

Geopark Ecotourism Product Development: A Study on Tourist Differences

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Abstract

This study is to explore the tourists' perceived satisfaction on tourism products and services offered in Kilim Geopark. Tourism development in Kilim Geopark has been spurred by an active involvement of the local community and the assistance of the local government. Marketing initiatives taken by the local government, together with community cooperation, have successfully attracted an increasing number of tourists to visit Kilim Geopark. The influx of international and local tourists every year resulted in a dilemma between environmental sustainability and economic benefits to the local community. Nevertheless, the high economic yield from the tourism activities is determined by tourist satisfaction. The data were collected questionnaire survey where respondents have been met directly. Using random sampling approach, the questionnaires were distributed to the visitors randomly. The target respondents in this research were visitors of Kilim Geopark, including both domestic and international tourists. During the survey period, only a total of 341 tourists completed the questionnaires. A significant difference was found among the satisfaction with ecotourism product and services of three groups of Kilim Geopark visitors. In many cases, international tourists reported high satisfaction levels compared with local travellers and those coming from ASEAN countries.

Keywords: ecotourism, geopark, product development, tourism products and services

1. Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the most important sectors that has driven modern economic development throughout the world; it plays a vital role in invigorating economic growth in many developed and developing countries (Chaiboonsri & Chaitip, 2008). Furthermore, tourism is considered a vital dimension of global integration and trade activities and has, therefore, become the world's largest source of income. For many tourism industries in the world, tourism is economically significant as a source of income and employment. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2012), the tourism industry directly contributed to the global economy, reaching USD 2 trillion and generating more than 100 million jobs in tourism-related sectors. Taking into account the impacts induced by auxiliary sectors, the number of jobs has increased to 260 million, with 9% yield of global gross domestic product (GDP). The most relevant component of total tourism flows is the domestic one, which generated 70% of tourism GDP in 2011.

The tourism industry in Malaysia highly encourages annual development and is a catalyst of the Malaysian economic renaissance. The industry is the fifth largest in the Malaysian economy and continues to be at the forefront of economic development. In addition, according to the National Key Economic Area, the tourism sector contributed a total of RM 37.4 billion to the gross national income in 2011. The tourism sector an important economic generator, which contributes in terms of establishing businesses, increasing income, creating job opportunities, improving the standard of living, reducing poverty, and promoting rural development (Mohamed, 2005). The number of tourist arrivals in Malaysia grew from 24,577,196 in 2010 to 24,714,324 in 2011, representing an increase of 137,128; meanwhile, the number of receipts reached RM 58.3 billion compared with RM5 6.5 billion recorded in the previous year, representing an increase of RM 1.8 billion in a year (MOTOUR, 2012). Furthermore, the tourism industry provided 451,000 employment opportunities in 2005, which increased to 520, 700 in 2010 (10th Malaysia Plan, 2011).

At present, the development of the tourism industry has brought innovative and exciting tourism products, with geoparks being a focal area of development. A geopark is a territory with a particular geoheritage of international significance, rarity, or aesthetic appeal. To realize the aspiration of a geopark, three different approaches are used, namely, preservation/conservation, education, and sustainable development (Newsome, Dowling, & Leung, 2012; Farsani, Coelho, & Costa, 2011; Komoo, Mokhtar, & Aziz, 2010). The term “geopark” is referred to as a sanctuary consisting of several selected geological, ecological, archaeological, cultural, or historical heritage sites (UNESCO, 2012; Newsome, Dowling, & Leung, 2012; Farsani et al., 2011). A geopark is designated with a focus on the following main components: (1) protection and conservation; (2) tourism-related infrastructural development; and (3) socio-economic development using a sustainable territorial development strategy. Geoparks are introduced as a new strategy for obtaining sustainable development and further enhancing socio-economic status through the participation of local communities in the continuous geopark activities (Farsani et al., 2011). According to Hashim (2010), the development of geoparks attempts to increase local community awareness on the significance of geology environment protection. Yahaya (2010) argued that the concept of a geopark is a model for sustainable development in sensitive areas. Local participation is an important aspect of tourism development (Tosun, 2000). Thus, to achieve sustainable tourism development, the local people must actively participate in the transformation process (Okazaki, 2008).

The participation of the local community, stakeholders, and interest groups in tourism is very important in the decision-making process and in achieving the sustainable benefits offered by geoparks (Timothy, 1999; Drumm & Moore, 2005; Joppe, 1999; Okazaki, 2008). According to Brohman (1996), participation in the former generally involves empowering local residents to determine their own goals for development and consulting with the locals to determine their hopes and concerns for tourism. Moreover, geopark development also stimulates local economic growth by providing employment opportunities, promoting local products, improving community welfare, and contributing to the improvement of local facilities and infrastructures. To date, only 87 geoparks in 27 different countries worldwide have been acknowledged by the UNESCO as among the Global Geoparks Network (UNESCO, 2012). Of these, only five Asian countries have been acknowledged internationally by the UNESCO as among the Global Geoparks Network, namely, China (26 geoparks), Japan (5 geoparks), Korea (1 geopark), Malaysia (1 geopark), and Vietnam (1 geopark) (UNESCO, 2012). Generally, a geopark is under the jurisdiction of the federal government and the local authorities (Farsani et al., 2011).

Recently, tourists have developed awareness of their rights to be involved in the process of creating meaningful experiences during their vacation based on their prior knowledge and experiences. Therefore, service providers should be able to identify and understand the clients' needs (Matilla, 2011). Taneva (2009) argued that tourism products must adhere to the specifications and requirements previously set by clients in order to ensure that meaningful experiences can be provided to meet the clients' expectations. This aspect should be carefully considered, because tourism markets not only nature-based products but also experiences and satisfaction to the clients.

2. The Development of Eco-Tourism Products

In recent years, the interest in tourism industry has intensified globally. The recognition of the tourism industry as a highly profitable area of trade in developed and a developing country has led to the emergence of geotourism. As a new tactic for promoting tourism worldwide, geotourism has shown remarkable potential by focusing on the uniqueness of culture and history in various destinations (Miller, 2009; Newsome et al., 2012). The term “geotourism” was derived from two different words, namely, “geology” and “tourism.” Geology is the study of the structure of an area, including rocks, minerals and physical components, while tourism refers to travelling to obtain services either for pleasure or for business.

The definition of geotourism can be selected from a vast library of previous tourism literature (Miller, 2009). Generally, it refers to a form of tourism activity that upholds the geographical characteristics of a tourism destination, particularly the attractions and destinations (e.g., environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and residents' welfare) (Heggie, 2007). Geotourism is also a form of nature-based tourism unambiguously emphasizing the geosystem (scenery and geology) while encouraging the development of tourism destinations (Hose, 2007; Newsome & Dowling, 2010; Newsome et al., 2012). However, Dowling and Newsome (2010) argued that geotourism is broadly renowned for its significant involvement in geoconservation, promotion of sustainable development, enhancement of tourists' knowledge and awareness of nature, introduction of cultural identity of the local community, encouragement of socio-economic growth, and provision of other benefits to the local community, such as employment opportunities and regional earnings (McKeever, Zouros, & Patzak, 2010).

Nonetheless, geotourism is still at the early phase of development; similar to ecotourism, which is another

concept in the field of tourism, geotourism concentrates on sustainable tourism in particular destinations where the natural, historical, and cultural heritage should remain pristine for forthcoming generations (Heggie, 2007). The concept of geotourism is built with the purpose of stimulating the growth of socio-economic activities while encouraging the preservation and conservation of the environment. Elucidating a clear definition of geotourism and its characteristics is necessary to comprehensively grasp its full potential in relation to the specific aspects of marketing and protecting and interpreting geotourism interests (Newsome et al., 2012). According to them, the collaboration among several concerned parties, the government, the local community, and private sectors can foster the development of geotourism in a country. In turn, the development of geotourism can further contribute to the growth of the local economy, improve support for the communities, and protect and promote geoheritage sites. Likewise, geoparks aim to promote local community awareness on the importance of geology. Therefore, several types of activities have been identified to encourage local community participation in geotourism, namely, geotours, geoproducts, geomuseums, geosports, georestaurants, and geobakeries (Farsani et al., 2011).

Generally, the concept of ecotourism is derived from two different notions, namely, ecology and tourism. Ecology is the study of the relationship between living organisms and their natural or developed environment (Encarta Dictionary, 2009), while tourism is the act of travelling to benefit from a particular service or activity that is unavailable at home (Encarta Dictionary, 2009). In fact, Bjork (1997) defined tourism as an activity in which the authorities, tourists, and local people cooperate to allow tourists to enjoy the tour as the latter study and admire the beauty of nature and the local culture while helping maintain the sustainability of the area. According to Bjork (1997), each ecotourism program should have the following considerations: (1) its impact on the environment; (2) its impact on host cultures; (3) the economic benefit it may provide to the host country; and (4) tourists' recreational satisfaction. Ecotourism follows several principles: (1) it must be harmless to the environment; (2) it must provide first-hand experiences; (3) all parties (i.e., the local community, authority, and tourists) must be involved; (4) it should promote partnership and responsibilities among parties; and (5) it should provide long-term benefits for the resources, the local community, and the industry (Wight, 1993).

Malaysia has a great potential in promoting nature tourism and ecotourism (Backhaus, 2003). Indeed, the Seventh Malaysian Plan was designed to boost the country's tourism industry by popularizing its considerable natural attractions (Sadi and Bartels, 1997). In addition, the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001 to 2005) included an entire section on tourism development, with a focus on nature-based ecotourism; this rhetoric supports ecotourism development and is reiterated in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006 to 2010), particularly as a means to generate income for rural communities while demonstrating the commitment of the government to conserve natural resources (Hitchner et al., 2009). The ecotourism motion is worthy of further investigation, especially in terms of product advancement in accordance with strategic measures to sustain this viable industry.

3. Tourism Product Satisfaction and Tourist Preference

Although tourism is actually classified as a service industry, most academic scholars preferred to portray tourism products as "products" rather than "services" (Carlos et al., 2007; Osmund & Sunday, 2010). The term "service" is best used to describe product development within the specific service industry (Osmund & Sunday, 2010). However, tourism products and services can hardly be distinguished from one another (Matilla, 2011). To date, no definite definition of tourism products is available. Eraqi (2006) defined tourism products as promotion activities carried out by individuals beyond their familiar environment as well as services or processes that facilitate tourism; in addition, tourism products may consist of natural and cultural resources, facilities, infrastructure, accommodation, and restaurants (Eraqi, 2006). From the marketing perspective, tourism products include any physical object, service, place, organization, or idea which is open to the market and influences the satisfaction of the clients (Smith, 2001; Chaiboonsri & Chaitip, 2008).

Smith (1994) stated that one of the essential features of a tourism product is its quality, which should be measured to determine its price. Therefore, the quality of the product must be considered to provide the appropriate product equivalent to the fixed price; after all, quality is related to the clients' satisfaction on the tourism products. The quality of a tourism product can only be determined by evaluating whether or not it has fulfilled the clients' expectations. Different clients are expected to have different expectations that are normally based on their prior experiences and the price of services offered (Matilla, 2011).

Customer satisfaction is defined as a complete assessment of the performance of products or services offered (Bartikowski & Llosa, 2004). Such assessment tackles certain characteristics of a product or service in innumerable industries (Albayrak et al., 2010; Choi, 2005; Herrick & McDonald, 1992). In the process of providing the best services to their clients, service providers are continuously pressured by clients to provide individualized services that meet their expectations (Osmund & Sunday, 2010).

Xu (2010) argued that tourists encounter a wide range of tourism products in various destinations they visit. Many researchers believe that the variety of products offered at different tourism destinations contributes to the variety of memorable experiences offered to different kinds of clients (Albayrak et al., 2010). Tourism product management is a system of managing skills and activities used to arrange and systematize tourism for a specific tourism destination (Chaiboonsri & Chaitip, 2008). In relation to this, tourism product management must deal with attractions, amenities, accessibility, image, and price of products and services (Chaiboonsri & Chaitip, 2008).

Different tourists have their own perceptions, demands, preferences, needs, motivations, and desires. Therefore, each tourist has his or her own preferences regarding tourism products they desire. Tran and Ralston (2006) pinpointed three key elements of tourist preference, namely, desire, motivation, and image. Generally, tourists prefer three types of tourism, namely, adventure, cultural, and eco-related tourism (Lepp & Gibson, 2008; Tran & Ralston, 2006). Tourism literature categorizes several traits of common tourist preferences as follows: destination, companion, transportation, accommodation, recreation, prices, services, activities (risk takers or risk averse tourists), and travel styles (independent or group travellers) (Plog, 1991; Griffith & Albanese, 1996; Smith, 1990; Tran & Ralston, 2005; Nicolau & Mas, 2006). The following criteria should also be considered when measuring tourist preference: perceived risks, tourists' experiences, climate, quality, pricing, tourists' familiarity with the location, region of destinations, climate, time, money, health, degree of novelty, and length of stay (Hsu, Tsai, & Wu, 2009; Lepp & Gibson, 2008; Tran & Ralston, 2006; Kelly, Haider, Williams, & Eugland, 2007; Lee & Crompton, 1992; Hamilton & Lau, 2004; Goossens, 2000; Bello & Etzel, 1985).

Hsu, Tsai and Wu (2009) classified the factors affecting tourist preference into two, namely, internal (i.e., psychological, physical, social communication, and exploration) and external (i.e., tangible transportation, accommodation, locals' attitude, safety, prices of activities or services offered, cultural and historical resources, intangible destination image, and benefits/expectation) factors. There are also several factors related to the tourists' characteristics and situational variables contribute to tourist preference, namely, age, income, gender, personality, education, costs, distance, nationality, risks, motivation, place, residence, finances, education, sex, and time (Hsu, et al., 2009; Kelly et al., 2007; Tran & Ralston, 2006; Apostolakis & Jaffry, 2005; Hearne & Salinas, 2002; Lindberg et al., 2001). Particularly, tourist preference is influenced by travel party size, purpose of trip, length of stay, location and type of accommodation, as well as activities pursued during the visit (Kelly et al., 2007).

Tourist preference contributes to the growth of the local economy (Oh, Draper, & Dixon, 2010). Thus, gaining additional information on tourist preference provides useful insights for improving local infrastructures and amenities as well as enhances the marketing of a destination (Kelly et al., 2007; Hsu et al., 2009). Each individual is different in nature and nurture (Lepp & Gibson, 2008), and previous studies on tourist preference have been conducted worldwide (Hsu, et al., 2009; Lepp & Gibson, 2008; Kelly et al., 2007; Tran & Ralston, 2006; Lee & Crompton, 1992). Tourists' perception of a particular product usually depends on individual needs, preferences, expectations, and motivation (Kelly et al., 2007).

Preference comes in between motivation and behavior (Tran & Ralston, 2006). Thus, tourist preference is defined as the behavior of selecting the most desired product from a set of choices, in which it is influenced by individual motivation (Tran & Ralston, 2006; Decrop, 2000; Hsu et al., 2009). Tourist preference is usually related to individual decision making, which is a complex process with multiple inter-related elements (Hsu et al., 2009). The knowledge gaps in the current study were addressed by exploring different tourist preferences in using the product and services offered in Kilim Geopark in Malaysia. This work also aims to examine different tourist preferences on ecotourism products offered as well as the satisfaction levels of tourists based on services and activities offered in Kilim Geopark.

4. Attraction and Development of Kilim Geopark, Langkawi

Islands are special places with natural attractions for tourists; however, these also provide special challenges concerning sustainability. Island tourism in Malaysia is developing across the nation. It continues to develop into a renowned tourism destination and has attracted numerous incoming tourists in recent years. As a result, the local community economy has rapidly expanded, and many of the locals presently enter the tourism industry by engaging in a variety of tourism-based entrepreneurship and service industries.

Essentially, the islands of Malaysia continue to be developed into tourist spots, thus attracting a continuous increasing number of arrivals (Mohamed et al., 2006). In this regard, all islands must address issues of economic impact, environmental consequences, and those related to the social, cultural and political fabric of the island because these aspects are affected by the density of tourism on the island. High tourist and resident densities in

islands, such as Malta, are the source of many sustainability problems (Bruguglio & Bruguglio, 2002). Therefore, carrying capacity should be considered. The Kilim Geopark Area is one of the three designated areas in Langkawi Geopark that have been recognized as among the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network by in 2007. This recognition helped the government re-brand Langkawi as a “Geopark Island.” Tourists visiting Langkawi reached 6 million in 2011 (LADA, 2012), demonstrating a sharp increase compared with those in previous years. Kilim Geopark also benefitted from this recognition as it managed to record a high number of tourists over the past five years, that is, from 78,145 tourists in 2007 to 159,338 in 2011 (KCCS, 2012). The increasing number of annual tourist arrivals shows that tourism products offered in the Kilim Geopark have gained the attention of tourists from all over the world.

Kilim started to attract the attention of tourists, especially those from other countries, in the late 1990s. These tourists were mainly nature-lovers who were attracted by the vast nature-based attractions available surrounding the area. Tourism development in Kilim started with the initiatives taken by the Kilim Community Cooperative Society (KCCS). Previously known as Kilim Fishermen Association, this organization has successfully convinced the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) to provide several basic infrastructures, including a jetty for the community to embark on tourism businesses. The cooperative also acts as an intermediary with the local authorities concerning issues on tourism development in the area. They are responsible for supervising businesses in Kilim and encouraging more locals to be involved in entrepreneurship, with the aim of improving the economic well-being of the community. The involvement of the local community in providing boating services to cater to the needs of tourists started in 1999 and was carried out independently by a few individual boat owners. However, by 1999, the government, led by LADA, developed Kilim’s mangrove forest for tourism purposes. Thus, KCCS became fully responsible for ensuring the sustainability of tourism products and activities offered in Kilim.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Respondents (Setting and Sampling)

The data were collected at Kampung Kilim Jetty, where the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in person through face-to-face interviews. Two paths were commonly used in assessing the geopark, namely, through Kilim Jetty and Tanjung Rhu Jetty. However, Kilim Jetty was chosen for the survey because a greater number of tourists used the route of Kilim Jetty than that of Tanjung Rhu Jetty. Owing to the limited time for collecting information, many tourists in Kilim Jetty were recruited as the respondents. Before conducting the survey, the interviewers were briefed in detail to ensure that they understood the objectives of the study and the questions and that they would be able to identify the target respondents; in addition, the briefing was performed to ascertain that the survey would not violate the ethics of research.

Using random sampling approach, the questionnaires were distributed to the visitors randomly. The target respondents in this research were visitors of Kilim Geopark, including both domestic and international tourists. All visitors in Kilim Jetty were selected as the respondents. The survey was conducted on March 2012. March was chosen for conducting the survey based on the average number of tourists visiting Kilim Geopark; it was also a good month to ensure balance between the number of local and international respondents, given that this month covered school holidays. This increased the number of local tourists and reduced the possible bias in the selection of respondents. Based on the tourist arrival statistics in Langkawi and Kilim Geopark, the number of international tourists was higher than that of local tourists. However, during the survey period, only a total of 341 tourists completed the questionnaires.

5.2 Instrument and Data Analysis

A quantitative method involving a questionnaire survey was used in this research to explore tourist perspective on the ecotourism product development in Kilim Geopark. Quantitative method was chosen based on the recommendation of the author who studied similar research areas on tourist perspective. The questionnaire comprised four sections, namely, respondents’ demographics, tendency, satisfaction, and attitude. A four-point (i.e., 1=least satisfied, 2=satisfied, 3=most satisfied, and 4=not applicable) Likert scale was used to measure the tourists’ satisfaction on the activities and services offered in Kilim Geopark. The data collected from the completed questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Descriptive statistics analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were run to map the tourists’ demographic profiles and measure their satisfaction levels. The satisfaction levels per item were determined using the mean score and standard deviation of each item. The highest mean score indicated the highest satisfaction level.

6. Analysis

6.1 Results/Findings

Table 1 depicts the respondents' profile. Among the 341 respondents, 47.5 percent were male and 52.5 percent were female. In terms of age, majority of the respondents (37.2 percent) were 21 to 30 years old, 22.3 percent were 31 to 40 years old, 18.8 percent were 41 to 50 years old, and 17.3 percent were 51 years old or above. In terms of educational background, most of the respondents (98.5 percent) underwent formal education, whereas a few of them (1.5 percent) did not obtain any prior formal education. Regarding employment status, majority of the respondents (62.4 percent) were involved in the private sector, 17.6 percent worked in the government sector, 9.1 percent were students, and 10.8 percent had other occupations. In terms of marital status, majority of the respondents were married (61.9 percent), whereas 32.6% of them were single. In terms of nationality, majority of the respondents were local tourists (45.5 percent), 23.4 percent were Asian tourists, and 31.8 percent were Western tourists.

Table 1. Respondents' profiles

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	162	47.5
	Female	179	52.5
Age	18 to 20	15	4.4
	21 to 30	127	37.2
	31 to 40	76	22.3
	41 to 50	64	18.8
	51 or above	59	17.3
Educational	No formal education	5	1.5
	Formal education	336	98.5
Employment	Government sector	60	17.6
	Private sector	213	62.4
	Student	31	9.1
	Others	37	10.8
Marital status	Single	111	32.6
	Married	211	61.9
	Others	19	5.6
Nationality	Asian	79	23.4
	Western	107	31.8
	Local	155	45.5

Table 2. One-way ANOVA on tourism activities offered in Kilim Geopark

Ecotourism activities	F	Sig.
Mangrove sightseeing	19.798	0.000*
Floating fish farm	17.245	0.000*
Bat cave	11.242	0.000*
Crocodile cave	6.316	0.002
Floating restaurant	15.007	0.000*
Eagle feeding	11.598	0.000*
Fishing trip	13.135	0.000*

*p<0.01

Table 2 shows the one-way ANOVA results for different tourist preferences based on the tourism products. As can be seen, all of the products provided at Kilim Geopark (except Crocodile cave) achieved a significance level of $p < 0.01$. This finding implies that the products were generally preferred differently by different tourists. Based on the mean scores in Table 3, the highest levels of enjoyment on all the tourism activities provided in Kilim Geopark was reported by Western tourists, followed by Asian and local tourists. The highest mean score given by Western tourists was on fishing trip (3.20), followed by food served at the floating restaurant (2.98); the lowest score was given on the crocodile cave (2.75). For Asian tourists, the aspect that received the highest score was food served at the floating restaurant (2.84), followed by fishing trip and open sea (2.77), while bat cave received the lowest score (2.46). Similarly, local tourists reported similar scores for each product offered; however, fishing trip obtained the highest score (2.55), whereas mangrove sightseeing and floating fish farm obtained the lowest score (2.32).

Table 3. One-way ANOVA on tourism activities offered in Kilim Geopark

Product Provided	Local		Asian		Western	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Mangrove sightseeing	2.32	0.728	2.59	0.651	2.87	0.702
Floating fish farm	2.32	0.747	2.52	0.749	2.87	0.728
Bat cave	2.35	0.700	2.46	0.859	2.80	0.782
Crocodile cave	2.35	0.819	2.47	1.011	2.75	0.922
Food served at the floating restaurant	2.35	0.945	2.84	1.031	2.98	0.942
Eagle feeding	2.34	0.784	2.61	0.775	2.81	0.837
Fish feeding	2.34	0.817	2.67	0.902	2.91	0.896
Open sea	2.33	0.831	2.77	0.862	2.97	0.841
Fishing trip	2.55	0.927	2.77	1.219	3.20	0.946

Table 4 presents the ANOVA results for different tourist preferences in relation to the tourism products offered. The results show that all products (except adequate safety facilities and willingness to assist tourist) were preferred differently by different tourists at a significance level of $p < 0.01$.

Table 4. ANOVA on the services offered in Kilim Geopark

Services	F	Sig.
Facilities		
Adequate safety facilities	2.535	0.081
Information centre with relevant information about park	7.116	0.001**
Price		
Cheap recreational activities	7.743	0.001**
Reasonable prices	8.987	0.000**
Natural environment		
Uncrowned and unspoiled environment	3.467	0.032*
Visually attractive	5.029	0.007**
Appealing and in good condition	3.116	0.046*
Services		
Neat appearance of staff	6.362	0.002**
Prompt services to tourists	3.049	0.049*
Providing accurate information	5.495	0.004**
Providing services at accurate time	7.488	0.001**
Willingness to assist tourist	1.386	0.252
Knowledge to answer tourist questions	6.327	0.002**
Responding to tourists' questions	5.176	0.006**
Providing additional information about KilimGeopark	6.734	0.001**
Convenient operating hours	7.846	0.000**
Rendering personal attention to tourists	4.888	0.008**
Understanding the special needs of tourists	6.120	0.002**

**p<0.01 Services, *p<0.05

Table 5 presents the one-way ANOVA results for the services offered in Kilim Geopark. Significant differences were found among the services offered in Kilim Geopark, as indicated at the p<0.05 level. However, no significant difference was found for adequate safety facilities and willingness to assist tourists, as the values failed to achieve the p<0.05 level.

Table 5. Descriptive analysis of the services offered in Kilim Geopark

Strategies	Local		Asian		Western	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Facilities						
Adequate safety facilities	2.37	0.766	2.53	0.676	2.57	0.754
Information center with relevant information about the park	2.43	0.845	2.54	0.712	2.81	0.859
Price						
Cheap recreational activities	2.39	0.801	2.67	0.873	2.79	0.869
Reasonable prices	2.39	0.794	2.48	0.731	2.80	0.806
Natural environment						
Uncrowded and unspoiled environment	2.48	0.840	2.59	0.670	2.74	0.793
Visually attractive	2.52	0.856	2.77	0.678	2.79	0.736
Appealing and in good condition	2.50	0.856	2.48	0.714	2.72	0.724
Services						
Neat appearance of staff	2.34	0.809	2.54	0.748	2.69	0.794
Prompt services to tourists	2.50	0.825	2.49	0.677	2.73	0.831
Providing accurate information	2.49	0.809	2.48	0.638	2.79	0.801
Providing services at accurate time	2.46	0.839	2.54	0.676	2.84	0.826
Willingness to assist tourists	2.57	0.821	2.62	0.666	2.74	0.828
Knowledge to answer tourists' questions	2.45	0.791	2.48	0.658	2.77	0.747
Responding to tourists' questions	2.46	0.832	2.67	0.711	2.78	0.793
Providing additional information about KilimGeopark	2.46	0.832	2.51	0.714	2.81	0.802
Convenient operating hours	2.43	0.813	2.59	0.707	2.82	0.833
Rendering personal attention to tourists	2.41	0.851	2.48	0.714	2.73	0.842
Understanding the special needs of tourists	2.44	0.853	2.52	0.731	2.79	0.765

7. Discussion

This study imparts well defined and excellent comprehension on the ecotourism literature, specifically on the ecotourism products. The discussion further covers the tourists' satisfaction levels as regards the ecotourism activities and services offered in Kilim Geopark. Several remarkable activities are conducted in the Kilim Geopark under the management of the local community. These include the following: mangrove sightseeing, eagle feeding, fishing trip, and tour to several exciting places (i.e., floating restaurant, fish farm, bat cave, and crocodile cave). Head-on questionnaire-based survey was chosen as the method for collecting the data in order to obtain fresh feedback from the tourists who have experienced the activities and services. The survey aims to measure the tourists' satisfaction level based on their experiences after enjoying the activities or services offered in Kilim Geopark.

Based on the descriptive analysis, the fishing trip obtained the highest mean score and is, therefore, considered

the most satisfactory activity. The study reveals that a significant positive relationship exists between the tourists' satisfaction level and their purchase proclivity of tourism products offered in Kilim Geopark. Satisfied tourists are most likely to provide positive feedback and have the highest possibility to become regular customers. The concerned parties should, therefore, be assured that the finest quality of existing activities and services are being offered to incoming tourists to continuously fulfill the tourists' needs. This assurance will further influence tourists' constancy and loyalty, eventually contributing a positive repercussion effect on the tourism destination. Satisfied customers tend to promote the destination and the available activities or services they previously experienced to people they may be in contact with. Such sharing of experiences reflects the positive image of the tourism destination while increasing the destination marketability through the promotion of the destination with other potential clients in mind.

The current study provided an in-depth understanding of the tourists' satisfaction level with regards the tourism products offered in Kilim Geopark. Murphy et al. (2000) and Albayrak et al. (2010) stated that a tourism destination is a collection of individual products and experiences that come together to develop a total and meaningful experience of the area, which fulfill the tourists' needs (Matilla, 2011). This statement is further explained by Chaiboonsri and Chaitip (2008) and Swanson and Horridge (2004), who discussed several characteristics of a tourism product that influence clients' judgement as to whether or not they would subscribe to the product; such attributes include cleanliness, beauty, safety, and being environment friendly.

The present study provided a brief explanation on geology as well. The findings of this research ascertained the relationship between tourist preference and tourists' background. It identified that tourists' demographic profiles directly influenced tourist preference. The results of this study confirmed those of other similar studies (Tran & Ralston, 2006; Lee & Crompton, 1992; Lepp & Gibson, 2008; Kelly et al., 2007), which reported that tourists' demographic profiles appeared to be related to tourist preference. Each tourist has a distinct and individual preference. As asserted by Lepp and Gibson (2008), each individual is different in nature and nurture. Kelly et al. (2007) further explained this assertion and stated that tourist preference of a particular product usually depends on individual needs, preferences, expectations, and motivation.

Moreover, the present study provides further insights into one of the key factors to be considered in tourism development, i.e., geology. In brief, geology is the study of the constitution of a particular region (i.e., rocks, minerals, and physical structure). Furthermore, this study also distinguishes several eminent geo-based products in the world, such as geotours, geoproducs, geomuseums, geosports, georestaurants and geobakeries, which prompt commitment and participation from the local community members as well as encourage them to engage in related tourism activities (Farsani et al., 2011).

8. Conclusion

The tourism sector continuously develops worldwide, especially in Malaysia. This study defined tourism products by referring to previous studies and the tourism literature; this work also examined the relationship between the tourists' satisfaction on the activities and services offered in Kilim Geopark. The descriptive analysis and one-way ANOVA found a significance difference between the nationalities of the respondents and their satisfaction levels. Therefore, a relationship exists between the tourists' satisfaction level and their purchase proclivity of the tourism products offered in Kilim Geopark.

The tourism products extend to the services and activities offered to tourists during their visit to the destination. The results show that, in general, most of the tourists prefer the fishing trip (mean=2.80), because it received the highest satisfaction level compared with other types of activities offered. Regarding the tourists' satisfaction with the services offered, they seemed to be most satisfied with the visual attractiveness and appeal of the natural attraction service offered during their tour, as it obtained the highest mean score (mean=2.66). The tourists' demographic profiles, experiences, expectations, and moods during their subscription of the tourism products have a positive influence on their satisfaction level.

However, the results and analyses in this study should be viewed in light of several limitations. First, this study is based on a sample consisting of tourists who visited and experienced the activities and services offered in Kilim Geopark. Therefore, the results cannot be directly generalized to a wider population. The small size of this study is restrictive, and the generalizability of the results is limited to the particular population in a specific country. Nevertheless, the findings are highly significant for the marketing sector with mutual interest in ecotourism or nature-based tourism products. Therefore, the local community, the government, and private sectors should collaborate in preserving the environment while ensuring the viability and economic development of small businesses in the area.

The present study also provides meaningful documentation on the tourism products offered in Kilim Geopark,

Langkawi, Malaysia. Currently, three goeforest parks in Langkawi Island have been acknowledged by UNESCO. Further studies could examine the two geoparks, namely, Dayang Bunting Marble Geoforest Park and Machincang Cambrian Geoforest Park, to determine the difference between the tourist perceptions on these geoparks. The geoparks can be accessed through two jetties, namely, Kilim Jetty and Tanjung Rhu Jetty. Different from this study, further research can be conducted in Tanjung Rhu Jetty, which offers the same tourism products but is under a different management. Aside from investigating the differences among the perceptions of tourists, future research can also examine public awareness on the importance of establishing geoparks. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the concept and the establishment of geoparks can further attract potential consumers and will increase tourist satisfaction on the natural environment. Indirectly, satisfied tourists can promote their experience of the natural beauty of geoparks to other tourist as well. In this case, the services offered by the geopark as well as its image are the most important promotional factors that can help management draw in potential visitors.

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