

**THE DETERMINANT OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN ISLAMIC ARTS
MUSEUM MALAYSIA**

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**THE DETERMINANT OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN ISLAMIC ARTS
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requirements for the award of the degree of
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To all my family members especially to my beloved parents for their true support towards me. It is a never-ending journey, let's keep on learning and widen our horizons.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the determinant of the visitor experience in Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia. Many researchers have looked at the visitor motivations and experience in the different context of tourism industry. Unique and memorable experience is crucial for the long-term in order to sustain the business of tourism sector, especially in the museum context as certain people still have the stigma that museum is boring. However, this research will investigate the relation between five experience attributes that relate to museum visitor experience. Five different attributes of experience include sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, and social context. In order to investigate the attributes of experience, qualitative content analysis approach has been applied in this research. The data were collected from 509 online reviews in TripAdvisor and only English language reviews have been selected in a period of one-year duration. The online reviews of Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia contain 93.7% positive review and just 2.8% negative reviews while the balance 3.5% is neutral reviews. Apart from that, the additional attributes have been found that makes the total of six attributes of experience in Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia which are sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, social, and ancillary attribute. Each attribute contains an element that supports the attributes of experience. This research provides insightful data on museum visitor experience that can be utilized by Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia and other museum management to enhance their services.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti penentu pengalaman pengunjung di Muzium Seni Islam Malaysia. Banyak kajian telah dijalankan yang menyentuh aspek motivasi pengunjung dan pengalaman dalam konteks yang berbeza dalam industri pelancongan. Pengalaman yang unik dan tidak dapat dilupakan adalah penting untuk jangka panjang untuk mengekalkan perniagaan sektor pelancongan terutama dalam konteks muzium kerana sesetengah sifat masyarakat yang masih mempunyai stigma bahawa muzium itu membosankan. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian ini akan mengkaji hubungan antara lima sifat pengalaman yang berkaitan dengan pengalaman pengunjung muzium. Lima sifat pengalaman yang berbeza termasuk konteks deria, afektif, intelektual, tingkah laku, dan sosial. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kandungan analisis secara kualitatif. Data dikumpul dari 509 ulasan dalam talian di TripAdvisor dan hanya ulasan bahasa Inggeris sahaja yang dipilih dalam tempoh satu tahun. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan Muzium Kesenian Islam Malaysia mengandungi 93.7% ulasan positif dan hanya 2.8% ulasan negatif manakala baki 3.5% adalah ulasan neutral. Selain itu, terdapat penemuan sifat pengalaman yang baru dan menjadikannya enam iaitu sifat deria, afektif, intelektual, tingkah laku, sosial dan sampingan. Setiap sifat mengandungi unsur yang menyokong sifat-sifat pengalaman. Penyelidikan yang dijalankan dapat membantu pihak Muzium Kesenian Islam Malaysia dan pengurusan muzium lain untuk meningkatkan perkhidmatan mereka kerana telah mengenap pasti sifat yg diperlukan dari segi pengalaman pengunjung.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis looks at the determinant of visitor experience in Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia. This chapter provides an introduction, background of study, and overview of museum related tourism in Malaysia. Also, problem statement will be outlined followed by research question and eventually the research objective will be formed. Lastly, conceptual framework, scope of study and significant of the study will also be discussed.

1.2 Background of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the determinants of visitor experience in Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia based on the reviews in TripAdvisor. Therefore, this study explores the experience of visitors in Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia determined by dimensions of experience.

As for now, experience is a key to innovation for current business as the consumer has become more sophisticated and it is essential to deliver memorable

customer experience in order to create superior value and competitive advantage (Voss, 2014). According to Yalowitz (2002), visitor nowadays has different expectation compared decades ago. Thus, it is a difficult to achieve the visitor satisfaction in the museum. However, in order to let visitor leave feeling more satisfied after visiting museum, the visitor attention and time directed in museum should meet or exceed their expectation (Raed and Bahauddin, 2011). Furthermore, Colbert (2003) mentions that visitors' experience becomes an opportunity to further expand the visitors' understanding and learning.

The traditional mission of museum is to collect, preserve, exhibit and encourage appreciation and knowledge of the past but it becomes beyond that as museum becoming a place to offer a wide range of services that inspire visitor in more welcoming and friendly environment (Brida et. Al., 2016). In order to enhance the satisfaction of visitor, it is crucial to analyse visitors' behaviour, experience, and their commitment to the cultural site as each segment of demand bring different expectations from the services offered at site (Chan, 2009; Youngs et.al., 2014).

Nowadays, consumer-generated online reviews are becoming a trend because of the development of internet. Internet becomes a platform for consumer to share their experience and for some to seek review and Tripadvisor is one of the websites that can cater that. The website assists consumers in posting and sharing their travel-related comments, opinions, and personal experiences, which then serve as information for others. The determinant of visitor experience may help the museum marketer to enhance their service and to know how to manage the museum activities in the future. Despite all this, there is limited research focus on the determinant of museum visitor experience in Malaysia. Hence, this research was carried out to contribute to filling this gap.

1.3 Overview of Tourism in Malaysia

Tourism is the leading and largest industry in the world today. From the global perspective, this sector has been recognised as the main important services industry in the world. Tourism is a potential matter in term of social, environmental and economic levels of many governments agenda. The global spread of industrialised and developed states have produced economic and employment benefits in many related sectors - from construction to agriculture or telecommunication (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2013). Malaysia also one of the countries that use tourism as the contributor to generate more income to a nation.

The tourism industry in Malaysia offers numerous tourism products such as agro tourism, eco-tourism, health tourism, golfing, education tourism, food outlet, diving, homestay experience, island and beaches, wellness & spa, shopping, sail & cruise, adventure attraction and cultural attraction. Tourism industry in one of the major contributor factor in Malaysia. Tourism sector in Malaysia in the year 2016 shows a strong performance from 25.7 million arrivals in 2015 to 26.7 million in 2016. Tourism Malaysia has been targeting the year 2020 to get 36 million tourist arrival with RM168 billion revenue of tourist receipt. Parallel with that, tourist receipt in 2016 also shows an increase of RM13 billion reaching RM82.1 billion of tourist receipt in 2016. Thus, according to Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC), Datuk Mas Ermieyati, tourism industry maintain as the third largest contributor to the country's economy in 2016 (The Star, 2017) and this can be shown in the GNI value as in the Figure 1.1. According to the National Transformation Programme Annual Report 2016, tourism sector contributing to RM73.7 billion in GNI, driven by the Shopping, Ecotourism, Cruise and Business Events focus areas which continued to grow during the year with the effort of MOTAC in facilitating the tourism NKEA.

GNI VALUE (RM BILLION)	
NKEA SECTOR	2016
Agriculture	68.1
Palm Oil/Rubber	64.9
Oil, Gas & Energy	179.7
Electrical & Electronics	57.0
Wholesale & Retail	181.9
Education	9.7
Healthcare	10.9
Communication Content & Infrastructure	58.1
Tourism	73.3
Financial Services	64.8
Business Services	58.6
TOTAL NKEA	827.2
Other Industries	367.5
TOTAL GNI	1,194.6

Figure 1.1 GNI value Malaysia according to NKEA sector

Source: National Transformation Programme Annual Report 2016

Apart from that, the tourism industry continues to build on Malaysia's prominence as an internationally-renowned tourist destination by focusing on new opportunities for growth. The country continued to gain recognition and was named Asia's Leading Destination at the World Travel Awards 2016 and the No. 1 Muslim-friendly Destination by MasterCard-Crescent Rating 2016. Not only that, in the year 2016 Malaysia also received recognition such as Best Asian City Destination and Best Asian Culinary Destination by the Travvy Awards (travAlliancemedial). Additionally, Kuala Lumpur was listed among the Top 5 destinations in Expedia UK's list of the

world's 25 best shopping cities, while Ipoh was named in Lonely Planet's Top 10 Best in Asia for 2016 list (National Transformation Programme Annual Report 2016).

In 2016, MOTAC held a Tourism & Culture Lab 2.0 (Lab 2.0) aimed to expand the area of focus rather than reviewing the existing tourism initiatives under the National Transformation Programme. The NKEA undertook the Lab 2.0, identifying culture, arts, heritage and crafts as well as birding, diving and homestays as new areas to be developed. At the same time, the ecotourism cluster and cruise industry continued to provide strong avenues for growth. The assessment of existing and new focus area under the Tourism NKEA consists of 71 initiatives across 12 Focus Area were proposed as in Figure 1.2:

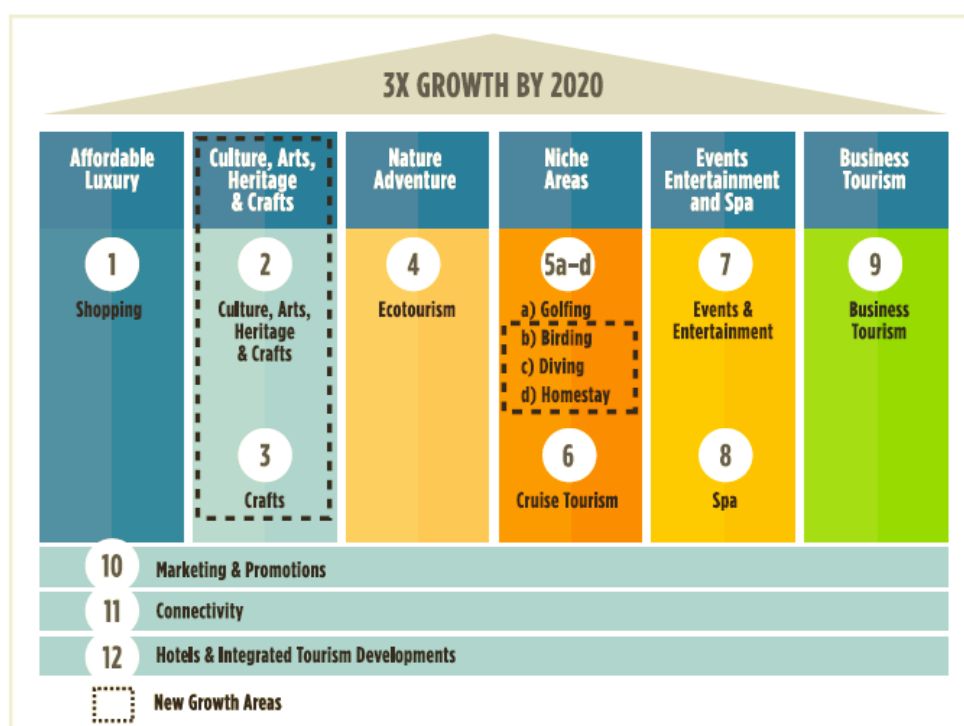


Figure 1.2 Tourism & Culture Lab 2.0 Focus Areas

Source: National Transformation Programme Annual Report 2016

The inclusion of culture, arts & heritage and crafts represents an opportunity for Malaysia to hit into the inherent strengths of its cultural diversity and is aimed at

supplementing efforts already undertaken by MOTAC. According to Norhasimah, Tarmiji, & Azizul (2014), cultural heritage tourism has emerged as a new trend in tourism industry. This can be proved by the increasing number of tourist who seeks culture, adventure, history, archaeology and interaction with local people (Chourasia, 2012). According to Chourasia (2012), cultural heritage can be defined as travelling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.

In this research context, history, culture and arts are represented in the form of museum. Museum operation is a part of cultural heritage. Kuala Lumpur is the capital city of Malaysia and even though it is a city that offers vibrant tourism activities but it still does not lack in heritage and objects of value. Lonely Planet mention that in Kuala Lumpur, tourist can learn all about the city's history and its cultures by visiting museum and cultural centres of Kuala Lumpur. At some of these you will fawn over the beauty of Islamic art, in others see the finest of textiles and at others dive back through the eons to learn of Malaysia's prehistoric past. The TripAdvisor has listed 48 museum that can be visited in Kuala Lumpur and Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia is in number one ranking (TripAdvisor, 2017) and this same goes in Lonely Planet as this museum ranking at the top museum to be visited in Kuala Lumpur (Lonely Planet, 2017).

For the year 2016, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) has been announced as the winner from top 10 museums in Malaysia and top 25 museums in Asia by the TripAdvisor. According to TripAdvisor reviews for the year 2016, the first top 10 museums in Malaysia has been awarded to IAMM, followed by Pinang Peranakan Museum and Baba & Nyonya Heritage Museum in Melaka. For top museums in Asia, the Museum of Qin Terra-cotta Warriors and Horses honoured with the 1st, and IAMM in 8th between National Palace Museum in Taipei in 7th and Hong Kong Museum of History in 9th positions (IAMM Newsletter, 2016). This shows that Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia have been receiving the top 10 museums in Asia for three consecutive years from 2014 and show an improvement from 10th place in 2014

and 2015 to 8th in 2016. Thus, this research will solely focus on this museum as it is a benchmark of the excellent museum in Malaysia.

Thus, this research analyses the attributes of visitor experience in the museum as it will help to offer a better experience for visitor of museum in the future. Accordingly, a museum is known to be an important pillar for tourism attraction because of their historical attraction and the association of cultural heritage. Museum has been recognised by World Tourism Organization (2016) as that contribute important economic and cultural value to the host destination. This is because museum shapes community identities, fosters respect and tolerance among people, and has become a key tourism asset, creating distinctive differences between destinations because of the content of the museum itself.

1.4 Problem Statement

The initial establishment of museum in Malaysia was started in 1883 by the British in Taiping, Perak and the first museum in Malaysia is called as Perak Museum. The main function of all museums in Malaysia as mentioned by Taha (2008) is to defend the national uniqueness and the heritage of the country. According to Raed and Bahauddin (2011), there are over 50 museums in Malaysia that are managed by the federal and state government. However, there are also cases where a museum is under the management of a private entity. The success of the tourism industry in the country, locally, and internationally have been contributed by the museums in Malaysia as mentioned by Taha (2008). As for now, Raed and Bahauddin (2011) states that the good examples of the support and contribution to the successful museum in Malaysia are the national museum, the rice museum and the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.

One of the greatest challenges museums face today is to attract new visitors, especially in the face of increasing competition in the culture and leisure market. According to Dirsehan & Yalçın, museums often concerned with collection and

research than visitor-orientation even though we are currently in the 20th century (2011). The core issue faced by the museum industry in Malaysia is on how to strengthen the national unity with all the multi-cultural and the multi-racial society of Malaysia as mentioned by Raed and Bahauddin (2011). Malaysia government still considers the museums as semi-academic and educational institutions (Rahah Haji Hasan 2006; Taha 2008). In addition to that, Taha (2008) through Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage, Datuk Seri Utama Dr Rais Yatim mentioned that our museum in a need of comprehensive development especially in the areas of exhibition concept and design, lighting, displays, and the use of interactive technologies in order to attract visitor.

According to American Association of Museum, (2012), museums are having a hard time due to increased competition and lack of funds due to a reduction in government support and this scenario is similar to museums in Malaysia. Not to mention that especially young visitors have the stigma that museums are boring. Thus, some of the museums nowadays have shifted from product orientation to consumer orientation in order to serve better services. As mentioned by Sheng and Chen (2012), museum in modern times serve the functions of collection, research and exhibition, as well as education and recreation. However, the awareness of Malaysian visiting museums particularly in heritage museum less compare to other countries as reported by Shafie (2013). In addition, visitors' satisfaction has been discussed widely in many articles (Boulding, Kalra et al. 1993; Bordass 1996; Oliver 1996; Brock 2007; Black 2008; Bolton 2010; Brock University Team 2010), but until now there is limited agreement about the determinant variables that affected the visitors' satisfaction (Rojas and Camarero 2007) especially in term of museum visitor. In terms of visitor studies, the focus is often the educational role of museums and the learning outcome of museum visits while ignoring other aspects of the museum experience (Lehn, 2006).

Museum is important tourism attraction that needs to be focus due to their historical and cultural value. There is evidence that tourism and museum related to each other as museum visitor are mainly tourist as mention by Kotler & Kotler (2008). Likewise, Hu & Ritchie (1993) mentioned that museums have found to impact the attractiveness of a destination and the visitors' vacation experience. Furthermore,

more studies are focusing on visitor-related motivations and experience in tourism industry but limited in the museum related experience and this should remain as one of the important elements that need to be explored. Thus, this research purpose is to investigate elements associated with museum experiences in Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia through the online review of TripAdvisor.

As for today, many visitors shares their experiences through the use of social media websites. TripAdvisor is the most popular and frequently used by tourist to share their experience as the site makes it possible for a user to share reviews, videos, photo, and have a conversation with other people. According to Xiang and Gretzel (2010) on the role of social media in online travel search, research results indicated that most tourists in the U.S. use social media to collect information about the destinations to which they plan to travel.

1.5 Research Question

This study will evaluate and find out the study problem or issue that been studied. Therefore, it focuses on the following questions

1. What are the attributes of visitor experience in the museum context?
2. What are the most influential attributes towards visitor experience in the museum context?

1.6 Research Objective

The aim of this research is to examine the visitor experience in Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia. Thus, the objective of the research is as follows:

1. To identify attributes of visitor experience in the museum context.
2. To discuss the most influential attributes towards visitor experience in the museum context.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

To analyse the visitor experience in Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, online reviews assessment is needed. The visitor experience is being analysed using the five attributes of experience based on Dirserhan (2012) which are sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioural, and social. Data of visitor experience will be collected using the online review's assessment. In this context, primary data will be collected from TripAdvisor and qualitative content analysis will be conducted. Thus, this research adapt the visitor experience attributes in order to determine the most influential attributes towards visitor experience in the museum context.

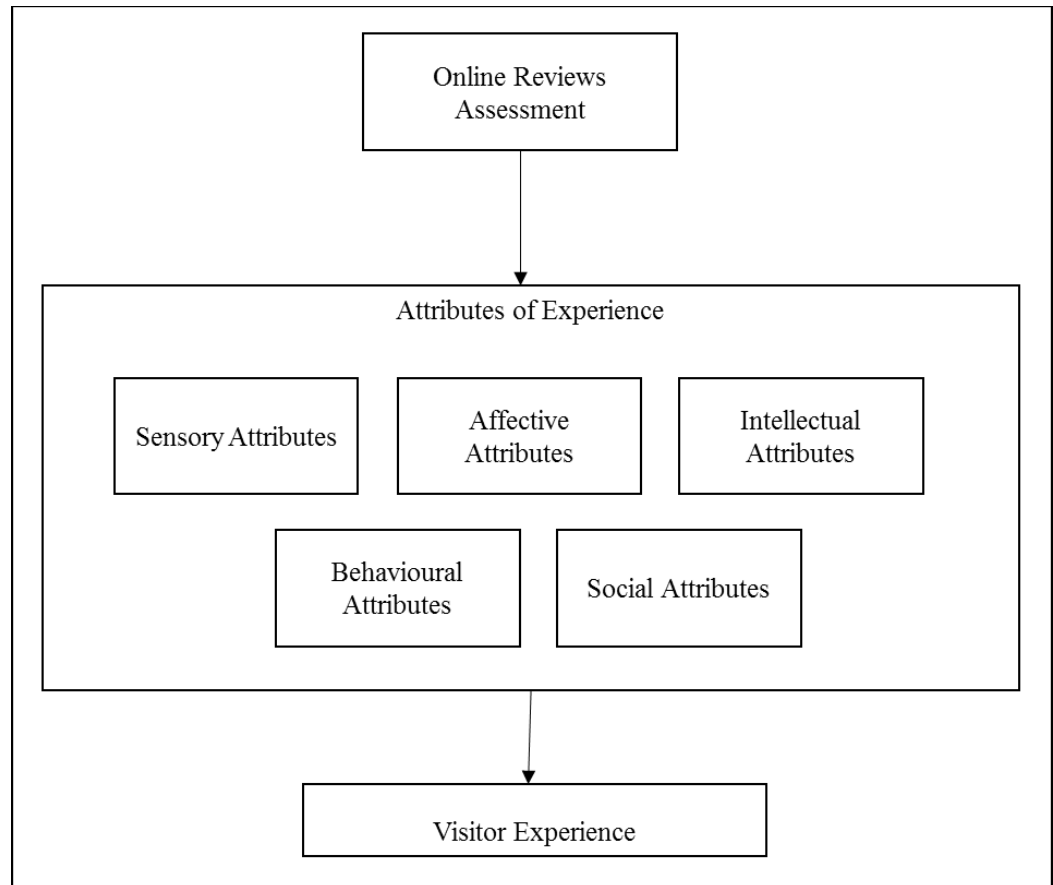


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

1.8 Scope of Study

The scope of the study is to identify the elements associated with museum experiences in Islamic Arts of Museum through the online review of Tripadvisor. Thus, research only focus on the online review of Tripadvisor.

1.9 Significance of the Study

This study offers significant contributions for the tourism industry, especially for the academic and practical perspective:

1.9.1 Academic Perspective

First and foremost, this research contributes to the academicians as this research will add more information regarding the museum visitor experience. This research will broaden the information of experience especially the element towards museum experience among visitors.

In addition, student especially in the field of tourism may enhance their knowledge regarding the museum industry and the tourism experience by referring to this research. This may also help them to further explore this topic in the future.

1.9.2 Practical Perspective

For the practical perspective, the study identified the element of visitor experience in the museum, thus providing practitioners in tourism industry especially for the museum management to actually seek information in order to offer their best services to the visitor. This can be a tool to develop their marketing strategies as well.

Besides, this research will enrich the knowledge of the visitor and also the community about the museum experience that they encounter or might encounter in the near future.

1.10 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Each chapter represent as (i) Introduction, (ii) Literature Review, (iii) Research Methodology, (iv) Analysis and Findings, and (v) Discussion and Conclusion.

The first chapter sets the framework for this research by providing a introduction and background of the study. The overview of tourism in Malaysia is also discussed in order to relate with this research. From that, the problem statement and research questions is formulated that lead to research objective, and finally explains how this study is significance.

The second chapter discusses the literature relevant to the museum context which include definition of museum, museum services, visitor experience, role of social networks, and also online travel reviews concept.

The third chapter explains the research design, research approach, site area, the sampling size, data collection, qualitative content analysis method, and the coding process. This chapter explain the methodology of the research.

The fourth chapter is analysis and findings. It include background of museum review, taxonomy of review, and also attributes of experience. It presented in a narrative form in order to highlight the online reviews assessment.

The fifth chapter discuss the summary of finding according to the research objective. It also consist of contribution of the study and presents its limitations, and provides recommendations for future studies as a conclusion.

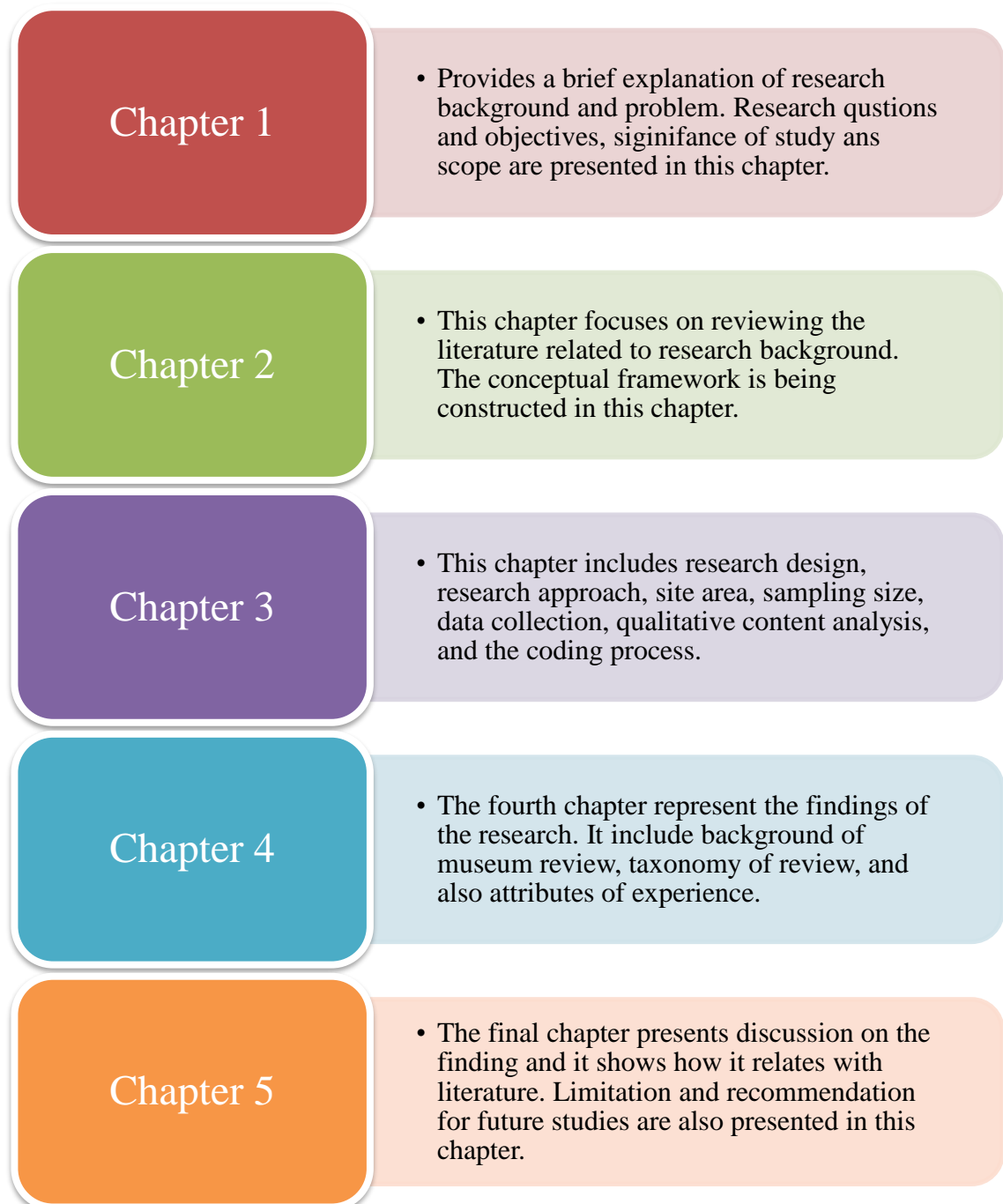


Figure 1.3 Structure of the thesis

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