

# Marine Conservation Area in Sabah: The Roles and Contributions of Sabah Parks in Establishing and Managing the Tun Mustapha Park (TMP)

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## Abstract

*The biggest marine conservation area in Malaysia, Tun Mustapha Park (TMP), was finally been established on May 19, 2016. This study focuses on the roles and contribution of Sabah Park in the process of gazetiting the Tun Mustapha Park (TMP). The study is important in order to understand the scope of work of Sabah Park as the lead actor involved in establishing TMP. This study used qualitative approach where most of the data were obtained from literary sources. The main scope of work of Sabah Park in the process of establishing TMP are managing the overall initiative to establish TMP Steering Committee including in fisheries management, marine habitat protection through collaborative management, shoreline management and control of land-based pollution, livelihoods and enterprise management, and education and awareness. Thus, the guidance of Sabah Park has been crucial in the agenda setting of the TMP as well as the completion of more than 13 years of negotiation, lobbying, capacity building, scientific discovery and community outreach before the establishment of TMP.*

**Keywords:** Sabah parks, Government agency, Marine conservation area, Marine park, Tun Mustapha Park (TMP)

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## INTRODUCTION

Received: 10 January 2021  
Accepted: 21 March 2021  
Published: 30 June 2021

Conservation is important in order to protect the world's various biological to create healthy future between human and nature by controlling the declining of natural environment of the planet (World Wildlife Fund-International, 2008). It has become an important effort of the government to establish Tun Mustapha Park (TMP) in 2016 through its leading agency, Sabah Park, to provide protection towards the marine life within the area (World Wildlife Fund-Malaysia, 2017). Conservation needs to be supported by everyone including the government agency, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and community as conservation helps to protect various life forms, the earth and also human health (Pure Leisure, 2019). Basically,

TMP takes more than 13 years to be gazetted since it was first been proposed in 2003 (Sario, 2016).

Therefore, the role of government agency is often crucial in the establishment of marine conservation like TMP. Yet, there are limited studies done on the role of government agency like Sabah Parks in the establishment of marine conservation areas like TMP particularly in term of agenda setting and management of marine conservation areas. Most studies on TMP focus on compliance (WildAaid, 2017), marine biodiversity conservation (The GEF Small Grants Programme, 2016) or general account of the creation of TMP but not focusing on Sabah Park's roles and contributions (Sabah Park, 2019). The need to understand how government agency such as Sabah Park assists in the establishment of TMP is crucial to shed more light on how relevant Sabah Park can complement state bodies in promoting and realizing conservation agenda in Sabah. Thus, the focus of this study is to understand how the roles and contributions of Sabah Park helps to establish and manage the Tun Mustapha Park (TMP).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conservation**

In his book of "New Conservation", Soule stated that conservation should be about providing protection for the nature and any efforts taken that focusing more on delivering benefits to the people is not conservation (Sandbrook, 2015). The Oxford English Dictionary defines conservation as the action of conserving something. According to Stuart (2017), conservation is about saving nature, trying to keep all the beautiful places, species and habitats where in short, conservation means the wonders of the natural world-on this earth. The Leap on (2019) stated that conservation is the study of nature, with the aim of protecting species, their habitats and ecosystems from extinction.

Leader-William et al. in their book of 'Trade-offs in Conservation' published in 2011 (Sandbrook, 2015) explained that conservation can be understood as actions taken that directly increase the opportunities of habitats and species continue exist in the wild. For Sandbrook (2015), conservation as defined by these authors describes a branch of the conservation tree rather than the tree itself.

Therefore, he proposed a new definition of conservation. He proposed that conservation is actually actions that are intended to establish, improve or maintain good relations with nature. On the other hand, national geographic (n.d) stated that conservation is the practice of taking care different natural resources of the earth such as water, soil, air, minerals, plants and animal so that all living things on earth such as human, flora, fauna and others can benefit from them now and in the future.

The World Wildlife Fund-International (2008) explained conservation as conserving the world's biological diversity to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. Applied locally, Sabah Park (2019), believed conservation is preserving areas in Sabah that contain outstanding natural values as a heritage for the benefit of the people, now and in the future. The article titled 'Conservation' in 2019 added conservation is the act of protecting the natural resources of the earth for current and future generations.

There are numerous ways in which environment protection and conservation can be achieved (Han, 2011). For example, three essential verbs that should be kept in mind are reduce, recycle and reuse (Han, 2011). Han (2011) added that recycling, reducing water consumption, composting, using rechargeable batteries, quitting smoking, maintaining a car, talking about it are ways that can be used to achieve environment protection and conservation. Apart from that, unplugging unused appliances, planting trees to shade one's home and picking up some reusable cloth bags to use at local grocery store are the different ways to achieve the environment protection and conservation (Han, 2011).

## **Conservation Areas**

The Oxford English Dictionary defines conservation as the action of conserving something (Sandbrook, 2015). Conservtion is important as to protect the environment from harm or destruction and to prevent the wasteful overuse of a resources (Sandbrook, 2015). Conservation area is often used synonymously with protected area. The Global Forest Atlas (n.d.) defined protected areas as the "regions or zones of land or sea that are reserved for purposes of conserving nature and biodiversity" while The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (n.d.) defined a protected area as "aclearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed,

through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.”

Rahooof (2019) described the importance of protected areas saying that protected areas play a significant key role in preserving the ecosystem services such as food and freshwater, recreational opportunities, regulation of floods and droughts and nutrient cycling that nature provides to people. The same author further maintained that there are more than 10 000 protected areas in Asia covering at least 13.9% of the terrestrial environment and 1.8% of a marine and coastal areas. For example, some countries such as Bhutan and Brunei Darussalam protect 40% of their land while others have less than 17% of their land declared as protected areas (Rahoo, 2019). However, there are several threats that limit the effectiveness of the protected areas. The Global Forest Atlas (n.d.) stated that removal of specific species or resources, land degradation due to encroachment, pollution, land conversion and isolation of protected areas are among the said threats. Chronically underfunded and did not received enough funds needed to manage and enforce regulations of the protected areas are other threats or issues related to the world’s protected areas today (The Global Forest Atlas, n.d.).

There are several categories of protected areas introduced by the International Union for Conservation of Nature which are seen as the global standard in defining and recording protected areas and these categories of protected areas were also seen as set of laws of the government especially when dealing with matters related with protected areas (International Union for Conservation of Nature, n.d.). The International Union for Conservation of Nature (n.d.) also added there are six categories of protected areas under the body are recognized by the United Nations as well as international bodies and national governments throughout the world.

Table 1: *The Six Categories of Protected Areas Under the IUCN and its Functions*

Category	Function
Category I : 1a  Firstly, Category is divided into 1a and 1b.	Category 1a is about Strict Nature Reserve. All protected areas that fall under this category strictly controlled and limit human visitation, use and impacts to ensure the values of the conservation are protected. However, this kind of protected area allowed indispensable reference area for certain activities such as scientific research and monitoring.

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1b	On the other hand, Category 1b focus more on Wilderness Area. It is an area where its natural character and influence have not been modified or only slightly modified. The areas under this category are protected and managed in order to preserve its natural condition.
Category II	Secondly, Category II of IUCN protected areas focus on National Park. Basically, the areas protected under this category are large natural areas. Areas under this category is set aside to protect large ecological processes as well as the complement of species and ecosystems features of large natural or near natural areas. However, different activities such as visitor opportunities, spiritual, education, foundation for environment and cultural compatible, recreational and scientific research are allowed but compliance towards the rules and regulations provided must be followed to maintain the area's environmental values.
Category III	Thirdly, Category III seeks to protect the Natural Monument or Feature. This is referring to a specific natural monument in a protected area. Generally, it is a small area where it can be a landform, sea mount, submarine cavern or any geological characteristics such as ancient grove of any living feature or cave. Under this category of protected visitors are usually allowed to visit and enjoy the natural monuments or features that have been protected.
Category IV	Fourthly, Category IV. The main focus under this category is habitat or species management area. Protected areas under this category often needs active interventions to solve any listed requirements of any particular species as well as to maintain the habitats of different species even if this is not a stated requirement under this category.
Category V	Fifthly, Category V. This is a category that had been introduced to focus specifically on Landscape and Seascape which is an area producing a significant, ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value from the interaction of people and nature over the years. Protecting the interaction's integrity is crucial in order to protect and sustain the area, its nature conservation and other values.
Category VI	Lastly, Category VI, a category created under the IUCN that focus on sustainable use of natural resources. This category provides protection towards large protected areas to conserve the ecosystems and habitats associated with cultural values and traditional natural resources.

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## **Table Theory of Agenda Setting and Conservation's Policy**

According to Mohd Zain (2014), agenda setting is a theory that discussed of how mass media influences the processes involved in making certain problems or issues as public agendas. Albalawi (2015) stated the core concept of agenda setting theory assumes that the awareness of the people is stimulated by the media on certain issues. In addition, an agenda is a collection of problems, understandings of causes, symbols, solutions, and other elements of public problems that come to the attention of members of the public and their governmental officials (Sanchawa, 2015).

Kingdon defined agenda setting as a list of subjects or problems to which government officials and people outside of the government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention to at any given time (Eustis, 2000). Resse explains that agenda setting is not only seen as an important theory on mass communication but also crucial in other social studies such as political communication (Mohd Zain, 2014).

Rogers and Dearing explained that agenda setting theory consisted of three components which are public agenda, media agenda and policy agenda. In public agenda setting, the public agenda is the dependent variable and traditional hypothesis (Albalawi, 2015). On the other hand, in the media agenda setting, the media's agenda is treated as a dependent variable or the agenda building while in the policy agenda setting, the elite policy makers' agendas are treated as the dependent variable and is sometimes called political agenda setting (Sanchawa, 2015).

According to Kingdon's model of agenda setting, the three streams needed to get an issue into public agenda are the problem stream, policy stream and political stream (Sanchawa, 2015). A problem stream was considered as a problem occurred by sudden crisis or feedback and these issues are intended to be brought into an agenda (Sanchawa, 2015). Policy stream focus on the policy actors and communities who come out with solutions like policies to solve the arising problems (Sanchawa, 2015). This Kingdon's model of agenda setting also relates to the actual policy being promoted (Sanchawa, 2015). Political stream consists of the public mood, pressure group campaigns, elections results, partisan or ideological distribution (Sanchawa, 2015).

The analysis of agenda setting on hydraulic fracturing in South Africa by Koetlisi (2016) serves as an example on the application of John Kingdon's Agenda Setting Theory. According to Tucker and Tonder, (as cited in Koetlisi, 2016), since 2008, hydraulic fracturing was considered as a possible response to the energy crisis in South Africa. Koetlisi, (2016) added that coal had always been the main source of electricity to the people at this country where it had been estimated that the percentage of coal-based energy supply was at least 72.1%. There are three streams of Kingdon's Agenda Setting Theory which are problem stream, policy stream and political stream. In the first stream, Kingdon stated that, a problem gets recognized if it is clearly observable that a solution is required (Koetlisi, 2016). Koetlisi (2016) stated that the situation related to the energy was seen as a crisis by important actors and this situation was supported by President Zuma as a crisis in his state where he announced that the country would be facing a continuous energy crisis.

Kingdon stated that in the second stream (policy stream), specialists develop various proposals which they believe one day will turn into policies (Koetlisi, 2016). In this particular issue, in 2008, the Department of Minerals and Energy in collaboration with Eskom passed a new policy as a national response towards the electrical shortage faced by South African. Last but not least, in the final stream (political stream), Kingdon explained that political spheres will affect the government's agenda such as change in the administration and national mood or interest group. This can be explained by the fact that the government of South African had tried very hard to amend a number of legislations including the MPRDA and the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA).

Kingdon's model had also been used to review the environmental sanitation and health promotion policy in Ethiopia (Agide, et al., 2019). According to WHO, issues of environmental sanitation and lack of water supply have been some of the biggest problems faced by at least 2.6 billion people all over the world (Agide, et al., 2019). Agide et al. (2019) also stated there are many countries including Ethiopia, dealing with problem of sanitation where efforts to frame a policy have been taken to address this issue. Generally, in Ethiopia, safe condition, adequate water, clean and safe air, safe animal and human waste disposal, food protection from contaminants and clean as well as safe housing surroundings are the example of environmental sanitation (Agide, et al., 2019). However, they also added that it had been estimated that there are more than 27 million people still not having access to any form of toilet. The three streams of

Kingdon's Agenda Setting theory, which are problem stream, policy stream and political stream, have been applied to review the environmental sanitation and health promotion policy in Ethiopia (Agide, et al., 2019). The problem stream of the Kingdon's model applied in this issue is related to the promotion of sanitation and health policies (Agide, et al., 2019). These authors further added that policy stream is seen in the policy of health promotion to address sanitation problems whereas the political streams is seen as the act of the government on health promotion specifically focusing on sanitation.

### **Marine Park in Malaysia**

Marine Park is a sea area zoned as a sanctuary for the protection of marine ecosystems especially coral reef and its associated flora and fauna, like the sea grass bed, mangrove and the seashore (Kenchington et al., 2003). There are at least 4,675 km of coastline in Malaysia which included all sides by seas, the Straits of Malacca, the Sulu Sea, the South China Sea and the Andaman Sea (Zainal, 2020). Moreover, in Malaysia, protecting special biological and environment values have been the main objectives behind the establishment of marine parks in the country (Ali et al., 2013). Zainal (2020) added that marine parks is an important breeding grounds for fish as well as to the other marine life. Besides, marine parks also crucial in providing variety of ecosystem services which is also important such as the sequestration of carbon dioxide, maintain the genetic diversity, offering protection towards the coastal and regulating climate effects too (Zainal, 2020). However, due to open access to marine park resources and failure of the market system in restricting their use, over-use and environmental degradation have resulted (Ali et al., 2013).

In Malaysia, the Fisheries Act of 1985 is the act that needed to be referred when establishing marine parks (Kaur, 2007). This act was provided for in the Marine Parks and Marine Reserves, Part IX, section 41 to 45. Any problem arising related to the development of islands will be protected by this act (Sazali, Azlan& Mohamed, 2013). Other acts related to marine park are the Malaysia Marine Parks Act Validation Fi Year 2004 and Act 1951 of Fee Fi Marine Park Malaysia Year 2003, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975 and the Establishment of Marine Parks Gazette 2012 (Sazali, Azlan& Mohamed, 2013).

## **The Roles of Sabah Parks in Marine Conservation**

Sabah is endowed with variety of natural heritages which have many unique characteristics with high esthetical values including flora and fauna (Globinmed, 2018). The Sabah National Parks Ordinance had been adopted by the State of Sabah in 1962 to provide control, constitution and maintenance of Sabah's national park (Globinmed, 2018). According to Globinmed (2018), only a few national parks were established in 1964 and 1974 under this ordinance such as Kinabalu National Parks and Tunku Abdul Rahman Park. However, the National Parks Enactment 1977 then replaced these ordinances where under this enactment, the Turtle Island Park had been established in 1977, whereas Pulau Tiga Park and Tawau Hills Park had been established in 1978 and 1979 respectively (Globinmed, 2018). Sabah Park Enactment was established after the establishment of the Park Enactment in 1984 to replace this enactment (Globinmed, 2018).

The Park Enactment 1984 is an enactment related to the provision as well as control of national parks and national reserves in Sabah and also to provide for matters incidental thereto and connected therewith so as to make better provisions respecting the consultation, administration, procedure functions and finance of parks (State of Sabah, 2010). This enactment also established Sabah Parks as a legislative body under the Ministry of Tourism Development, Environment, Science and Technology, and is administered by the Sabah Parks Board of Trustee (State of Sabah, 2010).

According to the enactment the board is granted to with the power to purchase or acquire, hold and exchange or alienate any property moveable and immovable, and to enter into contracts and generally to do such acts and things as a body corporate may do by law, in order to necessarily carry out its duties as set out in this enactment (State of Sabah, 2010). Two provisions provided under Part IV, the first and second provision, focus more on the functions of the boards and the power provided to them to do all things expedient or reasonably necessary related to their scope of job (State of Sabah, 2010). In addition, Part IV (1) stated that the functions of Sabah Parks include to initiate, co-ordinate and control the activities in respect of all Parks or Nature Reserves in Sabah, to make recommendations to the Government as to the methods, measures, and policies to be adopted to facilitate the development of the Parks or Nature Reserves and, where approved by Government, to implement and assist in the implementation of the same and to control, manage and administer the Fund (State of Sabah, 2010).

On the other hand, in Part IV (2), the Board is given the power provided to do all things expedient or reasonably necessary or incidental to the discharge of its functions and in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing include to provide and maintain adequate and efficient services and facilities at all Parks or Nature Reserves constituted under the provision of the Enactment, to promote the use, improvement and development of the Parks or Nature Reserves, to take such steps and ensure the security and well-being of the animal and vegetation in a Park or Nature Reserves and the preservation of such Park or Nature Reserves, the natural features as well as the animal and vegetation therein in their natural state (State of Sabah, 2010).

Another power of the board is to reserve or set aside any portions of a Park or Nature Reserves as breeding places for animals and as nurseries for vegetation, to provide important accommodation, amenities, facilities as well as services which can be used to attract as much as visitors to the Parks or Nature Reserves and most importantly are not prejudicial to the proper care, control and management thereof, to levy fees or to collect dues from persons utilizing the accommodations, amenities, facilities or services provided under this Enactment (State of Sabah, 2010).

The board also has the power to carry out all activities, particularly for the development of commercial and industrial enterprises, the carrying on whereof appears to it to be requisite, advantageous or convenient for or in connection with the discharges of its duty including the development of tourists accommodation and facilities, bio-prospecting, tree plantation, tissue culture and marketing of products, research and training and to promote the carrying on of any such activities bodies or persons and for that purpose to establish or expand or promote the establishment or expansions of other bodies to carry on any such activities either under the control or partial control of the Board, or independently, and to give assistance to such bodies or to other bodies or persons appearing to the Board to have facilities for the carrying on any of such activities, including financial assistance by taking up to share or loan capital or by loan or otherwise (State of Sabah, 2010). Thus, in the context of the TMP, the role of Sabah Parks can be seen as promoter or advocate for the establishment of TMP. It provides 'leadership' in the movement to establish TMP.

## **Tun Mustapha Park (TMP) in Sabah**

Tun Mustapha Park (TMP) is a marine park at the northern tip of Sabah gazetted on May 19, 2016 with a size of approximately 8,987km (Bigue, Morris & Bor, n.d.). It is located at the Western Pacific Ocean where it helps to provide protection towards the coral reefs, mangrove, seagrasses and productive fishing ground that are important for the people who lived within the area (World Wildlife Fund, n.d.). Basically, there are four zones developed to manage TMP which are Protection Area, Community Area, Multiple-Used Area and Commercial Fishing Area (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). TMP is a home to mangrove forest, sea grass beds and coral reef playing important function as a breeding ground for all the marine and migratory species, for example, whale sharks (Bigue, Morris & Bor, n.d.). Different species such as 82 species of hard coral, 715 species of fish, 50 species of Opisthobranchmolluscs, 25 species of Ovulidadaesnails and 130 species of seaweed have made TMP as their home (Bigue, Morris & Bor, n.d.). Sabah Parks (2017) further added that TMP also provides source of livelihoods to more than 80,000 coastal inhabitants of diverse ethnic groups.

However, there are several threats faced by TMP. The World Wildlife Fund (2013) stated that TMP faced serious issues related to overfishing and destructive fishing, direct take of turtle, mining and coastal development, climate change and pollution. In terms of overfishing and destructive fishing, fishermen tend to catch more fish than what had been allowed and some used fish bombs and cyanide to catch fish (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). This NGO also stated that the foreign vessels often take the turtle's eggs and the amount of egg poaching also is unidentified since most of the turtle's nest are in the remote areas. The World Wildlife Fund (2013) further added that mining and coastal development also threatened the various marine species in the TMP, for example, there were activities related to mining and coastal development such as silica sand and limestone, oil and gas drilling implemented under the Sabah Development Corridor in Balambangan island that threatened the ecosystem. In addition, climate change had contributed towards the changes in oceanic circulation and increasing acidification of the ocean (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). Finally, threats related to pollution. Two different causes of pollution within the TMP were pollution from oil palm plantation (land-based pollution) and pollution due to oil spill from boats and fishing vessel who operated near the area (sea-based pollution) (World Wildlife Fund, 2013).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to analyse the roles and contribution of Sabah Parks in the process of establishing Tun Mustapha Park (TMP). This study used qualitative method and the conceptual approach is framed using Kingdon's Model of Agenda Setting. Basically, the Kingdon's Agenda-Setting Model is a model that shows the processes of how an issue or problem is being brought into an agenda based on Kingdon's three streams which are problem stream, policy stream and political stream. Sanchawa (2015) defined agenda setting as the process by which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose public and elite attention. Larkin (2012) added that there will be different participants, ideas, problems, solutions and practical strategies for adoption and implementation coming together. There are three factors that can be used to connect the three streams of Kingdon's model of Agenda Setting which includes pressure from outside, government of the day and change of policies.

Problem stream involves identification of problem. It was clear from scientific data obtained from by various bodies that marine resources in the sea off Kudat were severely threatened. For example, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) conducted a comprehensive survey to obtain data on the identified issue related to TMP. An important factor was the pressure from outside. Abdul Razak (2020) stated, "We have 10 years of memorandum of understanding (MOU) with WWF-Malaysia as they are the one who pushed us to gazette TMP as soon as possible and that is why we still collaborated with them even if TMP has been gazetted." Due to the threats to marine resources in the area, Sabah Parks was expected and thus pressured to do something about the problem and being the responsible body on the matter. Besides, WWF also participated the scientific expedition conducted by Sabah Park to identified the real issue occurred within the area as well. According to Larkin (2012), a problem is seen as a matter of concern that people want to change or affect and any captivating and sudden events can be solved from becoming more difficult to handle. In this study, the He further said that a problem is also requires long-term attention from media where the arising issue can be felt by everyone. Beland and Howlett (2016) added that problem stream includes of perceptions of problems where government action is needed to resolve them.

On the other hand, in policy stream which is related to feasibility of solution to the problem identified, the essential factor is the government of the day ability through

Sabah Parks to solve the problem. The solution identified was to establish a protected marine park. Larkin (2012) stated that myriad of possibilities for policy action and inaction are identified, assessed, and narrowed down to a subset of ostensibly feasible options. Beland and Howlett (2016) defined policy stream as a stream that is filled with outputs related to problems and solutions of a problem which has been examined by the experts and analysts. In addition, policy stream relates to those policy actors and communities who attach their solutions which are the policies to emerging problems (Sanchawa, 2015).

Lastly, political stream involves political will and political feasibility of the proposed solution to the problem identified. The most essential factor is change of policies. Sabah Parks itself pushed for the establishment of TMP. The government was supportive of the proposal to establish TMP since it is an agenda of Sabah Parks which is part the government structure. Larkin (2012) stated there are various different factors that influence the political body such as national mood swings, turnover involving both executive and legislative as well as the advocacy of interest groups (Beland & Howlett, 2016). Larkin (2012) maintained that political stream is formed by the administration changes or the majority in both House of Representative and Senate where there will be new election, officials with charismatic personality, referenda of the public and the moods prevailing among the electorate.

## FINDING AND ANALYSIS

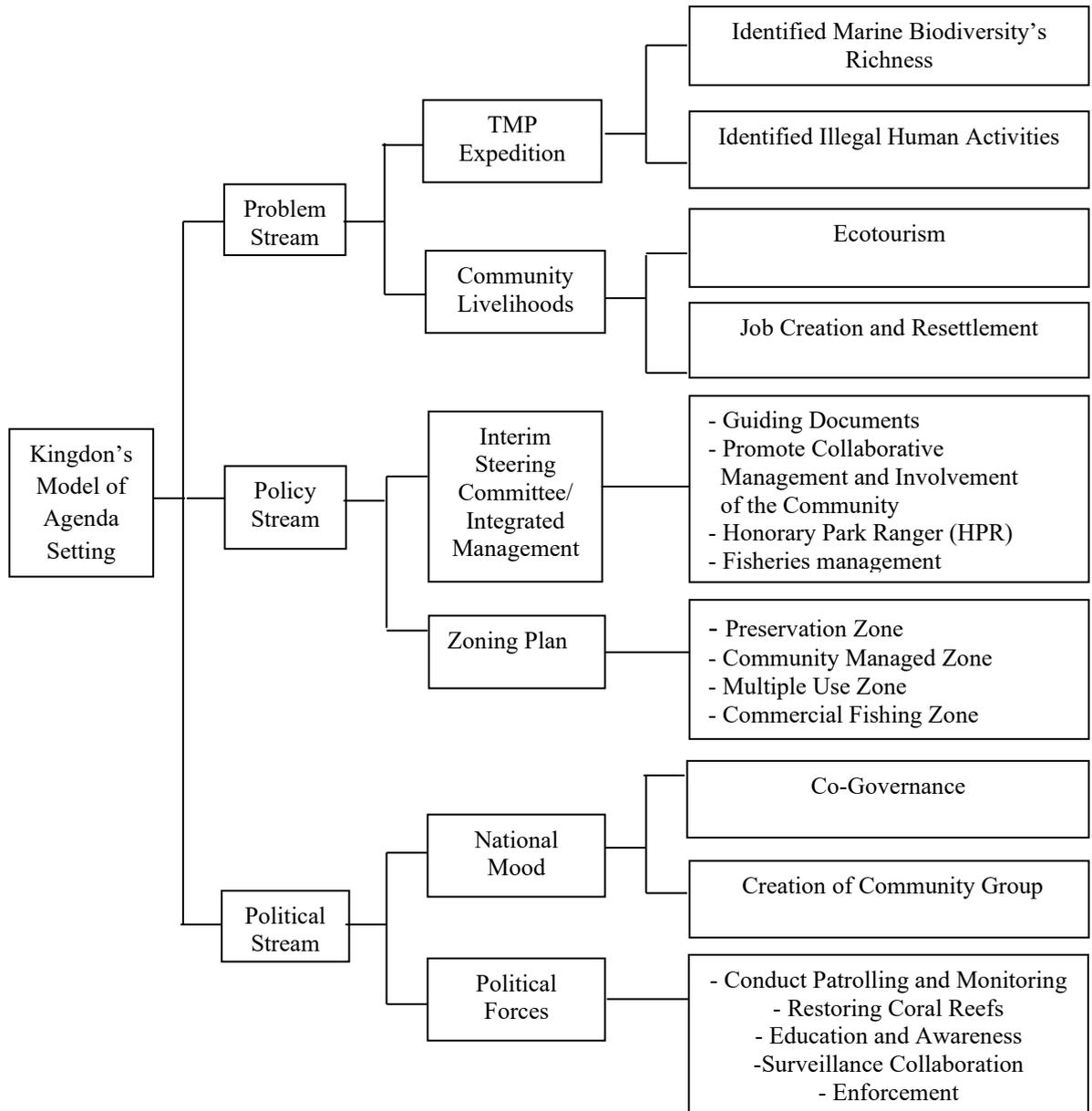


Diagram 1: *Three streams of Kingdon's Model of Agenda Setting*

## **Roles of Sabah Park in the Establishment of TMP**

Sabah Parks is a government agency that plays significant roles in the establishment of marine parks particularly in Sabah. Globinmed (2018) stated that Sabah Parks is administered by the Sabah Parks Board of Trustee holding the power which enables it to purchase or acquire, hold and exchange moveable and immovable properties which can be alienated or entered into contracts where all of the duties will be carried out by the members of the boards as a body corporate who perform their duties according to the law. Historically, the Park Enactment 1984 was established on 15 March 1984 to replace the current enactment which was known as the National Parks Enactment 1977 (Globinmed, 2018). This enactment is related to the provision and control of Sabah's National Parks and National Reserves where the constitution, administration, procedures, functions and finance involved in establishing the Park Enactment 1984 had been improvised (Globinmed, 2018). The enactment also established Sabah Parks as a legislative body under the Ministry of Tourism Development, Environment, Science and Technology (Globinmed, 2018).

Generally, it is the vision of Sabah Parks to ensure that the people of Sabah live in harmony with nature and this is done through the Sabah Parks' mission which is to preserve areas in Sabah that contain outstanding natural values as a heritage for the benefit of the people, now and in the future (Sabah Parks, 2019). Sabah Parks (2019) stated that Sabah Parks has at least six goals. The six goals of Sabah Parks are, "our parks are world class, we are the center of excellence for Tropical Ecosystem Research, our parks are nature education programme and we are financially strong and there is symbiotic harmony between us and all our stakeholders" (Sabah Parks, 2019). Currently, Sabah Parks had successfully established six marine parks and three terrestrial parks (Sabah Parks, 2019). The new marine parks established under the Park Enactment 1984 add to marine parks previously established. The marine parks in existence are Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, Pulau Tiga Park, Turtle Island Park, Tun Sekaran Marine Park, Sipadan Island Park and Tun Mustapha Park while the terrestrial parks are Kinabalu Park, Crocker Range Park and Tawau Hills Park (Sabah Parks, 2019).

On May 19, 2016, the biggest marine area in Malaysia, Tun Mustapha Park (TMP), was gazetted (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). It was first proposed in 2003 by the State Government of Sabah after it was recognized as an important priority marine

conservation area globally (World Wildlife Fund, n.d.). Sabah Parks, the leading agency of the State Government of Sabah related to parks, was actively involved in the process to gazette TMP for more than ten years, (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). Kingdon's agenda setting theory can be used to explain the roles and contribution of Sabah Parks in the process of establishing TMP. This study applied all three streams of Kingdon's agenda setting which are problem stream, policy stream and political stream to explain the process of acceptance of TMP as a government agenda. In problem stream, Sabah Parks helps to assess the marine species biodiversity within the TMP (TMPE) which fall under the road mapping workshop for the proposed TMP. Sabah Parks had sent its researchers to join the expedition known as Tun Mustapha Park Expedition (TMPE) participated by the University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) team, Biodiversity Team from Naturalist, WWF-Malaysia and University of Queensland (World Wildlife Fund, 2017).

Basically, the expedition was conducted to assess all aspects of marine biodiversity and ecology including to assess the socio-economic benefits of marine ecosystem to all the local communities that lived within the TMP (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). Since TMP initially lack scientific marine data to support its establishment, MOSTI participated in the expedition and MOSTI's participation was considered important in providing more information particularly in scientific marine data. The University Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Naturalist Biodiversity Centre, WWF-Malaysia and Sabah Parks itself also took part in the organization of the expedition (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). From the expedition, scientific data had been collected. Firstly, various coral family's life was identified involving 38 species of Fungiidea, 28 species of Agrieciidea, 14 species of Euphylliidea, 430 species of reef fish, 25 species of Ovulidae snails and 130 species of Macroalgea (Ling, 2012). The World Wildlife Fund (2017) further highlighted the richness of marine biodiversity within TMP by identifying more than 250 species of hard corals, around 430 species of fish, endangered green turtles and dugongs, as well as significant primary rainforest, mangroves, and sea grass beds.

The expedition also found that human activities such as fish bombing and overfishing threaten several species of coral and fish (Ling, 2012). Other threats faced by TMP were hunting of turtles, mining and coastal development, climate change and pollution (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). Secondly, Sabah Park helps WWF-Malaysia to identify and study the community's acceptance towards the idea of establishing TMP. In order to identify and study their acceptance, Sabah Park and WWF-Malaysia conducting community consultation and surveys to gather the community's response

along the process of establishing the TMP. Initially most of the communities were afraid that new regulations due the establishment of TMP would affect their livelihoods and traditional use of the area particularly in extractive industries and in fact, the government was equally concern on this (World Wildlife Fund, 2017).

Sabah Parks and WWF-Malaysia also work closely in evaluating the TMP's economic to assess the costs and benefits of the proposal on current development including the limestone, sand, silica mining and oil extraction off the west coast of Sabah (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). The study found that it is much better to conserve TMP through ecotourism rather than proceed with existing project of mining economically (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). However, focusing more on conservation only will not help to settle the socio-economic problems and therefore, job creation and resettlement of the communities living within the TMP has become the priority of development by Sabah State Government through its leading agency, Sabah Parks, with the collaboration of WWF-Malaysia (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). In policy stream, an Interim Steering Committee had been formed by Sabah Park particularly for TMP, the one-million-hectare area in the northern part of Sabah encompassing three districts namely Kudat, Kota Marudu and Pitas as well as 50 other islands (Sabah Parks, 2019). TMP Interim Steering Committee also had been endorsed by the Sabah Parks Board of Trustees in 2009 and in 2011, it was finally been established. In the meantime, TMP ISC Secretariat was established in 2010. TMP Integrated management and Zoning Plan also were drafted in 2011 and endorsed in 2012 to manage the process of establishing TMP (Proposed Tun Mustapha Park to be Gazette, 2011).

Six working groups together with all the committees cooperate and work together specifically within the integrated management plan to achieve the three objectives of the proposed TMP (Sabah Parks, 2019).The integrated management plan shows that Sabah Parks and Sabah Fisheries Department play important roles in which Sabah Park was responsible to lead the integrated resources management group whereas the coastal and deep water fisheries management group was led by the Sabah Fisheries Department (Proposed Tun Mustapha Park to be Gazette, 2011). The three important objectives of TMP are to conserve marine biodiversity in mangrove forests, coral reefs, and coastal waters and to protect threatened marine species such as sea turtles allow sustainable development of traditional and commercial fisheries, aquaculture and seaweed culture as well as to solve poverty problems among the coastal villagers (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). The approved integrated management plan has become

the principal guiding document for all the management authorities to carry the roles and responsibilities required in order to meet the objectives of the park (Bigue, Morris & Bor, n.d.). Sabah Parks promoted collaborative management and involvement of the community in the management through the integrated management plan in which interviews were conducted among the community associations and non-profit organizations to really understand the activities as well their roles (Bigue, Morris & Bor, n.d.). From the interviews conducted, it was found that the Banggi Youth Club (BYC), Maliangin Island Community Association (MICA) and Berungus community had positive feedback towards the management plan for TMP (Bigue, Morris & Bor, n.d.). These communities support the TMP management plan by changing their fishing practices from destructive to non-destructive type of fishing practices, enforce of their own nearby marine areas by doing monitoring activities such as patrolling as well as create awareness towards the other community to stop using destructive fishing practices (Bigue, Morris & Bor, n.d.).

Apart from that, Sabah Parks also implemented a program called the Honorary Park Ranger (HPR). This program aims to helps the government in managing the resources within TMP and allowances will be given to those who qualify and interested to join the program as well. This program also provides a great potential to expand the influence of Sabah Parks where currently there are 13 HPRs and Sabah Parks are planning to increase the number of HPR to 40 individuals (Bigue, Morris & Bor, n.d.). This strategy by Sabah Parks contributed to the success of the integrated management plan of TMP specifically in integrated resources management. In addition, Sabah Park collaborated with the government agencies, non-governmental organizations, community leaders and the community people to establish zoning plan which consisted of at least four different authorized area such as Preservation area, Community Managed Area, Multiple Used Zone and Commercial Fishing Zone (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). These zones were used by Sabah Parks to manage and control arising issues related to the sea area of TMP. Lastly, political stream. Started in 2003, Sabah State Government has officially announced their intention to gazette TMP (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). The gazettement of TMP is significant because it would contribute to the Malaysia's international commitments of at least 11% for Sabah and 2.1% for Malaysia (World Wildlife Fund, 2017).

Generally, there are two main important components of political stream applied in this study. Firstly, national mood. Sabah Park had collaborated with the other

governmental agencies, non-governmental organization (NGO) and community leaders and they had successfully established TMP in 2016 after they received no objections from the community when Public Hearing was done in 2014. WWF-Malaysia (2017) and Sabah Parks (2017) (as cited in Boey, et al, 2019) added as the largest MPA in Malaysia which supports variety of marine life and different ethics of communities, TMP multiple stakeholders use the concept of co-governance to collaboratively managed the area and community participation also were encouraged at all stages of implementation.

Sabah Park is the government agency who holds a significant role as the leader in this collaborative management with the other government agencies and community's organizations (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). Through the guidance of the TMP steering committee, Sabah Parks responsible in leading all the initiatives as wholly (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). Sabah Parks also is the main agency that manage and control the TMP management and enforcement (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). According to World Wildlife Fund (2017), Sabah Parks work closely with WWF to implement few significant programs particularly for the community people who lived within the area of TMP (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). The determined programs are conservation outreach, education and fostering networks, alternative livelihood development and transparent regulations and stricter enforcement (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). Sabah Parks and WWF used different communication channel such as newspaper, radio, social media and advertising to inform the TMP local community about the programs and developments that they wanted to implement (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). Besides, training also was provided to the TMP communities to helps them to develop their skills in livelihoods activity such as handicraft's production and enable them to use the skills they have in earning side income (World Wildlife Fund, 2017).

In addition, Sabah Parks also ensure that the community understand the rules and regulation outlined within the TMP by sharing with them more transparent regulations and stricter enforcement so that, they are aware of the consequences of any inappropriate actions performed by them (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). Most importantly, the establishment of TMP were believed to have a positive impact on nearby communities in terms of job creation, a cleaner environment and increased fish numbers (World Wildlife Fund, 2017). Therefore, the national mood among these multiple stakeholders in establishing TMP increasing with the help of Sabah Park. Secondly, Sabah Parks helped organizes political forces to support the establishment of

TMP. There are numerous efforts taken by Sabah Parks in ensuring that TMP can be established successfully especially in terms managing its marine resources such as creating community groups. For example, Maliangin Island Community Association (MICA), Banggi Youth Club (BYC) and Berungus Community.

Maliangin Island Community Association (MICA) was formally formed in 2010. This association is important to help to manage the Maliangin Sanctuary, an area chosen as a demonstration site for the purpose of to show the benefits of MPA within TMP (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). MICA and the Banggi community are currently working together to develop their Maliangi Handicraft Programme. MICA also worked with BYC in conducting patrolling and monitoring work within the area of this sanctuary (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). This association helps in handling marine resources threats by developing activities on alternative livelihoods, enforcement activities within the area of Maliangin and outreach to the local tourism operators (Bigue, Dorris & Bor, n.d.). Despite that, Banggi Youth Club (BYC) is responsible for the activities of operating and managing the Banggi Environmental Awareness Centre (BEAC) (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). Moreover, awareness activities also have been carried out particularly at the former community hall which have been provided by the Banggi District Office (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). Overall, this community club implemented the activities of educational and awareness, restoring the coral reefs and patrol activities (Bigue, Dorris and Bor, n.d).

Apart from that that, the Berungus Community. Members of this community are responsible to manage the coral reefs around their village where the community have identified their informal boundary which is the area that they are going to monitor (World Wildlife Fund, 2013). Bigue, Dorris & Bor (n.d.) also added that through the initiatives provided towards this community such as collaborative surveillance, monitoring and activities of enforcement of the coral reefs in their area help to protect the marine resources of TMP specifically in their village.

Table 2: Year, Stages involved in setting up TMP and Roles

Year	Stages Involved in Setting Up TMP	Roles
2003	Tun Mustapha Park (TMP) proposed for gazettelement by the Sabah State Government.	Sabah Park as a lead agency.
2006	Road mapping workshop for the proposed TMP.	- Accessing the marine species biodiversity within the TMP. - Scientific data collected
2006-2007	Community consultation and surveys to raise awareness on the proposed TMP conducted by WWF-Malaysia.	Helping to identify and study the community's acceptance towards the idea of establishing TMP specifically in terms of their livelihoods.
2009	TMP Interim Steering Committee had been endorsed.	- Sabah Park had been given mandate to form TMP Interim Steering Committee, TMP Integrated Management and Zoning Plan and responsible to lead the groups in establishing TMP.
2010	In the meantime, TMP ISC Secretariat was established.	
2011	TMP Interim Steering Committee had been established.	- Sabah Parks also provided leadership in fisheries management.
2012	TMP Integrated Management and Zoning Plan drafted	
2013	Finalize the TMP drafted Integrated Management and Zoning Plan	
2014	Public Hearing	Sabah Parks collaborated with other governmental agencies, non-governmental organization (NGO) and community leaders. Sabah Parks created community groups in managing its marine resources.
2015	Award Ceremony	Leaders for a living planet award ceremony to the Sabah State Government
2016	TMP Gazettelement	Gazettelement of TMP by Sabah State Government

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### Discussion

Sabah Parks' roles and contribution can be seen through various projects and programs especially in managing the integrated management plan of the proposed conservation and protected areas. Starting with the establishment of a handful protected areas, Sabah Parks has now established at least 9 terrestrial and marine conservation areas including the Tun Mustapha Park (TMP) (Sabah Parks, 2019). In order to ensure that TMP able to achieve its goals, all of the stakeholders including from other relevant

government agencies, non-governmental organizations and local communities need to cooperate one and another (World Wildlife Fund, 2013).

In problem stream, Sabah Parks helps in assessing the marine biodiversity and ecology and also studying the socio-economic condition and needs of the community. Sabah Parks sent its researchers to help in the Tun Mustapha Park Expedition (TMPE) before the integrated management plan was formulated by Sabah Parks itself. The accumulated data on marine biodiversity and ecology were important and it helps to identify needs of the community lived within the area. Apart from that, data on various species of marine life were collected by Sabah Parks together with the other government agencies, non-governmental organization and communities in order to close the gap in scientific data. In addition, Sabah Parks together with other concerned groups also were able to obtain important information on the threats that could threaten the various marine species within the TMP. The collected information helped Sabah Parks to formulate actions to control and solve these issues (World Wildlife Fund, 2017).

In policy stream, the idea to form the interim steering committee and integrated management plan were proposed and planned by Sabah Park itself. Sabah Parks also come out with an idea to implement a program called Honorary Park Ranger (HPR) with the aims to manage the resources available within TMP. The appointed honorary park rangers help to encourage awareness among the members of the community particularly on the benefits of establishing TMP. To encourage supports from the community, Sabah Park encourage their participation in the program of Honorary Park Ranger. In fact, Sabah Parks added a greater number of participants in the HPR program which is from 13 to 40 (Bigue, Morris & Bor, n.d.). Sabah Parks also contributed to the fisheries management where this government agency actively collaborating with WWF-Malaysia, Department of Fisheries (DOF) and also the community people. Sabah Parks needed to consider the impact of deciding to establish a fully protected area in managing the fisheries matters within TMP. It is because, more than 80,000 coastal inhabitants of diverse ethnic groups depend on the source of the area (World Wildlife Fund, 2016).

In this case, the intention to establish TMP as a fully protected area was unable to be applied as the Turtle Island Park. It is because, the characteristics of TMP are very different from Turtle Islands and using this approach would create issues with the community. Therefore, a win-win situation for both of the community and marine

conservation was needed not only to gain community support for the establishment of TMP but also to ensure sustainable fisheries within TMP. Ensure Win-Win for Sustainable Fisheries in Tun Mustapha Park (2018) stated that in the beginning of proposing the multi-use zones, an area where non-destructive and small-scale fishing activities and other sustainable development activities such as tourism are allowed, the needs of both the local community and fishing industry had been carefully considered right from the beginning. However, to maintain food security as well as human well-being, it is important to protect habitats and biodiversity conservation and enforcement will be strengthened to enhance the capacity to monitor TMP more effectively (Ensure Win-Win for Sustainable Fisheries in Tun Mustapha Park, 2018).

In term of political stream, Sabah Parks plays an important role as a leading agency in managing TMP. The collaborations with other governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations and also build good relationships with these actors show that Sabah Park played its main role. At the same time, it is important to involved the community in the process of establishing TMP. According to Jumin (2017) (as cited in World Wildlife Fund, 2017), “You can have a great management plan based on the latest conservation and biodiversity measures, but if you can’t implement it because the local people don’t think it considers their needs and therefore don’t adhere to the rules - then it is practically useless and will fail to meet its objectives” (p. 27). The TMP community own enough information related to the development and programs implemented within TMP. It was important to ensure that all of the communities aware of any developments or program developed and implemented for them as it will helps them to improve their life by learning new skills from the program they joined which known as “Development of livelihood program in conjunction with the demonstration sites within TMP provide alternatives to stakeholders, especially the local communities, to diversify their livelihood and source of income to move away from total dependence on fisheries” added by (Jumin, 2017, p.27) (as cited in World Wildlife Fund, 2017).

## Conclusions

Sabah Parks played important role in the establishment of TMP in terms of collecting scientific data, integrated management plan, fisheries management and engaging with affected community people. The contributions of Sabah Parks can be shown through all three streams of agenda setting theory and also in formation of policy related with TMP. Sabah Parks was involved in studying the marine biodiversity and

ecology, socio-economic of the local communities and threats that could threaten various marine life. The importance of these studies is to ensure that all the marine species such as coral and fish are preserved and their habitat are protected. Moreover, the study is also important to understand the livelihoods of the community so that community engagement and empowerment could help them to earn other income as alternatives in addition to identifying effective strategy plan to address issues arising that could threaten the marine life.

Sabah Parks is also the leader in the implementation of the integrated management plan where its scope of work is managing the fisheries issues, marine habitat protection through collaborative management, shoreline management and control of land-based pollution, livelihoods and enterprise management and education and awareness (Bigue, Morris & Bor, n.d.). Most importantly, Sabah Parks as the leading agency who committed to establish TMP also built good relationships with all the multiple stakeholders such as the community people to gain their supports in establishing this large marine protected area. World wildlife fund (2017) stated that it is critical to secure local community commitment to a final plan that is developed. Thus, the involvement of Sabah Parks as the leading agency of TMP is significant especially in managing the management plan used in the process of establishing TMP. Sabah Parks is also the main actor of TMP responsible to ensure the successful establishment of TMP.

## **Acknowledgements**

At the first place, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to God for His blessing and marvelous grace towards me that I am able to do and to complete my task on time. Apart from that, with His help, I also able to solved problems as He provided me with the best solutions towards my problems. On the other hand, I want to give my special thanks to my beloved supervisor, Dr. Haijon Gunggut for always motivate and support me in many ways and always help me with my problems in completing this research patiently and professionally. Most importantly, thank you for all the valuable advices and keeps on reminding me to do my best in completing this paper. I would also like to give my special thanks to both of my parents for always supporting me especially in terms of financial and also always preparing me with so much beautiful advices that I will never forget for the rest of my life. Last but not least, I would also like to take this opportunity to express my greatest thank you to

all of my friends for their moral support, that they always give me guidance when I needed. Furthermore, I appreciated all of your helps that I am able to gain additional knowledge and creative opinion along the way of finishing this task.

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