A CHOICE EXPERIMENT TO ESTIMATE VISITOR PREFERENCES FOR ECOTOURISM ATTRIBUTES AT KENYIR LAKE, MALAYSIA

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By

WAN NORHIDAYAH W MOHAMAD

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

March 2013
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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

A CHOICE EXPERIMENT TO ESTIMATE VISITOR PREFERENCES FOR ECOTOURISM ATTRIBUTES AT KENYIR LAKE, MALAYSIA

By

WAN NORHIDAYAH W MOHAMAD

March 2013

Chairman : Associate Professor Alias Radam, PhD
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Kenyir Lake is one of the popular ecotourism destinations in Malaysia which offers spectacular scenic beauty to the visitors. Water transportation is the main method of travel here and the popular water transportation is the house boat service. Tourism industries at Kenyir Lake generate large financial income from house boat attractions, and therefore improvement of these services and the determination of relevant policies for management and maintenance are vital for future development.

The objectives of this research are to evaluate the attitude and perception of the visitors towards the recreational aspects of Kenyir Lake and to evaluate the visitors’ preferences for house boat services attributes at Kenyir Lake. Data was obtained by using questionnaires as part of a face-to-face interview with the visitors who rented house boats during their vacation at Kenyir Lake. A total of 285 respondents were interviewed over
January to March 2012. The results show that most of the visitors are satisfied with the ecotourism resources and services at Kenyir Lake. Many of them are first time visitors to the lake while the rest have visited more than once.

The data was analysed by using descriptive analysis and the choice experiment method (CE). Descriptive analysis is used to analyse the socio-economic profile of the visitors and the attitude and perception of the visitors towards the ecotourism services at Kenyir Lake. The visitors’ preferences for house boat services were estimated by using a Choice Experiment. In the CE part, five categories of non-market values of house boat services were defined including: tourist guide, safety equipment, communication system, activity packages and extra package prices.

The results demonstrated the respondents positive willingness to pay (WTP) for three attributes of house boat services, namely the tourist guide, safety equipment and premium package activities with averages of WTP of 8.98%, 23.85% and 26.8% respectively. These findings indicate that respondents are willing to pay for an improvement from the status quo to a better level of services. The findings of this study may guide and assist policy makers, authorities and local managers to better consider the consequences of maintaining the current condition of the services provided to the visitors.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

KAEDAH EKSPERIMEN PILIHAN UNTUK MENGANGGARKAN KEUTAMAAN PENGUNJUNG BAGI ELEMEN EKOPELACONGAN DI TASIK KENYIR, MALAYSIA

Oleh

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Tasik Kenyir merupakan salah satu kawasan ekopelancongan terkenal di Malaysia yang menawarkan keindahan pemandangan yang menakjubkan kepada pengunjung. Pengangkutan air merupakan kaedah pengangkutan utama di sini dan pengangkutan air yang popular adalah rumah bot. Sektor pelancongan di Tasik Kenyir telah menjana pendapatan yang lumayan daripada tarikan perkhidmatan rumah bot. Oleh itu, penambahbaikan dalam perkhidmatan dan penentuan dasar-dasar yang berkaitan untuk pengurusan dan penyelenggaraan adalah penting untuk pembangunan di masa depan.


Keputusan menunjukkan kesanggupan membayar (WTP) pengunjung adalah positif untuk tiga elemen rumah bot, iaitu pemandu pelancong, peralatan keselamatan dan pakej aktiviti premium. Purata-purata kesanggupan membayar adalah 8.98%, 23.85% dan 26.8% untuk pemandu pelancong, peralatan keselamatan dan pakej aktiviti premium.
Penemuan ini menunjukkan bahawa responden bersedia untuk membayar peningkatan dari status quo ke tahap perkhidmatan yang lebih baik. Kesimpulannya, hasil daripada kajian ini mungkin boleh membantu penggubal dasar, pihak berkuasa dan pengurus tempatan ke arah pertimbangan yang lebih baik berdasarkan keadaan semasa perkhidmatan yang disediakan kepada pengunjung.
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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 29 March 2013 to conduct the final examination of Wan Norhidayah Binti W Mohamad on her thesis entitled “A Choice Experiment To Estimate Visitor Preferences For Ecotourism Attributes At Kenyir Lake, Malaysia” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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DECLARATION

I declared that the thesis is my original work except for quotation and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declared that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

WAN NORHIDAYAH W MOHAMAD
Date: 29 March 2013
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