



THE STUDY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY'S PERCEPTION
ON THE IMPACT OF TOURISM TOWARDS THE
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF PERHENTIAN ISLAND

BY

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation discusses the local community's perception on the impact of tourism towards the physical environment of Pulau Perhentian. It aims to identify the villagers' perception and their opinions on the impacts of tourism on the island. As one of the well-known and popular tourist spots and destinations in Malaysia as well as in the world, Pulau Perhentian receives large numbers of tourists per year which has resulted in many changes to its physical environment and influenced the community's culture and lifestyles as well as the island's economy. As a small resort island, it has very limited flat lands and very fragile environment, and thus the increase in capacity of its occupants and populations may cause much impact on its natural resources and environment. Concerned with this issue, this study focuses on the impact of tourism on the physical environment of Pulau Perhentian, both natural and man-made environment. In conducting the survey, questionnaires consisting six sections were distributed to 130 villagers or local people of Pulau Perhentian. The information gained from the questionnaires was analyzed and the factors that gave high impact on the villagers and environment had been identified. The results of the study together with solutions and recommendations for a better tourism management which includes sustainable tourism planning strategies, appropriate IT applications with active and effective public participation are covered in this dissertation.

ملخص البحث

التلخيص الثقافي تناقش عن أثر السياحة المتعلقة بالبيئة الوقعي المحلي, الجزيرة الصغيرة في النظر المجتمع وعدد السكان في الجزيرة فرهننتيان تهدف هذه المناقشة والتحليل لتبرز عن رأى المجتمع المحلي عن أثر الأنشطة السياحة في تلك الجزيرة. والجزيرة فرهننتيان هي إحدى المكان السياحي في ماليزيا المشهورة وتعرف في أنحاء العالم, هذه الجزيرة تقبل السياحي في العدد الكثيرة وهذه القضية تؤدي الى تغيير اشكال الحياة من ناحية البيئة الأرضية والمعاملات والإقتصاد في هذه الجزيرة. كانت الجزيرة فرهننتيان هي الجزيرة الضيقة وأرضها محدودة بالبيئة الضعيفة ويمكن مؤثرة بالعناصر القبيحة, ولهذا زيادة الشعب والسياحي تؤثر الى بيئة ومناظر في الجزيرة. بالنظر الى هذه الآثار القبيحة وتؤدي الى فساد الجزيرة, هذا الإكتشاف تنظر وتناقش عن الآثار السياحة ضد البيئة الجزيرة وأحوال الطقس والبيئة الأصلية والصناعي. في هذه العملية الإكتشاف الإستبيانات التي تتكون من ستة أجزاء قد توزع الى 130 اهل المجتمع, والمعلومات التي حصلت من هذه الإستبيانات حلل, والعوامل التي تؤثر الى عدد السكان والبيئة محدد. ونتيجة البحث وطريقة حل المشكلات والإقتراحات في تحسين تدبير السياحة مثل إقتراح استراتيجية للسياحة المستدامة, تطبيقات تكنولوجيا المعلومات المناسب والإقتراحات من عدد السكان تؤخذ بعين الإعتبار في التلخيص العلمي.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Nik Nadia Izyan binti Jamil

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THE IMPACT OF TOURISM TOWARDS THE PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT OF PERHENTIAN ISLAND**

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*This thesis is dedicated to my beloved **husband** and **parents**;
Who inspire hope, ignite imagination
And instil love of learning*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DV	Dependent Variable
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
H0	Null Hypothesis
H1	Alternative Hypothesis
IV	Independent Variable
JPBD	Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Desa
MDB	Majlis Daerah Besut / Besut District Council (BDC)
PERHILITAN	Jabatan Perlindungan Hidupan Liar dan Taman Negara / Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP)
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme Library
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important industry to many countries especially the developing countries. But tourism industry has given many impacts towards the environment and local community (Coccosis et al., 2004).

These impacts could be positive and negative not only towards its natural environment but also to the culture and livelihood of the people in the host countries. The positive impacts are in the form of generating economic activities and income to the destination countries and also development to the attraction areas and many other benefits. However there are also many negative impacts arising from tourism activities especially to its natural environment and social and cultural impacts to local people unless it is done in sustainable manner and taking into account the carrying capacity of the areas.

The initiative of this study is not to get into great detail of the causes and issues related to the impacts but to understand and to gather information on the perception of local people of Perhentian Island related to the physical environment impacts of tourism to their island, both positive and negative connotation of the impacts.

1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

According to Inskip (1991), travelling and tourism has started thousands of years ago when people start travelling for essential reasons such as seeking food, escaping

from enemies, obtaining relief from pressures of overpopulation, and many more reasons. Continually from this, with different factors, since the World War II, tourism has grown rapidly and become a major socioeconomic activity of the world. This is due to several reasons (Inskeep, 1991) such as:

- i. more disposable income available for travel
- ii. reduced working hours and large number of employees who received paid holidays and annual vacations, thus providing the leisure time for travel
- iii. higher education levels and greater awareness of other areas of the world, leading to a desire of more persons to travel
- iv. rapid and dispersed economic development leading to a greatly increased business travel; and
- v. major improvements in transportation including air travel services and highway networks

Although tourism activities have started thousand years back, in Malaysia tourism is not as old as that. Systematic and organized tourism activities in Malaysia only started in the early 1970s and at the beginning it is more focused on the coastal areas. After 1990s, the activities and products of tourism started to expand to include other attractions such as shopping, events, theme park and nature-based and also health tourism.

Today, many people realized and recognized the existence of small islands that has the potential to be developed. Many small islands also has been developed to be a resort island which offers many great opportunities to the local people, government as well as the visitors. But, besides the positive contribution of tourism development towards the island, there are also negative impacts due to tourism and rapid development in small islands.

Thus, this research will evaluate the impacts of tourism development towards its local community in a small island. Perhentian Island in Besut was chosen for this the case study due to its criteria as a small resort islands with local inhabitants. The study will focus on the impact of tourism towards the island's physical environment at the same time will also relate other impacts arising from tourism activities thereto. This research will emphasize on the local community's perception of the degree and extent of impacts brought about by tourism activities to them and their village.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENTS

As tourism is one of the very important contributors to the country's income, there are many initiatives done by the government to portray Malaysia in the world map including promoting exotics natural tourist attractions such as small islands found along the coasts such as Perhentian Island, Redang Island and Tioman Island in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia, and Pangkor Island, Pulau Pinang and Langkawi Island in the West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. According to Badarudin (n.d), islands of Malaysia today continue to be developed into tourists spots which attract continuous numbers of tourist arrivals (see Figure 1.1).

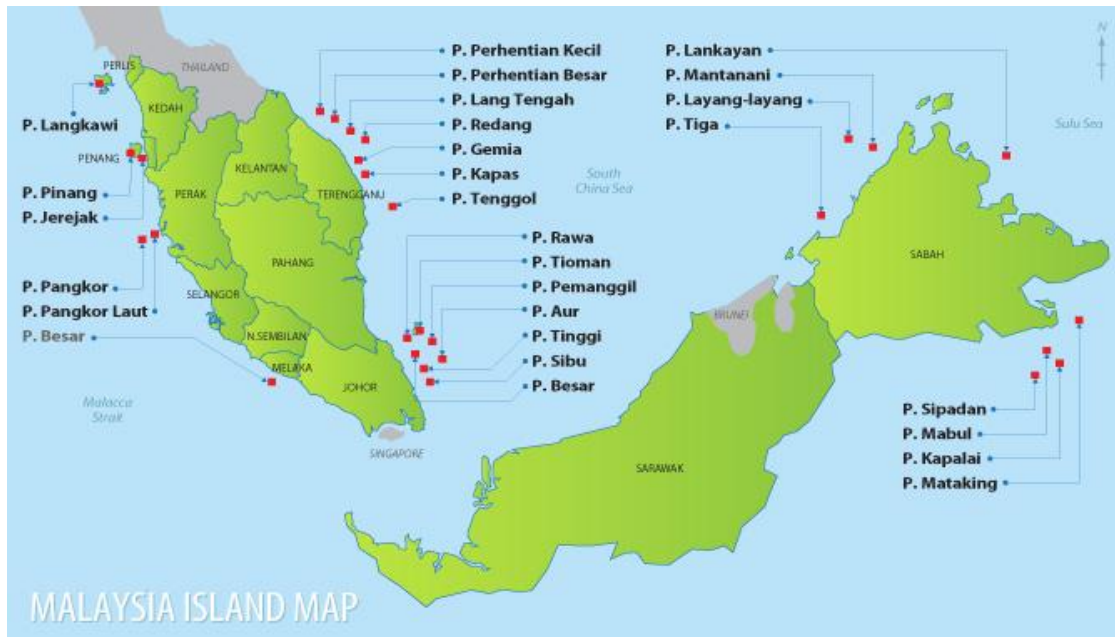


Figure 1.1: Malaysia Island Map
 (Source: <http://www.myoutdoor.com/paradise/Islands.html>)

In a small island that practise sustainable tourism, the limitation of numbers of tourists arrival is very crucial in order to sustain the physical and environmental aspect of the resort island especially the marine resources such as the sensitive coral reefs. Thus, there are various issues common to almost all of the small Malaysian islands that are identified in this research.

- i. Small Islands in Malaysia such as Redang Island, Tioman Island and Perhentian Island which are located in the East Coast have the common problems regarding tourism development. As reported by Department of Wildlife and National Parks (PERHILITAN) and Coral Cay Conservation (2005), the small islands usually share the same characteristics such as limited flat areas for development, imposing pressure on the ecosystem due to waste disposal and water demand. Most of the islands have been gazetted under Marine Park and require Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) prior to development in Marine Park.

- ii. According to PERHILITAN and Coral Cay (2005), due to the drastic increase of tourist arrivals in Redang Island, it has threatened the carrying capacity of the area as a result of rapid development such as constructions of jetties, resorts, coral dredging, and airstrip sites. The development is done in phases and each phase has left their impacts towards the environment (Edward H.S. Wong, 1994). Many developments failed to adhere to the EIA regulations. Almost the same situations happened in Tioman Island and Perhentian Island as mentioned in the PERHILITAN's Wildlife Report.
- iii. There is also poor management of sewage discharge and solid disposal in small islands as mentioned in PERHILITAN's Wildlife Report and Coral Cay (2005). This is a worrying situation especially the indiscriminate development will give negative impact to the environment. The solid waste management is a big issue in almost all small islands in Malaysia as mentioned by Agamuthu (n.d) and proper solid waste management is crucial to ensure the environment is protected especially in small tourist islands.

Thus, according to the problems identified, it can be understood that tourism development might have contributed to land use changes and many other problems on small islands in Malaysia. These changes somehow brought about many impacts on the island – socially, economically and physically. Certain changes are desirable but some may bring more harm towards the biodiversity of the island. The issues mentioned above are the basis for this research to examine and identify the physical environment impacts of tourism towards the local community in a small island in Malaysia with Perhentian Island as its case study site.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The identification of the problems above has left the research with several questions:

- i. What are the types of natural biodiversity and tourism attractions in Perhentian Island?
- ii. What are the impacts created by tourism development in Perhentian Island?
- iii. What are the types of local people's involvement and their perception towards tourism and its impacts in the island?
- iv. What are the best solution and recommendation for a better tourism development in Perhentian Island?

1.5 AIM & OBJECTIVES

The questions above have led to some objectives being formulated. In order to answer the questions above, the following objectives have been developed.

- i. To identify small island characteristics, its resources and attractions.
- ii. To identify the issues, problems and impacts related to tourism development in Perhentian Island.
- iii. To identify and analyze the perception of the local people about the impact of tourism towards the physical environment of Perhentian Island as well as the other impacts related to it.
- iv. To suggest and recommend for a better sustainable tourism development in the island