

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**VALUES OF PENANG BOTANIC
GARDENS AS GREEN SPACE TO
USERS**

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ABSTRACT

The increasing number of botanic gardens in Malaysia indicate they are really important to people thus making them one of the most visited green spaces. A common perception on botanic gardens management in Malaysia is that educational values are the main attraction among their users but this assumption is not always correct. Lack of studies related to other values in botanic gardens contribute to the misunderstanding of the present role of botanic gardens as green space to users. The aim of the research is to determine the values that contribute to the success of botanic gardens as a green space. Hence, this study looks into other values in botanic gardens that are positively related to users' visitation motivation. Based on the value ranking results, the recreational and leisure values with the cumulative mean of 4.14 were deemed the most important values followed by social value at 3.96, visual value at 3.90 and the educational value as the lowest among its visitors with a cumulative mean of 3.66. This shows that the educational value is not the most important value among its users. In term of demographic variables, results show that demographic factors affect the findings minimally. For the important values of the Penang Botanic Gardens and the reasons for visiting the gardens, the demographic variable of occupation (Table 4.14 and Table 4.23) shows more significant differences compared to other demographic variables. Meanwhile, for visual assessment the variable race (Table 4.29) displays more significant differences compared to the others variables. This study also provides ideas and guidelines on how the botanic gardens management can identify the most vital values, hence providing the best facilities and services for botanic garden users and to increase visitation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Botanic gardens play a vital role in improving the quality of human life, ecology and the environment. Botanic gardens provide its users opportunities to engage in recreational, educational, and social activities for family and friends to hangout together. Botanic gardens are predominantly located in urban areas (Telfer, 2015) and serve multiple benefits to urban citizens (Noriah et al., 2015). Although the location of these gardens are mostly in urban areas, users are not limited to urban residents only. In Malaysia, there are many botanic gardens located in urban areas and these include the Perdana Botanical Garden, Putrajaya Botanical Garden, Penang Botanic Gardens and the National Botanical Garden Shah Alam. Some of the botanic gardens in Malaysia were originally gardens or parks. One of these includes the Perdana Botanical Garden which was actually the Lake Garden in 2011 and the National Botanical Garden, Shah Alam which was formerly the Agricultural Park. This scenario shows that botanic gardens are more important than common gardens and parks and their functions more complete.

Creating an environment that enhances quality of life, whether in urban or rural areas has always been prioritized by the government (Tenth Malaysia Plan 2011-2015 [TMP], 2010). The development of residential areas which are attractive to live in, work at and conduct recreation activities, to treat and prevent diseases and focus on a healthy lifestyle indicate the government considers quality of life as vital. Farahwaheeda et al. (2012) cited that a garden can be an attraction for tourists, visitors or investors to work and live in. Hence, green spaces including botanic gardens, recreation parks and urban parks should complement their natural landscape and ecology to create a balance between natural environment and a variety of human activities. Residents near green spaces can enjoy and appreciate the scenic view surrounding their housing area on a daily basis. TMP (2010) highlighted, the government hopes that people can appreciate and preserve the environment for future generations. The transformation of 101 hectares of lake park in Kuala Lumpur into a