



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***LOCAL COMMUNITIES' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS ECONOMIC
IMPACTS FROM ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SUNGAI KAMPAR,
GOPENG, PERAK***

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**LOCAL COMMUNITIES' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS ECONOMIC IMPACTS
FROM ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SUNGAI KAMPAR, GOPENG,
PERAK**



By

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ABSTRACT

The tourism development in Sungai Kampar in Gopeng, Perak has brought changes to the local community. These changes regarded as an important benefit to them. A household survey based on sample of 132 respondents in 3 villages near with the Sungai Kampar was conducted in for 1 weeks. A descriptive analysis was carried out to identify the socio demographic of local community in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak. Besides that, a Multiple Regression analysis was carried out to identify the respondents' perception of economic impacts from ecotourism development in Gopeng, Perak. Finding from data analysis, show that positive relationship between perceptions towards income opportunities and community facilities from ecotourism development. Based on the finding from data analysis show that ecotourism development was bring more economic benefits towards local community in term of income opportunities and community facilities. On the others hands the local authorities and government were playing important role in making the region more attractive to tourists and to maintain the increasing number of tourist that will keep coming to the destination and at the same time local community be able to get benefit from it. The development authority should carry out with a properly strategy and planning, for creating a sustainability empowerment management.

ABSTRAK

Pembangunan pelancongan di Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak telah membawa perubahan kepada masyarakat setempat. Perubahan penting bagi mereka, tinjauan rumah berdasarkan sampel daripada 132 responden di 3 kampung berhampiran dengan Sungai Kampar dan bersemuka telah dijalankan selama 1 minggu. Analisis deskriptif telah dijalankan untuk mengenalpasti demografi sosio masyarakat tempatan di Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak. Selain itu, analisis regresi berganda (*Multiple Regression Analysis*) telah dijalankan untuk mengenal pasti persepsi responden terhadap kesan ekonomi daripada pembangunan ekopelancongan di Gopeng, Perak. Data analisis menunjukkan bahawa hubungan positif antara persepsi terhadap peluang pendapatan dan kemudahan masyarakat daripada pembangunan ekopelancongan. Berdasarkan maklumat daripada analisis data juga menunjukkan bahawa pembangunan ekopelancongan telah membawa lebih banyak manfaat ekonomi kepada masyarakat tempatan dari segi peluang pendapatan dan taraf kualiti and kuantiti kemudahan masyarakat. Di samping itu, pihak berkuasa tempatan dan kerajaan telah memainkan peranan penting dalam pemantauan tempat rekreasi ini untuk menjadikan lebih menarik kepada pelancong dan untuk mengekalkan peningkatan jumlah pelancong yang akan terus datang ke destinasi dan pada masa yang sama penduduk tempatan dapat faedah daripadanya. Pihak berkuasa pembangunan perlu menjalankan strategi dengan betul dan perancangan, untuk mewujudkan pengurusan kemampunan kuasa.

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APPROVAL SHEET

I certify that this research project report entitled “**Local Community’ Perceptions towards Economic Impacts from Ecotourism Development in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak**” by Teo Wen Qiang has been examined and approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Parks and Recreation Science in the Faculty of Forestry, Universiti Putra Malaysia.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
NGO	Non- Government Organization
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science





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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter contains overall study of ecotourism, which include the background of study, problem statement, research objective, research question, significance of study, organization of thesis, and the summary of the chapter.

1.2 Background of Study

Gopeng is a region located in Mukim Teja, District of Kampar, Perak, Malaysia. It is situated around 20 km south of Ipoh city. Gopeng is made up of a multi-cultural society. Population in the Gopeng approximately 100,000 people consisting the Malay, Chinese, Tamils and the indigenous people.

Gopeng town started with heritage, natural and outdoor recreation ecotourism attractions developed by the local community. From Gopeng town, it takes about 15 minutes to reach the starting point located at Kg. Ulu Geruntum. The journey itself is a memorable experience as visitors will pass by some of the most picturesque places in Gopeng with a whole spectrum of landscapes. The manager of outdoor department of the Rumah Rehat Adeline Sdn.Bhd, Jamahuri (personal communication, October 7, 2015) said that the development of ecotourism was started since year of 2004 until now. Most of the ecotourism destinations are remotely located from the east of Gopeng town into the hill slopes, and the way goes in surrounded by traditional Malay villages, flaunted with its rainforest.

One of a strategy for supporting conservation and providing economic benefit for local communities' particular areas is ecotourism (Jeffrey, 2012). The development of ecotourism on the uphill along the Sungai Kampar opens up tourist avenues for tourism activities that transform into a tourist destination. The ecotourism activity is the main tourism attraction nowadays, such as white water rafting, jungle trekking, caving and wet abseiling.

Besides that, the ecotourism industry in Gopeng provides employment opportunities to the local community, and this may affect the perception of local community towards the industry. As Ahmad et al. (1995) and Ahmad and Dora (1996) stated that the perception of the local community was dependent on whether the local community had direct, indirect involvement or non-involvement in tourism related activities.

Perceptions of local communities toward tourism development and how these perceptions are formed would be valuable knowledge for the tourism industry particularly for state tourism development. Lu et al. (2009) indicated that tourism development may change residents' relationships to one another and to their community. It is generally feel that residents' perception toward tourism impact including economic, social, cultural and environmental impact.

1.3 Problem Statement

The tourism development at the Sungai Kampar, Gopeng town has shown a rapid change in terms of economic impacts. There is a relationship between community in tourism development and their perceptions towards increase in these tourism developments (Nzama, 2008). The manager of outdoor

department of the Rumah Rehat Adeline Sdn.Bhd, Mr Jamahuri said that the people who are guide in the ecotourism activities such as the jungle trekking, white water rafting, paintball, caving and night walk are from the local community. There are 70 percent of the local community are involving in the ecotourism activities especially the juvenile generation which 18 age and above (Personal communication, October 7, 2015). There are study place for the previous similar researches are Geopark, islands and theme parks. The study place of this research is river side, so this can be as the fulfilment to the theoretical gap of the study.

On the other hand, there are some negative responds of local community towards the tourism in term of economic benefits. The manager of outdoor department of the Rumah Rehat Adeline Sdn.Bhd, Mr Jamahuri (Personal communication, October 7, 2015) said that was a conflict issue happened between the outdoor recreation operations companies and local community in middle of the year 2015. The Sungai Kampar, Gopeng is the main tourist attraction and most popular outdoor recreation destination, and the issue was started at starting area of the river. The landowner of the starting area who is an owner of an outdoor recreation operation company force others companies and local community to pay the entrance fees.

According to the law of Malaysia Act 418 Water Act 1920 Section 3 state that, the entire property of all rivers in any State is vested solely in the Ruler of State and not belongs to anyone. This was means that the landowner does not have any power request for any entrance fees, and the others companies

and local community refuse to pay for it because of irrational and unreasonable request. In the end, this economic conflict of the tourism was become an issue. This was cause the split of the local community and the particular recreation company. Indirectly, this was generated the bad opinions and feelings of the local community toward the tourism development.

One of the important roles for sustainable management of tourism is the perception of local community towards tourism (Sharma and Dyer, 2009). Perception of local community towards potential economic impact must be investigated because it can affect the economic development of tourism. The factors which influence residents' perceptions are likely to be different in each community based on the nature and the extent of the impact. Cater (1994) highlights the need for local community involvement in planning and managing tourism, especially the developing countries. This research is to find out the perception of the local community toward the economic impact of ecotourism in river site, and there are not similar previous researches. The local residents' perceptions are important to strengthen economic growth from tourism development and provide a good image of the tourism industry. Harrill (2004) states residents with the most economic gain are the most supportive of the tourism industry. According to Allen et al. (1988) local residents' perceptions and their attitudes towards impacts from tourism development must be constantly assessed for support of the tourism industry.

1.4 Research Question

What are the local community' perceptions towards economic impacts from ecotourism development in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak?

Specific Questions

1. What are the socio demographic of local community in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak?
2. Is there a relationship between income opportunities and the perceptions of local community towards economic impacts from ecotourism development in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak?
3. Is there a relationship between entrepreneurial opportunities and the perceptions of local community towards economic impacts from ecotourism development in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak?
4. Is there a relationship between community facilities and the perceptions of local community towards economic impacts from ecotourism development in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak?

1.5 Research Objective

This study aims to investigate local community' perceptions towards economic impacts from ecotourism development in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the socio demographic of local community in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak.
2. To investigate the relationship between income opportunities, entrepreneurial opportunities, and community facilities and the

perceptions of local community towards economic impacts from ecotourism development in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study helps reader to understand the effects of economic impacts from ecotourism development towards the perceptions of local community in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak.

This study is useful for the academic purpose. The findings can be the reference of the researchers when they are doing similarity research in Perak. Besides that, this can help to rise up the awareness of the researchers, students and even public toward the perception of local community, and convincing them for further study on this issue in Malaysia.

In the other hand, this can be help to attract tourists in Malaysia. With this research, the tourist attraction in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng can be more familiar and popular in the Malaysia. Rearrangement of the research findings it can be a marketing tool for promoting ecotourism in Sungai Kampar, Gopeng, Perak to the international tourists market.

This study also is useful to help tourism of Malaysia to do some national tourism planning project in Perak. Besides that, the findings of this study will provide information to ecotourism developers and policy makers of ecotourism destinations that are at the planning stage of their residents' perceptions of tourism development. This will be let them make the most

favourable development plans and policy decisions with considered the benefit of local community.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

There are five chapters will be covered in this study, which are introduction, literature review and hypothesis development, methodology, results, and conclusion and recommendation. The first chapter contains the background of the study about the perception of local community, problem statement, research objective, research question and significance of study.

The chapter two shows the overview of literature about the perceptions of local community towards the economic impact of tourism development. Various theories will be discussed in order to develop the hypotheses and build a conceptual framework. The empirical finding for every variable will also be presented.

In chapter three, two aspects will be discussed, which is the data collection and analysis. This chapter will describe the location of study, sources of data, how to collect data, choose the sample size, and the data analysis as well as statistical analysis that will be applied in this study.

Chapter four shows the analysis results from the data collection. Various aspects of analysis result will be presented. The summary from the results of this study will also be discussed in this chapter.

The last chapter, chapter five will conclude all the result through this study in summary. Moreover, the limitation about this study will also be explored for future research study.

1.8 Summary

In summary, there are many researches have paid many attention to the impacts of ecotourism development. However, the researches about the perceptions of local community toward economic impact of ecotourism development in the overseas, but this topic still unfamiliar and less researches about this topic in Malaysia. Therefore, this research will give awareness about impacts of ecotourism in Malaysia.

In the next chapter, literature review will be presented. Previous findings will be discussed in order to have more understanding on this topic.

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