

**A STUDY ON ECO-TOURISM INDUSTRY IN KUCHING:
MARKETING ISSUES AND IMPACTS OF ECO-TOURISM**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The growth of eco-tourism market segment is one of the most promising trends to emerge in the world of tourism. The interest in eco-tourism in all parts of the world arose from the concern to conserve and preserve the natural environment and the potential for environmental degradation, pollution and littering in eco-tourism sites is of concern to all stakeholders.

This study was carried to examine the possibility of negative impact of eco-tourism on natural environment through a sample survey, personal observations and interviews. A sample survey was used to gather the required data and the study was conducted in some of the major tourist destinations within Kuching due to time and cost constraint as well as other limitations. Other data for this study was gathered through secondary sources. Respondents in this study were selected using purposive sampling.

The results of the study indicated that majority of the respondents were aware of the negative impact of eco-

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study was carried out as partial requirement for my Bachelor in Business Administration (Marketing). The purpose of this study was to examine the marketing issues faced by eco-tourism industry and the impacts of eco-tourism on natural environment and local communities in order to create awareness on the importance of eco-tourism.

The international eco-tourism market declined dramatically as a result of the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Airlines continue to project lower utilization rates for passenger services. But eco-tourism offers some attractive opportunities as a means of reestablishing a destination. The world's eco-tourists are mostly knowledgeable, sophisticated travelers, and this sector is expected to successfully rebuild somewhat more rapidly than other types of international leisure travel (WTTC, 2001). Also, the eco-tourist usually visits rural communities and more remote regions of host countries.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no universally agreed definition of what exactly constitutes eco-tourism but many eco-tourism destinations and attractions are national parks, natural reserves and other types of protected areas. The definitions for eco-tourism are varied and used in accordance with various settings and situations.

The term 'eco-tourism' was coined from the words ecology and tourism and this terminology was widely used throughout the world and it was the in-thing emerging in the early eighties. Eco-tourism represents an attempt within the tourism industry to provide travelers with culturally and environmentally sensitive experiences.

In view of the many definitions of the term '*ecotourism*' and as it has many meanings to many people, a simple definition is required so that the term can be understood by all. The "National Ecotourism Plan for Malaysia" (1995) accepted the term as defined by the IUCN (World Conservation Union)