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**TOURIST SATISFACTION TOWARDS PERLIS STATE PARK**

Nur Azmina binti Azmi1, 2nd. Faizzatul Nor Shazleen binti Ahmad Lazim2, 3rd. Ung Ean Na3

1Jabatan Pelancongan dan Hospitaliti, Politeknik Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, 02600, Pauh Putra, Arau, Perlis

Email: nurazmina@ptss.edu.my

*Abstract*

Satisfied tourists bring success to the tourism business. However, dissatisfied tourists might not go back to the same place and might not encourage it to other travellers. Even worse, dissatisfied tourists can review a place online and harm its market position. The current study aims to gauge tourists' levels of satisfaction because it is becoming increasingly crucial for promoting travel. Further, the findings were derived from a questionnaire survey of visitors who visited Perlis State Park. The objective of this study is to identify tourist satisfaction at Perlis State Park, to analyses factor influencing tourist satisfaction at Perlis State Park and to measure the satisfaction level of tourist at Perlis State Park. Therefore, this study is proposed on how tourist satisfaction towards Perlis State Park. The purpose of this study is to see whether tourist satisfied with the visit to the Perlis State Park and also to know factor that contribute to tourist satisfaction at Perlis State Park.

**Keywords:** Tourist, Satisfaction, Perlis State Park

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The state of Perlis, near the very tip of Peninsular Malaysia, is where Perlis State Park is located. In southern Thailand, it borders Thaleban National Park. Additionally, the Perlis State Forestry Department recommended to the State Government in 1990 that 1,000 hectares of Mata Ayer Forest Reserve be established, which is how the park got its start. The State Government basically approved in 1993 to the establishment of Kelian Dana State Park for 1,000 hectares of Mata Ayer Forest Reserve. But three years later, the State Government decided to establish Perlis State Park by expanding the region to include the Mata Ayer, Wang Tangga, and Wang Mu Forest Reserves, totaling 5,000 hectares (Latiff et al. 2001). Rahimatsah and Kasim (2002). From the Syamsul et al (2012) Perlis State Park is one of the nature-based experiences at Wang Burma and there are some of activities that can do there.

Furthermore, Perlis State Park was chosen as the natural forest representative. It was a wild cave adventure in a national park. Walking along the forest road to the entrance of Wang Burma Cave takes about 30 minutes from the campsite in Perlis State Park. Along the way, the beauty of the beautiful flora and fauna can be easily found. There are also many poisonous and medicinal plants and trees along the way before arriving at the cave entrance. The caves are mostly large, but there are some narrow paths to crawl. Moreover, it has unique and rare stalactite stalagmites, and columnar rock formations. Cave stalactites and stalagmites mimic walls, curtains, and cascades formed over millions of years.

The unique flora and fauna discovered only within Perlis State Park especially  related to limestone. It is recommended that visitors stay away during the dry months since animal activity is quite low during those times. However, on drier months is a good time for caving activities. For example, Wang Burma Cave provide many recreational pursuits and the length of stay can be used to determine the type of facilities associated with the activity. Length of stay could also indicate visitors’ satisfaction of Wang Burma Cave. Those who are dissatisfied have shorter time spent on site in relative to those who have higher satisfaction. (Syamsul, Sridar, Ahmad Syuib, Mohd Rusli, 2013). However, the study on tourist satisfaction on Perlis State Park of Wang Burma Cave are limited. Therefore, this study is to identify tourist satisfaction towards Perlis State Park on the facilities and provide improvement methods that will need to be highlighted in plans for tourism development in order to provide better reach to potential visitors.

**2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1 Introduction

Perlis State Park is situated at the northernmost of Peninsular Malaysia. The park is located along the western border of Perlis, where Peninsular Malaysia meets Thailand. Perlis State Park is situated on the longest continuous range of limestone hills in the country, called the Nakawan Range which lies from Kuala Perlis to Southern Thailand.

A review of existing literature was performed to support the study undertaken in this research. A literature review is a piece of academic writing demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the academic literature on a specific topic placed in context. A literature review also includes a critical evaluation of the material this is why it is called a literature review.

2.2 Previous Study

According to previous studies, customer satisfaction is a crucial theoretical and practical concern. The degree of visitor satisfaction serves as a benchmark for how effectively a company's tourism-related services meet or surpass visitors' expectations. In addition, it may consider a range of factors that can be evaluated by getting visitor feedback on their experiences through questionnaires or interviews. The degree to which a visitor's assessment of the destination's qualities exceeds his or her expectations for those attributes is how Tribe and Snaith (1998) defined tourist satisfaction with a place. Numerous researches have suggested that a customer's previous experience will have a positive effect on their perceptions of a future episode (Zeithaml et al., 1993; Anderson & Hair, 1972; Fache' 2000; Hoffman & 80 Mohd Fauzi Sukiman et al. / Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 91 (2013) 78-87). Prakash and Lounsbury (1984; Bateson, 1997; Oliver, 1997; Oliver & Burke, 1999). Reviewing the role of expectations in customer satisfaction assessments is necessary before conducting a study of the expectation-satisfaction relationship (Oliver, 1997). In addition, Rodriguez et al. (1997) stated that assimilation theory (Sherif and Hovland, 1961) believes that consumers experience a psychological conflict if their expectations and perceptions of the consumption experience diverge. Consumers will then adjust their perception to better match their expectations and minimize the psychological tension (Anderson, 1973). Consequently, post-consumption evaluations are a function of consumer expectations (Oliver, 1977, 1997; Pieters, Koelemeijer, and Roest, 1995). On the other hand, the contrast theory (Hovland, Harvey, and Sherif, 1957) postulates that when expectations.

Factors Influencing Satisfaction Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001) claimed that ecotourists’ satisfaction is influenced by physical attributes including tangible and intangible factors of the tourism site including facilities, design and weather and also planning, protected nature areas, financing & understanding. The guide’s interpretation and role, variety and uniqueness of eco-experiences are also important factors in determining ecotourists’ satisfaction. The tourism industry has benefitted from the natural environment because most visitors are eager to travel to enjoy the natural beauty. When a natural region is protected, visitors are drawn to the appropriate hotels both for their enjoyment and for the protection.

Some recent studies on the quality of travel services are attempting to determine the factors that influence consumers' perceptions of such services' quality and to model the discrepancies between those expectations and the services actually received ( Chen, Wen-jung 2013: Prityana Seegoolam (2011) Mesfin Anteneh, Abede Dires (2016) Dr. David J. Shonk (2006) Hence, the need for research on the travel services industry, according to Seebaluck, P. Pillai (2006) Al-ababneh (2013), in order to better understand the factors that affect the quality of travel services. Researchers must take into account and combine a number of common dimensions for research purposes. Modern and up-to-date tourism facilities and services are proved to make visitors more attractive and satisfied. 2016 (Dires,e a tench).

Customer satisfaction is an evaluation of the effectiveness of the firm's entire services as received by the customer (Skogland and Siguaw, 2001). Customer satisfaction is a crucial factor to take into consideration when deciding whether to proceed with a purchase or otherwise. When performance goes above and beyond expectations, there is satisfaction. On the other hand, dissatisfaction will happen if the needs are higher than the performance (Parasumaran et al.1990). Since tourists also subscribe to the services provided, the same concept remains good from the perspective of tourism. Therefore, the satisfaction element influences their decision to return. Another term that is frequently used while discussing the idea of tourist satisfaction is travel satisfaction, which is the outcome of a visitor's satisfactions following their personal experience or the experience of a good or service received (Gunderson et al., 1996; Heide et al., 1999; Heung, 2000).

Additionally, most marketers and consumer researchers view customer happiness as a marketing strategy to draw in the most erratic market segments. In addition, satisfaction refers to the perceived gap between prior expectations and perceived performance following consumption; when performance falls short of expectations, discontent results (Oliver, 1980). However, it can also be described as how much a person thinks a particular experience makes them feel good (Rust & Oliver, 1994). Customers' attitudes or feelings toward a service after receiving it, according to Bitner and Hubbert (1994). Moreover, a concept of contentment has been examined by Woodside, Frey, and Daly (1989). It is commonly acknowledged that this concept relates to how much a consumer likes or dislikes a service or product after using it. According to several travel-related remarks by Mountiho (1987), this post-purchase construct is mostly a result of trip expectations and experiences. When comparing "a tourist's experience at the destination visited with the expectations about the destination," Pizam, Neumann, and Reichel (1978) defined tourist satisfaction as the outcomes. Although the definition is a little different, a destination's attractiveness reflects the thoughts, feelings, and ideas that a person has towards the destination's perceived capacity for satisfying.

There is no definitive definition of contentment, however most definitions would involve "an evaluative, affective, or emotional reaction," according to Spreng and Mackoy (1996). As a result, Hansemark and Albinson (2004) think that customer satisfaction is also an emotional response to the discrepancy between what customers expect and what they really get in terms of the fulfilment of a need, objective, or desire. In the context of tourism, satisfaction is usually understood as a result of pre- and post-travel expectations and experiences. Consequently, contentment among travelers is an emotional state following a vacation (Baker and Crompton, 2000). The visitor is content when their experiences match their expectations and they feel satisfied. However, the visitor feels unhappy when they cause feelings of annoyance (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). As a result, Kozak and Rimmington (2000) contend that customer pleasure is crucial to the success of destination marketing. A growing emphasis on customer happiness is one of the business strategies utilised by leisure companies to acquire a competitive edge, according to Philip and Hezlett (1996). Additionally, Philip and Hezlett appear to concur that customer happiness affects travel decisions, product and service consumption, and repurchase intentions. According to studies (Saleh and Ryan, 1991; Barsky, 1992; Bojonic and Rosen, 1994; Kozak and Kozak, 1996), customer satisfaction is likely to result in good behavioural intentions from customers, such as positive word-of-mouth and repeat purchases. As a result, in order to achieve customer satisfaction, tourism organisations should place an increasing emphasis on service quality and first understand what their tourist' expectations are and how to meet them. This is because achieving customer satisfaction encourages tourist loyalty and retention (Ojo, 2010). But in the linked literature, measuring customer satisfaction in the leisure and recreation sectors has been a key topic (Dorfman, 1979). Over the past three decades, a variety of methods for measuring customer satisfaction have been thoroughly investigated; nevertheless, no accepted method has yet been found. As a result, there are primarily two methods for researching customer happiness in the marketing literature.

**3.0 METHODOLOGY**

This study used a descriptive survey method to identify the factors influencing tourist satisfaction at Perlis State Park from tourists who have visited Perlis State Park. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed during November–December 2021. 50 sets of questionnaires were returned by respondents using Google Forms and 50 sets of questionnaires were collected using on-site surveys, in which the questionnaires were distributed and collected at the same time at Perlis State Park.

**4.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

4.1 Respondent Profile

A questionnaire survey was used to collect the data. Apart from questions intended to capture the background information of the respondents; the remaining questions in the questionnaire asked them to identify the degree to which the enabling factors and personal values were satisfied with their tourist programmes. Among the respondents who visited Perlis State Park, more than half (60%) of the respondents were male and the remaining 40% were female. Approximately 70% of respondents were from the age group of 18 to 29 years old, followed by 12% and 11% of the respondents fell under the age groups of 30 to 39 years old and 40 to 49 years old. Only 7% have been recorded as 50 years old or above. A majority of them are residents of Kedah (47%) and 12% are residents of Perlis State.  Some tourists come from Johor (9%), Penang (7%), Kelantan (5%), Perak (4%) and other (16%). Besides that, most of the respondents, which is about 59%, have visited Perlis State Park in the past 2 years before the current visitation, other than that they are first-time visitors to Perlis State Park. In addition, the majority of respondents, or 34%, said they visited Perlis State Park because it is close to nature and they enjoy the sight, sound, and smell of nature. Almost 23% of respondents like the activeness of Perlis State Park. The majority of respondents (14%) stated that visiting Perlis State Park could provide a sense of harmony with nature. About 11% of respondents enjoyed the park as a quiet place to gain peace. Some of the respondents indicated that they liked to observe the beauty of nature (10%) and chose to escape from the pressure of work (8%).

Table 1: Characteristics of the respondent who visited Perlis State Park

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Respondents Profile | | Frequent | Percentage |
| Gender | Male | 60 | 60.0 |
| Female | 40 | 40.0 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100.0** |
| Age | 18-29 Years | 70 | 70.0 |
| 30-39 Years | 12 | 12.0 |
| 40-49 Years | 11 | 11.0 |
| 50 Years and above | 7 | 7.0 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100.0** |
| Residences | Perlis | 12 | 12.0 |
| Kedah | 47 | 47.0 |
| Pulau Pinang | 7 | 7.0 |
| Perak | 4 | 4.0 |
| Kelantan | 5 | 5.0 |
| Selangor | 4 | 4.0 |
| Kuala Lumpur | 1 | 1.0 |
| Negeri Sembilan | 3 | 3.0 |
| Johor | 9 | 9.0 |
| Others | 8 | 8.0 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100.0** |
| Visited Perlis State Park in past 2 years | Yes | 59 | 59.0 |
| No | 41 | 41.0 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100.0** |
| Reason for Visiting Perlis State Park | Find quite place | 11 | 11.0 |
| Attractive | 23 | 23.0 |
| Escape from the pressure of work | 8 | 8.0 |
| Observe the beauty of nature | 10 | 10.0 |
| Enjoy the sight, sound, and smells of nature | 17 | 17.0 |
| Feel close to nature | 17 | 17.0 |
| Obtain a feeling of harmony with nature | 14 | 14.0 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100.0** |

4.2 Factors that influencing the tourist satisfaction toward Perlis State Park

To determine the factors that contributes to tourist satisfaction toward Perlis State Park, based on experience of tourist who visited Perlis State Park in past 2 years and also first-timer tourist who join Perlis State Park’s programmes, the tourist were asked to rate the applicability of four enabling factors on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly disagreed) to 4 (strongly agree), with higher scores reflecting a high tourist satisfaction toward Perlis State Park. four-point Likert scale questionnaires were designed which comprises four enabling factors as shown in Table 3. Table 2 shows the interpretation of the mean score of each dimension.

Table 2: Interpretation of the Mean Score

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mean Score | Interpretation |
| 1.00 – 2.00 | Low |
| 2.01 – 3.00 | Moderately low |
| 3.01 – 4.00 | Moderately high |
| 4.01 – 5.00 | High |

The factors comprise 15 items as indicated in Table 3. Based on the tourist’s perception, there are a number of tourists who enjoy the Perlis State Park environment while visiting, which scored a moderately high mean of 3.24. Most of the respondents agreed that Perlis State Park retains a natural environment that allows tourists to take pleasure in the natural environment. Besides that, tourists also expressed satisfaction with the services provided by the Perlis State Park staff, which scored a moderate high mean of 3.20. It showed that Perlis State Park managed to provide good quality services to tourists (86% agreed). However, in the questionnaire responses, it is shown clearly that Perlis State Park is unable to provide a satisfactory level of service on facilities and special needs of tourists who visited the Perlis State Park were only moderately low, with mean scores of 3.04 and 3.04 respectively.

Table 3: Summary on Factors Influencing the tourist satisfaction toward Perlis State Park

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ENABLING FACTORS | | Strongly Disagree | | Disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | | Mean |
| Q1 | I enjoy the environment of Perlis State Park | 0 | 0% | 8 | 8% | 60 | 60% | 32 | 32% | 3.24 |
| Q2 | The safety of Perlis State Park provided make me always feel save | 0 | 0% | 12 | 12% | 58 | 58% | 30 | 30% | 3.18 |
| Q3 | Perlis State Park have many facilities | 0 | 0% | 22 | 22% | 52 | 52% | 26 | 26% | 3.04 |
| Q4 | There are many people in this Perlis State Park | 0 | 0% | 20 | 20% | 50 | 50% | 30 | 30% | 3.10 |
| Q5 | Staff understood the specific needs of their tourists | 0 | 0% | 16 | 16% | 64 | 64% | 20 | 20% | 3.04 |
| Q6 | Staff always supply the information needed by tourists | 0 | 0% | 16 | 16% | 54 | 54% | 30 | 30% | 3.14 |
| Q7 | Staff always polite and courteous when serving tourists | 0 | 0% | 14 | 14% | 60 | 60% | 26 | 26% | 3.12 |
| Q8 | Staff always have time to respond to tourists’ requests | 0 | 0% | 20 | 20% | 52 | 52% | 28 | 28% | 3.08 |
| Q9 | The staff is always in a state of readiness to serve tourist | 0 | 0% | 16 | 16% | 60 | 60% | 24 | 24% | 3.08 |
| Q10 | Staff willing to help if tourists have problems | 0 | 0% | 14 | 14% | 56 | 56% | 30 | 30% | 3.16 |
| Q11 | Facilities at Perlis State Park attract tourists | 0 | 0% | 18 | 18% | 58 | 58% | 24 | 24% | 3.06 |
| Q12 | The facilities provided are consistent and appropriate to the service/activities offered | 0 | 0% | 16 | 16% | 60 | 60% | 24 | 24% | 3.08 |
| Q13 | Staff provide/perform services at an immediate rate without delay | 0 | 0% | 16 | 16% | 54 | 54% | 30 | 30% | 3.14 |
| Q14 | I’m satisfied with the quality of services provided at Perlis State Park | 0 | 0% | 14 | 14% | 52 | 52% | 34 | 34% | 3.20 |
| Q15 | From the overall did you satisfied with this State Park? | 0 | 0% | 18 | 18% | 46 | 46% | 36 | 36% | 3.18 |

4.3 Level of respondent Personal Values towards Perlis State Park

In response to a survey on tourists' personal values toward Perlis State Park while visiting as an enable factor, most respondents indicated that they have left a positive image towards Perlis State Park. Tourists have the intention to revisit for the next trip, which moderately high scored means 3.29. Besides that, tourists have gained a good value on loving nature after their visit to Perlis State Park, where the higher means scored 3.35.

Table 4: Summary on Personal Values to meet level of satisfaction toward Perlis State Park

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PERSONAL VALUES | | Strongly Disagree | | Disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | | Mean |
| Q1 | I have learned something new in this Perlis State Park | 3 | 3% | 9 | 9% | 52 | 52% | 36 | 36% | 3.21 |
| Q2 | I will come again this Perlis State Park in the future | 5 | 5% | 7 | 7% | 56 | 56% | 32 | 32% | 3.15 |
| Q3 | I will recommend Perlis State Park to visit to my friends and relatives | 3 | 3% | 7 | 7% | 52 | 52% | 38 | 38% | 3.25 |
| Q4 | I will try to take care of the nature in my life like the state park | 3 | 3% | 7 | 7% | 54 | 54% | 36 | 36% | 3.23 |
| Q5 | I will love more nature | 5 | 5% | 7 | 7% | 36 | 36% | 52 | 52% | 3.35 |
| Q6 | The beauty of Perlis State Park made me want to visit the place that have nature in the future | 5 | 5% | 7 | 7% | 50 | 50% | 38 | 38% | 3.21 |
| Q7 | I’m happy after visit Perlis State Park | 5 | 5% | 7 | 7% | 48 | 48% | 40 | 40% | 3.23 |
| Q8 | After visiting Perlis State Park, I was able to relieve stress | 3 | 3% | 9 | 9% | 50 | 50% | 38 | 38% | 3.23 |
| Q9 | The experience that I get from Perlis State Park, add to my knowledge | 5 | 5% | 7 | 7% | 48 | 48% | 40 | 40% | 3.23 |
| Q10 | I will tell people around me about Perlis State Park after I go back from this place | 3 | 3% | 7 | 7% | 48 | 48% | 42 | 42% | 3.29 |

**5.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this research is a study on Tourist Satisfaction Toward Perlis State Park, with a focus on tourists who have visited Perlis State Park. The findings of this research were made by using the questionnaire and google form. In addition, this research is able to find out the outlook of the tourist about Perlis State Park because everyday tourist who come to Perlis State Park are different, so their satisfaction with this state park will be different. This research that have been done on Perlis State Park, shows how important it is to make a study in a place to improve the place in terms of management or in the place itself.

A recommendation can help to improve the management of Perlis State Park. The recommendations provided are also applicable to other state parks. The questions given are based on the staff and the areas in Perlis State Park. The recommendations that have been given must be taken by the management of Perlis State Park to improve the satisfaction of tourists who come to the place. Besides, throughout the result the researchers proved the tourist satisfaction towards Perlis State Park are reliable and valid to be used in others studies for references. This research also beneficial to state park management to improve the quality and accessibility of the state park. This study can help state park management to gain better understanding on the important of factors contribute to tourist satisfaction while visiting Perlis State Park.

Besides that, this study will present some valuable information to academics in order to identify the tourist satisfaction towards state park. Thus, for future research should investigate the satisfaction of tourist not only after visiting but based on their experience while visiting to determine the level of satisfaction towards Perlis State Park.

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