

Nature seekers within the urban vicinity

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Nature seekers within the urban vicinity

This paper presents visitors' profile and motivation to Broga Hill, a nature-based attraction located at the fringe of Kuala Lumpur the capital city of Malaysia. The paper seeks to examine visitors' motivation for visiting the study area. The study adopts quantitative approach through self-administered questionnaire surveys and interviews. 100 respondents were randomly selected among those who visited Broga Hill. Non parametric tests were used to analyse the data since it was found to be not normally distributed. The findings reveals that Broga Hill is visited by nature seekers of various backgrounds who were willing to spend almost forty minutes to one hour climbing up the hill because of the fresh air and the beautiful scenery from the hilltop. These are the pull factors that motivate visitors' attraction to the hill. The paper concludes that natural forest within the urban vicinity such as Broga Hill should be preserved. Any new development encroaching green spaces within any urban vicinity should be reviewed rigorously.

Keywords: *nature seekers; motivation; typology; recreation; push and pull*

1.0 Introduction

Previous studies demonstrate a growing need for nature as a source of relaxation and recreation (Baur & Tynon, 2010; Broussard et al., 2008; Chiesura, 2004; Maas, 2006; Matsuoka & Kaplan, 2008; Nor Akmar, 2012) ; Cheisura 2004;), However, the enjoyment of nature is not obvious anymore. Rapid population growth and urbanisation across the globe have led to pressures on the natural landscape. Similarly, Malaysia is currently developing into an urbanised nation, with an expected urban population of 78% by 2030 (United Nation Habitat, 2012). Urban areas have recently experienced a decline in the quality and quantity of their green space (Gairola & Noresah, 2010). Natural and open spaces have been lost due to the development of housing areas, infra-structure, commercial and industrial areas. Consequently, many available parks in the cities are getting congested (Ahmad, 2012), whilst those urban dwellers who love nature are willing to travel out of the city to enjoy and satisfy their recreational and leisure needs. Thus, this paper seeks to identify the urban dwellers' motivations to visit the nature based parks at the fringe of a city and also establish their profile.

This paper is organised as follows: in section 2 - recreational parks are described, section 3 - visitor's profiling and motivation are discussed consecutively, section 4 - data collection and method, section 5 - results and followed by section 6 - discussion. The work of this paper is summarised in the final section.

1.1 Recreational Parks

Recreational parks in the city play a major role in providing public spaces where city dwellers spend time with their family members or neighbours and, at the same time, enjoy some fresh air. In certain parts of the city, children and youths spend most of their leisure time either at the parks or at home playing electronic games. Studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between outdoor activities and health (Dirani et al., 2009) and the environment (Franzini et al., 2010). Furthermore, studies have also shown that visualising green space such as trees and grass can help reduce anxiety level (Parnabas & Mahamood, 2012), create positive moods (Hull IV, 1992), enable nature enjoyment (Sop Shin et al., 2005) and fulfil important immaterial and non-consumptive human needs (Chiesura, 2004). A park is a meeting place for people of diversified backgrounds and needs regardless of age, race and abilities