

CHAPTER 5: RESPONDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS AND OBSERVATION RESULTS

This chapter describes the general respondents' characteristics followed by the respondents' characteristics in the recreational forests, observations results, and finally, maintenance and related issues in both recreational forests.

5.1 General Respondent's Characteristics

In this section the respondents from the two study sites are combined to give a general overview of the sample. The 2010 census data from the Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristics from the Department of Statistics Malaysia were used to offer an overview of the Malaysian population distribution for comparison. The Labour Force Survey Report 2011 was also used for the employment status and educational distribution. This section examines the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents for the two recreational forests.

In general, the sample consisted mostly of respondents aged between 19-25 and 36-55 years (Table 5.7), with higher numbers of males over females. Malays, married people and the employed formed in the majority of the recreational forest respondents. Most respondents had at least high school education.

Table 5.1 Age group distribution

Age group	Study Sample Nos. (%)	Census 2010 (%)
<19	-	(28.0)
19-25	133 (32.2)	(20.1)
26-35	129 (31.2)	(17.0)
36-55	132 (32.0)	(23.7)
56 and older	19 (4.6)	(11.2)

Note: Individuals aged under 19 are not included in the study sample

Age group. Overall, the distribution of the sample across age group was equal, except for the older age group. However, the study sample contained a greater number of the younger age groups compared to the national population.

Table 5.2 Gender distribution

Gender	Study Sample Nos. (%)	Census 2010 (%)
Male	227 (55.0)	(51.0)
Female	186 (45.0)	(49.0)

Gender. The gender balance in the sample was approximately similar to the gender balance nationally, though there were proportionately greater numbers of men in the study sample.

Table 5.3 Ethnicity distribution

Ethnicity	Study Sample Nos. (%)	Census 2010 (%)
Malay	220 (53.3)	(50.2)
Chinese	117 (28.3)	(22.6)
Indian	76 (18.4)	(7.1)
Other categories	-	(20.1)

Note: Other categories such as Other Bumiputera, Others and Non-Malaysia were not included in the study sample.

Ethnicity. The study sample was more proportionate to the census data. The distribution of Malay and Chinese respondents was similar to the Malaysian population, but Indians were more highly represented.

Table 5.4 Marital status distribution

Marital status	Study Sample Nos. (%)	Census 2010 (%)
Single	177 (42.9)	(35.0)
Married	228 (55.2)	(60.0)
Divorced/living apart	6 (1.5)	(5.0)

Marital status. In general, single respondents were over-represented in the study sample compared to the Malaysian population.

Table 5.5 Employment status

Employment status	Study Sample Nos. (%)	Labour force survey report 2011 (%)
Student	61 (14.8)	n.a
Employed	262 (63.4)	(76.6)
Self-employed	40 (9.7)	(15.6)
Retired	10 (2.4)	n.a
Housewife	38 (9.2)	n.a
Other	2 (0.5)	(7.8)

Employment status. Employed respondents were fairly well-represented and the self-employed were slightly under-represented compared to the national population.

Table 5.6 Educational distribution

Educational	Study Sample Nos. (%)	Labour force survey report 2011 (%)
High school and below	177 (42.9)	(73.0)
Vocational certificate/diploma	112 (27.1)	(24.0)
First degree (e.g. BSc, BA)	93 (22.5)	
Postgraduate degree (e.g. MA, PhD)	28 (6.8)	
Other - not schooling	2 (0.5)	(3.0)

Educational status. A comparison of the educational profile indicated that the respondents were more likely to have vocational or academic qualifications, compared with the general population.

5.2 Respondent's Characteristics for each Recreational Forest

This section elaborates on the respondents' backgrounds for each site. The 2010 census data from the Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristics for Selangor state, from the Department of Statistics, Malaysia, was used for comparison. Both Ampang Recreational Forest and Kanching Recreational Forest are located in sub-urban areas. However, Kanching Recreational Forest is more secluded and surrounded by hills and green areas.

Age group distribution

Table 5.7 reveals that when the sample is divided into two case study sites, there are clear differences between the distributions of the sample between age groups. In general, the respondents in Kanching Recreational Forest were younger than those in Ampang Recreational Forest. The distribution of respondents among age group for the Ampang Recreational Forest site was more representative of the general population of Selangor.

Table 5.7 Age group and gender distribution (both recreational forests)

Ampang Recreational Forest		Kanching Recreational Forest		Selangor Census 2010
Age	Nos. (%)	Age	Nos. (%)	(%)
<19	-	<19	-	(24.0%)
19-25	49 (23.6)	19-25	84 (41.0)	(20.0%)
26-35	55 (26.4)	26-35	74 (36.1)	(22.0%)
36-55	87 (41.8)	36-55	45 (22.0)	(24.0%)
56 and older	17 (8.2)	56 and older	2 (1.0)	(10.0%)
Gender	Nos. (%)	Gender	Nos. (%)	(%)
Male	104 (50.0)	Male	123 (60.0)	(52.0)
Female	104 (50.0)	Female	82 (40.0)	(48.0)

Note: Individuals aged under 19 are not included in the survey at both recreational forests

Gender distributions

There were an equal number of males and females at Ampang Recreational Forest. However, for Kanching Recreational Forest, male respondents were over-represented compared to the general population of Selangor.

Ethnicity distributions

Ampang Recreational Forest had proportionally greater numbers of Chinese and Indian respondents compared with Kanching Recreational Forest, whereas Kanching Recreational Forest had proportionally more Malay respondents in the sample. The ethnic profile of the Ampang Recreational Forest respondents was generally similar to the ethnic profile of the Selangor population.

Table 5.8 Ethnicity distribution (both recreational forests)

Ampang Recreational Forest		Kanching Recreational Forest		Selangor Census 2010
Ethnicity	Nos. (%)	Ethnicity	Nos. (%)	(%)
Malay	90 (43.3)	Malay	130 (63.4)	(51.0)
Chinese	68 (32.7)	Chinese	49 (23.9)	(25.5)
Indian	50 (24.0)	Indian	26 (12.7)	(12.7)
Other categories	-	-	-	(10.8)

Note: Other categories such as Other Bumiputera, Others and Non-Malaysians are not included in the study sample.

Table 5.9 shows that a majority of the respondents at both sites were in employment. Self-employed respondents, retirees and housewives were higher in number in Ampang Recreational Forest than Kanching Recreational Forest.

On the other hand, Kanching Recreational Forest had a higher number of student respondents.

In general, however, the respondents from both sites were more highly educated than the Selangor population. About half of the respondents from Ampang Recreational Forest had completed their education at high school level, whereas over half of the Kanching Recreational Forest respondents had obtained their vocational or higher education qualification.

In general, the socio-demographic analysis for the respondents at the two recreational forests shows that the largest number of respondents was aged 19-25 and the smallest respondent group was more than 55 years old (Table 5.7). The proportion for male and female respondents was roughly similar in Ampang Recreational Forest, with males in Kanching Recreational Forest being overrepresented. Malays were over-represented in Kanching Recreational Forest, whilst there were proportionately more Chinese and Indians in Ampang Recreational Forest. In addition, respondents who had at least a vocational certificate/diploma as their highest level of education seemed to be over-represented at both sites.

Table 5.9 Employment status and educational distribution (both recreational forests)

Ampang Recreational Forest		Kanching Recreational Forest		Selangor Labour force survey report 2011 (%)
Employment status	Nos. (%)	Employment status	Nos. (%)	(%)
Employed	123 (59.1)	Employed	139 (67.8)	(85.0)
Self-employed	25 (12.0)	Self-employed	15 (7.3)	(10.0)
Student	22 (10.6)	Student	39 (19.0)	n.a
Retired	8 (3.8)	Retired	2 (1.0)	
Housewife	28 (13.5)	Housewife	10 (4.9)	
Other	2 (1.0)	Other	-	
Educational	Nos. (%)	Educational	Nos. (%)	(%)
High school and below	103 (49.5)	High school and below	74 (36.1)	(62.6)
Vocational certificate/diploma	45 (21.6)	Vocational certificate/diploma	67 (32.7)	(15.1)
First degree (e.g. BSc, BA)	43 (20.7)	First degree (e.g. BSc, BA)	50 (24.4)	(16.8)
Postgraduate degree (e.g. MA, PhD)	15 (7.2)	Postgraduate degree (e.g. MA, PhD)	13 (6.3)	
Other	1 (0.5)	Other	1 (0.5)	(5.5)

5.3 Observation Results for Ampang and Kanching Recreational Forests

The results were obtained from the observations carried out in October 2009 for three days, namely, on a Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Saturday and Sunday are official off-days for most of the states in Malaysia, including Selangor. The observations were done to obtain a profile of the users and their activities and were carried out at pre-determined focal areas at certain times (morning, afternoon and late afternoon). The number of people observed differed from the sampling frame, which was based on the number of people entering the site (See Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1 for a more detailed explanation of how the sampling frame was devised). Some inherent inaccuracies in the observation process were noticed, for example, possible double counting forest users at the pre-determined areas (the sampling frame showed that Ampang Recreational Forest had 369 visitors and Kanching Recreational Forest had 697 visitors). Nevertheless, the observations provided additional information about users and their activities

which were helpful in understanding usage of recreational forests and interpreting other data.

5.3.1 Days of visit by site

Based on the observations, it seemed that the recreational forests attracted more users during the weekend more than during the working week. There were some marginal differences between the two sites; in the sense that Saturday was the busiest day at the Ampang Recreational Forest, while the Kanching Recreational Forest recorded most visitors on Sunday (Figure 5.1). The observations suggested that many families and groups of young people visited Kanching Recreational Forest on a Sunday particularly for picnics and swimming. The scenic qualities of the Kanching Recreational Forest waterfalls probably attract visitors to this destination for their main weekly outing.

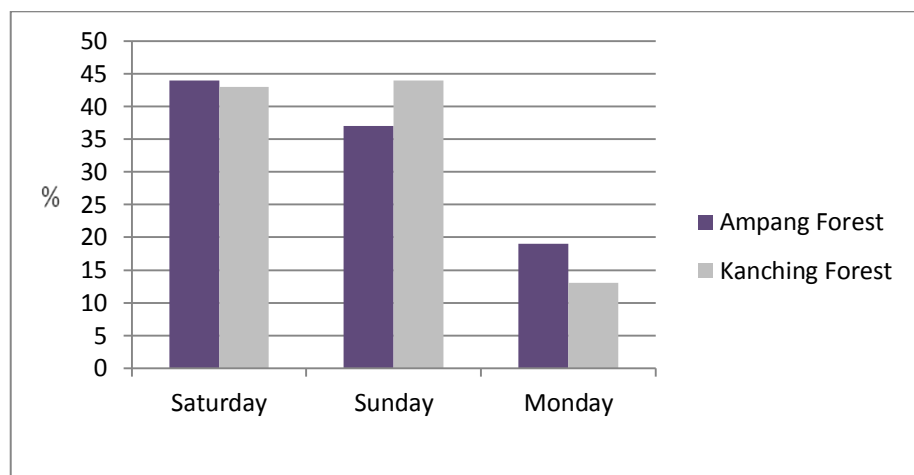


Figure 5.1 Observed results for days of visit in the recreational forests

5.3.2 Gender distributions based on sites

The users observed at Kanching Recreational Forest (N = 581) outnumbered those at Ampang Recreational Forest (N = 336). The number of male and female users at Kanching Recreational Forest was greater than those at Ampang Recreational Forest. They were represented more than 50% compared to the people who visited Ampang Recreational Forest.

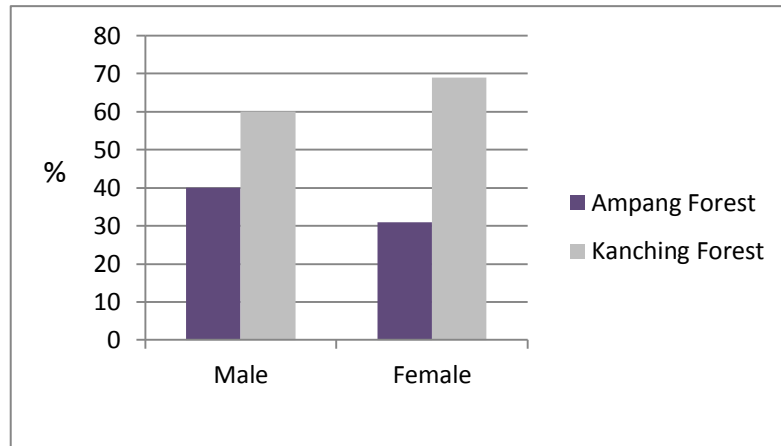


Figure 5.2 Observed gender distributions in the recreational forests

5.3.3 Recreational activities observed in the recreational forests

Observations revealed that there were more exercise-focused activities, such as jogging and brisk walking, at Ampang Recreational Forest compared to Kanching Recreational Forest (Figure 5.3). This was probably related to the differing physical character of the two sites. Kanching Recreational Forest is hillier than Ampang Recreational Forest, and is therefore quite unsuitable for such activities. There were also quite distinct recreational patterns in Kanching Recreational Forest and Ampang Recreational Forest. Jogging (87%) was more popular at Ampang Recreational Forest, whereas picnicking/barbeque (BBQ) (78%) was more popular in Kanching Recreational Forest. In addition, taking photos/videos was more popular (88%) in Kanching Recreational Forest, especially amongst international tourists due to the presence of the scenic waterfalls there. Outdoor learning and volunteering work was more common in Kanching Recreational Forest, possibly because it is more extensive than the Ampang Recreational Forest. For the purposes of this study, the term ‘volunteering work’ refers to actions and work which are volunteered by the users.

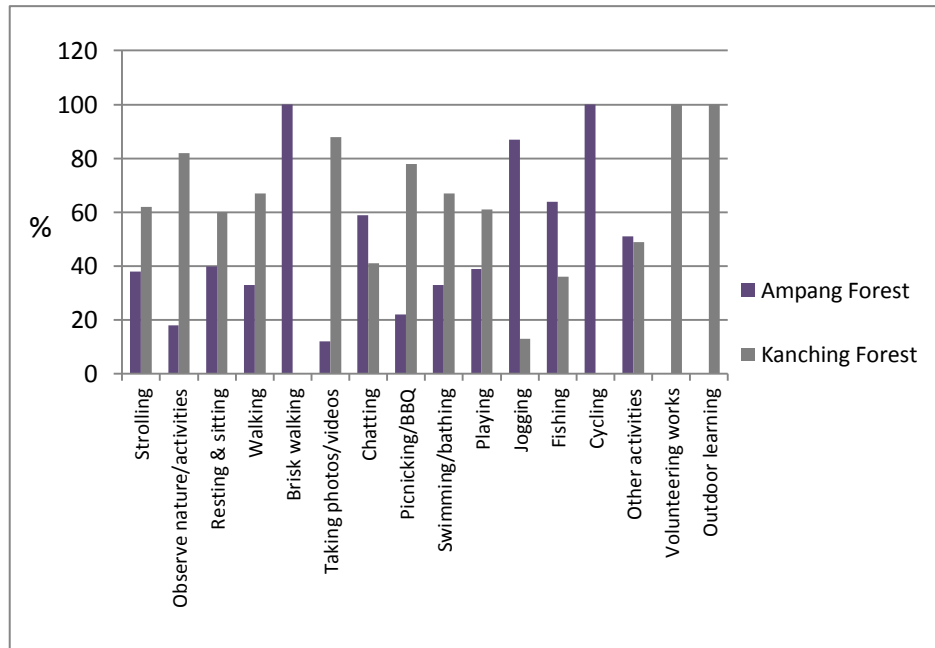


Figure 5.3 Recreational activities observed in the recreational forests



Figure 5.4 Some activities at Ampang Recreational Forest (Clockwise from top left: swimming, fishing, playing with a ball and bird watching)



Figure 5.5 Some activities at Kanching Recreational Forest (Clockwise from top left: feeding monkeys, outdoor programmes and jungle trekking)

5.3.4 Recreational activities and gender

Overall, male users outnumbered female users in terms of their engagement in recreational activities, with some exceptions. It was noted that only men were observed cycling and taking photos in Ampang Recreational Forest (Figure 5.6). Cycling was observed in Ampang Recreational Forest because boys and occasionally male adults, from residential areas nearby regularly cycled there. Fewer women engaged in fishing, playing and swimming/bathing. Most of the adult women, but not female teenagers appeared to be busy serving food or attending to their family's needs. It was also observed that they liked to swim/bathe. In addition, women outnumbered men in volunteering work in Kanching Recreational Forest (Figure 5.8) while, in Ampang Recreational Forest, female users exceeded males in brisk walking and strolling activities.

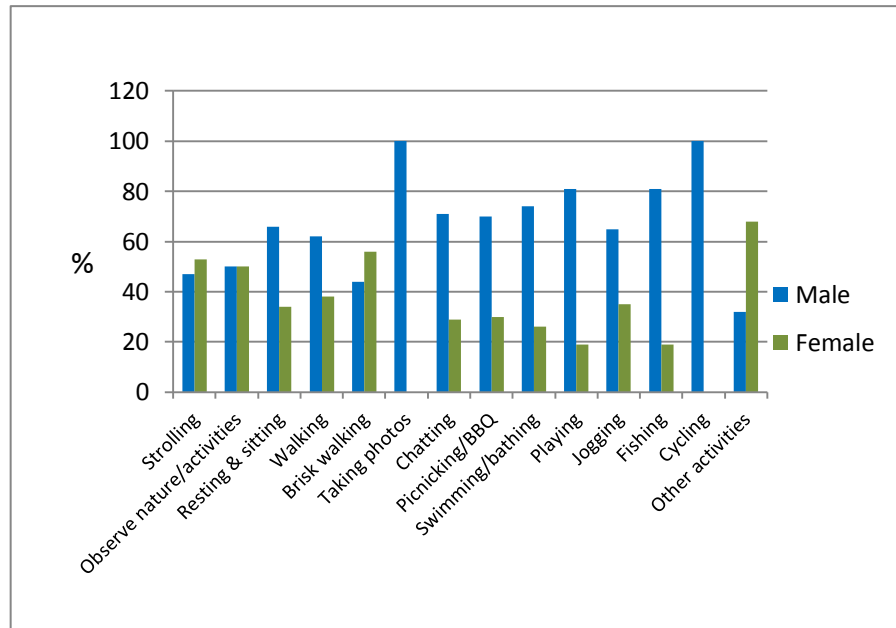


Figure 5.6 Recreational activities based on gender in Ampang Recreational Forest



Figure 5.7 Several children cycling in the Ampang Recreational Forest and a man doing volunteering work in Kanching Recreational Forest

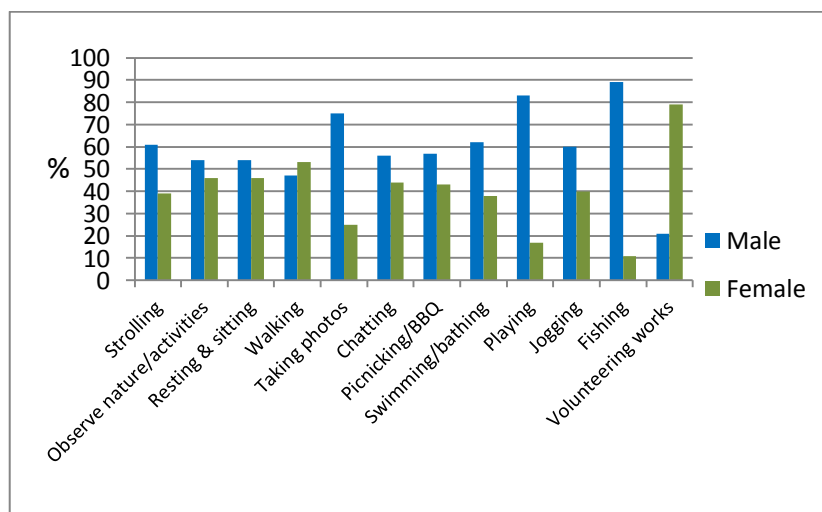


Figure 5.8 Recreational activities based on gender in Kanching Recreational Forest

5.3.5 Recreational activities and ethnicity

Based on observations and interviews with the forest manager, it was apparent that users from a wide range of ethnicities visited the site, including international tourists as well as foreign workers from an industrial plant nearby. There appeared to be a strong relationship between the ethnicity of users and the activity in which they engaged. Malays dominated most of the activities except for a few activities such as brisk walking. This may be due to the fact that the Malays were the biggest group, followed by Chinese and Indian users. Chinese users were more likely to do brisk walking and fishing in the Ampang Recreational Forest (Figure 5.9) and volunteering work in the Kanching Recreational Forest (Figure 5.10) compared to Malays and Indians. On the other hand, there did not appear to be any distinct activity preferred by Indians.

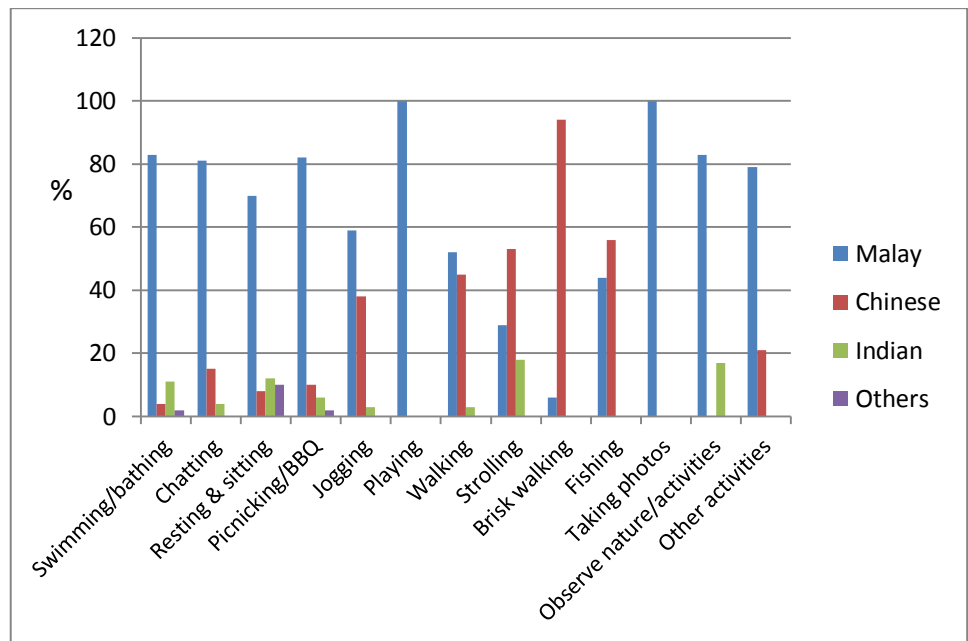


Figure 5.9 Recreational activities engaged in by ethnic groups in Ampang Recreational Forest

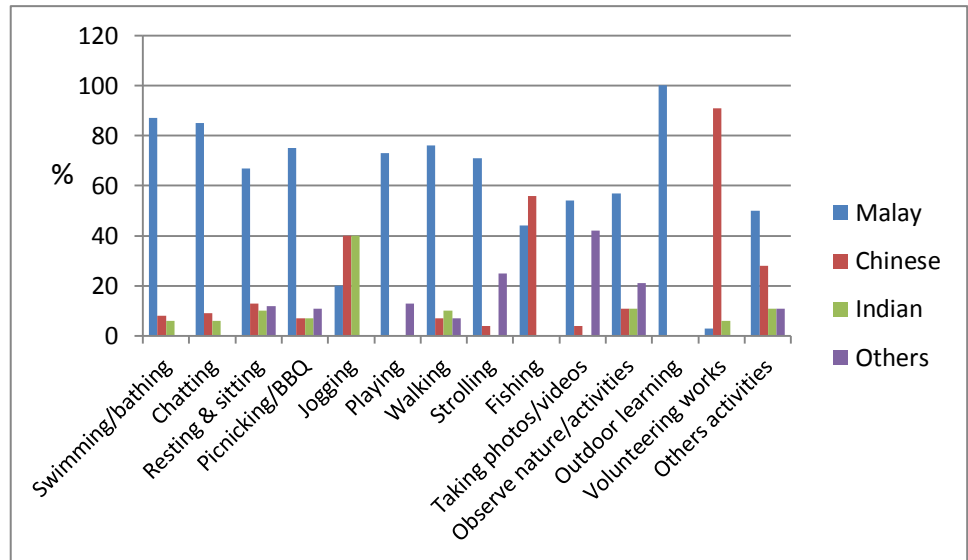


Figure 5.10 Recreational activities engaged in by ethnic groups in Kanching Recreational Forest

5.3.6 Recreational activities and the age of users

It was observed that teenagers (aged 19 and below) were the largest group who liked to swim or cycle in the Ampang Recreational Forest (Figure 5.11). There was a contrast in terms of the most preferred activity engaged in by young adults (19-35), in the sense that taking photos/videos was most popular amongst this age group at the Ampang Recreational Forest, while adults liked brisk walking (Figure 5.12). On the other hand, young adults dominated almost all the activities at the Kanching Recreational Forest. The total number of young adults who preferred outdoor learning the most was 41. Surprisingly, young adults also liked swimming/bathing compared to teenagers and adults.

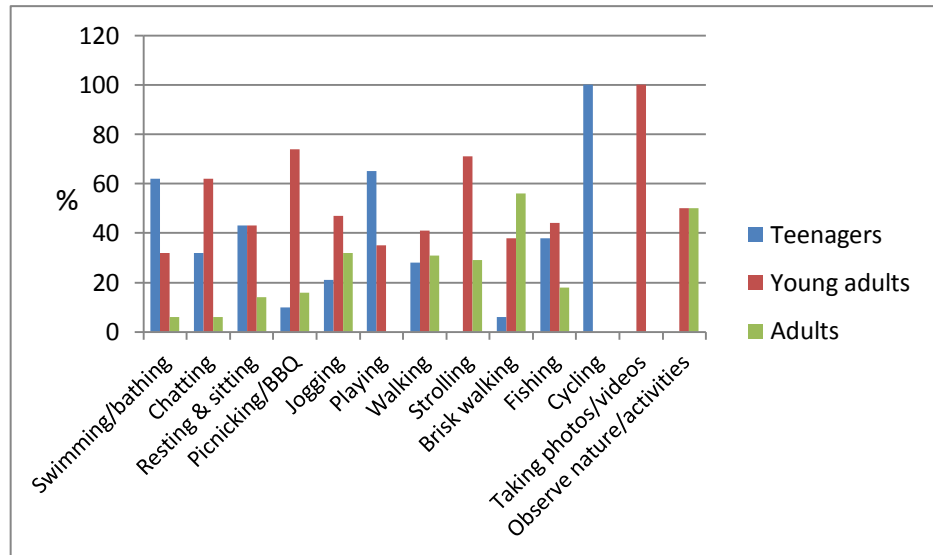


Figure 5.11 Recreational activities engaged in by age groups in Ampang Recreational Forest

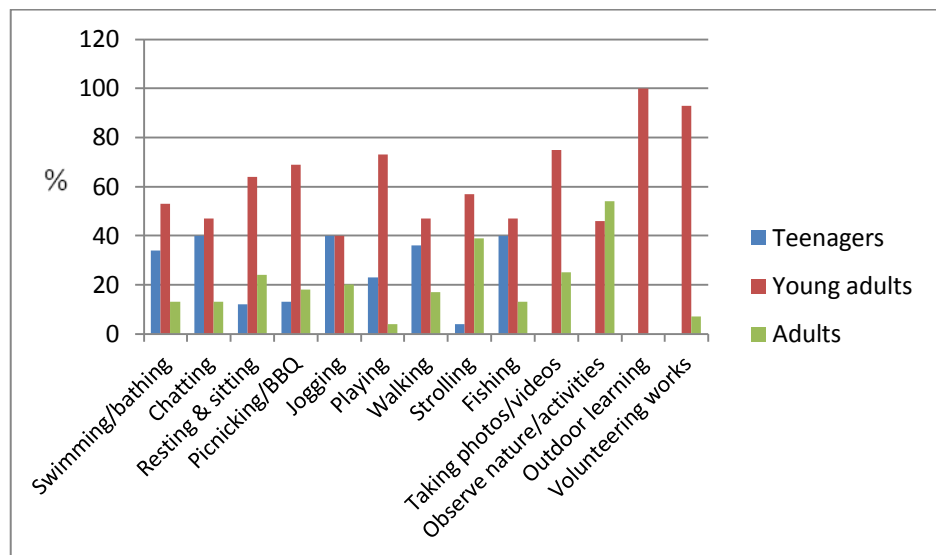


Figure 5.12 Recreational activities engaged in by age groups in Kanching Recreational Forest

5.4 Maintenance Issues at Both Sites

There were some issues related to the maintenance and design of the Ampang Recreational Forest. From the observations, there was poor maintenance of facilities such as some play equipment was broken (Figure 5.13). Some areas near to the children’s playground were dirty with scattered rubbish, and an uncovered manhole posed a danger to the users. In terms of design, a rubbish bin was located at an inappropriate location (on a pedestrian walkway); as a result

the users could not use the pathway (Figure 5.13). However, there was a conflict in opinion between the forest officers and users. The senior forest officers claimed that the users littered and did not use the provided bin. They also said that forest users always complained about the presence of dried leaves. The forest officers responded that the dried leaves are common in the forests because it is a natural process.



Figure 5.13 A few issues in Ampang Recreational Forest (Clockwise from top left: poor maintenance of play equipment for children, an uncovered manhole poses a danger to forest users, and a concrete rubbish bin located on a walkway)

Similar problems were also found at the Kanching Recreational Forest. There was evidence of a burnt tree stump; which had perhaps been used as a barbeque area by the users because there were no barbeque pits/areas. The results also revealed that wild monkeys also contributed to dirty areas as they liked to search for food in dustbins. Some trees have been affected by diseases and tree labelling was old and quite difficult to read. In addition, some walkways to the waterfalls (to level 3 and 4) were damaged (Figure 5.14).



Figure 5.14 Some issues in Kanching Recreational Forest (Clockwise from top left: burnt tree stump, monkeys searching for food in the trash, untreated tree trunk and damaged walkway)

5.5 Conclusion

This section described the demographics of the sample as a whole compared to the population of Malaysia, and of the sample at each recreational forest compared with Selangor state. It also highlighted the findings in relation to the recreational patterns and activities in both sites as a result of observations and the interviews conducted with the forest senior officer. Some maintenance issues were brought up, such as broken play equipment, damaged walkway and littering. In summary, the results indicate that male visitors outnumbered female visitors in both recreational forests. The Malays dominated most of the activities while the Chinese dominated brisk walking and volunteering works. Swimming was preferred by teenagers in Ampang and by young adults in Kanching Recreational Forests. Chapter 6 will discuss the findings from the questionnaire surveys.