



***DETERMINANTS INFLUENCING REVISIT INTENTION FOR  
ECOTOURISM TO TASIK KENYIR, MALAYSIA***

**NURUL AFIFAH BINTI NORDIN**

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**DETERMINANTS INFLUENCING REVISIT INTENTION FOR  
ECOTOURISM TO TASIK KENYIR, MALAYSIA.**

**By**

**NURUL AFIFAH BINTI NORDIN**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduates Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Science**

**January 2019**

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## **DEDICATION**

Every challenging work needs efforts as well as guidance of elders especially those who were very close to our heart.

My humble effort is dedicate to my sweet and loving parents

Nordin Bin Harun

&

Romainor Binti Abd Rajab @ Abd Wahab

Whose affection love, encouragement and prays of days and nights make me able to get success and honour

Along with all hard working and respected

Teachers.

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

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ECOTOURISM TO TASIK KENYIR, MALAYSIA**

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**January 2019**

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

The abundance of natural resources creates opportunities for Tasik Kenyir to become an attractive ecotourism site; the increase in the number of visitors implies the increase in demand for ecotourism activities and services in Tasik Kenyir. However, the increase in the number of visitors to Tasik Kenyir may not provide accurate information on the number of repeat visitors. Understanding the factors that influence the revisit intention to Tasik Kenyir is imperative as it helps the management of the ecotourism site to develop effective strategies in ecotourism marketing in at Tasik Kenyir. The main objective of this study is to identify the determinants influencing the revisit intention of visitors to Tasik Kenyir.

In order to assess the factors influencing revisit intention of the visitors, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) variables were examined together with additional variables, which included conservation awareness of the visitors, their visit characteristic and socio-demographic profiles. A structured questionnaire was designed as the instrument to gather data on the revisit intention to Tasik Kenyir. The questionnaires were distributed to the 319 sampled visitors in Tasik Kenyir using the non-probability sampling technique while the respondents were selected using the convenience sampling method. Descriptive analysis was used to measure the level of awareness variables included in the TPB and to identify the socio demographics and visit characteristics of visitors. While, a multiple linear regression analysis was used to analyse the determinants influencing the revisit intention of the visitors.

Findings revealed that there were positively significant relationships between the level of conservation awareness, perceived behavioral control (PBC), and subjective norm and the revisit intention of visitors in Tasik Kenyir. The regression analysis showed that

socio demographics and visit characteristics of visitors, types of occupation and types of accommodation used in Tasik Kenyir were the determinants that influenced the revisit intention of visitors to Tasik Kenyir. These findings can be used as a basis for further development of ecotourism facilities and services by the management at Tasik Kenyir. This study may also assist policy makers such as Terengganu Tengah Development Authority (KETENGAH), Tourism Terengganu and other agencies to formulate better conservational policies in order to encourage repeat visitations to Tasik Kenyir and to promote positive behaviors among the visitors toward the natural resource conservation efforts at Tasik Kenyir.



Abstrak tesis ini yang dikemukakan kepat Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains

## **PENENTU-PENENTU YANG MEMPENGARUHI NIAT LAWATAN SEMULA UNTUK EKOPELANCONGAN KE TASIK KENYIR, MALAYSIA**

Oleh

**NURUL AFIFAH BINTI NORDIN**

**Januari 2019**

**Pengerusi : Ahmad bin Shuib, PhD**  
**Institut : Kajian Dasar Pertanian dan Makanan**

Kekayaan sumber asli membuka peluang untuk Tasik Kenyir menjadi tapak ekopelancongan yang menarik; peningkatan jumlah pelawat menunjukkan peningkatan permintaan terhadap aktiviti dan perkhidmatan ekopelancongan di Tasik Kenyir. Walau bagaimanapun, peningkatan bilangan pelawat ke Tasik Kenyir tidak dapat memberikan gambaran mengenai jumlah pengunjung berulang. Memahami penentu-penentu yang mempengaruhi niat lawatan semula menjadi topik penting kerana ia membantu pengurusan tapak ekopelancongan untuk membentuk strategi yang berkesan dalam pemasaran ekopelancongan di Tasik Kenyir. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti penentu-penentu yang mempengaruhi niat lawatan semula pengunjung di Tasik Kenyir.

Untuk mengenal pasti penentu yang mempengaruhi niat lawatan semula pelawat, pembolehubah Teori Perlakuan Terancang (TPT) dikaji bersama pembolehubah tambahan, yang meliputi kesedaran terhadap pemuliharaan sumber asli, profil sosio-demografi pelawat serta ciri lawatan. Soal selidik berstruktur dibentuk sebagai instrumen untuk mengumpul data mengenai niat untuk kembali melawat di Tasik Kenyir. Soal selidik diedarkan kepada 319 sampel pelawat di Tasik Kenyir menggunakan teknik pensampelan bukan kebarangkalian; responden dipilih menggunakan kaedah pensampelan mudah. Analisis deskriptif digunakan untuk mengukur tahap kesedaran konservasi termasuk pembolehubah dalam TPT dan untuk mengenal pasti demografi sosio-ekonomi dan melawat ciri-ciri pelawat. Manakala, analisis regresi linear berganda digunakan untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi niat pengembalian semula pengunjung.

Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan positif yang signifikan antara tahap kesedaran pemuliharaan, kawalan tingkah laku dilihat, dan norma subjektif

terhadap niat pengembalian semula pengunjung di Tasik Kenyir. Analisis regresi menunjukkan bahawa demografi sosio-ekonomi dan ciri-ciri pengunjung pelawat, jenis pekerjaan dan jenis penginapan yang digunakan di Tasik Kenyir adalah faktor yang mempengaruhi niat untuk melawat Tasik Kenyir lagi. Penemuan ini boleh digunakan sebagai asas bagi pembangunan dan kemudahan ekoplancongan oleh pihak pengurusan di Tasik Kenyir. Kajian ini juga boleh membantu pembuat dasar seperti Lembaga Kemajuan Terengganu Tengah (KETENGAH), Pelancongan Terengganu dan agensi lain untuk merumuskan dasar-dasar konservasi yang lebih baik untuk menggalakkan lawatan semula ke Tasik Kenyir serta menggalakkan tingkah laku positif dalam kalangan pelawat ke arah usaha pemuliharaan sumber semula jadi di Tasik Kenyir.



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

**Ahmad Shuib, PhD**

Professor  
Institute of Agricultural and Food Policy Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Nawal Hanim Abdullah, PhD**

Institute of Agricultural and Food Policy Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**Puvaneswaran Kunasekaran, PhD**

Post Doctorate Research Fellow  
Institute of Agricultural and Food Policy Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

---

**ROBIAH BINTI YUNUS, PhD**

Professor and Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

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Name and matric No: Nurul Afifah binti Nordin, GS44044

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of  
Chairman of  
Supervisory  
Committee: Professor Dr. Ahmad bin Shuib

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of  
Member of  
Supervisory  
Committee: Dr. Nawal Hanim binti Abdullah

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of  
Member of  
Supervisory  
Committee: Dr. Puvaneswaran Kunasekaran

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ECER	East Coast Economic Region
EPP	Entry Points Project
ETP	Economic Transformation Programme
GNI	Gross National Income
KECV	Kenyir Elephant Conservation Village
KETENGAH	Terengganu Tengah Development Authority
MMBH	Malaysia Mega Biodiversity Hub
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NKEA	National Key Economic Areas
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SPSS	Statistical Packages for Social Science
TNB	Tenaga National Berhad
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
PBC	Perceived Behavioral Control
PERHILITAN	Department of Wildlife and National Parks
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
VBN	Value-belief-norm
WOM	Word-of-mouth

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of study

The first part of this chapter discusses the overview of revisit intention in ecotourism industry in Malaysia, especially in Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia. The discussion seeks to identify the problems in Tasik Kenyir which are related with natural resources conservation efforts in Tasik Kenyir and determinants influencing revisit intention of visitors for ecotourism at Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia.

### 1.2 An overview of revisit intention in ecotourism

Revisit intention is defined as the visitors' willingness to revisit the same destination in the future (Luo & Hsieh, 2013), willingness to recommend it to others (Wang *et al.*, 2015) and has been considered as an expression of loyalty (Li, 2010). In ecotourism industry, repeat visitors is considered as critical issue because loyal customer are the most useful indicators for accessing marketing strategies (Lee, 2009) as it is continually benefits the development of a country (Intan Safina, 2017).

Repeat visitation has been viewed as an important research topic in tourism industry (Li *et al.*, 2014; Wu, 2015) as a significant phenomenon in an economy and a country's attractiveness to visitors (Luo & Hsieh, 2013; Ellis & Vogelsong, 2002). Huang & Hsu (2009) believed that securing repeat visitations was critical to maintain competitiveness of these destinations, (Luo & Hsieh, 2013), and maintaining competitiveness of the products. According to Ahmad Puad *et al.*, (2012) loyal customer is a crucial contributor to the profitability of companies.

It is very critical to fascinate the visitors and encourage them to revisit the same destination and make them loyal to the destination. This has been mentioned by Chi (2008) in considering determinants of loyalty will allow management to concentrate on the most influencing factors that lead to customer retention. By understanding factors influencing revisit intention of the visitors, tourism managers would know better the way to formulate appropriate strategies in marketing tourism destinations (Ahmad Puad *et al.*, 2012). Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify the determinants influencing revisit intention in ecotourism perspective in term of internal factors as well as the internal factors.

### **1.3 Ecotourism**

Tourism comprise of activities provided to people who are travel and stay in places outside of their usual environment or home for leisure, recreation, business, and other purposes for more than one day but not more than one year. According to Nair *et al.* (2012), tourism is a service delivered by people that involves the transportation of visitors, accommodation and entertainment, giving rise to potentially disruptive side effects. There are several sub-components of tourism industry which consist of ecotourism (Ahmad, 1991; Nuva *et al.*, 2009; Syamsul Herman *et al.*, 2013; Chia *et al.*, 2015), sport tourism, indigenous tourism (Kunasekaran, 2014; Shazali *et al.*, 2015), cultural tourism (Song *et al.*, 2012; Mousavi *et al.*, 2016), adventure tourism (Nur Syuhada *et al.*, 2013), event tourism (Nawal Hanim, 2015) and agro tourism (Kunasekaran *et al.*, 2011; Syamsul Herman *et al.*, 2014; Marin, 2015).

Ecotourism is one of the sub-components of tourism under the scope of nature based tourism (Nuva *et al.*, 2009) and is a fast growing market in the tourism industry (Faiz *et al.*, 2010). Many countries which are rich with biodiversity have been promoting ecotourism to improve their economic status such as in China (Li, 2014), Indonesia (Nuva *et al.*, 2009), 2016) and Thailand (Tun, 2016). Ecotourism is also focused on sustainable tourism that emphasises on ecotourism activities (Nuva *et al.*, 2009) that are related to conservation of the environment among tourists (Mohamad Saifudin & Nik Norma, 2014). Thus, the main concern for ecotourism development is to use the resources for ecotourism activity in a given area and protecting them by minimizing the negative impact on the natural resources (Chiu *et al.*, 2014) in order to fulfil the economic, social and environmental needs (Bunruamkaew & Murayama, 2012).

### **1.4 Ecotourism in Malaysia**

Most countries are actively promoting their natural resources as their ecotourism product to the world and Malaysia is no exception in attracting the attention of both local and foreign tourists. Ecotourism sector in Malaysia has the potential as a popular ecotourism destination due to its natural resources attraction and unique geographical landscape (Mohamad Safee, 2013). This includes lakes, tropical rainforest, mangroves, highlands, range of mountains, waterfall, islands, beaches, limestone caves, and islands (Nor'Aini & Mohd Fitri, 2013).

In 1957, Malaysian economy was heavily dependent on its primary commodities such as tin, palm oil, and petroleum (Norlida Hanim, 2008). However, in 1970's, the Malaysian government had changed the strategies to generate the diversity of economy in the country by developing the manufacturing industry. Unfortunately in 1980's, Malaysia had severe economic recession which forced the government to discover another firm industry which could expand the Malaysian economic base. Thus, tourism industry was identified as a potential industry to encourage and stimulate the socio-economic development in Malaysia.

Then in 1987, the government established the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism as one of the efforts to promote tourism industry in Malaysia. In 1995, National Ecotourism Plan was developed to assist the government at Federal and State level in the development of Malaysia's ecotourism potential. Hence in 2004, The Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism was upgraded to Ministry of Tourism in 2004 (Md. Anwar *et al.*, 2011) and the Ministry of Tourism had introduced National Tourism Master Plan to monitor, manage, and synchronize all the tourism activities in Malaysia.

In March, 2006, the Ninth Malaysia Plan was tabled by the fifth Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in Parliament. Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP) was Malaysia's development plan for the period of 2006-2010. During this period, the major focus was to establish Malaysia as a major tourist destination in the world. Thus, the effort was given by focusing on the facilities provided, tourism product innovation and services.

Tenth Malaysia Plan was tabled by the sixth Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak June 10, 2010, with the theme "Towards Economic Prosperity and Social Justice". The Tenth Malaysia Plan goal was tourism development for five years period which was from 2011 until 2015. Within this five-year period, Malaysia's target was to be in the list of countries in the world in terms of global tourism receipts (Md. Anwar *et al.*, 2013).

According to ETP Annual Report in 2014, despite global economic and sectorial challenges, tourism sector in Malaysia improved its position from fifth in 2014 to third highest Gross National Income (GNI) contributor in 2015. The launch of the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) in 2010 was to create 3.3 million jobs by 2020 as a majority of the labor force in the tourism industry and gainful employment. The ETP's targets for 2020 will be achieved through the implementation of 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs) including the tourism sector by representing economic sectors which account for significant contributions to GNI in Malaysia.

In ETP, the first Entry Points Project (EPP) was positioning Malaysia as a duty-free shopping destination for tourists' goods. Thus, the development of duty-free project in Tasik Kenyir, specifically in Bayas Island was one of the initiatives by the Malaysian government. EPP 4 was establishing Malaysia Mega Biodiversity Hub (MMBH) with the aim to increase tourism revenue by establishing the country as one of the world premium nature and ecotourism destinations. Thus, the development of ecotourism in Tasik Kenyir is considered as one of most important policies in Terengganu state and Malaysian government.

The Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016 - 2020) focus is the conservation effort of natural resources for present and future generations, as green growth will be an important shift in the socioeconomic development of the country as well as development and protection and biodiversity (Eleventh Malaysia Plan, 2015). In this current Malaysia Plan,

ecotourism will be developed as a major tourism segment by utilizing biodiversity assets as well as enhancing widespread branding and promotions. Thus, Tasik Kenyir has been chosen as the study area in this study because of the richness of natural resources in Tasik Kenyir provides opportunities to become an ecotourism destination.

#### **1.4.1 Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu**

Terengganu is a state that is rich with ecotourism natural resources which are suitable for ecotourism development. The main ecotourism resources of Terengganu are beaches, islands, highlands, hills, mountains, lakes and waterfalls, parks, forest reserves, arts, crafts, culture and heritage and Tasik Kenyir is one of the ecotourism sites in Terengganu. According to the East Coast Economic Region (ECER) Master Plan, Tasik Kenyir has been identified as prospective ecotourism site for its natural beauties, recreational facilities and tourism activities (Md. Anowar *et al.*, 2014).

The lake is located in the Eastern part of Terengganu and shares its borders with the west of Kelantan and the south of Pahang (KETENGAH, 2015). Tasik Kenyir was the largest man-made lake in South East Asia (Faiz *et al.*, 2010) spanning 260,000 hectares in total land area. The lake was a result of a dam construction Sultan Mahmud hydroelectric power station, in 1978 (Wan Nur Hidayah, 2014) which was completed in 1985 (Faiz *et al.*, 2010) for the purpose of generation of hydroelectric power, which is able to supply electricity to Peninsula Malaysia. The islands on Tasik Kenyir are at the tips of highlands and hilltops which would not submerge during floods (Mohd Norfaizal, 2015) created about 340 man-made islands, 15 rivers, more than 14 waterfalls, limestone caves, numerous rapids and rivers and lush tropical rainforests surrounding Tasik Kenyir which have become special attractions for ecotourism activities in Terengganu (KETENGAH, 2015).

This phenomenon has made Tasik Kenyir to become one of the ecotourism sites in Terengganu since it is rich with its natural beauties and resources, recreational facilities and tourists' attractions (Md. Anowar *et al.*, 2014). There are several ecotourism activities that can be done in Tasik Kenyir such as fishing, boating, island hopping, numerous water activities, jungle trekking, wildlife observation, and camping (Nor'Aini & Mohd Fitri, 2013).

#### **1.4.2 Ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir**

Terengganu Tengah Development Authority (KETENGAH) is an agency under the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, which was incorporated in 1973 (KETENGAH, 2015). KETENGAH was authorized to carry out economic and social development in an area covering the interior of Dungun, Kemaman and Hulu Terengganu. In 1993, the Development Area of Kenyir Tasik, Hulu Terengganu area has been gazetted as a part of the overall territory KETENGAH.

KETENGAH's role is planning and implementing the development of economic and social aspects in Tasik Kenyir as an ecotourism destination. Other than that, KETENGAH also was the agency responsible for issuing licenses and monitor the involvement of local communities in the operation of ecotourism activities in Tasik Kenyir (Wan Nur Hidayah *et al.*, 2014). Over the years, numerous projects related to infrastructures and services were planned and implemented in Tasik Kenyir by KETENGAH. Table 1.1 shows the facilities that have been provided for visitors to access Tasik Kenyir, which is located at the main jetty, Pengkalan Gawi.

**Table 1.1: Facilities and services provided by KETENGAH**

Facilities	Services
Jetty	Tour boats
Food courts	Houseboats
Public toilets	Tourist guides
Prayer rooms	KETENGAH office
Parking lots	Tourist information centre

(Source: KETENGAH, 2018)

Other than that, Table 1.1 also shows the services provided in Tasik Kenyir which involves the local communities monitored by KETENGAH such as tour boats, houseboat services and tour guides. The richness of natural resources in Tasik Kenyir provides opportunities to become an ecotourism destination (Kalsitinoor *et al.*, 2015) and to increase the number of visitors and demand towards ecotourism activities (KETENGAH, 2016). Recently, there has been a significant increase in the number of visitors at Tasik Kenyir with the increase of arrivals from 225, 570 in 2010 to 808, 336 in 2017 as shown in Table. 1.2 below.

**Table 1.2: Number of visitors at Tasik Kenyir from 2010 to 2017**

Year	Total
2010	225, 570
2011	275, 241
2012	397, 005
2013	467, 678
2014	649, 394
2015	706, 223
2016	507, 502
2017	808, 336

(Source: KETENGAH, 2018)

However, there are decreased number visitors arrival on 2016 since there was no special of big event were held to attract visitors during 2016. The increased number of visitors on 2017 is due to ‘Visit Beautiful Terengganu 2017’ which aimed to to push tourism revenue through continuous events and activities by promoting the best ecotourism destination at Terengganu State.

The other authorities that were responsible in the management of Tasik Kenyir were Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB), who was in charge of the management of the hydroelectric dam, Police Marine Unit, who was responsible in the aspects of security at Tasik Kenyir and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (PERHILITAN) which was responsible in regulating, controlling and preventing illegal activities in Tasik Kenyir.

In Malaysia, Act 716 was enacted in 2010 where indigenous communities have been given permission to hunt certain wildlife as their food or family food and cannot be sold or exchanged with food, financial gain or any other things (Law of Malaysia, 2010). According to Hairul (2016), illegal hunting is still active in Tasik Kenyir forests because the Orang Asli community have found traces of intrusion and bumped into them when entering the forest area. Table 1.3 shows the cases of illegal hunting in National Park Tasik Kenyir and Tasik Kenyir area based on monitoring operations that have been conducted by the Department of Wildlife and National Park (PERHILITAN) Peninsula Malaysia since 2009 until 2015.

**Table 1.3: Arrested of foreigners in the National Park Kenyir**

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Thailand	2	-	-	-	-	2
Vietnam	4	4	6	7	4	25
Kemboja	3	5	3	11	6	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>55</b>

(Source: Hairul, 2016).

This information reveals that illegal hunting are is still active among foreigners in Tasik Kenyir. The number of arrested illegal hunting has increased through out this duration of five years. The existence of PERHILITAN is important in Tasik Kenyir to ensure the natural resources of Tasik Kenyir are protected from these irresponsible illegal activities to meet the dual roles, it is important for destination marketers and resources managers to arrange for quality experiences towards visitors (Han, 2016) for ecotourism purpose and to ensure the loyalty of visitors in ecotourism destination.

## 1.5 Problem statement

In the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016 – 2020) the focus in ecotourism sector is on the conservation effort on natural resources for socio-economic development of the country as well as development and protection and biodiversity (Eleventh Malaysia Plan, 2015). Thus, ecotourism will be developed as a major tourism segment by utilizing biodiversity assets as well as enhancing widespread branding and promotions. Tasik Kenyir has been chosen as the study area in this study because of the the richness of natural resources in Tasik Kenyir provides opportunities to become an ecotourism destination. Other than that, in order to make Malaysia as the preferred ecotourism destination, visitors' revisit intention issue is important determine the country's tourism growth as well as its future potential (Wong, 2018). Thus, the critical analysis and depth of study on the factors influencing revisit intention of visitors in Tasik Kenyir is crucial to improve its market for repeat visitors.

The increase in the number of visitors at Tasik Kenyir is very significant as reflected in the increase of arrivals from 60, 532 in 2006 to 706, 223 in 2015 (KETENGAH, 2016). The increasing number of visitor to Tasik Kenyir indicates the increase of demand for ecotourism activities and services in Tasik Kenyir. However, this does not provide the information on the number of repeat visitors. According to Mr. Mohd Faiz bin Wahid, Supervisory and Assets Officer of KETENGAH, the number of visitors in Tasik Kenyir has increased over the years but this information is not enough in tourism business as the management needs to know the number of first time visits and repeat visitors to develop the strategies to increase the number of loyal visitors at Tasik Kenyir.

*“The understanding of factors influencing in revisit intention to Tasik Kenyir can be viewed as an important topic as it allows the ecotourism managers like KETENGAH and other authorities to fundamentally know better the way to develop in effective strategies in ecotourism marketing and management in Tasik Kenyir such as to build up the motivation of the visitors to visit again Tasik Kenyir in the future.” (Personal communication. 16. March, 2016, Mr. Mohd Faiz bin Wahid, KETENGAH, Supervisory and Assets Officer of KETENGAH, 2016)*

Other than that, it is important to know the reasons and factors that influence the visitors to make repeat visits to Tasik Kenyir. Management need to get information on repeat visitors and identify the repeat visitors as they are considered as loyal consumers. According to Lee (2009), loyal consumers are defined by repeat purchases and the most useful indicator in marketing strategy and according to Ahmad Puad *et al.*, (2012), loyal customers is a crucial contributor to the profitability in business. Apart from that, ensuring repeat visitors was also a strategy in tourism business as it is to maintain competitiveness (Luo & Hsieh, 2013). A study has been done by Faiz *et al* (2010) conclude that level of service quality in Tasik Kenyir was low, leading to the dissatisfaction experienced by the visitors. According to Intan Shafina (2017), more

repeat visitation studies need to be go through due to the ever-changing lifestyle as well as visitors' behavior.

Travel behavior is the result of multiples factors. Tourism marketers find that understanding tourist behavior is a complex matter due to the heterogenous characteristics of tourists (Matthew *et al.*, 2014) and tourists make choices and decisions for their ecotourism destination based on interplay of multiple factors (Luo & Hsieh, 2013). By understanding socio-psychological factors and external factors influencing revisit intention of the visitors, managers would know better ways to formulate strategies in marketing of Tasik Kenyir. Thus, it is necessary to identify the profile and characteristics of visitors in Tasik Kenyir. This is because the differences in socio-demographic characteristics and visit characteristics among the visitors would have the different perception on revisit intention (Baral *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, this study bridges the gap in terms of the lack of knowledge on the socio – demographic characteristics and visits characteristics of visitors in Tasik Kenyir.

There are a lot of studies has been done at Tasik Kenyir. However, most of previous studies are mainly focused on environmental science such as water quality assessment using Monogenean Gill Parasites of fish (Modu *et al.*, 2014), a study on phosphorus and silicon compounds in lake water which was conducted at the Tasik Kenyir (Suratman *et al.*, 2015), the relationship between aquatic insects communities with water quality (Azmi, 2016).

Even though several past studies have been conducted on visitors in Tasik Kenyir, limited studies examined the visitors' viewpoint in natural resources conservation efforts as it can help the managers of Tasik Kenyir to earn their support in maintaining and preserving the resource from damage during ecotourism activities. Several past studies had been conducted on visitors in Tasik Kenyir investigating service quality provided by resort operators (Faiz *et al.*, 2010), organizational culture dimension in a lake-based ecotourism resort at Tasik Kenyir, (Nor'Aini & Mohd Fitri, 2013), tourist perception on local economy (Md. Anowar *et al.*, 2014), ecotourism service attributes in Tasik Kenyir (Wan Nur Hidayah *et al.*, 2014), Ecotourism service attributes in Tasik Kenyir (Norhidayah, 2014) and sustainable measurement (Md. Anowar *et al.*, 2015). Thus, this study aim to bridge the research gap of investigating the determinants influencing revisit intention for ecotourism at Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia.

Other than that, as the main component of ecotourism was visiting natural areas with educational component (Faiz *et al.*, 2010), maintaining sustainability (Md. Anowar *et al.*, 2015) and provides economics well-being for local people (Nurul Azwa *et al.*, 2013); conservation education among visitors is critical for the success of conservation efforts anywhere in the world. It helps people to understand and appreciate natural resources and learn how to conserve these resources for future generations.

Therefore, conservation awareness and knowledge had has been identified as one of the important elements in ecotourism activity in this study. Thus, it is crucial to investigate the level of awareness among the visitors towards natural resources conservation in Tasik Kenyir for ecotourism purpose. Other than limiting the negative impact, sustainable tourism also urged for a higher level of awareness and support for natural resources conservation among the visitors (Chiu *et al.*, 2014) since conservation has higher probability of being successful if it is backed up by public support (Hemant *et al.*, 2014).

## **1.6 Research questions**

The tourism development should also be seen as an ongoing process to achieve sustainable development for ecotourism development in Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu. Thus, the research questions of this study are

- 1) What are the socio demographic profiles and visit characteristics of the visitors at Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia?
- 2) What is the level of awareness of the visitors towards natural resources conservation at Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia?
- 3) What are the levels of attitudes, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control in revisit intention of visitors in Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia?
- 4) What are the factors that influence the revisit intention of the visitors in Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia?

## **1.7 Objectives**

The main objective of this study is to determine the revisiting intention of visitors towards Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia. The specific objectives of this study are listed below:

- 1) To identify the socio demographic profiles and visit characteristics of the visitors at Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia.
- 2) To determine the level of awareness of the visitors towards natural resources conservation at Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia.
- 3) To determine the level of attitudes, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control in revisit intention of visitors to Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia.
- 4) To identify the factors influencing the revisit intention of the visitors to Tasik Kenyir, Malaysia.

## **1.8 Significance of the stud**

This study is important in contributing significantly in terms of practical and theoretical implication perspectives.

### **1.8.1 Practical perspectives**

A study on factors influencing revisit intention of the visitors will produce several benefits indicators especially for those who are closely related with the tourism sector in Tasik Kenyir such as KETENGAH, stakeholders and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The findings of this study will be used for the benefit of different groups such as residents of host communities, natives, industry experts, governmental planners, policy makers, corporate sectors, and academicians. Positive revisit intention also would likely contribute to the success of local communities in Tasik Kenyir who are involved in ecotourism activities business.

This study allows the management of Tasik Kenyir especially KETENGAH to focus more on repeat visitors' factors that influence this group to make their decisions considering high revisit rate as the key strategy in tourism business and marketing. It is important to specifically identify the demographic profiles that influence revisit intention of the visitors, since visitors' revisit intention often changes over time since visitors' profiles have changed significantly in recent years (Fernandez & Sanchez, 2016).

The results of this study would reveal the key factors that are statistically significant in predicting the intention of the visitors to revisit Tasik Kenyir. This will become the key managerial implication to recommend both the organization and marketers relevant to tourism industry in Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu as a leading ecotourism destination.

### **1.8.2 Theoretical perspectives**

In term of theoretical perspectives, the actual data of this study which is primary data is directly obtained from actual visitors at Tasik Kenyir. Therefore, the result obtained from the data can be used to expand the knowledge on ecotourism visitors as the basis for future research in the same field.

This study will be guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior to understand the nature of the field of study. The findings of this studies which include the factors influencing revisit intention of visitors in Tasik Kenyir would be the unique contributions to the literature on ecotourism management in terms of marketing process. The new developed

scale can be used as a tool to measure the visitors' revisit intention to ecotourism destinations in future studies.

## 1.9 Operational definition of concepts

After understanding the obtainable concept from past studies, there are several relevant concepts for this study that need to be defined from the research interpretation. These concepts are:

**Ecotourism:** Ecotourism is a form of tourism concerning visiting undisturbed nature-based areas (Lee, 2009) which emphasize on conservation awareness among visitors including the local communities (Yung et al., 2009) as well as stakeholders, and involves interpretation, education (Kim et al., 2008). In this study, ecotourism refers to activities based on the natural resources with low environmental impact to increase the in order to fulfil the economic, social and environmental needs.

**Sustainable tourism:** This study views sustainable tourism as uniting the conservation of natural resources, local community involvement and economic development to achieve the benefits (Bunruanmkaew & Murayama, 2012).

**Conservation awareness:** This study defines conservation awareness as the sensitivity on conservation values of natural resources in ecotourism destination and its importance for ecotourism purpose. Knowledge can make visitors more aware of nature and further support their conservation through the transformation of their personal behaviors, greater political conservation support and greater economic contribution to conservation efforts (Clement, 2013).

**Visitor:** Visitors can be generally defined as individuals who visit to a ecotourism site to spend time or stay with others. For the purposed of this study, visitors are defined as individuals who visit Tasik Kenyir to spend time with provided activities.

**Revisit intention:** Luo & Hsieh (2013) defines revisit intention as the willingness of visitors to visit the same destination again in the future and willingness to recommend to others (Wang, 2015) and can be considered as an expression of loyalty (Li, 2010). In this study, revisit intention refers to willingness of visitors to visit gain the same ecotourism destination in future.

## **1.10 Summary**

This thesis is organized into five different Chapters which are: Chapter 1 (introduction), Chapter 2 (literature review), Chapter 3 (methodology), Chapter 4 (results) and lastly, Chapter 5 (conclusion). The first chapter briefly introduces the study and the purpose of this study. The second chapter expands the literature from past studies for each topic within ecotourism and the theory used in this study. The third chapter describes the methods that will be utilized in the study which is data elicitation consisting of study area, conceptual framework, sample size and sampling technique, and data analysis. The fourth chapter discusses the results of the study obtained from the analysis has been conducted and the final chapter discusses the summary of this study.



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