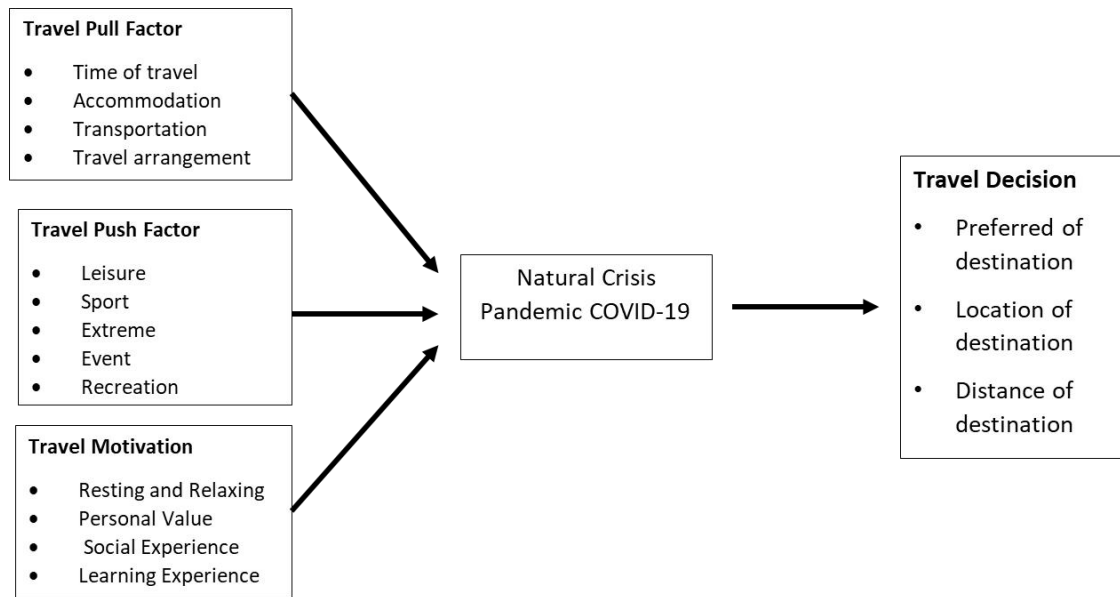
Figure 1.3: Conceptual Framework

The Figure 1.3 shown the travel behaviour that can be determine by demographic profile that can be influencing the independent variable which are travel preference, activities and their motivation. From the framework, the dependent variable is about the travel decision that tourist made before go to the destination chosen. After understanding the factors, the Malaysian travel behaviour during tourism crisis can be determine.

Dann (1977) had mention, push factor (travel preference, activities and motivation) and pull factor (travel decision) are two basic factor that affect the individual's decision to travel. In this study, several items related to travel behaviour such as travel preference, activities and motivation are examining to

see the impact to travel decision. When all the factors are being identified, the travel behaviour of Malaysian towards tourism crisis could be determined.

The tourism industry needs to learn about tourist behaviour in order to predict the sustainability of their businesses. Based on several studies suggesting tourist behaviour in determining tourist destinations is influenced by several things. First, the specific factors of tourist decision making are age, gender, marital status, income, education, lifestyle, personal values, tourism motivation.

Second, specific factors for alternative tourist destinations such as attributes of tourist destinations that include tourist attractions, tourism resources, facilities, services, and accessibility of tourist destinations. Moreover, the third is situational factors that include weather conditions, cultural conditions of tourist destinations, and social conditions such as political conditions in the choice of tourist destinations.

1.6 Research Flowchart
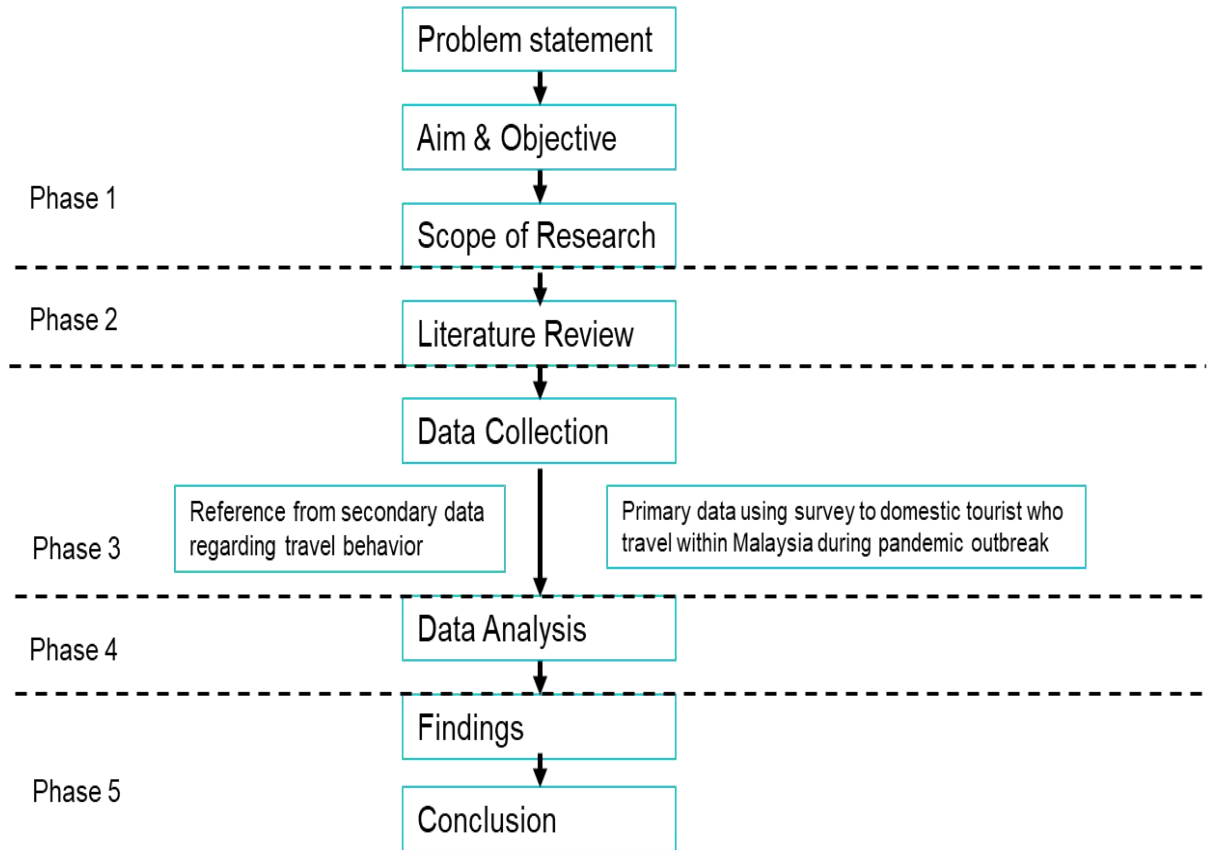
Figure 1.4: The flow chart of research

This study will have five phase which are phase 1, phase 2, phase 3, phase 4 and phase 5 based on figure 1.4.

1.7 Research Limitation

Each research has their own limitation as resources and timing are limited. The limitation of this research is:

1. The study focuses on domestic tourist who travel for pleasure and non-work purpose.
2. The target respondent was domestic tourist who travel during pandemic COVID-19.
3. The data collection was based on Malaysian Facebook sharing about their traveler

1.8 Research Significant

Through the examination of travel behaviour among Malaysian as domestic tourist, this study contributes to the research in the following ways:

1. The study contributes to the literature of tourism on travel behaviour for Malaysian while tourism crises situation. A better understanding of travel behaviour among Malaysian as a new trend for market segmentation in domestic tourism after facing tourism crises.
2. Tourism industry can have developed new strategies to target potential tourist to meet the demand on what factor or indicator that become priority in facing tourism crises.

1.9 Expected Outcome

From the study, some expected outcomes have been anticipated to shed some light on the travel behaviour pattern of Malaysian:

1. Understanding the factor that influencing travel behaviour for domestic tourist that can help to determine how they makes decision to travel.
2. Determining the domestic tourist travel behaviour in Malaysian during the pandemic COVID-19.

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