



***BEHAVIORAL INTENTION OF BIRDWATCHERS TOWARDS  
BIRDWATCHING ACTIVITY IN MALAYSIA***

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By

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Faculty of Forestry  
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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my final year project to my family especially my parents and all my fellow friends. My father, Haji Abdul Rahim Mudin and my mother, Hajah Yuliani Soedjono who are always give an endless support and enormous sacrifices throughout the implementation of this project.

I would also dedicate to my classmates, Kenaboi Batch for always be there when help is needed and their encouragement, patience, understanding and continuous support

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## ABSTRACT

Birdwatching activities can have a positive and negative impact on bird's wildlife's daily lives. The purpose of this study was to identify the key in encouraging human or birdwatchers towards birdwatching activities in the context of habitat disturbance and threats. The theory used is Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). This theory is able to provide explanations and reveals the major predictors that influence bird observer in Malaysia towards behavior to birds. Therefore, this study assesses the behavior of birdwatchers towards birdwatching activities. A total of 100 questionnaires have been answered through a Google Form that is distributed to all birdwatching Facebook groups of MNS in Malaysia. The variables from the theory were measured using the 5 -point Likert Scale. Birdwatchers socio-demographics are also identified. Overall, Perceived Behavioral Control ( $\beta = 0.598$ ) was the strongest driver of Behavioral Intention ( $\beta = 0.202$ ) compared to Subjective Norm and Attitudes ( $\beta = 0.023$ ) using the method of path estimation analysis. Birdwatching categories were also significant with behavioral intentions ( $p$ -value = 0.01) where  $p$ -value is less than 0.05.

## ABSTRAK

Aktiviti pemerhatian burung mampu memberi kesan positif dan negatif terhadap kehidupan seharian burung liar. Tujuan kajian ini dilaksanakan adalah untuk mengenal pasti kunci utama dalam mendorong manusia atau pemerhati burung terhadap aktiviti pemerhatian burung dalam konteks gangguan dan ancaman habitat. Teori yang digunakan adalah Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Teori ini mampu memberikan penjelasan dan mendedahkan terhadap peramal utama yang mempengaruhi niat pemerhati burung di Malaysia ke arah tingkah laku kepada burung. Oleh itu, kajian ini menilai tingkah laku pemerhati burung terhadap aktiviti pemerhatian burung. Sejumlah 100 borang soal selidik telah dijawab melalui Google Form yang disebarkan ke seluruh kumpulan Facebook pemerhati burung MNS di Malaysia. Pemboleh ubah daripada teori dinilai menggunakan skala 5 likert. Sosiodemografi pemerhati burung turut dikenal pasti. Secara keseluruhannya, Kawalan Tingkah Laku ( $\beta = 0.598$ ) merupakan pendorong utama yang paling kuat terhadap Niat Tingkah Laku ( $\beta = 0.202$ ) berbanding Sikap dan Norma Subjektif ( $\beta = 0.023$ ) dengan menggunakan kaedah anggaran analisa laluan. Kategori pemerhatian burung juga adalah signifikan dengan niat tingkah laku ( $p\text{-value} = 0.01$ ) dimana  $p\text{-value}$  adalah kurang daripada nilai 0.05.

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## APPROVAL SHEET

I certify that this research project report entitled **Behavioral Intention of Birdwatchers Towards Birdwatching Activity in Malaysia** by Al-Kautsar Hidayanto Bin Abdul Rahim had 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

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| UNWTO | United Nation of World Tourism Organization |
| MNS   | Malaysia Nature Society                     |
| TPB   | Theory of Planned Behavior                  |
| TRA   | Theory of Reasoned Action                   |
| PBC   | Perceived Behavioral Control                |
| SPSS  | Statistical Packages for Social Sciences    |
| ELM   | Elaboration Likelihood Model                |
| SEM   | Structural Equation Model                   |



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Birdwatching has become a recreational activity and a major focus on hobbies since the 18th century (Moss, 2004). In the 1900s there was an order of protecting birds by avoiding taking away the specimens from their native habitats in the observation of free-living birds (Moss, 2004). The instruction was executed when people often collecting the bird and egg specimens for institutional and private collections which can intrude the ecosystem.

This ecotourism activity also has been proven that birdwatching plays a vital role in increasing the value of tourism in a country. According to United Nation of World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2016), it was recorded about 26.8 million tourist arrivals in Malaysia during 2016 which has been increased one million from the year of 2015. However, according to Sekercioglu (2002) in a journal of impacts of birdwatching on human and avian communities, mostly the characteristics of birdwatchers are well-educated, highly motivated and well prepared. Birdwatching activities will give an effect and benefits towards the economy as well as the locals. Therefore, there is a need to minimize the risk, especially where vulnerable species or habitats are concerned (Burger and Gochfield, 1993).

## 1.2 Tourism in Malaysia

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economies and play significant role in the world by deepening the diversification of a country. Malaysia remains unknown destination because tourism in Malaysia is relatively young. After 1980's tourism development, Malaysia recognized that tourism can play a vital role in both social and economic development, as well as in fostering national integration and unity. This tourism sector has turned it into a key driver for socio-economic progress. Tourism Malaysia has grown by leaps since 1972 and it has emerged as a major player in the international tourism scene. While experiencing tremendous growth from year to year, Malaysia's tourism industry has increased drastically and becoming the second income spinner to the national economy. As tourism has become one of the main income sources, it even competes very well with other industries such as petroleum and automobiles especially for the developing countries. Malaysia has received high number of tourists visits annually as Malaysia has its own uniqueness, attractiveness and natural environment. According to World Economic Forum (2017), as for the competitiveness among the countries, Malaysia ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> place out of 137 countries and took 2<sup>nd</sup> place among nine South East Asia country.

### **1.3 Ecotourism**

Malaysia consists of a variety of natural and cultural assets that are capable to form a tourism destination which highly beneficial, sustainable and long-term form of tourism. Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, to enjoy and appreciate nature that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples. Ecotourism also involves education of locals and tourists as well (Jacobson & Robles, 1992). Ecotourism can enhance and spread the nature and culture of an area. It divided into two categories which are active ecotourism and passive ecotourism. Active ecotourism is when people try to improve or save the environment and make it healthier, while passive is considered when person wants to relax and seeks to minimize to damage the area. In terms of biodiversity, Malaysia is ranked 12th in the world (Mayan & Nor, 2017).

### **1.4 Wildlife Tourism in Malaysia**

Malaysia consists 54 protected areas of more than 1,000 hectares (ha.), totaling 1,483 million ha. It is about 4.5% of the land surface of the country. They include 28 district nature reserve, where 90,070 ha. are not opened to tourism activity (Norizan, 2000). Wildlife tourism is one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in the world. According to Rodger, Moore, & Newsome (2007) the desire for people to interact with wildlife in the natural environment

continues to grow and visitation to sites with wildlife is on the increase. Malaysia is one of a great country that having many kinds of wildlife tourism activities in both consumptive and non-consumptive.

### **1.5 Problem Statement**

Despite having an ostensibly good reputation on birdwatching, there is high potential of disturbance to happen towards bird breeding through human presence around bird nests especially for identifying purposes other than photography which can increase nest abandonment (HaySmith & Hunt, 1995). Generally, the birds with small species is less vulnerable than larger birds that higher up the food chain or those feed in flocks in an open area. Several issues are commonly meet by chance by nature conservation professionals in endeavor to ensure continued or enhanced ornithological interest in the face of increasing pressure from disturbance. However, stated that birdwatchers that visits a new area particularly would like to see the rare and shy species, which are likely to also be the most vulnerable. Bird-watching tourism has attracted the attention in recent years as a booster for economic value towards a country in an environmentally-friendly way. Therefore, Tourism Malaysia has made cooperation with non-governmental organizations namely Malaysia Nature Society (MNS) which is dedicated to promoting Malaysia as the preferred birding destination. The programs and seminars organized by MNS are held every year to promote and conserve the avian species. For example, Raptor Watch in Tanjung Tuan, the National



Park, Kuala Tahan Bird Count, Fraser's Hill International Bird Race, the Wings of Kuala Kubu Bharu held annually, the Borneo Bird Festival in Sandakan, Sabah a seminar with the main topic: Malaysia A Preferred Birding Destination. Birdwatchers intention are usually a good intention and they are aware about the conservation value. However, Ream (1978) stated that even birdwatchers and photographers were likely to frequently harm the wildlife. Disturbance can occur in terms of technical effect such as the light from flashlights and camera sounds without realizing that their action might give an impact towards wildlife. Nowadays, birdwatching activity are getting popular and keep increasing in a global scale as a recreation activity. Negative impacts towards wildlife can be found which is caused by the wildlife tourism and there is the possibility the number of negative impacts getting higher. To solve these problems, a research required especially to study on the behavior and psychology of tourists and be able to explain tourist behavior in future.

## 1.6 Objectives

The general objective of this study is to evaluate the behavioral intention of birdwatchers towards birdwatching activity. The specific objectives of the study are listed as below:

- a. To determine the influencing factors of behavioral intention of birdwatchers towards disturbance from birdwatching activity;
- b. To investigate the relationships between independent variables towards behavioral intention of birdwatchers.

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