



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTINGS OF THREE
RECREATION FORESTS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON
VISITORS' PERCEPTION**

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VISITORS' PERCEPTION**

By

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**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTINGS OF THREE RECREATION FORESTS AND THEIR
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The Recreation Forests of Malaysia are mostly frequented by the middle income residents. It was shown that there are numerous visitors to these sites especially during the weekends. The study looks at the effects of recreational settings, which are the natural resources conditions and the crowding conditions on visits' satisfaction. The excessive use was found to have affected the natural resources and the crowding levels were found to be very high. However, the study found that visitors are still highly satisfied with the recreation experience.

Visitors' perceptions of the environmental conditions were assessed for three Recreation Forests namely Sungai Chongkak, Lentang and Sungai Tua which are popular among the population of the Klang Valley. Visitors' preferences and awareness were compared to actual conditions of the Recreation Forests.



Findings on awareness, shows that visitors are more aware of the plant component resource more than the other parameters. By groups, it was found that age seems to be a factor in perceiving environmental conditions, where the older people tend to be more aware of the situation.

Visitors' environmental preferences are more towards general conditions in term of cleanliness from rubbish and the availability of recreation facilities. They are less affected by crowd as indicated by what they consider as "pollutants" of the Recreation Forests. It was found that visitors object more to hearing noise from other visitors than seeing the crowd.

On placing importance, measured in terms of money and walking distance, visitors would rather spend more for cleanliness than for solitude. They are willing to pay up to RM 1 for cleanliness, which was encouraging as the mode. However, nothing at all is willing to be spent for solitude. More visitors are willing to walk for cleanliness (500 m) but not at all for solitude conditions. This again emphasised the lack of importance of solitude, or the lack of aversion to crowd by Recreation Forests' visitors. In fact, when asked what is their crowd tolerance limit, most visitors answered "Do not care".

Another finding from this study, is that campers which include visitors of challenging activities are quite different in their perceptions and preferences of environmental conditions. The limit of crowd tolerance is less, and this group made up the most willing to pay up to RM 10 and walk up to 1 km.

In conclusion, it was found that the recreational settings do indicate excessive use of the area. The natural ecology of the areas is significantly affected, and crowding is intense. It was found that, visitors noticed the conditions of crowding more than the natural resources'. Nevertheless, the majority of visitors are still very satisfied of the recreation experience in the Recreation Forests.



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**PERSEKITARAN TIGA HUTAN LIPUR DAN KESANNYA TERHADAP
PERSEPSI PENGGUNA REKREASI**

Oleh

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Mac 1999

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Hutan-hutan Rekreasi di Malaysia merupakan kawasan rekreasi yang popular di kalangan golongan berpendapatan sederhana. Pemerhatian telah menunjukkan terdapat kepadatan pengunjung yang tinggi terutamanya pada hujung minggu. Kajian ini menyelidiki keadaan persekitaran dari aspek sumber-sumber semulajadi serta kesesakan, dan kesannya terhadap kepuasan rekreasi. Aktiviti rekreasi dikenal pasti telah meninggalkan impak ke atas sumber-sumber semulajadi serta terdapat kesesakan yang amat tinggi di hutan-hutan rekreasi yang dikaji.

Penyelidikan rekreasi pengunjung ke atas keadaan persekitaran telah dijalankan di tiga Hutan Rekreasi yang popular dikalangan penduduk-penduduk Lembah Klang. Hutan-hutan Rekreasi ini ialah Sungai Chongkak, Lentang dan Sungai Tua. Kajian mengenai kepekaan mendapati pengunjung adalah lebih peka terhadap keadaan tumbuh-tumbuhan di kawasan tersebut berbanding faktor-faktor

persekitaran yang lain. Jika dibandingkan antara kumpulan sosio-ekonomi, didapati umur merupakan satu faktor dalam persepsi persekitaran, dimana pengunjung yang lebih berumur didapati lebih peka kepada keadaan sekitar.

Pengunjung didapati lebih berminat terhadap faktor-faktor persekitaran yang am seperti kawasan yang bersih dari sampah sarap atau kemudahan di kawasan yang disediakan. Kesesakan di kawasan rekreasi bukan merupakan masalah kepada pengguna yang tidak menganggapnya sebagai satu faktor pencemaran. Juga di dapati, pelawat lebih tidak gemar kepada kebisingan yang diakibatkan oleh pelawat lain berbanding melihat kesesakan pelawat.

Dari segi keutamaan, berdasarkan kesanggupan untuk membayar dan berjalan kaki, pengunjung lebih sanggup membayar dan berjalan untuk mendapatkan kawasan yang bersih, berbanding untuk ke kawasan yang tidak sesak. RM 1 merupakan mod yang sanggup dibayar untuk kebersihan kawasan. Walaubagaimanapun, mereka tidak sanggup membayar apa-apa untuk menghindari kesesakan. Pengunjung juga sanggup berjalan sejauh 500 m untuk menghindari kawasan yang kotor tetapi tidak sanggup berjalan lebih jauh untuk menghindari kesesakan. Ini membuktikan pengunjung lebih menghargai kebersihan berbanding kawasan yang sunyi. Lebih ketara lagi, apabila ditanya had bilangan toleransi kesesakan, kebanyakan pelawat tidak mementingkan akan bilangannya.

Satu lagi hasil kajian ini ialah pengunjung-pengunjung yang berkhemah, termasuk yang melakukan aktiviti yang mencabar, adalah didapati agak berbeza

dalam persepsi dan keutamaan dari segi persekitaran. Had bilangan toleransi adalah lebih rendah dari kumpulan pengunjung lain dan kumpulan ini mempunyai peratusan yang lebih besar yang sanggup membayar sehingga RM 10 dan berjalan sejauh 1 km.

Kesimpulannya adalah didapati, walaupun keadaan sumber telah terjejas dan kesesakan rekreasi adalah amat tinggi, pengunjung masih berpuas hati dengan pengalaman rekreasi di hutan-hutan lipur.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

A Recreation Forest or an Amenity Forest is a forest designated for public recreational use which was conceptualised during the First Malaysian Plan (1966-1970). The first two sites established under this designation were Sekayu Recreation Forest in Terengganu State and Telok Bahang Recreation Forest in the state of Penang (Jalil and Chee, 1983). The Recreation Forests are designated and managed by the Department of Forestry. As of 1997, there are 84 Recreation Forests encompassing an area of 6,723 ha covering all states in the peninsula (Malaysia, Department of Forestry, 1997). These accessible areas of scenic beauty comprise about 0.05% of the total 12.7 million ha of permanent forest estates in Malaysia.

Even prior to the designation of the first Recreation Forest, many forest reserves gazetted since the Forestry Act of 1934 were already utilised for recreational purposes. Templer Park and highland forests such as Fraser's Hill and Cameron Highland were very popular as holiday retreats ever since the colonial time (Wan Sabri, 1987). As a component of a Permanent Forest Reserve, the concept of Recreation Forest was first described in the National Forestry Policy

(Malaysia, Department of Forestry, 1978) as the conservation of adequate forest areas for recreation, education, and the protection of the country's unique flora and fauna.

With the National Forestry Act amendment in 1992 (Malaysia, Department of Forestry, 1992), the objectives of Recreation Forests were slightly modified. Its redefined purposes are to conserve enough area as places for recreation, ecotourism and to enhance the public's awareness on forestry.

Referring to the National Forest Policy and its 1992 amendment, Recreation Forests can be described as areas designated for conservation of local flora and fauna as well as areas where environmental education can be conducted. Recreation Forests set up specifically for educational purposes, such as Hutan Lipur Rantau Abang in Terengganu, are gaining importance. However, it is observed that currently Recreation Forests are mainly serving the first function, that is for passive recreational activities.

Serving as affordable settings for outdoor recreational activities, Recreation Forests of Malaysia attract a large number of visitors. The increase in recreational needs could be due to the rising number of the population, increase of leisure and money, as well as the upward trend in nature appreciation. Jalil and Chee (1983) stated that over 100,000 visits were received at Hutan Lipur Telok Bahang and Sekayu per annum, based on entry counts since 1983. Entry counts observed in 1991 and 1992 estimated a total of 318,000, 466,000 and 371,000 visits per annum