

TOURIST PERCEPTION TOWARDS SEGAMAT AS ECOTOURISM
DESTINATION

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DEDICATION

“.... To my beloved father, mother, sisters, brother, family and friends. HARD WORK PAID OFF.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis is dedicated to my families, who always support and encourage to finish this study. Not to forget to lecturers who have taught me for 3 semester in this programme, provide knowledge and guide me until the last semester to finish up my thesis. Finally, to my colleagues who share the ups and downs during our semester was held. Thank you for any help given and the support from them.

Lastly, thank you to all. May Allah bless you.

ABSTRACT

Ecotourism established because of the combination of environmental conservation and development. An ecotourism is one of tourism industry that is growing faster since years back then. This study is analyzing the tourist perception on Segamat as an ecotourism destination. (Beeton, 2006; Jamal and Stronza, 2009; Ryan, 2002), the relationship among perception of eco-tourism, interpretation needs and satisfaction from the perspective of visitors remained unclear. The objectives for this study are to identify the existing ecotourism product that has potential to be as world ecotourim destination, to identify tourist behavior towards ecotourism in Segamat and to analyze the tourist perception toward ecotourism in Segamat. Segamat district was chosen because there are a lot of ecotourism attractions and Segamat also has the USP of Endau Rompin National Park (Selai). Structured questionnaire form was being distributed to 146 respondents that represent the tourist population which was calculated using Yamane (1967) and the convenience sampling was used as the sampling technique. Descriptive analysis and content analysis were used to do the analysis and findings about the ecotourism in Segamat. At the end of this study, the tourist perception will produce to determine Segamat as an ecotourism destination.

ABSTRAK

Ekopelancongan terwujud apabila adanya kombinasi Antara pemuliharaan dan pembangunan alam sekitar. Tambahan pula, ekopelancongan adalah salah satu industry pelancongan yang berkembang dengan cepat sejak beberapa tahun kebelakangan ini. Kajian ini adalah mengenai persepsi pelancong di Segamat sebagai salah sebuah destinasi ekopelancongan. Beeton (2006), Jalam dan Stronza (2009) dan Ryan (2002) menyatakan hubungan Antara persepsi ekopelancongan, keperluan tafsiran dan kepuasan dari perspektif pengunjung masih tidak jelas. Oleh yang demikian, objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti tarikan ekopelancongan yang mempunyai potensi sebagai destinasi ekopelancongan dunia, untuk mengenalpasti tingkah laku pelancong terhadap ekopelancongan di Segamat dan untuk mengenalpasti persepsi pelancong terhadap ekopelancongan di Segamat. Daerah Segamat telah dipilih kerana terdapat banyak tarikan ekopelancongan dan juga adanya tarikan utama iaitu Taman Negara Endau Rompin (Selai). Sebanyak 146 borang soal selidik telah diedarkan kepada responden yang mewakili populasi pelancong. Saiz sampel ditentukan menggunakan formula Yamane, T (1967) dan persampelan mudah telah digunakan sebagai teknik persampelan. Analisis deskriptif digunakan untuk membuat analisis terhadap penemuan yang telah dicapai. Pada akhir kajian ini, persepsi pelancong terhadap Segamat sebagai destinasi ekopelancongan akan diperolehi.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This part will be discussed on brief introduction about tourism scenario in Malaysia. Next, the problem statement and background of study for the whole research is explained further. In addition, to make it clear the research objectives and research questions is created in order to ease the researcher determine the expected outcome at the end of this study. Research framework is formed at the end of this chapter as to explain the research flow from the beginning until the end of this study.

1.0 Introduction

Tourism industry seems to be growing rapidly and it became one of the important factor as the contributor to a country's economic development. In Malaysia, tourism industry is one of the main focus to the National Key Economic Area (NKEA) under the Economic Transformation Project (ETP) which seems to be the booster of

economic development. Day by day the demand of the tourism industry increased among tourists. Hence, the development of tourism sector expanded rapidly as this sector become the economic contributor of the country.

In addition, travel and tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the service sector. The industry, which encompasses transportation, accommodation, food and beverages, recreation and entertainment is currently the second largest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contributing industry in Malaysia. Hence, there is no doubt and hesitation that tourism industry plays important role to generate income through foreign exchange and creating job opportunity.

According to the YB Dato' Sri Dr. Ng. Yen Yen in Economic Transformation Plan (ETP): A Roadmap to Malaysia the tourism sector will be the frontline of Malaysia's Economic development. Hence, the sustainable and high-yield sector will contribute to Malaysia's economic development and provide more job opportunities to the people.

The desire to travel is become a trend in Malaysia especially to the youth generation. The advance of technology make them want to travel around the world either in mass tourism or alternative tourism. Some of them preferred to become urban/city tourist, adventure tourist, nature tourist, and many more.

However, the development of the tourism sector gives impact for the existence of alternative tourism concept that refers to any activity or a form of tourism that contributes to environmental

sustainability and preservation of local cultural values. According to the definition given, alternative tourism can be linked with ecotourism as closely related to the natural environment and local culture (Razzaq, 2014). Furthermore, according to MOTAC (2014) ecotourism is a travel experience that is developed through cooperation between the government, private sector and local communities which include elements such as the preservation of nature, contributions to conservation, benefit local communities, education and awareness component, and sustainability (MOTAC, 2016). In other words, an ecotourism can give benefits to the local communities and to the environment through conservation of it.

Since 1980s tourism has established new investment, production and new resources on the other types of tourism activity which is ecotourism. Mostly, ecotourism activity expanded in rural areas and inside the green lands.

1.1 Problem Statement

Tourism industry has evolved into many areas such as sports tourism, sustainable tourism, urban tourism, island tourism, nature tourism and others including ecotourism itself. Ecotourism is one of the tourism areas that using natural resources and natural environment as its product such as accommodation, activity and others.

Ecotourism in Malaysia is still new and rare among the domestic tourist. The ecotourism is not being portrayed to the public but yet, the people is not doing the activities related to the ecotourism

but in small numbers of them. As well as the promotion and marketing, the ecotourism is not being promoted wisely among the domestic tourist. Because of that, demand for ecotourism in Malaysia is among the European traveler.

The demand for ecotourism is primarily driven by the United States of America (USA), Western Europe and Australia. Some of the US and Australian traveler consider that hotel should be responsible for active protection of the environment and supporting the local community. In South East Asia (SEA) Region, Thailand and Indonesia are developing on ecotourism in their country too. For example ecotourism sites in Indonesia are Pulau Weh, Pulau Banyak and Tangkahan. Meanwhile ecotourism sites in Thailand are Phang Nga Bay and Khao Sok National Park.

By developing ecotourism in one destination as tourism product it can allows for more tourist to spend more money to stay in the local economy thus boosting national wealth. According to The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) (2006), Costa Rica which is the primary ecotourism country as their one of tourism product generated USD 1000 per visitors. Meanwhile in France where tourism generates USD 400 visitors. It is approved that nowadays the ecotourism could be attract more tourist and it can be sustain in the future as long as it is developed in correct ways as it is ecotourism.

According to Center for Responsible Travel (CREST), UNWTO estimates that in 2007 the ecotourism captured 7 percent of the international market. While according to Travel Weekly, sustainable tourism could grow to 25% of the world's travel market by in 2012, taking the value of the sector to approximately 473 billion a year.

According to National Ecotourism Plan 2016-2025 (NEP) Malaysia has established 52 ecotourism destination including Peninsular Malaysia and West Malaysia (Borneo). For Peninsular Malaysia the ecotourism destinations are Kuala Tahan National Park in Pahang, Royal Belum State Park in Perak, Endau-Rompin National Park in Johor, Kuala Gandah Elephant Sanctuary in Pahang and Penang National Park in Teluk Bahang. Meanwhile the ecotourism sites in Borneo are Danum Valley in Tawau, Sabah and Mulu Caves National Park in Sarawak. As stated before, the ecotourism is based in the pristine nature and environment. This factor is the pull factor to attract more domestic tourist and international tourist to come to these ecotourism destinations.

However, there are destination that has been declared as ecotourism sites but not being portray and well known among tourist and traveler. Some of it may have issues related to the location itself, the activities, facilities and it may be have issues about the participation.

To strengthen the ecotourism matter in Malaysia, it has been mentioned in 7th Malaysia Plan. Yet, there is written official document related to ecotourism in Malaysia which is National Ecotourism Plan. This development plan is focusing on 52 ecotourism clusters in Malaysia. While in micro point of view, in Johor Tourism Master Plan 2014-2023 (JTMP) also develop tourism destination clusters related to ecotourism which are TDC 7: Eco-Adventure Challenge and TDC 11: Orchard Route.

Ecotourism is a responsible tourism towards the environment which is promoting the environmental conservation while gives benefit to the local communities through their involvement in industry. This

study is intended to conserve and rebranding the image of Segamat as well as to make it as the world class ecotourism destination.

Brand is important for any product as well as in tourism industry indeed. It means that one tourism product should have its own branding in order to be differentiate with other tourism products. According to Keller (1993) branding is a term, signal, symbol or design, or combination of both which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those competitors.

Morgan (2002), a brand is a visual representation of an organization unique product characteristics, those both functional and non-functional, which has taken on a relevant meaning to consumer. According to Morgan, branding is something physically to be seen and differentiate from other competitors while Keller's theory is more to combination of both tangible and intangible factors.

Qu (2011) states that destination brands serve two main functions which are identification and differentiation which gives meaning of a destination should have its own identity to be differ from others. For example, in this case of Segamat as an ecotourism destination, Segamat should have its own identity or image to be differ from other ecotourism in Malaysia. So that, Segamat could be well-known and compete with other ecotourism in Malaysia.

Branding of ecotourism in Segamat is aimed to improve the image the product so that it can attract more tourists, investors and encourage local communities to participate in tourism industry.

Basically, the rebranding of ecotourism in Segamat is intended to boost the economic growth of local community by encourage them to involved in tourism industry. Besides that, it also involve the cooperation between stakeholders and agencies such as Majlis Daerah Segamat, Pejabat Daerah Segamat and Tourism Johor to play role in improving the destination brand as well to attract tourist to visit Segamat.

Whilst, in Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Segamat (RTD) 2007-2020 it proposed about the image and identity of Segamat in 2020. According to RTD Segamat about 4 areas are focused on tourism sector. The details is discussed as table below.

Table 1.1: Proposed Image and Identity City Center in Segamat 2020

City	BP	Image and Identity of the City
Segamat	1	Bandar Warisan Khazanah Rakyat
Buloh Kasap & Taman Yayasan	1	Bandar Auto Wilayah
Batu Anam	1	Bandar Perkayuan
Labis	3	Bandar Pelancongan Daerah
Ayer Panas	3	Kampung Spa (<i>Spa Village</i>)
Jementah	5	Bandar Pertanian (Agro-City)
Batu Tujuh-Uitm	5	Bandar Pendidikan (7Mile Educuity)
Gemas Bahru	6	Bandar Gerbang Utara Johor
Bekok	8	Bandar Ekopelancongan
Chaah	8	Bandar Gerbang Selatan Daerah

Source: Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Segamat 2007-2020

1.2 Background of Study

Segamat is one of the district located in Johor bordering with other two states which are Negeri Sembilan and Pahang. Segamat is known as the gateway to Endau-Rompin National Park via Selai (North Johor). It is also well-known with fruits orchard among domestic tourist and it became main attraction especially tourist from Kuala Lumpur and Pahang other than Johor Bahru and Singapore though.

Realizing Segamat has a lot of attractions that has potential to attract more tourist either local or international Tourism Johor has formed Segamat as eco and agro tourism as its primary tourism product. Hence, it is compatible with JTMP (2014-2023) where two tourism destination clusters which are TDC 7: Eco-Adventure Challenge and TDC 11: Orchard Route formed in Segamat district.

TDC 7: Eco-Adventure Challenge will be driven by the main product which is Endau-Rompin National Park and it is expected to attract as many tourist for about 9 thousand people per year (JTMP, 2014). Other suggested eco-adventure activities are Canopy Walkway, Ecolodge, Elephant Sanctuary and etc.

While TDC 11: Orchard Route will be driven by 3 primary product namely Kampung Sermin, Gelang Chin-Chin and Pauh which have fruit orchard own by local people. It is been expected to attract as many tourist for about 150 thousand people consists of domestic and international tourist.

Additionally, Segamat tourist flow comes from 4 main points where those are from Johor Bahru, Tangkak, Gemas and Pahang. With these 4 gateways to Segamat it can be potential for tourist from nearest town to visit Segamat. Hence, it will wider the market segment and group of tourist. Well infrastructure is one of the pull factor for tourist to visit any destination as they have high accessibility to the destination. As for now, the existing infrastructure can accommodate mass tourism. In addition, new infrastructure such as railway is undergoing construction. It will encourage the free independent traveller (FIT) to visit Segamat by using public transportation. According to Rymer (1992) cited in Weaver (1998) *Ecotourism in the Less Developed World* ecotourism as centred on tourist desire for immersion in a relatively natural environment in which they and their support facilities have low impact upon the environment.

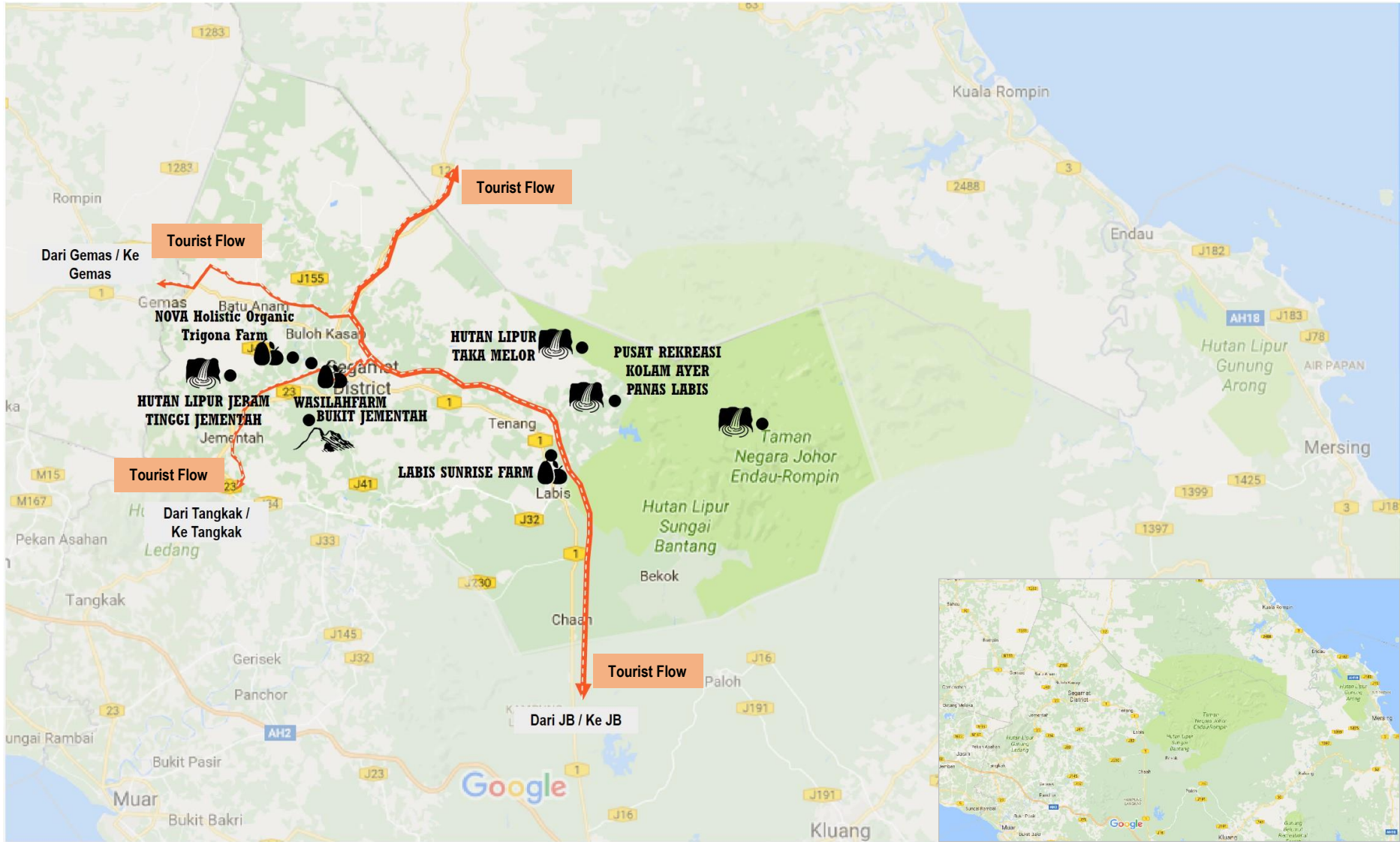


Figure 1.1: Research study area that involved TDC 7: Eco-Adventure Challenge area and TDC 11: Orchard Route area.

1.3 Research Objectives

In order to complete the research, several objectives have been outlined. The objectives are as below:

- 1) To identify existing ecotourism product that potential to be as world ecotourism destination.
- 2) To identify the tourist behavior on ecotourism Segamat
- 3) To determine the perceptions and expectation of tourist towards ecotourism attraction in Segamat.

1.4 Research Questions

Below are the research questions that have been formed based on the objectives of the study: -

- 1) What are the characteristics of ecotourism products that potential to be as world ecotourism destination in Segamat?
- 2) How does tourist react to the ecotourism sites in Segamat?
- 3) What are the perceptions of tourist towards Segamat as an ecotourism destination?

1.5 Scope of Study

The scope of study is divided into three parts:

- 1) Identifying the ecotourism product in Segamat district by carrying site visit and determine the ecotourism that has the potential to be as world ecotourism destination.
- 2) Identifying tourist behavior during their visits to any ecotourism attraction either in Segamat or any ecotourism attractions such as the experienced during their visits, with whom they visited, length of stay and medium of they get the information about ecotourism attractions in Segamat.
- 3) Determining the tourist perception and satisfaction towards ecotourism sites in Segamat which the aspects are services, accessibility, infrastructure and facilities, safety, management, activities and promotion and marketing.

The details about the scope of study will be explained in the table 1.1 that based on objectives including the aspect and data collection method. List of the scope of study will ease the researcher to conduct this study and it may help the reader to conduct their study as well.

Table 1.2: Scope of study

Objectives	Aspects	Data Collection Method
<p>To identify existing ecotourism product that has potential to be as world ecotourism destination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature based tourism Hutan Lipur, National park, waterfall, river. • Agro tourism Farming activity, orchard farm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Development Plan - Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Segamat - Johor Tourism Master Plan

<p>To identify tourist behaviour towards ecotourism in Segamat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of stay • First time visitor • Tourist experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire survey • Literature Review
<p>To determine the perception of tourist towards ecotourism attraction in Segamat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weakness about ecotourism Segamat • Advantages of ecotourism in Segamat • The Uniqueness of ecotourism Segamat. • Perception on elements as tourism destination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire survey • Literature Review.

Source: Author, 2017

1.6 Significance of Study

This study is important as to encourage the local community to participate in ecotourism activity. Besides that, this study is encourage the host and guest to conserve the natural environment. It means that the ecotourism activity itself helps to reduce the impact by optimizing the use of resources. Besides, an ecotourism is growing in tourism industry and it contribute to positive impact to the environmental, social and economic well-being of one destination. As this study is to encourage local community to participate in tourism industry it will help the local community itself to improve their quality of life by creating job opportunity. For example, the activities own by the local who are reside at one destination. They will manage the activities in all matters. Indirectly, this will help them to communicate and to manage their business while conserving the natural environment. In other words, ecotourism provides

effective economic incentives for conserving and enhancing the diversity and helps to protect the green land.

1.7 Limitations of Study

The limitation for this study is the time for completing it. Time to spend for this study to conduct only takes approximately four month after taking some consideration. The second limitation is the study area for this study. It covers the whole Segamat district for this study and it may difficult to complete this study within specific time.

1.8 Research Framework

This study involved five stages where by each of stages need to be completed first to continue the next step. At early stage which is first stage is the preliminary understanding stage. During this stage the research objectives, research questions and scope of study was determined in order to proceed the next stage.

Second stage of this study is about the understanding of ecotourism concepts such as the definition of ecotourism, principle of ecotourism, ecotourism in different perspective of world and the impacts of ecotourism. The concept of ecotourism is obtained from the literature review of past research, journals, fact sheet and official websites related to ecotourism.

The stage is proceed to stage three where during this stage is explain about the research methodology for this study. The topic involved in this stage are the sampling method, analysis technique and respondent to be targeted. Basially, this stage is brief about the way to conduct the study in correct way.

Fourth stage is the important part. It is because this part involved the analysis and findings about the whole study. Charts and graphs obtained from the analysis and findings will be explained further in this stage. Fourth stage also is important as to determine the research objective for this study. Lastly, the fifth stage is about the discussion and conclusion of all study from stage one until the last stage specifically the analysis and findings stage. During fifth stage also the recommendation is suggested for improving other studies related to this study. For further understanding research framework is being framed as in figure 1.2.

1.9 Summary

This study outcomes are crucial because it adds to a growing body of literature on the ecotourism. This study will produce a tourism product that will attract tourist to Segamat, as well as to achieve research objectives.

Through this study, ecotourism in Segamat could identified as the world ecotourism destination in Malaysia. So that, Segamat district can attract more tourist to come and it is in line with JTMP development plan that encourage outside tourist to visit Johor. This research also help to develop tourism in Segamat as ecotourism destination that considering the balance between physical development and natural environment in order to fulfil the tourist need without neglecting the impact towards natural environment.

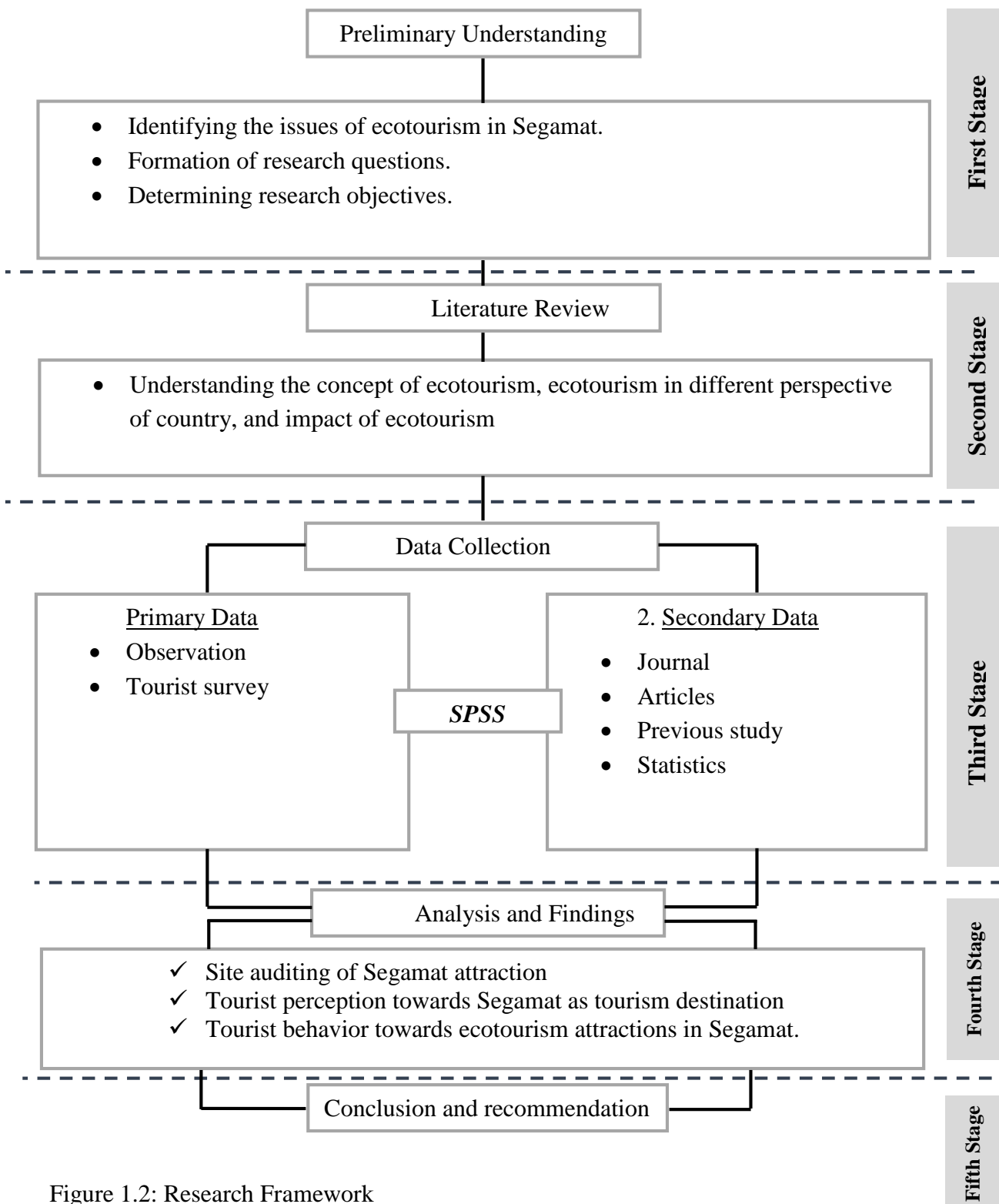


Figure 1.2: Research Framework

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