

Evaluating Visitor's Preferences of Ecotourism and Management Attributes in Kubah National Park: A Choice Experiment Approach

Menilai Pilihan Utama bagi Atribut Ekopelancongan dan Pengurusan dalam Kalangan Pengunjung Taman Negara Kubah: Kaedah Eksperimen Pilihan

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ABSTRACT

The growing numbers of national parks worldwide have somehow attracted the interests of nations around the world as it is now one of the important income generator for the tourism industry of a particular country. Since its inauguration, the concept of national parks has developed and expanded based on the important attributes of its environmental resources, albeit it is frequently affiliated to the possibilities of conservation and preservation of the biodiversity and its environment. The central motivation for this study is to estimate visitor's preferences for improvement in ecotourism and management in Kubah National Park (KNP) by utilizing the economic valuation tools, specifically the choice experiment (CE) model. Accordingly, the focus of this study is limited to the valuation of ecotourism and management attributes of KNP, Sarawak, Malaysia. Choice experiment of the stated preference approach was utilized and five attributes of ecotourism and management attributes were identified, namely; (i) amenities (AMT), (ii) information availability (INFO), (iii) interpretive trails availability (ITA), (iv) park guide availability (PG) and (v) entrance fee charges (MPRICE). Information and statistics were gathered using questionnaires from face-to face interviews. Conditional logit (CLGT) model analyses involving a sample of 303 respondents was carried out.

Keywords: Ecotourism attribute; management attribute; choice experiment; conditional logit; Kubah National Park

ABSTRAK

Jumlah Taman Negara di seluruh dunia yang semakin meningkat telah menarik minat dan perhatian negara-negara di seluruh dunia kerana ia kini merupakan salah satu penjana pendapatan yang penting bagi industri pelancongan sesebuah negara. Konsep Taman Negara pada dasarnya ditubuhkan dan berkembang berdasarkan atribut-atribut penting sesebuah kawasan semula jadi, walaupun idea penubuhan kawasan-kawasan ini acapkali berjalan seiring dengan idea untuk pemuliharaan dan pemeliharaan alam semulajadi dan ekosistem setempat. Motif utama kajian ini adalah untuk menganggarkan nilai pilihan pelawat bagi penambahbaikan ekopelancongan dan juga pengurusan Taman Negara Kubah (TNK) dengan menggunakan alat-alat penilaian ekonomi. Sehubungan dengan itu, fokus kajian ini adalah terhadap kepada nilai ekopelancongan dan pengurusan yang terdapat di TNK, Sarawak, Malaysia. Kaedah pemodelan pilihan telah digunakan yang meliputi lima atribut-atribut ekopelancongan dan pengurusan yang telah dikenal pasti, iaitu; (i) kemudahan (AMT), (ii) penyediaan maklumat (INFO), (iii) ketersediaan jejak interpretif (ITA), (iv) pemandu taman (PG) dan (v) caj yuran masuk (MPRICE). Maklumat dan statistik diperolehi dengan menggunakan soal-selidik secara temubual secara bersemuka. Analisis menggunakan model conditional logit (CLGT) yang melibatkan sampel responden berjumlah 303 orang telah dilakukan.

Kata kunci: Atribut ekopelancongan; atribut pengurusan; kaedah eksperimen pilihan; conditional logit; Taman Negara Kubah

INTRODUCTION

One of the best measures in conserving biodiversity is through the designation of protected areas. A protected area consists of an identified rich ecosystem such as habitats of the flora and fauna that are protected and preserved under an appropriate management, in order to promise that such habitats in the ecosystem are

secured. Protected areas are essential for the functioning ecosystems and support the provision of ecosystem services. Virtually, they are the cornerstones of all national and international conservation strategies, set aside to maintain functioning natural ecosystems (Dudley 2008). Protected areas can be degraded by external pressures, but the majority of the terrestrial and these areas are successful at stopping land clearing, and to a