



***DETERMINANTS OF LOCAL COMMUNITY'S PARTICIPATION IN
ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT AT TASIK KENYIR, MALAYSIA***

ENGKU NOR KAMILAH BINTI ENGKU HASSAN

IKDPM 2018 5



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ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT AT TASIK KENYIR, MALAYSIA**

By

ENGKU NOR KAMILAH BINTI ENGKU HASSAN

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

September 2018

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DEDICATION

This thesis is specially dedicated to two special people in my life for their continuous support, love, encouragement, inspiration and motivation throughout my postgraduate study:

My mother, Tengku Fuziah binti Tengku Muda Abdullah
My father, Engku Hassan bin Syed Ahmad Al-Idrus

Thank you very much.



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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By

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September 2018

Chairman : Profesor Ahmad Bin Shuib, PhD
Institute : Agricultural and Food Policy Studies

This study is aimed to determine the factors that influence the level of participation in ecotourism development among local communities. The study area selected which is Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu includes the local communities from Kampung Basong, Kampung Pasir Dula and Kampung Padang Setebu. Tasik Kenyir of Terengganu has been identified as a prospective ecotourism site for its natural beauties, recreational facilities and tourism activities. The problem statement highlighted is based on the personal communication with the leaders of the community and the theoretical gap in the past studies. Lack of understanding on the issues of participation and sustainability faced by the local community are clear gaps of the study. Thus the general objective of the study is to analyze the participation of local community in ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir. A quantitative method was used in this study. Questionnaire survey by face to face interview was used to determine the level of participation and to identify the perceptions of local community towards ecotourism impacts. Descriptive Statistics, Exploratory Factor Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis were also performed to complete the data set. The findings showed that the level of participation in ecotourism development among local community in Tasik Kenyir is at non-participation level. This indicates the minimal level of involvement of the local community in the decision making process. This is expected in a top down decision making procedure where the authority holds the real power. This study also investigated the local community perception towards ecotourism impacts in ecotourism development. The descriptive findings showed positive perception of respondents towards ecotourism impacts in ecotourism development but they also have negative perception towards several ecotourism impacts. The findings of the multiple regressions analysis showed that four variables were significant in predicting the level of participation in ecotourism development among the local community; family members' involvement in ecotourism, perception on

environmental impact, marital status and residential distance to ecotourism area. The results of the study also do not contradict the social exchange theory. Social exchange theory emphasizes that the local community who get benefits from the development will support the ecotourism. While, the other local communities who are not directly involved in ecotourism are still receiving the benefits such as from the environmental and sociocultural impact of ecotourism. The findings of this study also provided some recommendations and suggestions can be proposed to the local government especially KETENGAH and Tourism of Terengganu in enhancing the local community participation in ecotourism; these include increasing the development of various ecotourism activities and facilities to attract the local residents to be involved in ecotourism operations.



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

PENENTU-PENENTU PENGLIBATAN PENDUDUK TEMPATAN DALAM PEMBANGUNAN EKOPELANCONGAN DI TASIK KENYIR, MALAYSIA

Oleh

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Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi tahap penglibatan dalam pembangunan ekopelancongan di kalangan masyarakat setempat. Kawasan kajian yang dipilih ialah Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu termasuklah masyarakat setempat dari Kampung Basong, Kampung Pasir Dula dan Kampung Padang Setebu. Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu telah dikenal pasti sebagai tapak ekopelancongan yang mempunyai keindahan semula jadi, kemudahan rekreasi dan aktiviti pelancongan. Kenyataan masalah adalah berdasarkan daripada komunikasi peribadi dengan pemimpin masyarakat dan juga jurang teori dalam kajian-kajian lepas. Kekurangan pemahaman mengenai isu-isu penyertaan dan kemampanan yang dihadapi oleh masyarakat setempat adalah jurang yang jelas dalam kajian ini. Oleh itu objektif umum kajian ini adalah untuk menganalisis penyertaan masyarakat setempat dalam pembangunan ekopelancongan di Tasik Kenyir. Kaedah kuantitatif telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Kajian soal selidik dengan masyarakat setempat dijalankan untuk menentukan tahap penyertaan dan untuk mengenal pasti persepsi masyarakat setempat terhadap kesan ekopelancongan. Analisa Statistik Deskriptif, Faktor Analisis dan Analisis Regresi Berganda juga dilakukan untuk menyelesaikan set data yang dikumpul. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa tahap penglibatan dalam pembangunan ekopelancongan di kalangan masyarakat setempat di Tasik Kenyir berada pada tahap yang rendah. Ini bermaksud tahap penglibatan masyarakat setempat berada di aras minima dalam proses membuat keputusan. Ini dijangkakan dalam prosedur membuat keputusan, pihak berkuasa mempunyai kuasa yang dalam membuat keputusan berbanding dengan masyarakat setempat. Kajian ini juga untuk menyiasat persepsi masyarakat setempat terhadap impak ekopelancongan dalam pembangunan ekopelancongan. Hasil daripada analisis deskriptif menunjukkan masyarakat mempunyai persepsi positif terhadap ekopelancongan tetapi terdapat juga beberapa persepsi negatif terhadap ekopelancongan. Manakala, hasil kajian

daripada analisis regresi berganda menyatakan bahawa penglibatan ahli keluarga dalam ekopelancongan, persepsi masyarakat terhadap alam sekitar, status perkahwinan dan jarak rumah ke kawasan ekopelancongan merupakan faktor yang mempengaruhi tahap penglibatan dalam pembangunan ekopelancongan di kalangan masyarakat setempat di Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu. Hasil kajian ini juga selari dengan teori pertukaran sosial. Teori pertukaran sosial menekankan bahawa masyarakat setempat yang memperoleh manfaat daripada pembangunan akan menyokong ekopelancongan. Sementara itu, masyarakat setempat yang terlibat secara langsung dalam ekopelancongan juga masih memperoleh manfaat daripada ekopelancongan contohnya daripada impak alam sekitar dan juga sosio budaya. Dengan adanya hasil kajian ini, ia dapat memberi beberapa cadangan kepada kerajaan tempatan terutamanya pihak KETENGAH dan Pelancongan Terengganu dalam meningkatkan lagi penglibatan masyarakat setempat dalam ekopelancongan ini termasuklah dengan mempelbagaikan aktiviti dan kemudahan ekopelancongan untuk menarik minat masyarakat dalam sektor ekopelancongan.

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- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ECER	East Coast Economic Region
GNI	Gross National Income
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environment Initiatives
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JAKOA	Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli
KECV	Kenyir Elephant Conservation Village
KETENGAH	Lembaga Kemajuan Terengganu Tengah
MIER	Malaysian Institute of Economic Research
MOTAC	Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia
NEP	National Ecotourism Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NKEA	National Key Economic Areas
NTP	National Transformation Programme
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
IUCN	World Conservation Union
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The first part of this chapter is an overview of tourism and ecotourism in Malaysia; especially in Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu, an ecotourism site in Terengganu and the ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir. The places of tourism attraction and ecotourism trends in Malaysia are discussed. Then, the objectives of the study are formulated based on the problem statement and lastly, the significance of the study is discussed in the last part of this chapter.

1.1 Tourism in Malaysia

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world (Sharpley, 2002). Due to positive growth, tourism has reached a position which has the potential to bring many benefits to the individuals involved and the certain country where it is developed (Doh, 2006). Tourism has been an important industry in Malaysia for a number of years (Musa, 2000 and Kunasekaran, 2014). Nowadays, Malaysia has become one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world (Mosbah and Khuja, 2014). As a part of Malaysia's growth plan towards high income status, tourism was selected as one of the National Key Economic Areas (NKEA) under the National Transformation Programme (NTP) in 2010.

According to King (2009), there are various tourism activities in Malaysia such as beach tourism, heritage tourism and nature tourism. The World Travel & Tourism Council in Malaysia, in 2016 Travel & Tourism directly supported 639,500 jobs (4.5% of total employment) and this is expected to rise by 1.9% in 2017 and rise by 3.9% per annum to 956,000 jobs (5.4% of total employment) in 2027.

Currently, the tourism sector has become a significant contributor to the economy and it is recognized as one of the main sources of foreign exchange earnings and catalyst to the economic growth. Tourism contributes about 8 to 10 percent of Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (Sivalingam, 2007). According to Kunasekaran (2014), the Malaysian government is well aware of the vital role the tourism sector plays and has included this sector in one of the numerous Malaysian Development Plans.

The Malaysian tourism industry has generated foreign exchange income for the nation from RM56.5 billion in 2010 to RM72 billion in 2014 which is a rise by 27.4%. This was reflected in the surge of tourists visiting Malaysia from 24.6 million in 2010 to 27.4 million in 2014. Therefore, it has become obvious that our country has managed to be among the popular destinations among tourists in the global tourism market (11th Malaysian Plan 2016-2020). While, the international

arrivals reached 25.72 million and 26.76 million respectively in 2015 and 2016, compared to 27.4 million in 2014 (Tourism Malaysia, 2017). According to Dato' Sri Idris Jala (2016), the tourism industry is growing at a great speed. In 2015, tourism was the second highest private investment contributor at RM24.5 billion and the third largest Gross National Income (GNI) contributor at RM67.1 billion. Table 1.1 shows the international tourist arrivals to Malaysia and revenues received from 2006 until 2016.

Table 1.1 : International tourist arrivals and receipts to Malaysia (2006-2016)

Year	Arrivals/million	Receipts/MYR billion
2006	17.55	36.3
2007	20.97	53.4
2008	22.05	49.6
2009	23.65	53.4
2010	24.58	56.5
2011	24.71	58.3
2012	25.03	60.6
2013	25.72	65.4
2014	27.44	72.0
2015	25.72	69.1
2016	26.76	82.1

Source: Tourism Malaysia (2017)

Furthermore, tourism is identified as one of the key economic drivers of East Coast Economic Region (ECER), with a private sector investment target of RM9.4 billion by 2020. Tourism initiatives in ECER span several sub-sectors, namely urban and coastal tourism; ecotourism; culture and heritage tourism; island tourism; homestay programme and hallmark events (ECER Annual Reports, 2012). There are actually four states in ECER but for the state of Johor, it is only one district which is Mersing. The three other remaining states are Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang.

It is imperative for tourism marketers to understand the needs of the different segments of the market and satisfy these needs. The different segments of the market determine the types of tourism that can be offered by tourism marketers. For example, health tourism is preferred by the mature and older groups of consumers while education tourism is preferred by students (Johari, 2015). Consumers who love the nature will definitely prefer green tourism or ecotourism. Therefore, there are various tourist attributes such as individual preference, social status, income and purpose of travelling which act as a point of reference for tourism marketers to ascertain the level of demand for the different types of tourism to be offered to tourists.

1.2 Ecotourism – An Overview

The World Conservation Union's (IUCN) Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas defined ecotourism as “environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations” (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). The definition of ecotourism indicates that ecotourism development contains the combination of many factors including tourists, residents and managers (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1993).

In the National Ecotourism Plan 2016-2025, the definition of ecotourism is “tourism experiences evolved through collaboration between government, the private sector and local communities, and that includes the following elements; respect for nature, contribution to conservation, benefit to local communities, components of education and awareness and sustainability-ecologically, economically, socio-culturally and ethically”.

One cannot deny the rise and prominence of ecotourism in the present global tourism market. Ecotourism can boost the economy of most countries. Minimum adverse effects on the environment and the opportunity to interact closely with the local communities of the ecotourism destination have contributed to the rise of ecotourism. Tourists can appreciate the natural splendors and learn the local culture and tradition of the ecotourism destination. Furthermore, ecotourism is considered to be sustainable from the perspectives of social, economic and the environment.

As indicated in the 11th Malaysia Plan 2016-2020, the biodiversity assets will be fully utilized for ecotourism development since ecotourism is chosen as the highlight of the tourism industry. Among the ways to achieve the development is through extensive protection and conservation of the natural resources and will be supported by various promotional and selected branding activities. Hence, renowned and competent investors in the field of conservation and preservation of nature and wildlife will be invited in creating ecotourism products that have the value chain of high-yield tourism. Other elements such as tourism facilities, interpretive centres, communications and safety measures which cater for experience-enriching will also be intensified. Furthermore, in helping the local communities to increase their living standards, the development of ecotourism will be a good platform that offers opportunities to the communities to participate in related income-generation activities.

Table 1.2 : Ecotourism attractions in the ECER

State	Attractions
Kelantan	Kuala Koh National Park, Gunung Stong, Nenggiri, Kulai Krai-Dabong, Jelawang, Gua Musang
Pahang	Taman Negara, Sungai Relau, Kenong Rimba Park, Gunung Tapis Park, Senyum Recreational Forest, Tasik Bera, Tasik Chini, Jeram Besu, Kuala Gandah Elephant Sanctuary, Deerland Park, Tekam Plantation resort, Pulau Timon, Coastal beaches, Highland areas
Terengganu	Tasik Kenyir , Tanjung Mentong, Gunung Gagau, Sekayu Recreational Forest, Pasir Raja Forest Reserve, LA Hot Spring, Seito Agro Resort, Waterfalls, Islands, Beaches

Sources: ECER Master Plan (2007)

ECER has numerous ecotourism attractions as shown in Table 1.2 above. The states in ECER have a significant advantage due to the vast natural diversity available in each of these states and are deemed to be appropriate for tourism development. These states have beaches and islands which are equivalent to beaches in other countries of the world. However, since these beaches and islands are not crowded, it has enabled these destinations to be popular among tourists. These states also have other resources such as highlands, hills, mountains, lakes, waterfalls, parks, forest reserves, lush tropical landscape and nature, marine parks and a variety of tree and food crops . Other factors that have contributed to the development of tourism in these states are the warm, friendly and kind people and their heritage that has a combination of royal, religion, history and culture (ECER Master Plan, 2007).

1.2.1 Ecotourism Development in Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu

Terengganu is one of the states of ECER in Malaysia. The ECER Master Plan has proposed that Tasik Kenyir and the surrounding forest reserves be gazetted as a state park, with the objectives of promoting ecotourism, biodiversity conservation and maintenance of reservoir water quality (ECER Annual Report, 2012). The natural attractions, recreational facilities, and the range of tourism activities have contributed to Tasik Kenyir being identified as a potential ecotourism site. Other factors include the active participation of the residents in tourism, unique cultural experience for tourists, ecological escapade and conservation of the nature (ECER Master Plan, 2007).

National Ecotourism Plan 2016-2025 defined tourism cluster as “a critical mass of competitive (and/or complementary) tourism products including one or more major attractions in a concentrated geographical area”. Thus, Tasik Kenyir has been listed as one of the proposed ecotourism clusters in Terengganu in National Ecotourism Plan 2016-2025 as shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 : Proposed ecotourism clusters in Terengganu

State	Macro/Regional cluster
Terengganu	1. Kampung Raja – Besut – Pulau Perhentian – Jerteh
	2. Setiu – Merang – Penarik (Mature cluster)
	3. Ajil – Kuala Berang – Tasik Kenyir
	4. Kuala Terengganu – Kuala Nerus
	5. Marang – Pulau Kapas
	6. Dungun – Rantau Abang – Al-Mukhtafi Billah Shah – Pulau Tenggol
	7. Kemaman – Kijal – Chukai - Kerteh

(Source: National Ecotourism Plan 2016-2025)

In addition, Terengganu Tengah Development Authority (KETENGAH) was given the responsibility of the Terengganu State Government to regulate the development of Tasik Kenyir area in 1993. The important role of KETENGAH is to ensure the areas in KETENGAH region include Tasik Kenyir become a well-known tourist destination in the Southeast Asian region (KETENGAH, 2018). Nowadays, Tasik Kenyir became a popular tourist destination. There are many activities and programs that organized by KETENGAH and state government such as international events (e.g: Kenyir Rainforest Challenge International, Kenyir International Motorcross Challenge, Kenyir International Mountain Bike Challenge and Kenyir Lake International Triathlon) and other events (e.g: Kenyir Festival, Fishing Festival, Hari Raya celebrations). All the activities and programs were indirectly give the benefits to the local community (KETENGAH officers, 2016).

Thus, the presence of the attractions in Tasik Kenyir might be one of the factors that contribute to tourists' arrival at Tasik Kenyir. It is substantiated by the statistics of tourist arrivals in Tasik Kenyir by KETENGAH (2018) as shown in Table 1.4. The total tourist arrivals has been increasing from year to year due to numerous reasons. Since Tasik Kenyir provides new facilities and development, the total number of tourist arrivals has increased in 2014 compared to 2015 and increased dramatically in 2017 due to the opening of Tasik Kenyir duty-free zone. Tasik Kenyir is a very popular ecotourism area to those who love nature and fishing. It is a suitable place for family members to indulge in leisure activities.

Table 1.4 : Tourist arrivals in Tasik Kenyir (2008-2017)

Years	Total tourists
2008	133,569
2009	189,388
2010	225,570
2011	275,241
2012	397,005
2013	467,678
2014	649,394
2015	706,223
2016	507,502
2017	808,336

Sources: (KETENGAH, 2018)

1.3 Problem Statement

The justification to conduct this study is by highlighting (1) the gap in the literature and (2) the real problem or current scenario in the study area. The real issues of the local community participation and ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir are highlighted through personal communication technique. This technique is to avoid the researcher from considering the problem from only her point of view and to reduce all forms of bias.

Community participation in the context of tourism development as the process whereby the community influences the direction of tourism development is generally agreed as one of the factors that influences ecotourism development rather than simply being passive recipients of its benefits (Jaafar et al., 2017). Thus, the main concern of the problem statement is the local community participation in ecotourism development process. Community participation is very much highlighted and encouraged, with many academics agreeing that it is a very important component for ecotourism success. Therefore, the success of ecotourism depends on the success of local community participation. Without local people participation, sustainable ecotourism development is not possible (Bhuiyan et al., 2011). The active participation of the local community will ensure that they enjoy the positive development of ecotourism (Kunasekaran, 2014).

According to Drumm (1998), community participation in ecotourism development is defined as local people actively being involved in ecotourism projects and actively participating in ecotourism development. The local community will either occupy or own a natural attraction. Chok et al. (2007) stated that the participation of the local communities is vital in ensuring that tourism development decisions reflect the livelihood of the local communities. Nevertheless, participation in decision-making is not the only component of community participation. Participation in both the decision-making and benefits of tourism are the two forms of community participation (McIntosh and Goeldner, 1986; Timothy, 1999).

According to Ashley and Roe (1998), a range of activities such as employment, supply of goods and services, community enterprise ownership and joint ventures can be included in community participation. Individuals and the entire community should participate in ecotourism development activities.

The significance of local involvement in tourism was also stressed in the 11th Malaysian Plan 2016-2020 (Government of Malaysia, 2016). Tasik Kenyir in Terengganu was selected as the study area because it is a prospective ecotourism site in the East Coast Economic Region (ECER).

There are various changes experienced by the local community due to ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu. The ecotourism development can impact the local community either via economic, socio cultural or environmental. The impact of ecotourism can result in positive outcomes or negative outcomes and can be damaging to the local community (Aref et al., 2009).

“Since the existence of the development here, the job opportunities have increased and this opportunity is given especially to the local people who live around this area. As we know, most of the local people are from low income social groups. Thus, we can give the local people benefits from the development which helps them to alleviate the cost of living and can also increase the income of the local people. Some of them are working at several tourist destinations in Tasik Kenyir as security guards, tour guides, cleaners, boatmen and other jobs.” (Encik Faiq, KETENGAH officer, personal communication, 15 March 2016).

This statement shows the economic impact to the local people. Some of the local people are involved and they work in ecotourism sector to increase the income in supporting their families. According to Dato’ Rozi Mamat, the declaration of Tasik Kenyir as a duty free zone will increase the job opportunities of local people especially in tourism sector, business and services (27 September 2014, Berita Harian).

This statement proves that the factors that influence residents’ opinion on tourism are frequently described as economic, sociocultural, and environmental impact (Gee et al., 1989; Yoon et al., 2001; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Perdue, Long and Allen, 1990; Jurowski and Gursoy, 2004). An example of the negative impact of changes in the local community as a result of ecotourism development is the increase in price. It is common for local communities to be from the low income group and this has been acknowledged by the National Ecotourism Plan. It can adversely affect the low income groups’ ability to purchase goods and services because of the increase in the cost of living.

Besides, the socio demographic of the communities like distance of local people living from an ecotourism development area must be weighed before their attitudes are studied as geographical location in terms of distance can have an influence on the level of perception and support for tourism (Jurowski and Gursoy, 2004).

“Kampung Basong, Kampung Pasir Dula and Kampung Padang Setebu are the nearest villages to Tasik Kenyir. These villages are located along the way and easy to access for tourists or visitors to the ecotourism site which is Tasik Kenyir. Since the proximity of these villages is close to Tasik Kenyir, many of the local people work at that place because it is convenient for them to go there. (Encik Mamat, Head of Kampung Basong, personal communication, 14 March 2016).

The statement proved that the distance is one of the factors that influenced local people to participate in ecotourism development. According to Keogh's (1990), the strongest impact in terms of feelings on tourism are those who live in close proximity to the area of ecotourism development site as they are the ones who can benefit the most due to an upsurge in employment opportunities.

The involvement of the communities for the development and sustainability of ecotourism has been acknowledged in the National Ecotourism Plan. The vital role of the local communities in planning, developing and managing has to be acknowledged as they are directly benefitting from ecotourism (Senior Research Officer MIER, 2005). The support and involvement from local community is crucial in ecotourism because local community participation can guide the decisions made on projects and issues which are directly linked to their place of residence and environment (Sangkakorn and Suwannarat, 2013).

“The level of local community involvement of villagers is low and there is no specific statistics to shows the involvement of villagers in the ecotourism development especially in management and decision making such as in meeting which are normally attended by people who have positions in the meeting boards. The decisions taken for ecotourism development were made by the authorities and the authorities usually conduct the meetings with village committee members. The decisions taken on ecotourism development during the meeting will conveyed to the local people by word of mouth or be notified during ceremonies such as programs at mosque. (Encik Abu Bakar, Head of Kampung Pasir Dula, personal communication, 14 Mac 2016).

However, partnership, development and programs cannot occur if there is no participation of the local people. The level of local people involvement determines the level of community participation in the ecotourism development process (Miranda, 2007).

However, previous research has been conducted in Tasik Kenyir such as “Measuring the quality of ecotourism services: case study based model validation” by Yusof et al. (2014), “Fish community in Pengkalan Gawi – Pulau Dula section of Kenyir Lake, Terengganu” by Kamaruddin et al. (2011), “Atmospheric surfactants around lake ecosystem of Tasik Kenyir” by Hanif et al. (2011), “Tourists’ perceptions of service quality in a lake-based tourism area” by Yusof and Rahman (2011), “Understanding motivation factors of tourism entrepreneurs in Tasik Kenyir” by Set et al. (2015) and “Sustainable measurement for ecotourism destination in Malaysia: a case on Lake Kenyir, Terengganu by Bhuiyan et al. (2016). Thus, there is limited studies focusing on the level of local community participation in Tasik Kenyir. Hence, there is a need to explore the factors that influence the level of participation in ecotourism development among local communities in Tasik Kenyir.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the socio demographic profiles of the local community in Tasik Kenyir?
2. What is the ecotourism impact on ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir?
3. What is the level of local community’s participation in ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir?
4. What are the factors influencing local community’s participation in ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir?

1.5 Research Objectives

The general objective of the study is to analyze the participation of local community in ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia.

The specific research objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the socio demographic profiles of the local community in Tasik Kenyir.
2. To identify the perception of local community towards ecotourism impact in ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir.
3. To determine the level of local community’s participation in ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir.
4. To determine the factors influencing the level of participation in ecotourism development among local communities in Tasik Kenyir.

1.6 Significance of Study

This study will benefit the stakeholders within local people involvement in ecotourism framework. The broad community that will utilize the findings of this research includes the villagers, governmental planners, policy makers, corporate sectors, academicians and non-governmental organizations. It is hoped that the findings of this research will contribute to existing literature in local community participation in the ecotourism field that will enhance the sector to become a more profitable business for the local people community. Any new factors identified which could influence the local community participation in ecotourism development would be a unique contribution to the existing literature on local community participation in ecotourism field. Moreover, the research will enable the local community to gain a better understanding on ecotourism development in that area.

1.7 Operational definition of Concepts

Several concepts need to be defined and explored to orientate the readers and provide a foundation for the study. These concepts are: local community, level of participation, ecotourism development, the impact of ecotourism and Social Exchange Theory.

Local community: Local community who live near Tasik Kenyir is from Kampung Basong, Kampung Pasir Dula and Kampung Padang Setebu. The three villages are nearby Tasik Kenyir. Most of them are working in Tasik Kenyir.

Level of participation: The model of participation in this study was adopted from Arnstein's ladder of participation. Arnstein offers a typology of citizen participation in the form of an eight-rung level. Each rung of the ladder is corresponding to the extent of citizens' power in determining the plans or programs. The eight rungs of the ladder are categorized into three levels, namely; non-participation, tokenism and citizen power.

Non-participation: Non-participation is the lowest type of participation in Arnstein's ladder. The local people are not involved in planning because the authorities have the power to make all the decisions.

Tokenism: Tokenism is the second type of participation in Arnstein's ladder. The opinion of local people can be considered but they lack the power to influence decisions made.

Citizen power: Citizen power is the highest level of participation in Arnstein's ladder. The local people have their power to control the planning and make decisions.

Social exchange theory: In ecotourism perspective, the social exchange theory consists of two components which are costs and benefits. The local person who receives the benefits from ecotourism will tend to support ecotourism development and have the positive perception towards the impact of ecotourism.

Ecotourism development: Tasik Kenyir is one of the ecotourism sites in Terengganu. There are many developments in this place.

Impact of ecotourism: This refers to the perception of local community in Tasik Kenyir towards the impact of ecotourism whether positive or negative.

1.8 Summary

The first chapter briefly introduces the study and the purposes of the research. It also clarifies research questions and objectives and the terms used as a guide throughout the study. The second chapter expands the literature of each topic within ecotourism impact; economic dimension, sociocultural dimension and environmental dimension and also the level of local community participation in ecotourism development.

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