



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**FOREIGN TOURISTS' EVALUATION ON ATTRACTIVENESS OF RECREATIONAL  
FORESTS IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA AS ECOTOURISM DESTINATIONS**

**NUR HAFIZAH BINTI IDRIS**

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ECOTOURISM DESTINATIONS**

**By**

**NUR HAFIZAH BINTI IDRIS**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra  
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**January 2014**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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As noted in the National Key Economic Area, ecotourism has been identified as an important niche area for Malaysian tourism, effectively differentiating itself from other competing destinations in the region. Conventionally, ecotourism products are developed based on existing cultural and natural attractions. In Malaysia, recreational forests have the potential to be developed and marketed as ecotourism destinations since our forests are endowed with diverse flora and fauna, as well as other natural attractions. There are currently a total of 124 recreational forests in Peninsular Malaysia which receive mostly local visitors and only a handful foreigner. Thus, the principal purpose of this study was to measure the attractiveness of recreational forests as perceived by foreign tourists as ecotourism sites.

The conceptual framework in this study was constructed based on the model of attitude towards object (ATO), while the attributes listed are based on hierarchy of determinant on attractiveness of forest recreations as presented in several past studies. From the review, 20 characteristics were chosen as representing recreational forest important attributes. Total number of 222 foreign tourists have completed the questionnaire distributed. The main analysis used in this study is mean multiplicative score and importance-performance analysis (IPA). Overall, foreign tourists evaluated recreational forests in Peninsular Malaysia as not quite attractive. From the IPA result, it was found that the most attractiveness attribute is 'environmental scenery' while 'special event' was identified as the weakest attractiveness attribute for Malaysian recreational forests. The findings also showed that most of the foreign tourists had not visited recreational forest in Peninsular Malaysia before. Moreover, those who had visited the forests before are less than two times within the previous 12

month. Some said that these forests are not promoted properly and does not perform well in persuading tourists to visit the areas.

In general, the findings from this study have provided us an insight on how foreign tourists evaluate the importance and availability of recreational forests in peninsular Malaysia for ecotourism experience. This information is valuable for forest department and tourism agencies for promoting and introducing recreational forests as a new ecotourism product in Malaysia. It is hoped that once the recreational forests were to be developed and promoted as ecotourism sites, they can help to diversify our tourism profile and adding the unique dimension into our ecotourism appeal.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**PENILAIAN PELANCONG ASING TERHADAP DAYA TARIKAN HUTAN  
LIPUR DI SEMENANJUNG MALAYSIA SEBAGAI DESTINASI  
EKOPELANCONGAN**

Oleh

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**Fakulti: Perhutanan**

Seperti yang dinyatakan dalam Bidang Ekonomi Utama Negara, ekopelancongan telah dikenalpasti sebagai satu bidang khusus yang penting bagi industri pelancongan di Malaysia, berbeza dengan destinasi lain di rantau ini. Kebiasannya, pembangunan produk ekopelancongan adalah berasaskan daya tarikan kebudayaan dan alam semulajadi yang sedia ada. Di Malaysia, hutan lipur berpotensi untuk dibangunkan dan dipasarkan sebagai destinasi ekopelancongan kerana hutan kita dikurniakan dengan pelbagai jenis flora dan fauna, serta lain-lain tarikan semulajadi. Pada masa ini terdapat 124 hutan lipur di Semenanjung Malaysia yang kebanyakannya menerima pelawat tempatan dan hanya segelintir pelancong asing sahaja. Oleh itu, tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengukur daya tarikan hutan lipur sebagai satu kawasan ekopelancongan sepertimana yang dinilai oleh pelancong asing.

Konsep kajian ini telah dibina berasaskan model *attitude towards object (ATO)*, manakala sifat-sifat yang disenaraikan adalah berdasarkan kepada hierarki penentu daya tarikan hutan lipur, seperti yang ditunjukkan oleh beberapa kajian terdahulu. Daripada kajian tersebut, 20 ciri-ciri telah dipilih sebagai mewakili sifat yang perlu ada dalam hutan lipur. Seramai 222 pelancong asing telah menjawab boring soal selidik yang diberikan. Analisis utama yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah kiraan *mean multiplicative* dan *importance-performance analysis (IPA)*. Secara keseluruhannya, pelancong asing berpendapat bahawa hutan lipur di Semenanjung Malaysia tidak menarik. Daripada hasil keputusan IPA pula, didapati bahawa sifat daya penarik yang paling kuat adalah *environment scenery* manakala *special event* telah dikenal pasti sebagai sifat daya penarik paling lemah bagi hutan lipur. Hasil kajian juga mendapati

bahawa kebanyakan pelancong asing tidak pernah melawat hutan lipur di Semenanjung Malaysia sebelum ini. Selain itu, bagi yang telah melawat sebelum ini hanya melawat kurang dua kali sepanjang 12 bulan yang lalu. Ada yang mengatakan bahawa hutan ini tidak dipromosikan dan tidak menunjukkan prestasi yang baik dalam menarik minat pelancong asing untuk datang melawat.

Secara umum, hasil daripada kajian ini telah memberikan gambaran mengenai bagaimana pelancong asing menilai kepentingan dan ketersediaan hutan lipur di Semenanjung Malaysia. Maklumat ini sangat berharga untuk jabatan hutan dan agensi-agensi pelancongan dalam mempromosi dan memperkenalkan hutan lipur sebagai produk ekopelancongan baru di Malaysia. Adalah diharapkan sekiranya hutan lipur berjaya dibangunkan dan dipromosikan sebagai kawasan ekopelancongan, ianya boleh membantu dalam mempelbagaikan profail pelancongan dan menambah dimensi yang unik ke dalam struktur ekopelancongan di negara kita.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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