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Willingness to Pay for Kubah National Park: Evidence from the Contingent Valuation Method

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to estimate Kuching residents' (non-visitors) willingness to pay (WTP) for the conservation of Kubah National Park, Sarawak. In order to answer the research objectives in this study, Contingent Valuation Method (CVM) was put into application as the elicitation method and there were 160 respondents who involved in this data collection, where the random sampling method was executed. A dichotomous choice CVM (DC-CVM) was adopted and logit models were used to analyze the CVM analysis. The empirical results indicated that as the price increases, the probability in saying 'Yes' decreases. The minimum estimated mean for the WTP is an increment of 4.38% (RM0.44) while the maximum estimated mean is an increment of 200.24% (RM20.24). In addition, work status, education level attainment and income show positive and significant results.

Keywords: Total Economic Value, Contingent Valuation Method, Willingness to Pay, National Park, Conservation Attributes

Introduction

National parks play an integral role in the conservation and preservation of biodiversity and the provision of other benefits associated with the maintenance of ecological integrity (Stolten & Dudley, 2010; Bhatt & Bhat, 2016). It raises opportunities for people to learn and explores the diverse environments. Natural environment such as forest, wetlands, protected areas and national parks are well known as one of the largest sources that give significant contributions to community and affects human survival in this world. Natural ecosystem is also important to the economic activities in tourism industry specifically ecotourism as it contributes to the development of economic, social and environmental dimensions. Ecotourism, usually a form of nature-based tourism is usually claimed to be one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism market globally (Tisdell, 2003). According to Sangpikul (2017), the increased demand to experience with pure nature or undisturbed natural areas helps the growth of ecotourism.

According to Wunder (2000), nature tourism is a significant tool that contributes to employment and income in underdeveloped, biodiversity-rich. For instance, a project that is