



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***VISITOR PERCEPTION ON THE POTENTIAL OF MATANG
MANGROVE
FOREST RESERVE FOR ECOTOURISM***

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By

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ABSTRACT

In peninsular Malaysia, Matang mangrove forest reserve is the larger mangrove area which is about 40,711 hectares. Matang Mangrove Forest is a national treasure, it was lies under federal and state authorities. Since early 1904, Matang Mangrove Forest being forest reserve with systematic management. This study was conducted at Matang mangrove forest to identify the potential of Matang mangrove forest as an ecotourism destination. There were 137 questionnaire was distributed to the visitor during weekend and public holidays in the month of February 2016. This study finds that there are three significant factors that influence potential of Matang mangrove by visitor perception. The factor are satisfaction and need, relaxation and leisure and malaysian certificate of educational. The research finding gives an understanding on what people's needs and wants for their recreational activities where it is useful to the related agency for their future management purpose.

ABSTRAK

Di Semenanjung Malaysia, Hutan Paya Laut Matang adalah kawasan bakau yang terbesar iaitu kira-kira 40.711 hektar. Hutan Paya Laut Matang adalah khazanah negara, ia terletak di bawah kuasa pihak persekutuan dan negeri. Sejak awal tahun 1904, Hutan Paya Laut Matang telah menjadi hutan simpan dengan sistem pengurusan yang sistematik. Kajian ini telah dijalankan di Hutan Paya Laut Matang untuk mengenalpasti potensi hutan paya laut matang sebagai destinasi eko-pelancongan yang mempengaruhi lawatan pengunjung ke kawasan tersebut. Sebanyak 137 borang soal selidik lengkap telah diedarkan kepada pengunjung pada hujung minggu dan cuti umum pada bulan Febuari 2016. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa terdapat tiga faktor penting yang mempengaruhi penyertaan pengunjung. Faktor - faktor tersebut adalah kepuasan dan keperluan, bersantai dan beriadah dan Sijil Pendidikan Malaysia. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa pemahaman tentang keperluan dan kemahuan masyarakat untuk melakukan aktiviti riadah amat berguna kepada agensi yang berkaitan untuk tujuan pengurusan agensi mereka pada masa akan datang.

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APPROVAL SHEET

I certify that this research project report entitled " **Visitor Perception on the Potential of Matang Mangrove Forest Reserve for Ecotourism**" by Farah Liyana binti Abdul Latif has been examined and approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Park and Recreation Science in the Faculty of Forestry, Universiti Putra Malaysia.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Mangrove forest is a natural unique creature. There is just three percent (3.0%) mangrove forest in Malaysia which is equal to 628,671 hectares area from the total forest in Malaysia (Chan, 1988). Mangrove ecosystem is a complex collection of many species that grow on the top of the tide zone sheltered beach in the tropical area. It features has a lot of roots and can live in an area of high salinity environment to grow in an unstable and stressful area (Dahlan Taha et al, 1994).

Mangrove forest is not like other coastal area that we commonly go but it has its own way to give people benefit and fun during recreation. This is due to the nature of the mangrove forest are not very attractive and its muddy condition which makes it difficult for people to enter the area. However, Mangrove forests have a unique and special criteria which accord with the concept of pleasure and satisfaction derived from nature and itself it is more toward an educational experience and knowledge (Dahlan Taha et al, 1994).

Kosmaryandi and Avenzora (2004) suggested that exploiting the potential of nature tourism activities should be managed wisely, responsibly and really need to consider sustainability environment. Their uniquely biodiversity and ecosystems, potentially making it an attractive tourist destination. Tourism has

become an important activity in the development of the national economy as a whole. According to Dato' Khalid Hj. Ismail (1994) this is clearly seen in terms of its contribution to foreign exchange earnings , employment and also in terms of the benefit side. Tourism also not a new phenomenon, that has been widely debated in every corner of the globe (Alavanh Phanthavong , 2009).

Since the 1970's, one of the strongest and the fastest growing industries in the worldwide is a tourism (Boo, 1990). Besides, the rising number of tourists presents both threats and opportunities for the tourism industry which it is increasing and having an impact on protected areas worldwide (Goodwin, 1996) to natural resources, and those who rely on them for survival. By impact present, government start to make a policy to develop ecotourism to protect and preserve tourism product that become tourist attraction to be in well - balanced level (Dato' Khalid Hj. Ismail, 1994).

Development of ecotourism concept in 1990s showing an alternative to mass tourism that is mean the most proper tourism activity can be develop in natural and cultural area including cultural and rural tourism element (Osman Yilmaz, 2011). According to the definition of World Conservation Union (IUCN,1995), ecotourism is a visit or environmental journey to unexplored natural area, supporting protection area by gaining a knowledge about the nature and culture sources, having low visitor impact and providing socio economical income for the public.

Therefore, it is necessary to conducted a study to assess the potential that exists in the Matang mangrove area that may help in development of the area. At the same time, assessing potential will help to protect and manage the natural area itself. Other than that, the importance to know the potential for an area will have an impact in marketing of the country where the external and internal can help destination have desire to meet the need of their visitor.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Abdulla Al Mamun, Sumen Mitra, 2012 tourism is an activities that essential and direct on the education, cultural, social and economics sector for national societies. Matang Mangrove Forest Reserve located in Kuala Sepetang Perak was one of the best nature tourism destination. Kuala Sepetang is a coastal area and it suitable for those who are interested in wildlife, forest management, culture, fisheries and charcoal production. Kuala Sepetang is developed rural area which facilitate with resort, hotel, homestay and simple chalets, restaurants and small roadside eateries and recreational activities. At the same time, still sustained it natural resources.

The need to know well about the potential Matang mangrove forest will help to supporting protection area by gaining a knowledge about the nature and culture sources, having low visitor impact as this industry now grow and increasing the number of tourist and also providing socio economical income for the public as it

is an ecotourism destination World Conservation Union (IUCN,1995).

Thus, as mentioned earlier, this study aims is to identify and evaluating the internal ecotourism potential and external ecotourism potential at Matang mangrove forest in Kuala Sepetang area and recommended the improvement for the planning and implementation of activities of this coastal area from the view of factor of natural attractions, activities, accessibility, socio - economic condition, accommodation, facilities and infrastructure, the presence of water that existing in the tourist area of the coast of Matang mangrove forest in Kuala Sepetang. Also finding out the most significant factor that influencing visitor to visit Matang mangrove forest.

In conclusion, the research result will be useful for management of parks for the following reason : The analysis of the potential will help the managers to see the existing factor that have in Matang mangrove forest . Other than that, it is important to understand the reason why tourist choose Matang mangrove forest as ecotourism destination. In term of motive in segmentation market, designing promotional program and decision making about destination.

1.3 Objectives

The main objective for this research is to identify potential of Matang Mangrove Forest as ecotourism destination based on visitor perception. While the specific objectives of this research were to :

- 1) To identify the internal and external potential at Matang mangrove forest.
- 2) To evaluate the ecotourism potential at Matang mangrove forest in Kuala Sepetang area based on internal and external ecotourism potential by visitor perspective.
- 3) To determine the most significant factors influencing visitors to visit Matang mangrove forest.

1.4 Research Questions

Q1 : What is the internal and external potential that exist at the Matang mangrove forest area ?

Q2 : Which is the most significant internal and external ecotourism potential that influencing visitor at Matang mangrove forest in Kuala Sepetang area ?

Q3 : What is the most significant factors that influencing visitors to visit Matang mangrove forest ?

1.5 Significant of Study

The study is about potential of Matang mangrove forest as ecotourism destination. The result of this research is important in order to help developer to know well at what level are the internal ecotourism potential and external ecotourism potential of this area. The information of this study will help developer to improve their management at the same time will help in their economic site. From the potential that have been listed, they can also plan and organize a program or activities that can attract more tourist to visit Matang mangrove forest and sustain the number of visitation. It is important to evaluate the potential that give benefit as it mostly attract the visitor . This is for to achieve an effective management.

In addition, to make Matang mangrove forest as ecotourism destination is by promoting the most popular uniqueness or recreation activities that has been provide there by further understanding or identify the potential that existing and can be develop more. Besides, it will help to increase Matang mangrove forest capacity to attract visitors and generate sustainable tourism development.

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