

A descriptive profile of domestic tourists visiting Cameron Highlands, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Despite Cameron Highlands being one of Malaysia's highland tourism destinations, limited recent empirical evidence exists on the demographic and travel behaviour profile of its domestic tourists. Understanding these characteristics is essential for effective destination planning and sustainable tourism management. This study aims to examine the demographic characteristics, purpose of visit, length of stay, and activity preferences of Malaysian tourists visiting Cameron Highlands. A quantitative approach was employed using a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms between September 1 and 22, 2025, yielding 107 valid responses. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents were female aged between 24 – 44 years, employed, and earning above RM4,500.00 monthly. Sightseeing and relaxation were identified as the primary travel motivations, while visits to tea plantations, farm experiences, and night markets emerged as the most popular activities. Additionally, a high proportion of repeat visitors suggests strong destination loyalty. These findings provide practical insights for destination managers and tourism stakeholders to tailor tourism products, enhance visitor experiences, and support sustainable tourism development in highland destinations.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a cornerstone of Malaysia's economy, with domestic tourism, in particular, contributing significantly to national revenue and economic stability (Mustafa & Hawari, 2022). With 239.1 million domestic visitors recorded in 2019, representing an 8.1% increase, domestic tourism plays a crucial role in the nation's economic framework (Mustafa & Hawari, 2022). This substantial influx of domestic tourists underscores the importance of understanding their diverse motivations and behaviours to foster sustainable tourism development within Malaysia (Mustafa & Hawari, 2022).

Highland tourism is characterized by its unique appeal stemming from cooler climates, distinct biodiversity, and often agricultural landscapes, attracting visitors seeking respite from urban heat and a connection with nature. In Malaysia, destinations such as Cameron Highlands exemplify this, drawing tourists with its tea plantations, strawberry farms, and temperate weather, which offer a distinct contrast to the tropical lowlands (Ng et al., 2022). This environmental characteristic supports a range of distinct tourism activities, including agricultural tourism and eco-tourism, which are intrinsically tied to the unique ecological and cultural heritage of these elevated regions (Pongruengkiat et al., 2023). However, highland tourism faces significant challenges, such as the seasonal nature of tourist flows, which necessitates innovative marketing strategies to ensure year-round appeal and economic stability for local communities (Happ et al., 2020). Moreover, developing diversified tourism products and services, such as cultural festivals or specialized agricultural tours, can attract tourists during off-peak seasons, mitigating the economic impact of seasonality (Schuckert & Wu, 2020). Furthermore, sustainable management practices are critical in highland destinations to preserve their delicate ecosystems and cultural integrity from the pressure of over-tourism and uncontrolled development (Rita et al., 2024).

Despite its popularity, there remains limited recent empirical evidence detailing the demographic and travel behaviour profile of domestic tourists visiting Cameron Highlands. Existing studies often emphasize broader tourism trends or focus on specific aspects such as destination image or satisfaction, with scarce comprehensive analyses dedicated to profiling the domestic visitor segment (Wan'ombe et al., 2022). Such profiling is essential as it provides foundational insights into who the tourists are, how they behave, and what experiences they seek, thereby enabling more targeted and effective tourism planning and development (Kabuitu et al., 2022).

While market segmentation is widely recognised as an advanced analytical approach in tourism research, descriptive profiling remains a fundamental step in understanding tourist characteristics, particularly in contexts where detailed segmentation analysis has not yet been established (Domènech et al., 2023). This foundational understanding is crucial for optimizing resource allocation and tailoring offerings to meet specific visitor needs and preferences (Kifworo & Dube, 2023). By examining demographic attributes alongside travel behaviour variables such as purpose of visit, length of stay, and activity participation, researchers can generate meaningful insights that support destination management and marketing strategies. This approach allows for the identification of key visitor segments, facilitating the development of bespoke tourism products and services (Chandel, 2022).

Thus, understanding tourist characteristics are essential for tailoring marketing mixes to specific tourist preferences, ensuring the long-term viability and appeal of these unique destinations. Cameron Highlands, a prominent highland destination in Malaysia, presents a unique case study for tourist segmentation given its distinct appeal as an agricultural and natural escape. Specifically, it is a popular hill station in Pahang, attract a considerable number of tourists, necessitating detailed segmentation analyses to cater to varied

visitor profiles and enhance regional tourism strategies (Samad et al., 2023). It's allure stems from its temperate climate, verdant tea plantations, rich biodiversity, which collectively attract a wide spectrum of tourists, differentiating it from coastal or metropolitan tourist hubs in the country. The unique geographical and climate attributes of Cameron Highlands inherently influence visitor demographics, motivations, and the types of activities they engaged in, necessitating a focused segmentation analysis (Manosuthi et al., 2019).

This study aims to describe characteristics, travel behaviour, and activity preferences of domestic tourists visiting Cameron Highlands. This comprehensive approach facilitates a nuanced understanding of diverse tourist groups, crucial for targeted marketing and sustainable tourism development in the region (Ching et al., 2020). By providing a comprehensive profile of visitors, the study offers practical insights for tourism stakeholders to better understand tourist needs and enhance destination planning and management strategies. Furthermore, understanding these allows for the development of bespoke tourism products that cater to specific preferences, moving beyond a generalized marketing approach that often assumes a uniform audience (Baby & Kim, 2025). This is particularly pertinent for destinations like Cameron Highlands, which offer a variety of attractions that may appeal to different visitor motivations and expectations.

Building on the preceding discussion, it is evident that a clearer understanding of tourists' motivations, demographic characteristics, and activity engagement is critical for strategic tourism development and sustainable destination management (Duong et al., 2023; Hussin et al., 2021). While existing literature provides general insights into tourist behaviour, there remains a need for context-specific evidence that captures how domestic tourists engage with this highland destination. In particular, examining patterns related to visitor profiles, travel motivations, length of stay, and activity preferences can offer significant insights for developing targeted marketing strategies and enhancing the overall visitor experience in Cameron Highlands (Luvsandavaajav & Narantuya, 2021; Silva et al., 2024).

Guided by the objectives of this study, several key questions are addressed to better understand domestic tourists visiting Cameron Highlands. First, what are the demographic characteristics of these tourists in terms of gender, age, occupation, and income level? Second, what are their main travel behaviour patterns, particularly with regard to purpose of visit, length of stay, and repeat visitation? Third, what activities are most commonly undertaken by tourists during their visit to Cameron Highlands? Finally, how can insights derive from these demographic and behavioural profiles inform tourism planning and destination management in Cameron Highlands?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Market segmentation

Market segmentation is a fundamental strategy in tourism, enabling a deeper comprehension of heterogeneous tourist populations by dividing them into more homogeneous subgroups based on shared characteristics or needs. Typically, there are four conventional bases for segmentation namely demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioural characteristics. This strategic division allows for the development of tailored tourism products and marketing campaigns that resonate with specific segments, thereby enhancing tourist satisfaction and improving the overall sustainability of the tourism industry (Mustafa & Hawari, 2022).

While market segmentation is widely applied in tourism research, descriptive profiling remains a fundamental step in understanding tourist characteristics, particularly in destinations where segmentation has not yet been empirically established. The segmentation of tourists is a well-established practice in tourism research, serving as a fundamental tool for understanding consumer behaviour and informing strategic decision-making within the industry (Carvache-Franco et al., 2021). Such segmentation is vital for identifying distinct groups of tourists with shared characteristics, preferences, and behaviours, enabling destination managers and tourism operators to customize offerings and promotional strategies (Carvache-Franco et al., 2022). This approach moves beyond a one-size-fits-all model, recognizing that different tourist segments may seek diverse experiences, from passive enjoyment of lodging to active engagement with multiple attractions (Carvache-Franco et al., 2023).

Early tourism studies often rely on basic demographic and geographic variables for segmentation, which, while foundational, provided limited insights into the nuanced motivations and psychological underpinnings of travel choices (Parra et al., 2021). More recent research, however, has increasingly incorporated psychographic and behavioural variables, such as motivations, attitudes, and activity participation, to create more robust and actionable segments (Roget et al., 2020). This evolution reflects a deeper understanding of tourist decision-making processes, which are influenced by a complex interplay of personal interests, destination attributes, and pre-travel considerations (Aboalghanam et al., 2025).

A deeper examination of this principle reveals a critical link to long-term sustainability in ensuring that tourism development aligns with both tourist expectations and the preservation of local resources and culture (Aggarwal & Gour, 2020). The literature shows that destinations that attempt to cater to all market segments without clear differentiation often dilute their brand identity and fail to attract specific, high-value tourist groups. This underscores the importance of refining segmentation strategies to identify and target niche market effectively, thereby optimizing resource allocation and enhancing overall tourist experiences (Mensah et al., 2025).

2.2 Types of market segmentation

For instance, destinations can be categorized based on their inherent characteristics, such as natural, historical, cultural, or manufactured attractions, which in turn appeal to different segments of tourists (Xu & Chen, 2024). This differentiation in attractions often correlates with specific tourist motivations, ranging from those seeking relaxation and entertainment to visitors driven by a desire for cultural immersion or adventure (Carvache-Franco et al., 2023). Similarly, tourists can be segmented by their trip planning behaviour, which involves distinct pre-trip, during trip, and post-trip phases, each with unique information needs and decision-making processes (Wang et al., 2022). As for this study, we specifically focus on demographic profiles, purpose of visit, length of stay, and activities engaged in, offering a comprehensive understanding of tourist behaviour in Cameron Highlands. This multi-faceted approach allows for the identification of specific cohorts whose travel patterns are influenced by distinct generational values and technological engagement, thereby facilitating more precise marketing efforts (Ismail et al., 2025; Qi et al., 2021).

Demographic segmentation, often considered the most straightforward approach, classifies tourists based on quantifiable characteristics such as age, gender, income, education, and occupation (Kifworo et al., 2020; Soni et al., 2022). This method provides foundational insights into the composition of a tourist market, indicating potential variations in travel preferences and purchasing power across different groups

(Ameen et al., 2023). For example, different age cohorts may exhibit varying preferences for travel activities and accommodation types, directly impacting destination marketing strategies (Erdem et al., 2019). Furthermore, income levels can dictate the type of tourism experiences tourists can afford and are willing to pay for, influencing their choice of destination, mode of travel, and on-site expenditures.

Behavioural segmentation delves into the actions and patterns of tourists, such as their purpose of visit, length of stay, and activities undertaken, providing a more dynamic view of their interaction with a destination. This approach allows researchers to understand not only who the tourists are but also what they do and why they choose particular activities, thereby revealing their underlying motivations and preferences (Kankhuni, 2019). For example, tourists visiting for leisure might prioritize relaxation-oriented activities, whereas those on an adventure trip would seek more physically demanding experiences, directly impacting the types of tourism products developed (Pérez-Tapia et al., 2022). Analysing the purpose of a visit also elucidates the primary drivers behind travel decisions, which can range from recreation and leisure to education and health, often influencing destination choice and activity engagement (Deyshappriya et al., 2019). Understanding the duration of stay further refines these insights, as longer stays often correlate with a deeper engagement with the destination and a higher propensity for exploring a wider array of activities (Stefán et al., 2025). This extended engagement often translates into increased local spending and a greater likelihood of participating in local events, which can be leveraged for sustainable tourism development.

Last but not least is the product-related segmentation, which focuses on the specific features and benefits of tourism products that attract different consumer groups. In this context, destinations can segment their offering based on activities, amenities, or experiences, thereby catering to tourists who prioritize adventure, relaxation, cultural immersion, or eco-tourism (Utama et al., 2023). This type of segmentation is crucial for product development and tailoring services to meet diverse consumer needs, ensuring that specific offerings resonate with particular market segments. This approach allows destination managers to develop targeted strategies that optimize visitor satisfaction and economic benefits for the local community (Choe et al. 2019).

3 METHODOLOGIES

3.1 Data collection

This study was conducted in Cameron Highlands, Pahang. This region, renowned for its cool climate, lush tea plantations, and agricultural produce, attracts a diverse range of domestic and international tourists, making it an ideal setting for comprehensive segmentation analysis. Among the most frequently visited attractions are the Boh, and Bharat Tea Plantations, Kea Farm Market, and various strawberry farms, each catering to different interests and preferences.

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design with a bilingual (English and Malay) questionnaire adapted from previous research to suit the study's specific context. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used, targeting Malaysian tourists who had visited Cameron Highlands. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Form. This approach enabled a broad reach to potential respondents, ensuring a representative sample while mitigating geographical constraints. Data were analysed using SPSS version 29. The questionnaire was carefully structure to gather data on demographic profiles, motivations for visiting, length of stay, and activities undertaken, ensuring comprehensive insights

into tourist behaviour (Chen et al., 2023; Lam et al., 2020). Minor modifications were made to ensure relevance to the Cameron Highlands context. The survey was carried out for a duration of three weeks from September 01 to September 22, 2025, disseminated online to maximize participation (Zhu et al., 2025). The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section is on the nature of tourist visit which encompassed inquiries about purpose of visit, length of stay, and the specific activities they engaged in during their visit. The second section focused on collecting detailed demographic information from the respondents, including age, gender, occupation, and income levels, allowing for robust segmentation analysis. The sample size of 107 is considered adequate for descriptive analysis, although it does not aim for full population generalisation. This number falls within the range of sample sizes utilized in comparable studies focusing on tourist profiling and behaviour, ensuring a statistically sound basis for characterizing the domestic visitor segment in Cameron Highlands (SPR et al., 2023; Supriono et al., 2024).

4 FINDINGS

4.1 General characteristics of respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents indicated a diverse range of ages, occupations, and income levels, reflecting the broad appeal of Cameron Highlands as a tourist destination. Thus, the analysis of respondents' demographic profile provides insight into the composition of domestic tourists visiting Cameron Highlands.

Gender

Out of the 107 respondents, 68.2% were female, while 31.8% identified as male, indicating a predominantly female participation in the survey (Chin et al., 2021). This distribution is similar to findings in other studies where female respondents often outnumber male respondents (Gregana & Ylagan, 2022), though some studies have reported a more even split or male predominance depending on the destination and travel purpose (Najar et al., 2024).

Age

The largest age cohort among the respondents was between 35 – 44 years old, accounting for 37.4% of the total, followed by those aged 25 – 34 years old at 32.7%. In contrast, respondents aged 18 – 24 years old constituted a smaller proportion at 18.7%, while those above 45 years old represented the smallest group at 11.2%, collectively suggesting that Cameron Highlands primarily attracts a younger to middle-aged demographic, a pattern observed in similar nature-based tourism (Lopez & Santos, 2023).

Occupational status

Employed respondents accounted for 72.9%, aligning with patterns observed in studies where working professionals frequently engage in short leisure trips (Chatterjee & Shukla, 2024). A smaller proportion of 19.6% respondents were students, indicating that the destination also appeals to younger, education-focused individuals, while retirees and unemployed formed the remaining 7.5%, reflecting a diverse visitor base. This occupational distribution suggests a broad appeal for Cameron Highlands across various life stages, from early career professionals to students seeking leisure to retirees enjoying their post-work years (Aggarwal et al., 2024).

Income Level

The largest group of respondents, 44.8% earning more than RM 4,501 monthly, reflects a fraction with significant disposable income, indicative of a capacity for higher spending on travel and leisure activities (Amir et al., 2022). Following this, 33.6% of respondents reported monthly incomes between RM 1,501 – RM 4,500, suggesting a substantial middle-income tourist, while the smallest proportion, 21.5%, earned less than RM 1,500. This income distribution underscores Cameron Highlands' appeal to a diverse socioeconomic spectrum, with a notable inclination towards visitors with higher purchasing power, a trend consistent with findings in other studies focusing on destinations offering specialized experiences (Chin et al., 2023).

Table 1: Respondents' profile

Profile	Percentage
Gender	
Male	31.8
Female	68.2
Age	
18 – 24 years old	18.7
25 – 34 years old	32.7
35 – 44 years old	37.4
45 – 60 years old	10.3
61 and above	0.9
Occupation Status	
Employed	72.9
Unemployed	6.5
Retired	0.9
Student	19.6
Monthly Income	
Less than RM 1,500	21.5
RM 1,501 – RM 3,000	19.6
RM 3,001 – RM 4,500	14.0
RM 4,501 – RM 6,000	15.9
RM 6,001 – RM 7,500	9.3
More than RM 7,501	19.6

Source: Author

4.2 Travel behaviour profile

Travel behaviour of respondents was analysed based on their visitation patterns, duration of stay, and travel motivation. This finding facilitates the development of tailored marketing strategies and amenity provisions, aligning with the specific needs and expectations of distinct tourist groups (Ameen et al., 2023).

Number of visits

A majority of the respondents (71%) were repeat visitors, with 29.9% have visited Cameron Highlands more than six times, and 41.1% having visited twice to five times, indicating a strong loyalty and recurring appeal of the destination among domestic tourists. Conversely, the remaining 29% were either first-time visitor or had only visited once, suggesting that while the destination retains a loyal base, there is also a consistent influx of new or infrequent visitors. This high rate of repeat visitation signifies the destination's enduring attractiveness and the effectiveness of its offerings in cultivating visitor loyalty, despite the continuous arrival of new tourists (Gayeta & Ylagan, 2022). This sustained engagement from repeat visitors can be attributed to the unique restorative qualities of natural environments, which often lead to increased destination loyalty and positive visitor experiences (Zhu et al., 2025).

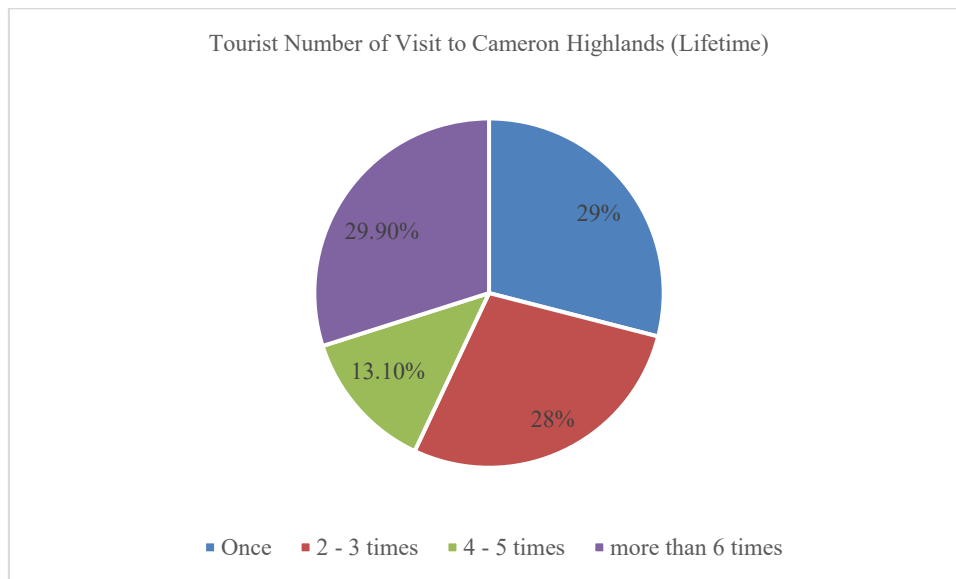


Fig. 1. Tourist number of visit to Cameron Highlands

Source: Author

Length of stay

The predominant length of stay among respondents was 3 days and 2 nights, accounting for 47.7%, followed by 2 days and 1 night at 23.4%, day trippers at 20.6%, and a smaller proportion of 8.4% staying for an extended period of 4 days and 3 nights or more. This distribution highlights a preference for short, recreational trips, common in domestic tourism where accessibility and weekend getaways are primary drivers (Mustafa & Hawari, 2022). This pattern of short stays is characteristic of destinations perceived as ideal for brief escapes, particularly for urban dwellers seeking respite from daily routines. Such shorter durations often optimize experiential value while minimizing the disruption to daily life, aligning with contemporary tourism trends (Setiawan et al., 2020). The brevity of stay also impacts the types of activities undertaken, often favouring those that can be readily experienced within a limited timeframe. Consequently, an analysis of the activities engaged in by tourists during their visits can provide further insights into the motivations and preferences shaping their travel decisions (Francis et al., 2019).

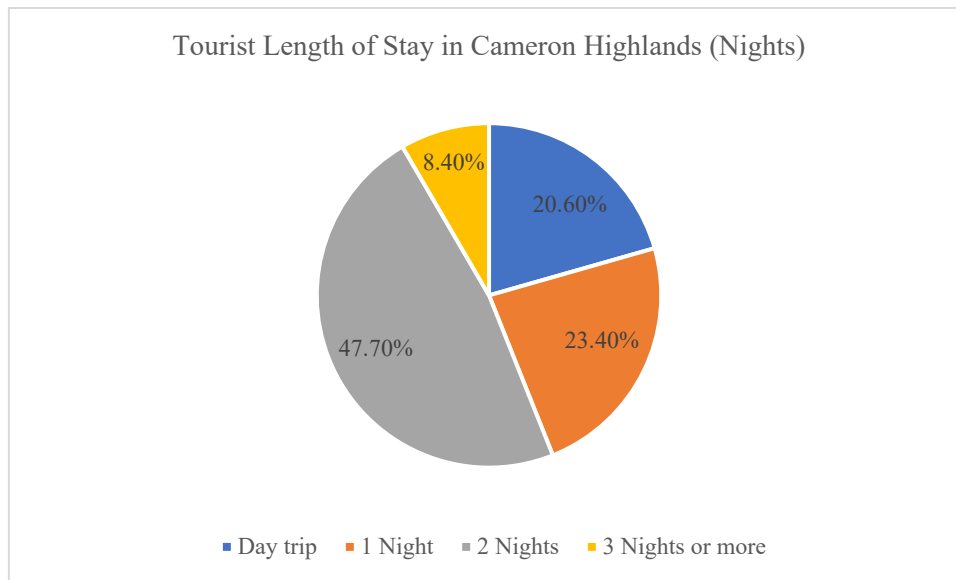


Fig. 2. Tourist length of stay in Cameron Highlands

Source: Author

Purpose of visit

The top motivation for tourist visits to Cameron Highlands was for sightseeing (75.7%). This primary purpose underscores the scenic and natural allure of the region, driving visitor interest in its unique landscapes and attractions. Following sightseeing, relaxation and leisure emerged as the second most cited purpose at 72.9%, indicating that tourists are often seeking tranquil escape from urban environments. This aligns with the findings that rural environments significantly enhance pleasure-seeking experiences, allowing tourists to destress and engage in self-reflection (Zhu et al., 2025). Agro-tourism (43.9%), food hunting (37.4%), and appreciate nature (29.9%) were also significant motivators, reflecting the diverse appeal of Cameron Highlands beyond its scenic beauty, encompassing culinary experiences and ecological engagement. While educational visits (17.8%), socialization (6.5%), participate in recreational activities (4.7%), and others (2.7%) such as work-related, represented a smaller but still present group of visitors, suggesting a multi-faceted destination appeal that caters to various interests. This multi-faceted appeal is crucial for sustaining tourist engagement and differentiating the destination in a competitive market (Zhu et al., 2025).

Table 2. Tourist purpose of visit

Description	Percentage
Agro-tourism	43.9
Relaxation	72.9
Sightseeing	75.7
Appreciate Nature	29.9

Participate in Recreational Activities	4.7
Socialization	6.5
Food Hunting	37.4
Educational Trip	17.8
Others (Work & Sport)	2.7

Source: Author

4.3 Activity preferences

This section examines tourist preferences and engagement with specific products and services offered in Cameron Highlands. The analysis of activity participation reveals the types of experiences that are most preferred by tourists. Analysing these aspects provides a comprehensive understanding of how tourists interact with the destination's offerings, revealing preferences that can inform targeted product development and marketing strategies. Understanding these preferences is vital for optimizing resource allocation and enhancing the overall tourist experience, thereby fostering sustainable tourism growth (Mercadé-Melé et al., 2023).

Activities during visit

As for activity preferences, the primary activities undertaken by tourists predominantly involve visiting tea plantations, followed by farm visits, and exploring local markets. These preferences demonstrate a clear inclination towards experiencing the unique agricultural and commercial offerings of the region, aligning with contemporary tourism trends that prioritize authentic local engagements and experiential consumption. Most of the respondents indicate that they visited the tea plantations the most (76.6%), followed by a visit to the Kea Farm Market (71%), and strawberry picking (66.4%). Such activities resonate with the growing demand for agrotourism, where tourists engage directly with agricultural practices and local produce, enhancing their connection to the destination's unique identity (Blanco-Fernández et al., 2025; Liang et al., 2020). Meanwhile 56.1% of the respondents indicate that they visited the Cameron Night Market. A 51.4% indicate that they visited Cameron Highlands for photography. Other attractions such as Cameron Lavender Garden, Honey Bee Farms, Cactus Valley, Cameron Flora Park, and Butterfly Garden recorded 37.4%, 24.3%, 23.4%, 20.6%, and 19.6% visitation rates respectively, indicating a diverse range of attractions that cater to varied interests among the tourist population. The least opted for activities were the Lakehouse, The Time Tunnel Museum, and visit to the waterfalls each at 11.2%, and 3.7% each for Glamping and Golfing. These findings collectively highlight the importance of natural beauty, immersive experiences, and agro-tourism in shaping the tourist experience in Cameron Highlands, reinforcing the region's position as a prominent highland tourism destination (Leh & Mokhtar, 2021). This comprehensive engagement with various attractions accentuates the destination's capacity to deliver various experiences that extend beyond conventional sightseeing, thereby fostering a deeper connection between tourists and the local environment.

Table 3. Tourist activities in Cameron Highlands

Activities	Percentage
Visit Tea Plantation	76.6
Kea Farm Market	71.0
Strawberry Picking	66.4

Cameron Night Market	56.1
Cameron Flora Park	20.6
Cameron Lavender Garden	37.4
Cactus Valley	23.4
Butterfly Garden	19.6
The Lakehouse	11.2
The Time Tunnel Museum	11.2
Honey Bee Farms	24.3
Waterfalls	12.1
Photography	51.4
Glamping	3.7
Golfing	3.7

Note: $n=107$

4.4 Implications for tourism planning and management

The findings of the study provide several important insights for tourism stakeholders. First, the dominance of young to middle-aged, employed tourists suggests that Cameron Highlands is particularly attractive to working adults seeking short leisure escapes. This demographic insight can inform targeted marketing campaigns and product development initiatives aimed at this key market segment (Voraseyanont et al., 2024). This shows an opportunity for tourism providers to develop weekend packages and flexible itineraries tailored to this segment. Second, the high rate of repeat visitation highlights strong destination loyalty, suggesting that maintaining service quality and visitor satisfaction should remain a key priority. Moreover, sustained focus on enhancing the experiential quality of tourism could further bolster satisfaction and loyalty among this demographic (Chebli et al., 2021). At the same time, introducing novel attractions or updating existing ones could further stimulates repeat visits and broaden the destination's appeal. Third, the short length of stay indicates potential for extending tourist visits through the development of diversified tourism products, such as multi-day itineraries, cultural events, or eco-tourism experiences. Such initiative would not only increase the economic impact of tourism but also contribute to a more sustainable and enriching visitor experiences, moving beyond solely descriptive profiles to more actionable strategic recommendations (Zarhari et al., 2023). Finally, the strong preference for agro-tourism and nature-based activities underscores the importance of preserving environment quality and agricultural heritage. This emphasis also implies that stakeholders should strategically invest in promoting and maintaining these core attractions to sustain visitor interest and ensure long-term viability (Aduce et al., 2021). Sustainable practices are therefore essential to ensure the long-term viability of Cameron Highlands as a tourism destination.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a descriptive profile of domestic tourists visiting Cameron Highlands, focusing on demographic profiles, purpose of visit, length of stay, and activities engaged in, thereby revealing distinct tourist preferences and behavioural patterns. The findings offer an insight for stakeholders, enabling them to tailor tourism products and services to better meet the diverse needs of different tourist groups, and foster sustainable tourism development (Ismail et al., 2021). Moreover, the identification of key motivations such as sightseeing and relaxation, alongside popular activities like tea plantations visits, highlights the importance of preserving and promoting the region's natural beauty and agricultural heritage to ensure

continued tourist satisfaction and loyalty (Suhartanto et al., 2020). Future research could explore the influence of perceived destination restorative qualities on tourist loyalty, particularly within rural tourism contexts like Cameron Highlands, which offer unique natural and cultural landscapes (Zhu et al. 2025). Additionally, investigating how tourist experiences, perceived value, satisfaction, and motivation contribute to agrotourist loyalty could provide a more holistic understanding of tourist engagement with the region's agricultural attractions (Suhartanto et al., 2020). The use of non-probability sampling and a relatively small sample size may limit generalizability of the findings, particularly given that the data collection was potentially constrained to specific locations or period (Zili et al., 2023). Future research could benefit from employing a larger, more representative random sample to enhance the external validity of the findings and allow for more robust statistical inferences (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2021). Furthermore, future studies may apply advanced analytical techniques such as cluster analysis to identify distinct tourist segments (Sthapit et al., 2022). Additionally, exploring the application of mixed-methods approaches, integrating qualitative data such as interviews or observational studies, could offer a more nuanced understanding of the underlying motivations and experiences of domestic tourists in Cameron Highlands.

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7 CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

8 AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Nurina Pillin Sibat: Conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation' writing-original draft, editing and writing of final manuscript; **Mazlina Mahdzar:** Conceptualisation, supervision, and validation

9 DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used **Grammarly** in order to **check manuscript grammar**. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

10 DATA AVAILABILITY/SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

11 ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was reviewed and approved by the organizing Committee of 6th Hospitality & Tourism Conference 2025 (Ref.: 100 – FHTOUR (PT.36/4/8)). All procedures involving human participants/animal subjects were in fulfilment of the ethical standards of the 1964 Helsinki Declaration. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and data anonymity was strictly maintained throughout the study.

12 ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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