

**VISITORS' SATISFACTION WITH CAMERON HIGHLANDS, MALAYSIA'S
POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATION.**



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JULY 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Bismillah – Hir – Rahman – Nir – Rahim

Praise to Allah, Lord of Universe, a praise that befits it is might and stuffiest His Grace; we would like to express our gratitude to those who have been involved directly and indirectly in completing this research. We would really appreciate and forever will indebted to them.

Hopefully, this research report is beneficial to all. Thank you.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Cameron Highlands is Malaysia's favorite retreat destination. It is located on the northwestern tip of the state of Pahang Malaysia's, some 200 kilometers north of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital city. The research is conducted for the purpose of evaluating Cameron Highland's attractiveness as a tourist destination. The customer (visitor) survey approach is chosen where visitors are asked to rate the merit of various tangibles they encounter in Cameron Highlands and their overall level of satisfaction with their visit. The survey is conducted because despite its popularity, Cameron Highlands's visitors are known to make complains concerning their tour experience such as physical developments that become eyesores to nature lovers, inadequate local transportation, lack of parking spaces (New Straits Times, 2009), and poor condition of public facilities, among others. Many visitors also raise concerns on the destruction of the highland's ecology, environment, and habitat relic due to extensive land-clearing activities for agricultural and physical developments (Mimi Syed Yusof, John and Shahrum Sayuthi, 2005; Ram, 2008; Singh, 2009).

The importance of the research is it assesses the quality of facilities, products, services, and tour items in Cameron Highlands such as transportation, accommodation, food and beverages. Variation in attitudes, if any, between foreign and local visitors, people of different ages, genders, and professions, is examined using standard statistical methods. Such analysis provides information to tourism industry actors to match tourism offers with different customer characteristics.

1.2 Problem Statement

Cameron Highlands is one of Malaysia's main tourist destinations. The highland region is named after a British colonial government surveyor, William Cameron, who discovered the plateau in a mapping expedition in 1885. Cameron Highlands then grew during the British colonial era when it was realized that its fertile mountain slopes have the potential for growing tea, then a prized commodity. Cameron Highlands is still Malaysia's largest tea-producing region. The plateau is now home to legume and vegetable farms, many of which altogether serve as major suppliers to both Malaysia and Singapore. Among Cameron Highlands' key attractions, apart from its cool weather, are tea plantations, butterfly farm, strawberry farms, rose gardens, vegetable gardens, cactus gardens, Hindu temple, Buddhist temple, charming Tanah rata town, Market Square, home stay and hotel accommodations, and a variety of stalls selling the region's produces (Wikipedia 2009).

Despite owning all its attractive natural assets and the availability of modern tourist facilities, Cameron Highlands also has to endure several shortcomings that cause dissatisfaction to local residents and visitors, such as, inadequate parking facilities (New Straits Times 2009) and the destruction of its ecology, environment, and habitat relic due to