

THE VISITOR ATTRACTION FACTORS TOWARDS FACILITIES AND SERVICES AT MUROG PUROG CAMP SITE

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Abstract. Camping tourism is an outdoor activity gaining attention from local residents and significant media coverage, particularly on social media. Despite this, camping tourism issues have not received the same attention as other tourism sectors at both local and international levels. This study focuses on camping tourism at Murog Purog Camp Site in Tambatuon Village (MPCST), Kota Belud, exploring attraction factors and satisfaction levels regarding facilities and services. The study has three objectives: (i) to identify attractions motivating campers at MPCST, (ii) to assess camper satisfaction with MPCST's facilities and services, and (iii) to propose recommendations for improving these facilities and services. A quantitative, online exploratory approach was used, with data collected from 70 respondents who visited MPCST. The questionnaire was conducted via Google Forms, complemented by indirect interviews with the operators via WhatsApp. Findings reveal that several factors attract campers, including the scenic location, clear river water, rocky river structure, and available activities. Respondents reported high satisfaction with these factors. Satisfaction levels with camping facilities and services, such as water, electricity, online reservations, and staff services, were also generally high. Suggestions for improvement include constructing a place of worship, expanding parking areas, building a convenience store, increasing the number of toilets and tents, improving electricity facilities, and installing lights around the campsite.

Keywords: *camping tourism, attraction factors, satisfaction level, facilities and services, recreation*

Introduction

One of the essential components for any tourism sector is the establishment of clean food zones, efficient and safe transportation, comfortable accommodation, appealing location, and various other services. These elements serve as the primary contributors to both national and local economic growth (Yusoh et al., 2023; Jusoh et al., 2011). According to World Tourism Organization (WTO), there was notable increase in international tourist arrivals between 2004 and 2007, with an impressive average annual growth rate of 7%. The WTO projected that this growth trend would continue towards 2020 (Jusoh et al., 2011; Badaruddin, 2008). The statistics clearly demonstrate the rapid expansion of the global tourism sector, including in Malaysia. In 2009, Malaysia was ranked 11th among the world's most popular tourist destinations, experiencing a sharp rise in tourist numbers, growing from 5 million in 1992 to 22 million in 2009 (Jusoh et al., 2011). The development of tourism is further fueled by tourists' curiosity, desire for new experiences, exploring of unique locations, and availability of leisure time (Murphy, 2013).

The Sabah Tourism Board (STB) is the agency responsible for promoting tourism in Sabah. The state government allocated RM 228 million in its budget, with RM 15 million specifically set aside in the 2018 budget to enhance rural tourism and diversity attractions within the state (Sipatau et al., 2020). Additionally, the chief Minister of Sabah, Datuk Seri Panglima Hajiji Mohd Nor, introduce the Sabah Budget 2021, which focused on economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of RM 125.45 million was designated for rural development, particularly for poverty alleviation projects such as the Community and Village Economy Program and the One District One Product Program.

Main concept in camping tourism study

Tourism

According to Goeldner and Ritchie (2011), tourism is a combination of phenomena and interactions that arise from the relationships between tourists, business suppliers (services), host countries, and host communities in the process of attracting and receiving tourists. Besides industrial sectors, tourism is a significant contributor to Malaysia's GDP, ranking third among the country's income generators. Tourism is also one of the sectors that can boost income, thereby driving the country's economic growth. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, international tourist arrivals reached 1.5 billion in 2019, up from 1.4 billion in 2018, representing a growth of six percent in 2018, seven percent in 2017, and four percent in 2016. In 2016, Malaysia ranked 12th compared to 14th in the world in 2015.

Camping tourism

Eagles et al. (2015) define camping tourism as an outdoor recreational activity and a form of nature-based tourism. Furthermore, camping tourism is a sustainable form of tourism, and specific providers offer services such as camping and motor caravanning. According to Slee et al. (1997), camping tourism is a form of tourism that is closer to nature and the green environment. For example, escaping the hustle and bustle of the city, tourists recognize the benefits of camping in rural areas by setting up their own tents with family and gaining amazing experiences. Additionally, camping is a type of tourism that includes self-catering for food, drink, and transportation, either provided by themselves or managed by businesses. Camping tourism is part of nature-based and outdoor recreational tourism, as well as the use of recreational vehicles such as caravans (Hall and Brown, 2006). Furthermore, camping tourism is favored by young people and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) because this type of tourism is often conducted for celebrations or organizational events outdoors and to strengthen the identity of its participants. This can be considered accommodation provided for shelter or rest purposes. For example, camping activities are also conducted as resting places and to return to areas close to major hiking centers for groups of hikers.

Camping site

According to Locke (2008), a camping area is a piece of land that accommodates two or more spaces for camping activities and caravan placement. Camping areas are known as sites where travelers or tourists come with their own accommodation equipment, such as camping gear. Therefore, this activity can be described as a form of self-catering

accommodation, typically accompanied by additional facilities such as kitchens, toilets, showers, and, in some cases, saunas (*Table 1*).

Table 1. *Categories of camping site types.*

Camping area	Location	Type
Yosemite National Park	California	Tents, caravans & cabins
Miyajima	Japan	Tents & caravans
The Isle of Arran	Scotland	Tents, caravans, cabins & hiking
Haleakala National Park	Hawaii	Tents & cabins
Maasai Mara National Reserve	Kenya	Tents, cabins & hiking
Yellowstone National Park	USA	Tents, caravans, cabins & hiking
Lake District National Park	England	Tents, caravans & cabins
Mount Cook National Park	New Zealand	Tents, caravans, cabins & hiking

Literature review of camping tourism

Camping tourism

Over the past 40 years, the number of people camping has increased from 13 million in the 1960s to 83 million in 2000 (Rosenberger and Loomis, 2001). Today, camping is one of the most common outdoor activities among Americans, with more than a quarter of the population participating. From the late 1950s to the early 1970s, researchers studied the elements of the camping experience, such as activities performed and social interactions (Clark et al., 1971). Early studies were conducted to understand and explore the relationship between camping and sociocultural variables such as family size, children's age, marital status, community type, population, camping frequency, education, and employment. Burch Jr (1965) in his study related to camping from the aspects of motives, values, and significance, identified the typical meaning of camping in early research as an escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. For instance, Burch's family camping study illustrated how camping served as a means to escape daily commitments in the city. He was also the first to discuss family togetherness as a social meaning of camping. Etzkorn (1964) examined the social meaning of camping groups. He introduced the concept of values related to camping participation, relaxation, meeting lonely people, and understanding outdoor life. Motivation is the act of providing someone with a reason to act, such as engaging in camping activities. Traveling to a particular place using a mode of transportation is driven by the motivation to visit a specific destination. Motivation occurs when individuals want to fulfill their own needs and desires. In the context of motivation, driving factors are social psychological needs that encourage a person to travel (Çakir et al., 2016). These factors are internal catalysts that drive participants to seek out markers, such as objects, situations, and events. Pull factors come into play when a person is motivated by the attractions of a destination (Fluker and Turner, 2000). Therefore, motivation is defined as follows:

“...need to travel after considering all the aspects and factors of the chosen destination or activity...”

Camping site and services

Kyle et al. (2005) conducted research in three camping areas within the Southeast National Forest and Found that motivation positively influenced both participation and

sustainability. Vogelsong et al. (1998) highlighted that features of park areas play role in shaping motivation. Field and Cheek Jr (1974) noted that social structures influence the choice of recreational sites, affecting both site characteristic and the activities pursued. Manfredo et al. (1996) investigated how motivation evolve over time, while White and Gray (2001) argued that motivation can change rapidly over short periods. Motivations that evolve over time include enjoying scenic environments, seeking rest and relaxing, spending time with family, socializing and forming new friendships, connecting with the nature, feeling rejuvenated after sporting activities and meeting new people. Kong et al. (2022) examined urban park management methods in Ankara that could affect user satisfaction. They concluded that effective management methods are necessary for user satisfaction. Muderrisoglu et al. (2010) suggested that to improve user satisfaction in urban parks in Ankara, the number of active recreational areas should be increased. Generally, there is a positive relationship between overall satisfaction and motivational factors such as site characteristics and management, experience, information, and level of facilities.

Camping sites in Finland are classified from one-star to five-star based on the capacity and services provided. According to researcher evaluations, one-star campsites provide basic services, while five-star campsites offer the best. This type of classification is an important source of information for travelers making choices based on their needs and preferences. Hundreds of such organizations provide visitors with a reliable overview of the services offered. Maintenance, cleanliness, space between pitches, and the distance from basic services such as toilets, showers, and laundry facilities are some of the fundamental factors considered in the evaluation of campsites (Poudel, 2013)

Materials and Methods

The survey design conducted by the researchers in this study aims to describe, explain, or find relationships between variables within a research context. Survey studies are used to obtain information from a large number of respondents, often hundreds or thousands (Marican, 2005). Therefore, the quantitative method was chosen as the primary approach to collect research data. According to Yusof (2003), the quantitative method is an effort to form general principles and rules that assume social reality is objective and separate or unrelated to individuals. Quantitative research involves questioning an identified problem based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured through numerical representation, and analyzed using statistical techniques (Lawrence Neuman, 2000) (*Figure 1*).

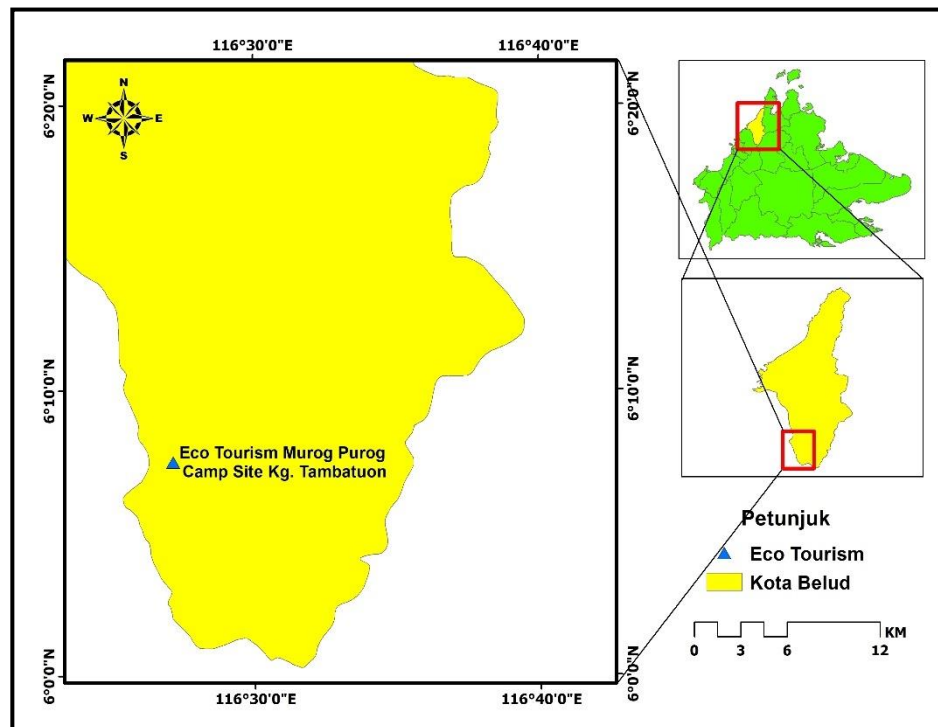


Figure 1. Map of Location Murog Purog Campsite Tambatuon Village, Kota Belud, Sabah.

Results and Discussion

Respondents' demographic profile

The results of the study showed that females were more numerous than male respondents (*Table 2*), with 48 respondents (68.6%) being female and only 22 respondents (31.4%) being male. Camping tourism is an outdoor recreation that involves semi-rough activities that require physical activity by an individual. Based on the data analysis, the participation of females is higher compared to males. However, in the real world, the number of participants in camping tourism is relatively the same or not far apart. The significant difference between male and female participation based on the data collected is because female respondents are more cooperative in filling out the questionnaire or google form that was distributed online. This indirectly influenced the gender category of the respondents analyzed as a whole. Meanwhile, the respondents who were most numerous were in the age range of 21-30 years old, with a total of 65 people (91.5%), while the second most numerous age group was in the range of 31-40 years old, with a total of four people (5.6%). Furthermore, the age group of 20 years and below had only two people (2.8%), while the age group of 41 to 60 and above had zero respondents. Overall, the researcher found that almost all of the respondents who answered the questionnaire were from the young age group of 21-30 years old. As for the marital status of the respondents, the study found that the majority of respondents who answered the questionnaire through the google form were unmarried compared to those who were married. The total number of unmarried respondents was 65 (92.9%), while the number of married respondents was five (7.1%). Regarding the level of education, the respondents who filled out the online questionnaire had a high level of education (diploma and degree), with a total of 58 people (82.9%). The number of respondents with secondary education was 12 (17.1%), and they were in Form 6 and

below. Overall, the researcher found that frequent visitors to camping activities were those with a higher level of education.

Table 2. *Respondents' demographic.*

Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	22	31.4
Female	48	68.6
Age		
<20 years old	2	2.8
21-30	65	91.5
31-40	4	5.6
Marital status		
Single	65	92.9
Married	5	7.1
Education level		
Secondary school	12	17.1
Higher education	58	82.9
Occupation		
Public sector	2	2.9
Private sector	4	5.7
Self-employment	2	2.9
Unemployed/Housewife	1	1.4
Student	61	87.1

In addition, the average respondents who filled out the questionnaire were mainly students, with a total of 61 people (87.1%), while only four respondents (5.7%) worked in the private sector. For respondents who worked in the public sector, there were two people (2.9%). Furthermore, two respondents (2.9%) were self-employed and the last respondent was a housewife or unemployed, with a total of one person (1.4%). As for the respondents' hometowns, those who came from Sabah recorded the highest number, with a total of 58 people (82.8%), although they came from different districts. The highest number came from Kota Belud, Kudat, Semporna, and Tawau, each recording five respondents (7.1%), while Kota Marudu ranked second with a total of four respondents (5.7%). Keningau, Kunak, Papar, Sandakan, and Tamparuli ranked third, with each recording three respondents (4.3%). Furthermore, respondents from Beaufort, Kota Kinabalu, Penampang, Tambunan, and Tuaran each recorded two respondents (2.9%), while the last group of respondents from Beluran, Putatan, Telipok, Telupid, Tenom, Tongod, and Tuaran each recorded one respondent (1.4%) only. As for respondents who came from outside Sabah, a total of 12 people (17.2%) were recorded. The highest number of respondents who came from outside Sabah was from the state of Sarawak, with a total of nine people (12.9%), while respondents from the state of Kelantan ranked second with two respondents (2.9%). The least number of respondents came from Terengganu, with only one person (1.4%) (*Table 3*).

Table 3. *Respondents' hometown.*

Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Sabah	Beaufort (2)	82.8
	Beluran (1)	
	Keningau (3)	

	Kota Belud (5)	
	Kota Kinabalu (2)	
	Kota Marudu (4)	
	Kudat (5)	
	Kunak (3)	
	Papar (3)	
	Penampang (2)	
	Putatan (1)	
	Ranau (3)	
	Sandakan (3)	
	Semporna (5)	
	Tambunan (2)	
	Tamparuli (3)	
	Tawau (5)	
	Telipok (1)	
	Telupid (1)	
	Tenom (1)	
	Tongod (1)	
	Tuaran (2)	
Outside Sabah	Kelantan (2)	17.2
	Sarawak (9)	
	Terengganu (1)	
Total	70	100

Tourism attraction of camping at Murog Purog Camp Site, Kg. Tambatuon, Kota Belud, Sabah

This section explains the tourism attraction factor for camping at Murog Purog Camp site, Kg. Tambatuon, Kota Belud. Several statements in the form of a likert scale were presented to respondents to examine the attraction factors at MPCST. The respondents' answers were based on three choices: 1-most attractive; 2-second most attractive; and 3-third most attractive. The study found that the location of MPCST was the primary choice for 60 respondents, followed by the factor of clear and cool river water (the top choice for 54 respondents), and finally, the scenic beauty of the surroundings, chosen by 43 respondents (*Table 4*).

Table 4. Tourism attraction of camping at MPCST Kota Belud based on likert scale.

Tourism attraction factors	Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Peaceful rural village atmosphere	44	62.9	11	15.7	15	21.4
Scenic beauty of Surroundings	43	61.4	12	17.1	15	21.4
Clear and cool river water	41	58.6	13	18.6	16	22.9
Activities offered (camping, water recreation, etc)	40	57.1	14	20	16	22.9
Rocky river flow structure and its fast-flowing water	37	52.9	15	21.4	18	25.7
Location of MPCST	30	42	24	35	16	23

Most Attractive attraction factor

In *Table 4* shows that the 'most attractive' factors are the beauty of the peaceful rural village atmosphere (62.9%), the surrounding scenic views (61.4%), the clear and cool river water (58.6%), the activities offered (57.1%), and the rocky river flow structure with its fast-flowing water (52.9%). The study findings align with the Iso-Ahola (1980) theory of recreational experience, which suggests that tourists come to a recreational area because of its location and participate in activities there. Tourist satisfaction with

the location also depends on how well their recreational motives are fulfilled. Generally, the location of a recreational place has a significant influence on its attractiveness to tourists. Additionally, visitor satisfaction is influenced by the location of the recreation area. Therefore, it is proven that the attractiveness of engaging in a recreational activity is influenced by the location. The attraction factor related to the scenic beauty of the surroundings is because the camping area is surrounded by natural views such as Mount Kinabalu, hills, and rivers. This finding is consistent with the idea of Gunn and Var (2002) in the book 'Tourism Planning'. He emphasizes that a tourist destination becomes popular due to the attraction factors of the place. Many attraction factors lead tourists to visit a certain area. This means that the primary concern from the tourists' perspective is the level of satisfaction and benefits they gain from the destination.

Additionally, the clear and cool river water is among the attraction factors for respondents because the water source in this camping area comes from rivers flowing from the foothills of Mount Kinabalu. Moreover, the rocky river structure and its fast-flowing water are attractive factors as they facilitate various water recreational activities. This aligns with Ang (2016) study titled "Sungai Melaka as a New Tourism Attraction in Negeri Melaka: A Critical Review". The study explains the potential of Sungai Melaka as a new tourism attraction. This is because the original main functions of Sungai Melaka were as a source of water, food, agriculture, livestock, transportation, and employment. Now, the state government has redeveloped Sungai Melaka to become like the 'Venice of the East', as part of the tourism program in the city. Furthermore, the attraction factor related to the activities offered is one of the reasons they choose to visit MPCST. This is because various activities can be done, such as water recreation, campfires, barbecue activities, tubing, and more. The Guidelines for Recreation, Conservation, and National Parks and the National Tourism Plan explain several ecotourism attraction features that should be considered by tourism operators, including that the surrounding area must be attractive and have a variety of sustainable activities to ensure the conservation and preservation of the ecosystem of the surrounding area and tourism destinations (Ibrahim et al., 2015) (*Figure 2 to Figure 7*).



Figure 2. Peaceful atmosphere of rural village.



Figure 3. One of the activities offered.



Figure 4. Cold and clear river water.



Figure 5. Rocky river flow structure and strong water current.



Figure 6. Location of campsite MPCST.



Figure 7. Beauty of surroundings scenery.

Conclusion

Overall, the results of this study achieved all three of the set objectives. The attraction factors for visits and the level of satisfaction with the camping tourism facilities and services at Murog Purog Camp Site Kg. Tambatuon, Kota Belud, Sabah (MPCST) were identified. Additionally, suggestions for improvements to the camping tourism facilities and services at MPCST were also determined. Furthermore, the findings indicate that camping tourism activities in Sabah, particularly in Kota Belud, are still new, meaning there are many aspects that need to be examined for improvement in terms of management, registration, facilities, services, safety, and other related aspects of camping tourism. Therefore, the role of various stakeholders is crucial in advancing the camping tourism sector to be more competitive on an international level.

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Conflict of interest

The researcher confirms that there are no conflicts of interest involving any parties in this research study.

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