

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**HOST COMMUNITY'S PERCEPTION OF  
SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS OF  
ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

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## ABSTRACT

Ecotourism encourages responsible travel to natural areas that safeguard the integrity of the ecosystem and produces economic benefits for the host community. The purpose of this study is to investigate the host community's perception of the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism development at Penang National Park (PNP). This study examines the relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of hosts and their perceptions of the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism development at PNP. Other than that, this study intends to identify the relationship between the degree of exposure in the ecotourism industry of the hosts and their perceptions of the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism development at PNP. This study conducted a questionnaire survey among 244 respondents. The findings indicate that the host community's perception of socio-cultural impacts is influenced by gender, ethnicity and occupation. There are both positive and negative socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism development at PNP. Results indicate that the host communities at PNP welcome the arrival of outsiders to their villages and remain enthusiastic about learning the culture of tourists. On the contrary, the hosts stated their concern about the increase of the crime rate in their villages. Besides that, this study also found that there is an association between the degree of exposure of the host community's and their perceptions towards socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism development in PNP. The study discovered that the host community in PNP felt that ecotourism has brought more positive than negative influences to their community.

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