

Economic value of recreation for domestic visitors in Kilim Karst Geoforest Park, Langkawi

ABSTRACT

Recreation and travel pattern of domestic visitors to Kilim Karst Geoforest Park (KKGP) has been increasing. KKGP is a tourism site in rural setting rich with diversity of fragile flora and fauna. This leads to the importance of valuation of this rural site to ensure such natural setting is managed in a sustainable manner. This study employed Travel Cost Method (TCM) to estimate the recreational economic value of KKGP. A total of 300 of structured questionnaires were collected from domestic visitors in KKGP. The results indicate approximately a balanced visitor of both female (56%) and male (44%). Majority of the visitors (29.3%) are between 41-55 years old. Most of them (34.6%) have attained Diploma/Professional certificate of education level. Most of the visitors' profession (24.1%) are service-related. There are eight independent variables employed in this study while the depended variable is frequency of visit per year. Nevertheless, only four factors are found to be significant at 5% significant level which are total travel cost, total time cost, income and education level of respondents. The average consumer surplus is estimated at RM 200.40/person/visit/year. Therefore, the estimation of recreational economic value is found to be RM 30 million for the year 2011. The findings from this study could benefit relevant authorities as a guideline and input to facilitate any decision making and policy formulation in regards to the management of resources and development of tourism of KKGP.

Keyword: Tourism economics; Mangrove forest; Revealed preference; Outdoor recreation; Malaysia