

Green Tourism Practices in Malaysia: A Review



MOHAMAD Diana ディアナ・モハammad

マレーシア科学大学建築学部講師

BSc and MSc in Urban and Regional Planning, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM);
PhD in Conservation (Travel Behavior), University of South Australia (UniSA)
School of Housing, Building and Planning (HBP), Universiti Sains Malaysia
(diana_mohamad@usm.my). Fields : Urban Planning, Travel Behavior, Transport
Planning, Telecommuting.

ABSTRACT

Green Tourism becomes the buzz word of key stakeholders, shareholders and players especially in referral to New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. Green tourism is an ideation to address the negative impacts of traditional mass tourism, among others, pollution (air, noise, visual), depletion of resources (misuse of natural resources, overexploitation of natural resources utilization) as well as rapid development (issues with biodiversity ecosystem, environmental destruction). This paper brings forward Malaysia's notion and initiatives in practicing Green Tourism that is centralized on employing Green tourism as a means to empower local people as well as a medium to educate people (via engaging the education system) on the importance of 'be green and behave green' in order to sustain our livability.

As the globe is experiencing harsh reality on the adverse impact of traditional mass tourism, green tourism is becoming impressive in size and pervasive in practices. The original concept of Green Tourism reflects "...small-scale tourism which involves visiting natural areas while minimizing environmental impact" (Pedro Pintassilgo, 2016). Thus, the concept has been used interchangeably with concepts of nature tourism, eco tourism, sustainable tourism and responsible tourism. Yet, it is argued that Green Tourism is a term without specific definitions and often '...[unable to] explain specific methods of reducing environmental impact' (Culture Trip, 2020). Initially, Green Tourism was a movement describing the hotel industry's initiatives of encouraging the guests to reuse their towels (in the 1980s) (Rainsforest Alliance, 2020) and now has evolved to the practice that provides practical framework to achieve sustainable business in a sustainable tourism setting (Green Tourism, 2020). In a nutshell, Green Tourism can be deemed as a movement that is performed to achieve mental and physical enjoyment without impacting changes in landscape and changes in the system for commercial or professional reasons (Ministry of Economy United Arab Emirates, undated).

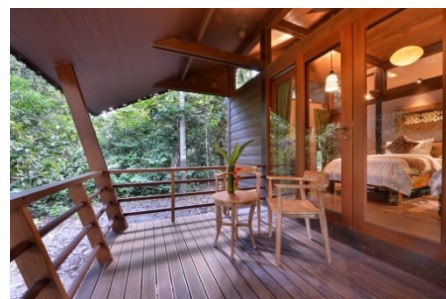
Green Consumer is often associated with the marketing strategy of the hotel industry that promotes environmental-friendly accommodation facilities; and therefore Green Consumer is displayed through their tourism product purchasing activity and their tourism behavior (Aminda et al. 2009). Green Behavior reflects '...buying green or sustainable products, pursuing responsible consumption, getting involved in environmental protection activities and preserving resources (Dan-Cristian Dabija & Bejan Brandusa, 2018). Conventional knowledge has generally encapsulated the Green Consumer into following criteria: (1) individual who really practicing green behavior, (2) individual who often practicing green behavior, (3) individual who practice green behavior at their convenience, and (4) individual who do not practice green behavior at all.

Green tourism practices in Malaysia can be encapsulated into a broad understanding as the practices are employed in various fields, among others: tourism, hotel (accommodation), education, conservation and daily life. In referral to hotel (accommodation), Maisarah Abd Hamid and Salmi Mohd Isa (2018) asserted that the green tourism practices cover facility design (elements of local culture especially for landscaping purposes, development of facilities that are disabled people friendly), sustainability system (implementation of green-based standard operating procedures for sustainability-related activities), community development (empowerment of local people and local businesses, involving local people in the decision making process) (see Pictures 1 and 2), and conservation (financial assistance for preservation and conservation activities, ensuring tour/tourism packages are ecosystem friendly, discourages purchasing items that are non-environmentally friendly) (see Pictures 3, 4, 5 and 6). In the context of daily life, however, the green practices could be considered at the very minimal level. Table 1 lists the ideation of green tourism practices, worldwide, in the field of tourism industry; which is also applied to Malaysia.

Table 1: The aspects covered in green tourism practices

Source: Adapted from Nur Syahidah Said (2016)

Aspects of green practices	Hill & O'Neill (2008)	Bergin-Seers & Mair (2009)	Croston (2010)	Becker (2011)	Bar & Prillwitz (2012)	Rezai et al (2013)	Huang et al (2014)	Choy (2015)	Graven (2016)	Jaini et al (2019)
Behavior in daily life	/	/		/	/					
Participating in green campaign	/			/		/		/		
Behavior while travelling	/		/					/		/
Behavior while staying	/			/			/			
Tourism products								/	/	/



Picture 1 and Picture 2: Tourism product made by the locals

Source: www.smallfootprintsbigadventure.com (2020)



Picture 3: Kayaking activity, Picture 4: Survival camp with local staffs
Source: www.smallfootprintsbigadventure.com (2020)



Picture 5 and Picture 6: Environmental friendly accommodation
Source: www.smallfootprintsbigadventure.com (2020)

Despite the ideation and the movement of green tourism could be principally dated back to 1980s, the action and the adaptation are still at the minimal level. Taking this into consideration, Malaysia is addressing green tourism and green practices from different perspectives namely education and awareness. Setting Philippines as the role model where tree planting and management has been absorbed as one of the graduation requirements, higher education institutions in Malaysia are now incorporating green activities into their calendar. At present, the education system seeks to instill and enhance environmental awareness and green practices through tree planting activity in new students' introductory week, community-based activity in institutional-level program, and education-based programs and activities that often handled by higher education institutions and non-government organizations (see Pictures 7 to 10).



Pictures 7 and 8: Gardening techniques sharing session with preschool teachers
Source: news.usm.my (2015)



Pictures 9 and 10: Instilling environmental awareness at secondary education level
Source: News Straits Times (2019)

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda movements, Malaysia is putting forward many efforts in ensuring current and future generations to commit to their responsibility in respecting the earth, taking care of the raw materials and in making certain that no further harm will be inflicted onto the Mother Earth. The notion is further strengthened through the country's belief in developing practical and pragmatic impact assessment checklist and manual such as Heritage Impact Assessment, Cultural Impact Assessment, and Arborist Impact Assessment.

Reference

- Aminda Marian Finisterra do Paco, Mario Raposo & walter Leal Filho. *Identifying The Green Consumer: A Segmentation Study*. Journal of Targeting Measurement and Analysis for Marketing (2009)
- Culture Trip. *The Differences between Green Tourism, Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism*. <https://theculturetrip.com/> (2020)
- Dan-Cristian Dabija & Bejan Brandusa. *The Impact of Consumer Green Behaviour on Green Loyalty Among Retail Formats: A Romanian Case Study*. Moravian Geographical Resports (2018).
- Green Tourism. *Promoting Sustainable Business Tourism: Green Tourism*. <https://www.green-tourism.com/> (2020)
- Maisarah Abd Hamid & Salmi Mohd Isa. *Exploring the sustainable tourism practices among tour operators in Malaysia*. Journal of Sustainability Science and Management 5, 68-80 (2018)
- Ministry of Economy United Arab Emirates. *A Guide to Concepts of Green Tourism*. (undated)
- News Straits Times. *SJKT Sg Ara applies fun approach to learning*. <https://www.nst.com.my/> (2019)
- Nur Syahidah Said. *Toward Green Consumerism Practices in Malaysia Hotel Industries*. 2016
- Pedro Pintassilgo. *Green Tourism*. Encyclopaedia of Tourism (2016)
- Rainforest Alliance. *What Is the Difference Between Green, Eco-, and Sustainable Tourism?* <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/> (2020).
- Small Footprints, Big Adventure. *The ultimate guide to Malaysia Eco resorts & Sustainable Accommodation*. <https://smallfootprintsbigadventures.com/> (2020)
- Universiti Sains Malaysia. *RCE Penang shares expertise with preschool teachers on green gardening techniques*. <https://news.usm.my/> (2015)