Understanding Youth Travel Motivation: Empirical Evidence from Kundasang, Sabah

Noor Suhaila Yusof*., Kamal Izzuwan Ramli., Enna Ng Wen Ni

School of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is an important driver for the economy, and youth tourism has been identified as a major contributor to this industry. While this is an important segment, it has unique characteristics and demand patterns that differ from other groups of travelers. This study aims to investigate the demographic profiles of Malaysian youth travelers and what motivates them to travel. The study's target respondents are students who have visited Kundasang, a popular tourist destination in Sabah. Questionnaires were distributed from September to November 2024. The majority of the respondents agreed that they chose to travel for internal motivation such as relief from academic stress and relaxation. The findings also show that source of income plays a major role in motivating these students to travel. In term of demographics, females were found to prefer both push elements (emotional relief and social involvement) and pull aspects (natural beauty, cultural experiences, and adventure activities). Males are similarly drawn to these qualities, have a lower level of agreement on these factors. The prospect of this group of tourists is significant both now and in the future, makes it important for the tourism marketers to understand. The findings of this study provides useful insights for the tourism marketers, particularly to those who target the youth tourists as their major audience.

Keywords: Tourist Motivation, Demographic Profiles, Youth Traveler, University Student, Kundasang Sabah

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Introduction

Tourism has been recognised as one of the major contributor to the world economy. According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2024a), the tourism sector accounted for almost 10 percent of the world economy in 2023, with a contribution of $9.5 trillion to the global GDP and projected to reach $11.1 trillion in 2024. Travel and Tourism are essential to job creation, both direct and indirectly. It was estimated that 1 in 4 jobs created worldwide, accounting about 334 million jobs or 10.6 percent of all jobs, worth USD9.2 trillion, or 10.4 percent of global GDP (WTTC, 2021). As a result, tourism has become as a major growing business and is regarded as a substantial component of the trade-in international services (Naseem, 2021). According to Nikjoo (2015), motivation is the driving force behind travel-related activities, affecting individuals' desires to explore new areas. Applying this incentive theory could substantially assist the tourism industry. Understanding tourist motivations is essential for developing better products and services, ensuring satisfaction with travel experiences, and understanding how travellers make decisions (Crompton & Mckay, 1997; Uysal et al., 2009). To understand this, Crompton's (1979) push and pull factors can be used to analyse why people choose a specific place. According to UNWTO (2016), youth and student travelers are becoming one of the most important markets for the tourism industry. They are the dynamic and influential segment of the tourism industry, making major contribution through cultural interchange, economic impact, and the advocacy of sustainable practices (Ghete, 2015). Understanding university students' travel motivations is vital for promoting areas such as Kundasang, Sabah, which is becoming increasingly popular with visitors and university students.

Malaysia recently became a popular travel destination worldwide. The direct contribution of travel and tourism to Malaysia's GDP has grown at an average rate of 6 to 10 percent over the last 25 years (Ching-Yi, & Siew-

Voon, 2023). According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2024b), Malaysia's tourism industry is expected to contribute MYR198.7 billion to the country's 2024 GDP. Sabah is a state of Malaysia which is located in northern Borneo, in the East region of Malaysia. Sabah has the ability to contribute significantly to Malaysia's economic growth. According to Yusoh et al. (2022), the state's diversified products and attractions have led to increased domestic and international tourism. Tourists from other regions are drawn to the area's unique maritime and natural features, as well as its ethnic communities. Kundasang, a small town in Sabah's Ranau region, is a popular tourism destination for leisure tourists. Kundasang is nicknamed "Little New Zealand" due to its temperate climate and stunning natural terrain, which resembles New Zealand (Calameo, 2024). Nestled in the hilly scenery of Sabah's highlands, this destination offers a wonderful escape from metropolitan life, with breathtaking views and lush foliage. Kundasang offers a variety of activities in the region such as climbing Mount Kinabalu, the First World Heritage site, would be at the top of the list. Desa Dairy Farm offers leisure tourism opportunities, like cuddling with alpacas; as well as Kundasang War Memorial Park honours fallen WWII troops and attracts dark tourism enthusiasts.

Malaysia's youth travel market is divided into three segments: high school, higher education, and working young travellers (Mohamed et al., 2010). This study targeted university and college students age 18 to above 25 years old. This group travels for many reasons, such as leisure, education, visiting friends and family, and participating in sports and adventure tourism. Young travellers are independent and motivated to participate in tourism activities for various reasons, such as cultural tourism and education (Linh, 2015). University students can spread word-of-mouth marketing, indirectly influencing their classmates. Positive travel experiences increase trust and attract new travellers. Yoon and Uysal (2005) found that recommendations from previous visitors are the most reliable source of information for potential passengers. Young people must not only benefit from the return of tourism, but also actively participate in its development.

The motivation of university students to visit Kundasang could be significantly influenced by various push and pull factors. The push factors are the intangible, intrinsic, or internal motivations that drive someone to travel; in other words, they are the causes behind people's desire to leave their current environment (Michael, 2013). Most university students are stressed with dozens of assignments and coursework, which leads them to have little intention of escapism, getting self-reward and proper relaxation. Students usually see travel as an escape from studying, although people who work full- time frequently have to study during the holidays (Xiao et al., 2015). These students need stress relief and mental health breaks, yet there is limited understanding of how travel destinations like Kundasang can effectively cater to these needs. Yiamjanya et al. (2014) defined pull factors as tangible and intangible markers of a destination that appeal to individuals seeking a specific travel experience. Crompton's (1979) study found that motivation to visit sites is driven by pull factors such as accessibility, attractions, entertainment, and infrastructure. Green et al. (2014) study indicated that affordability, social possibilities, and cultural experiences have a major impact on young travellers, including university students. Therefore, there is a gap in understanding how these intrinsic and extrinsic motivations drive their travel intention and destination, particularly to destinations like Kundasang Sabah.

A study by Jensen et al. (2013) found that age, gender, education level, and income significantly impact travellers' use of the internet for travel-related information and social media sharing before, during, and after their trips. Youth and student travel is a global and fast rising phenomenon (Özdemir, 2020). These criteria were used to study the motivation to visit Kundasang. According to Pabel and Prideaux (2012), youth travellers are defined as those aged 18 to 35. Gender has a significant role in tourism, with varied experiences for men and women (Aziz et al., 2018). There is lack of evidence on how demographic patterns influence travel motivations, particularly in Kundasang, Sabah. Understanding demographic effects is vital for developing efficient tourist marketing strategies and increasing destination appeal to university students. Addressing this gap will help promote Kundasang as a top location for young travellers.

In conclusion, university students, who fall into young traveller category, play a significant role in the tourist market due to their motivations and travel preferences. Understanding these motivations is crucial for promoting sites like Kundasang, Sabah, that meet the needs of this demographic. The specific objectives of this paper are as follows:

1. To investigate the push and pull factors influencing the students' motivation to Kundasang, Sabah.
2. To explore students' push and pull factors visiting Kundasang, Sabah based on different demographic pattern.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Push Factors That Influence University Students' Motivation to Visit Kundasang, Sabah

According to Crompton (1979) push and pull variables play a crucial role in influencing an individual's motivation to travel. He identified push motivational variables as socio-psychological factors that urge tourists to visit any destination. Dann (1981) proposed the push and pull model is a well-known motivational theory in tourism. This theory describes push factors as an individual's intangible and intrinsic needs, wants, and desires. Crompton (1979) highlighted socio-psychological motivators as escape, adventure, and novelty as the key motives for travel. Dann (1981) broadened the definition of push incentives to include socio-psychological aspects such as relaxation, social connection, and escape/adventure. Uysal and Hagan (1993) defined the push model as the desire for adventure, prestige, knowledge, and social interactions. According to Kim et al. (2007), push factors represent travellers' demands and ambitions, and aid in understanding the reasons behind their desire to travel. Furthermore Baniya & Paudel (2016) suggests that university students are motivated by escapism, relaxation, prestige, and social connection.

Escapism and Relaxation

According to Michael (2013), university students are motivated to travel due to their desire for escapism, which involves seeking escape from unpleasant reality through diversion or imagination. Xiao et al. (2015) found that many students experience significant levels of stress in the academic environment due to intense coursework, assignments, and academic expectations. Stress might lead students to seek relaxation and rejuvenation outside of their academic environment. Richards and Wilson (2004) suggest that travel offers individuals a temporary escape from daily life, including academic commitments. According to Xiao et al. (2015), university students find that travelling provides a mental and emotional vacation from their studies. They also find the desire for a break from their daily routines especially appealing.

Prestige

According to Correia et al. (2012), tourism is a social necessity driven by a desire for prestige, whether travelling domestically or seeking out unusual experiences. Several studies have identified status as a crucial motivator in tourism. According to Correia et al. (2009), people who can travel economically have a higher level of prestige compared to those who spend the most money. Prestige strongly influences travel motivations, especially among university students. University students frequently use social media to share their travel experiences. According to Kuhn et al. (2021), using social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to share holiday experiences can boost a person's social status. Travel can be a powerful incentive for individuals seeking social recognition and identity enhancement. Students can elevate their social status by sharing trip photos and experiences with their friends. Munar and Jacobsen (2014) suggest that sharing travel experiences can boost social capital and shape peer perceptions. Sharing trip images and anecdotes can boost a student's social standing and win respect from peers.

Social Interaction

Guha (2009) suggested that tourists visit destinations to meet new people, socialise, and improve their social standing. Research suggests that social connection is a key motivator for university students to travel, as it fosters friendships, cultural exchanges, and interactions with locals, notably in Kundasang (Richards & Wilson, 2004). Visits to destinations like Kundasang inspire university students to explore new cultures and interact with other groups. Students participating in leisure activities like mountain climbing can share their travel experiences with other groups from different areas and countries, as well as the local guide.

Pull Factors That Influence University Students' Motivation to Visit Kundasang, Sabah

Pull factors refer to the tangible elements of tourism destinations. Pull motivations influence travel decisions (Abd Khalid et al, 2023). Paulino et al. (2021) found that different types of tourism have varied draw forces. Natural places like national parks and beaches tend to draw outdoor adventurers, while cultural destinations like heritage sites, museums, and art galleries appeal to those seeking experience and novelty. Dann (1977) found a correlation between pull factors and destination features. Crompton (1979) identified education and novelty as two pull factors that influence motivation. According to Mohsin et al. (2017), the draw factor is impacted by events and activities, accessibility and affordability, history and culture, variety seeking, adventure, natural resources, heritage sites, and sightseeing options. The motivating elements examined in this study include novelty, adventure activities, affordability, history and culture, and natural resources.

Novelty

Tourists' curiosity determines their trip plans. Guha (2009) found that people often travel to unfamiliar areas to try new activities. University students love research and discovery, making novelty a strong motivator. High-novelty seekers tend to examine local stimuli, such as cultural, regional, and socio-economic distinctions. Lee and Crompton's (1992) model suggests that an individual's level of arousal effects their novelty seeking behaviour and destination choice. Unique and new experiences appeal to high novelty seekers, leading to increased satisfaction and inclinations to return. According to Sintang et al. (2019), seasonal events, such as festivals, play a significant role in social cohesiveness among Sabah's many cultures, regardless of location. Visiting Kundasang offers university students a unique experience that differs from their urban academic atmosphere.

Adventure Activities

Adventure activities attract university students looking for excitement and new challenges, making them a popular tourist attraction. Kundasang, Sabah offers a variety of adventure options, making it a popular location for young travellers and university students. According to Mahazir et al. (2021), adventure travel has become increasingly popular among young people worldwide, especially in Malaysia. The state's unique geology and natural resources make it perfect for adventurous sports including as mountain climbing, paragliding, ziplining, and jungle trekking (Mat Som et al., 2024). Kundasang offers a variety of adventure activities for university students. For example, Mount Kinabalu Climbing is a demanding adventure that allows university students to test their physical stamina.

Affordability

Young people prioritise the expense of travel when planning a vacation, as they are more cost-sensitive (Lim et al., 2015). This is especially true for destinations like Kundasang, Sabah. Travel expenses include transportation, lodging, meals, and activities (Shafiqah, 2024). University students need economical solutions in these categories. Visitors must arrange for hotel, meals, and transportation in addition to their destination (Park et al., 2020). This is especially important for students from Peninsular Malaysia, as the costs of flights, ground transportation, and lodgings in Kundasang can quickly accumulate. Many students must travel via numerous locations to reach Kundasang, which can be time-consuming and costly.

History and Culture

History and culture attract visitors, particularly university students and youth travellers, who contribute significantly to the tourism economy. People are drawn to dark tourism for various reasons, such as curiosity, social interaction, and education (Abd. Khalid et al., 2023). Sabah's rich culture, mythology, and history attracts tourists from all over the world, especially those interested in visiting sites associated with tragedy and death (Abd. Khalid et al., 2023). Kundasang has many dark stories that might be transformed into dark tourism sites. The most popular dark tourism site is Kundasang War Memorial. Ware & Hudson (2010) integrating memorials into local cultural environments involves considering aesthetics, symbolism, structural components,

and tangible experience. Cultural tourism in Sabah, with its different cultures and ethnicities, holds significant potential for expanding the travel and tourism industry (Abdullah et al., 2019).

Natural Resources

Natural scenery is a big motivator for university students to visit Kundasang, Sabah. Kundasang is surrounded by vibrant evergreen forests. Kinabalu Park is approximately four kilometres from Kundasang. This location has one of the world's oldest tropical forest reserves with a rich range of species (Yusoh et al., 2022). The natural environment can motivate university students by providing a break from academic stress and metropolitan environs. This natural area is ideal for nature lovers, with stunning mountain views and various flora and fauna.

Demographic Profiles

Understanding university students' demographic patterns can provide light on their reasons and choices for visiting tourism destinations such as Kundasang, Sabah. Demographics such as age, gender, income, and education level strongly influence travel behaviour and choices. Travel limitations vary by demographic variables (Park et al., 2020). Age has a substantial impact on travel intentions and behaviours among university students. Most university students are between 18 and 25 years old, with a strong yearning for adventure and new experiences. Mallman and Lee (2016) found that older students aged 22–56 have diverse experiences, circumstances, needs, and interests. Travel serves as a means of learning, meeting new people, experiencing different cultures, developing jobs, self-improvement, and taking a break from reality (Gheţe, 2015). Differences in gender greatly impact university students' travel motivations, preferences, and behaviours, influencing destination selection, activities, and overall travel experiences. According to Kim et al. (2007) males are more physically active and participate in outdoor and sports activities than females. Kundasang's adventure activities, including as mountain trekking on Mount Kinabalu and exploring natural parks, are likely to attract male students looking for excitement, challenge, and novelty. Male and female university students have distinct lodging choices, with men opting for more inexpensive or adventurous options, while women prioritise amenities, safety, and comfort (Joshi, 2021). University students, who are typically low-income, are heavily influenced by their financial level when it comes to travel motivation. Carr (2005) reports that students paid for their holidays through personal savings, parental funds, and bank/student loans. University students prioritise cost management when travelling. To secure the greatest bargains when visiting Kundasang, some university students researched transportation, hotel, and tourism site entrance fees in advance. When travelling with a group, it is possible to split expenditures and save money on vacation. Furthermore, some university students had to work part-time to save money. This subsequently impacts their motivation to travel or earn extra money to support themselves while university.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative method was used to collect and analyse data in the study. The study’s data was gathered using questionnaires. The major platform utilized was Google Forms, and the survey was delivered to respondents using online media such as WhatsApp, making it simpler to reach a large audience from multiple public universities. The questionnaire contains easy and straightforward questions that take only a few minutes to answer, allowing the respondent to complete it more quickly. The content of this questionnaire is straightforward and precise for the respondent to grasp, as it was designed using unambiguous English language. The questionnaire was divided into three section. A (demographic characteristics), B (push factors motivation – elements that influence personal desire), and C (pull factors motivation – factors influencing destination preferences). The Likert-scale was employed in the questionnaire to categorize respondents’ levels of agreement or disagreement with the provided statements. Simple random sample was used, with 150 university students selected to visit Kundasang, Sabah. Questionnaire were distributed from September to November 2024. This study analyses data using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and collects data through a questionnaire.

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FINDINGS

Demographic profiles of respondents

Table 1 provides demographic statistics to analyse university students' motivation for visiting Kundasang. The demographic components include gender, age, source of income and educational level. The majority of respondents in this study are between 23-24 years old. The total number of respondents is 87, or 58%. The age group of 21-22 years old has the second greatest number of responders (32 or 21%), followed by the age group of 18-20 years old (22 or 73.15%). Finally, there are just 9 responses aged 25 and above, accounting for 6% of the total. Finally, as for the gender, female respondents outnumbered male respondents by 118 (or 79%) to 32 (21%).

Table 1: Demographic profiles of respondents (N=150)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	32	21.0
	Female	118	79.0
Age	18 – 20	22	15.0
	21 - 22	32	21.0
	23 - 24	87	58.0
	25 and above	9	6.0
Source of Income	Scholarship	26	17.3
	PTPTN* or Student Loan	86	57.3
	Allowance (from family etc.)	36	24.0
	Others	2	1.4
Educational Level	Foundation	8	5.0
	Diploma	10	7.0
	Degree	131	87.0
	Master of PhD	1	1.0

Note: *PTPTN is a Malaysian government agency that provides educational loans for tertiary education to Malaysian students

The questionnaire asked about university students' income sources, with PTPTN or other student loans accounting for 57.3% of respondents (86 in total). Those receiving family allowance have the second biggest number of respondents (36, or 24%), followed by those receiving scholarships (26, or 17.3%). Only 2 of respondents, or 1.4% rely on other sources of income such as working.

Finally, the questionnaire reveals the respondent's educational level. The majority of respondents. 131 (87%), are degree students. Diploma and Foundation students accounted for a considerable number of respondents (10 and 8 respectively, or 7% and 5%). The lowest percentage, with only one respondent (1%) is Master or PhD students.

Research Objective 1: To investigate the push and pull factors influencing the students' motivation to Kundasang, Sabah.

Table 2 shows the data analysis on push factors that motivates university students to visit Kundasang, Sabah. The dataset includes frequency, percentage, mean, median, mode and standard deviation.

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Table 2: Push factors motivating university students to Kundasang, Sabah (N=150)

Push Factors	Scale	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I want to visit Kundasang to relieve the work stress.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4.59	0.625
	Disagree	1	1.0		
	Neutral	8	5.0		
	Agree	42	28.0		
	Strongly Agree	99	66.0		
2. I want to visit Kundasang to experience different environment.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4.60	0.645
	Disagree	3	2.0		
	Neutral	4	2.6		
	Agree	43	28.7		
	Strongly Agree	100	66.7		
3. I am visiting Kundasang to relax my mind.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4.59	0.637
	Disagree	2	1.4		
	Neutral	6	4.0		
	Agree	44	29.3		
	Strongly Agree	98	65.3		
4. I want to find thrills and excitement in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4.47	0.784
	Disagree	4	2.6		
	Neutral	22	7.4		
	Agree	45	30.0		
	Strongly Agree	90	60.0		
5. I want to meet new people.	Strongly Disagree	2	1.4	3.94	1.051
	Disagree	14	9.4		
	Neutral	33	22.0		
	Agree	43	28.6		
	Strongly Agree	58	38.6		
6. I want to enhance my social circle.	Strongly Disagree	3	2.0	3.95	1.015
	Disagree	8	5.3		
	Neutral	39	26.0		
	Agree	44	29.4		
	Strongly Agree	56	37.3		

The first item in push factor analysis is ‘I want to visit Kundasang to relieve work stress’. Strongly agree received the most responses, with 99 (66%), followed by agree (42,28%). Eight respondents (5%) chose neutral, whereas only one respondent (1%) disagreed. The second item is ‘I want to visit Kundasang to experience a different environment’. Out of 150 respondents, 66.7% strongly agree with the statement, with 43 (28.7%) agreeing, ranking it second highest. The percentage of respondents who chose neutral has steadily decreased to 2.6% (4 respondents) opt to disagree. ‘I am visiting Kundasang to relax my mind’ is the third item. The majority of respondents, 98 out of 150, or 65.3% strongly agree with the statement. 44 respondents, or 29.3% agreed with the statement. The neutral scale point, with a frequency of 6 (4%), is the third highest. There are only 2 respondents (1.4%) who disagree with the statement, with none choosing strongly disagree.

The fourth item is ‘I want to find thrills and excitement in Kundasang’. The research found that 60% (90 out of 150) respondents strongly agree with the statement. There are 45 respondents (30%) who agree with the statement, and 11 respondents (7.4%) who are neutral. Out of the total respondents, only 4 (2.6%) disagreed with the statement. This item also included no responses who strongly disagreed with the assertion. The analysis of the fifth item, ‘I want to meet new people’, found that respondents strongly agreed, agreed and were neutral [58 (38.6%); 43 (28/6%); and 33 (22%)]. The disagree and strongly disagree scales received the fewest responses, with 14 (9.4%) and 2 (1.4%) respectively. The analysis found that 100 out of 150 respondents strongly agreed with the statement ‘I wish to enhance my social circle’, with 56 (37.3%) and 44

(29.4%) also agreeing. Approximately 26% of respondents are ambivalent on the issue. Out of 150 responders, only 11 decided to disagree (5.3%) or strongly disagree (2%) with the statement.

Table 3 shows the data analysis on pull factors that motivates university students to visit Kundasang, Sabah. The dataset includes frequency, percentage, mean, median, mode and standard deviation.

Table 3: Pull factors motivating university students to Kundasang, Sabah (N=150)

Pull Factors	Scale	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I am interested in visiting historical buidings in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4.33	0.855
	Disagree	8	5.4		
	Neutral	14	9.4		
	Agree	49	32.6		
	Strongly Agree	79	52.6		
2. I am likely to engage in adventure activities in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4.43	0.763
	Disagree	4	2.7		
	Neutral	13	8.7		
	Agree	48	32.0		
	Strongly Agree	85	56.6		
3. The price of accommodation in Kundasang is affordable.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	3.97	0.862
	Disagree	4	2.7		
	Neutral	46	30.7		
	Agree	51	34.0		
	Strongly Agree	49	32.6		
4. The entry fee of tourist attraction is inexpensive.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	3.92	0.863
	Disagree	5	3.3		
	Neutral	47	31.4		
	Agree	53	35.3		
	Strongly Agree	45	30.0		
5. I want to visit Kundasang to experience good weather.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4.59	0.580
	Disagree	0	0.0		
	Neutral	7	4.7		
	Agree	47	31.3		
	Strongly Agree	96	64.0		
6. I want to experience the outstanding scenery in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4.69	0.530
	Disagree	0	0.0		
	Neutral	5	3.3		
	Agree	36	24.0		
	Strongly Agree	109	72.7		
7. The historical sites in Kundasang that reflect the culture, art, and traditions attract me to visit.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4.29	0.840
	Disagree	7	4.6		
	Neutral	16	10.6		
	Agree	53	35.4		
	Strongly Agree	74	49.4		
8. I want to visit Kundasang to try its local cuisine.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4.29	0.773
	Disagree	2	1.3		

	Neutral	23	15.2		
	Agree	54	36.2		
	Strongly Agree	71	47.3		
9. I want to learn new culture in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4.35	0.761
	Disagree	4	2.7		
	Neutral	14	9.3		
	Agree	57	38.0		
	Strongly Agree	75	50.0		

The data analysis begins with the statement, 'I am interested in visiting historical buildings in Kundasang'. The majority of respondents (52.6%) opted highly agree, while 49 respondents (32.6%) agreed with the statement. The third biggest percentage of respondents (14, or 9.4%) were neutral on the statement. Only 8 respondents, or 5.4% strongly disagree with the assertion, whereas the majority of the public does not. 'I am likely to engage in adventure activities in Kundasang' is the second factor. 133 out of 150 respondents expressed interest in the statement, with 85 (56.6%) strongly agreeing, 48 (32%) agreeing, and 13 (8.7%) remaining indifferent. Only 4 (2.7%) of respondents disagreed with the proposal, an none strongly disagreed. The next factor is 'the cost of accommodation in Kundasang is reasonable'. The data analysis shows that the majority of respondents considered the pricing to be affordable, with 49 (32.6%) highly agreeing and 51 (34%) agreeing. However, 46 (30.7%) responses are ambivalent, showing that some students find the cost appropriate while others disagree. Four out of 150 responders, (2.7%) chose the 'disagree' point scale.

The fourth item is 'the entry fee of tourist attractions is inexpensive'. The data shows that most university students are motivated to visit Kundasang by the statement. A total of 65.3% of respondents agreed with the statement, with 53 (35.3%) agreeing and 45 (30%) strongly agreeing. However, a significant proportion of responders (31.4%) remain impartial. Only 5 respondents (3.3%) disagree with the statement, and there is no indication of substantial disagreement. The fifth item is 'I wish to visit Kundasang to experience good weather'. 96 people (64%) strongly agree, with another 47 (31.3%) agreeing, for a total positive answer of 95.3%. Out of 66 respondents (4.7%), 7 were neutral, and none expressed dissent. The sixth item is 'I want to experience the outstanding scenery in Kundasang'. Data study shows that university students are particularly inspired to visit Kundasang due to its stunning surroundings. The majority of respondents (96.7%) showed favourable interest, with 109 (72.7%) strongly agreeing and 36 (24%) agreeing. Five respondents (3.3%) chose to remain impartial, with no disagreements. I am interested in visiting Kundasang's historical places that showcase its culture, art, and customs (item 7). 84.8% of respondents reacted positively, with 74 (49.4%) strongly agreeing and 53 (35.4%) agreeing that the phrase encourages them to visit Kundasang. Out of 150 responders, 16 (10.6%) were neutral, and 7 (4.6%) disagreed with the statement. The eighth item is 'I want to visit Kundasang to enjoy its local food'. According to the research, the majority of students are interested in visiting Kundasang for its local food, with 71 (47.3%) highly agreeing and 54 (36.2%) agreeing. 15.2% (23 respondents) stay neutral, while 1.3% (two respondents) disagree with the statement. Last but not least, item ninth: 'I wish to learn about new cultures in Kundasang'. A total of 88% indicated interest, with 50% strongly agreeing and 38% agreeing that learning about the culture is one of the motivating factors. Only 9.3% of responses are neutral, with 4 and 2.7% disagreeing with the assertion.

Research Objective 2: To explore students' push and pull factors visiting Kundasang, Sabah based on different demographic pattern.

Table 4 shows the push and pull factors that motivate male and female respondents to visit Kundasang, Sabah. Across most push variables, both genders express strong support for visiting Kundasang to relieve work stress, enjoy a new environment and rest their thoughts. Interestingly, a higher percentage of women (82 out of 150) than men (18 out of 150) strongly agree with these reasons. Compared to 18 men, 72 women strongly think that thrill-seeking is important. Social motives, such as meeting new people and expanding social circles, follow a similar pattern, with females agreeing more strongly. This shows that ladies, as opposed to males, are more motivated to visit Kundasang for emotional and social reasons. However, a higher percentage of males remain indifferent or disagree with these incentives.

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Table 4: Push and Pull factors based on different gender of respondents to visit Kundasang, Sabah (N=150)

GENDER			
Push Factors	**Scale**	**Male**	**Female**
		Frequency	**Frequency**
1. I want to visit Kundasang to relieve the work stress.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	2	1
	Neutral	1	3
	Agree	11	32
	Strongly Agree	18	82
2. I want to visit Kundasang to experience different environment.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	2	1
	Neutral	1	3
	Agree	11	32
	Strongly Agree	18	82
3. I am visiting Kundasang to relax my mind.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	2	1
	Neutral	1	3
	Agree	11	32
	Strongly Agree	18	82
4. I want to find thrills and excitement in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	0	4
	Neutral	2	9
	Agree	12	33
	Strongly Agree	18	72
5. I want to meet new people.	Strongly Disagree	0	2
	Disagree	4	10
	Neutral	3	30
	Agree	10	33
	Strongly Agree	15	43
6. I want to enhance my social circle.	Strongly Disagree	1	2
	Disagree	1	7
	Neutral	8	31
	Agree	10	34
	Strongly Agree	12	44
Pull Factors			
1. I am interested in visiting historical buidings in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	4	4
	Neutral	4	10
	Agree	7	42
	Strongly Agree	17	62
2. I am likely to engage in adventure activities in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	1	3
	Neutral	3	10
	Agree	11	37
	Strongly Agree	17	68
3. The price of accommodation in Kundasang is affordable.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	1	3
	Neutral	9	37
	Agree	10	41
	Strongly Agree	12	37

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4. The entry fee of tourist attraction is inexpensive.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	0	5
	Neutral	5	42
	Agree	12	41
	Strongly Agree	15	30
5. I want to visit Kundasang to experience good weather.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	0	0
	Neutral	3	4
	Agree	8	39
	Strongly Agree	21	75
6. I want to experience the outstanding scenery in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	0	0
	Neutral	2	3
	Agree	8	28
	Strongly Agree	22	87
7. The historical sites in Kundasang that reflect the culture, art, and traditions attract me to visit.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	2	5
	Neutral	3	13
	Agree	9	44
	Strongly Agree	18	56
8. I want to visit Kundasang to try its local cuisine.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	0	2
	Neutral	6	17
	Agree	7	47
	Strongly Agree	19	52
9. I want to learn new culture in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	1	3
	Neutral	1	13
	Agree	13	44
	Strongly Agree	17	58

Regarding pull factors, both genders are drawn to Kundasang because of its natural beauty and pleasant weather, with 87 females and 22 males strongly agreeing that the scenery as an important attraction. Historical and cultural components are also important, especially for women, with 56 strongly aggreging that cultural and traditional reflections are appealing. Another large pull factors is adventure activities, which 68 females and 17 males enthusiastically agree to participate in. affordability considerations, such as lodging and entry fees, elicit a more neutral response, while a greater proportion of females believe they are reasonable. The findings of his study reveals that, while both genders are drawn to Kundasang's natural and cultural settings, females are more enthusiastic about both push and pull incentives.

Table 5: Push and Pull factors based on different age of respondents to visit Kundasang, Sabah (N=150)

AGE					
Push Factors	**Scale**	**18-20 years old**	**21-22years old**	**23-24 years old**	**25 years old and above**
		Frequency	**Frequency**	**Frequency**	**Frequency**
1. I want to visit Kundasang to relieve the work stress.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	1	1	1
	Neutral	3	0	1	0
	Agree	6	10	27	0
	Strongly Agree	13	21	58	8
2. I want to visit	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0

Kundasang to experience different environment.	Disagree	0	1	1	1
	Neutral	3	0	1	0
	Agree	6	10	27	0
	Strongly Agree	13	21	58	8
3. I am visiting Kundasang to relax my mind.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	1	0	0	1
	Neutral	1	1	4	0
	Agree	10	13	21	0
	Strongly Agree	10	18	62	8
4. I want to find thrills and excitement in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	2	1	0	1
	Neutral	3	3	5	0
	Agree	6	11	28	0
	Strongly Agree	11	17	54	8
5. I want to meet new people.	Strongly Disagree	1	0	0	0
	Disagree	2	1	1	2
	Neutral	5	4	8	0
	Agree	6	14	29	2
	Strongly Agree	8	13	49	5
6. I want to enhance my social circle.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	2	0
	Disagree	4	2	7	1
	Neutral	6	3	21	3
	Agree	5	14	20	4
	Strongly Agree	7	13	37	1
Pull Factors					
1. I am interested in visiting historical buidings in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	2	2	2	2
	Neutral	2	3	8	1
	Agree	8	5	34	2
	Strongly Agree	19	22	43	4
2. I am likely to engage in adventure activities in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	1	1	2
	Neutral	4	2	7	0
	Agree	6	9	32	1
	Strongly Agree	12	20	47	6
3. The price of accommodation in Kundasang is affordable.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	1	1	2	0
	Neutral	12	7	25	2
	Agree	2	12	34	3
	Strongly Agree	7	12	26	4
4. The entry fee of tourist attraction is inexpensive.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	5	0
	Neutral	13	8	24	2
	Agree	4	14	32	3
	Strongly Agree	5	10	26	4
5. I want to visit Kundasang to experience good weather.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Neutral	2	1	4	0
	Agree	10	9	26	2
	Strongly Agree	10	22	57	7
6. I want to	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0

experience the outstanding scenery in Kundasang.	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Neutral	3	1	0	1
	Agree	5	8	23	0
	Strongly Agree	14	23	64	8
7. The historical sites in Kundasang that reflect the culture, art, and traditions attract me to visit.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	2	1	3	1
	Neutral	6	5	5	0
	Agree	7	8	5	3
	Strongly Agree	7	18	44	5
8. I want to visit Kundasang to try its local cuisine.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	1	1	0
	Neutral	6	3	14	0
	Agree	7	8	35	4
	Strongly Agree	9	20	37	5
9. I want to learn new culture in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	1	1	2	0
	Neutral	4	2	7	1
	Agree	6	8	41	2
	Strongly Agree	11	21	37	6

The information in Table 5 illustrates the push and pull factors that encourage various age groups to travel to Kundasang, Sabah. The age group of 23-24 years old regularly exhibits the highest level of agreement across all categories of push factors. This group's main motivations are driven by the desire to relieve work stress (58 respondents strongly agree), explore a new setting (58 strongly agree) and relax their min (62 strongly agree). Additionally, they show the strongest interest in meeting new people (49 strongly agree) and pursuing thrills and excitement (54 strongly agree). The group aged 25 and above, on the other hand, shows the lowest levels of agreement across all push factors, suggesting that older respondents are less driven to travel to Kundasang for social and emotional reasons. Younger respondents (18-22 years old) exhibit moderate agreement, indicating that these internal considerations motivate them to some extent but not as strongly as those in 23-24 age range.

The age group of 23 to 24 continues to be the most impacted by the outside attractions when looking at pull factors. They are most in agreement when it comes to taking in the outstanding scenery (64 strongly agree), engaging in adventure activities (47 strongly agree) and enjoying the good weather (57 strongly agree). With 41 respondents agreeing and 37 strongly agreeing to learn new cultures in Kundasang, this age group also indicates a high level of interest in local cuisine and culture. While the 25 and above age group once again exhibits the least amount of enthusiasm, the 18-20 and 21-22 age groups show a considerable level of agreement with these draw factors. Notably, reactions to affordability criteria like lodging and admission costs are more neutral across all age groups, indicating that money considerations may not be a major driver for most respondents.

Overall, the data shows a clear trend in which people aged 23-24 are more motivated by both push and pull factors, making them more likely to visit Kundasang for a variety of reasons. This group seeks both emotional release and new experiences, such as outdoor activities and cultural exploration. The 18-20 age group is likewise interested, albeit to a lesser amount, while the 25 and older group remains the least driven across all categories. These data imply that Kundasang tourism operations should profit from targeting the 23-24 age demographic with advertisements centred on adventure, relaxation, and cultural activities, as they are the most engaged and passionate group.

Table 6: Push and Pull factors based on different source of income of respondents to visit Kundasang, Sabah (N=150)

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SOUURCE OF INCOME					
Push Factors	**Scale**	**Scholarship**	**PTPTN* or Student Loan**	**Allowance (from family etc.)**	**Others**
		Frequency	**Frequency**	**Frequency**	**Frequency**
1. I want to visit Kundasang to relieve the work stress.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	1	1	0
	Neutral	0	3	3	0
	Agree	8	28	8	0
	Strongly Agree	18	54	24	2
2. I want to visit Kundasang to experience different environment.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	1	1	0
	Neutral	0	3	3	0
	Agree	8	28	8	0
	Strongly Agree	18	54	24	2
3. I am visiting Kundasang to relax my mind.	Strongly Disagree	18	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	1	1	0
	Neutral	0	3	3	0
	Agree	0	28	8	0
	Strongly Agree	8	54	24	2
4. I want to find thrills and excitement in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	3	1	0
	Neutral	3	4	4	0
	Agree	8	30	7	0
	Strongly Agree	15	49	24	2
5. I want to meet new people.	Strongly Disagree	0	1	1	0
	Disagree	2	8	3	0
	Neutral	6	18	9	0
	Agree	4	28	11	0
	Strongly Agree	13	31	12	2
6. I want to enhance my social circle.	Strongly Disagree	0	2	1	0
	Disagree	2	2	4	0
	Neutral	6	22	11	0
	Agree	6	31	6	1
	Strongly Agree	12	29	14	1
Pull Factors					
1. I am interested in visiting historical buidings in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	1	3	4	0
	Neutral	1	8	5	0
	Agree	6	33	9	1
	Strongly Agree	18	42	18	1
2. I am likely to engage in adventure activities in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	3	1	0
	Neutral	3	6	4	0
	Agree	4	34	10	0
	Strongly Agree	19	43	21	2
3. The price of accommodation in Kundasang is affordable.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	3	1	0
	Neutral	2	30	12	2
	Agree	11	28	12	0
	Strongly Agree	13	25	11	0
4. The entry fee of tourist	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0	0

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attraction is inexpensive.	Neutral	0	4	3	0
	Agree	3	29	14	1
	Strongly Agree	23	53	19	1
5. I want to visit Kundasang to experience good weather.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Neutral	0	4	3	0
	Agree	3	29	14	1
	Strongly Agree	23	53	19	1
6. I want to experience the outstanding scenery in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Neutral	0	3	2	0
	Agree	4	26	6	0
	Strongly Agree	22	57	28	2
7. The historical sites in Kundasang that reflect the culture, art, and traditions attract me to visit.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	2	0	5	0
	Neutral	2	9	5	0
	Agree	6	33	13	1
	Strongly Agree	16	44	13	1
8. I want to visit Kundasang to try its local cuisine.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	1	1	0
	Neutral	1	15	6	1
	Agree	11	27	15	1
	Strongly Agree	14	43	14	0
9. I want to learn new culture in Kundasang.	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	2	2	0
	Neutral	2	6	6	0
	Agree	13	32	11	1
	Strongly Agree	11	46	17	1

Note: *PTPTN is a Malaysian government agency that provides educational loans for tertiary education to Malaysian students

Table 6 shows how respondents with various sources of income are influenced by push and pull variables when opting to visit Kundasang, Sabah. Among the push factors, respondents who get PTPTN or student loans have the highest levels of agreement in most categories. For example, 54 respondents in this category highly agree that they want to go to Kundasang to relieve work stress, explore a new environment and relax their thoughts. Similarly, this group is really enthusiastic about discovering thrills and expanding their social network. Those receiving scholarships and allowances, on the other hand, show lower levels of agreement, although expressing considerable interest in these motives. Respondents with 'other' sources of income are the least motivated of all push factors with only a small percentage (0-2) strongly agreeing with any given statement.

Regarding pull factors, the trend is consistent. PTPTN students again express the strongest agreement with comments about Kundasang's attractions, such as adventurous activities (43 strongly agree) and the outstanding scenery (57 strongly agree). Scholarship students are likewise quite interested in these pull factors, particularly historical structures and local food, with 18 an 14 respondents strongly agreeing respectively. In comparison, students receiving family allowances show moderate agreement on most pull factors but are less motivated by economic issues such as accommodation and admission fees. Respondents with other income sources show little agreement across all pull factors, with no more that two respondents strongly agreeing with any category.

Overall, the data reveals that PTPTN beneficiaries are the most motivated group, driven by both internal desires (push factors) and external attraction (pull factors), thus the most likely to visit Kundasang. Students receiving scholarship have significant curiosity, perhaps to a lesser extent. Meanwhile, those who rely on family allowances and other forms of money demonstrate lower levels of drive. This suggests that tourism marketing in Kundasang could be most effective if it focusses on students receiving financial aid and emphases the area's relaxing environment, adventure activities and cultural experiences.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Several related push and pull questions were posed to understand the motivation of university students to visit Kundasang, Sabah. Most received responses focus on internal factors such as escape and relaxation. These variables highlighted students' desire for a vacation from everyday routines and academic stress. The findings of this study is consistent with Radzol et al. (2024), travellers often attempt to escape from stressful or hard situations. Out of 150 responders, item 2 'I wish to visit Kundasang to experience a different environment' was the most significant push reason, with 100% strongly agreeing. Kundasang is a popular destination for students seeking a break from their everyday routines. Theme parks and natural parks offer tourists a sense of escapism (Radzol et al., 2024; Anton Clave et al., 2023). The tranquil atmosphere provides a rejuvenating experience for university students. Hassell et al. (2015) suggest that nature-based tourism can help travellers relax by removing them from daily routines. According to Egger, Lei, and Wassler (2020), such encounters allow travellers to disconnect from their technology-driven lifestyles, leading to a sense of well-being and escape.

To determine the characteristics that motivate university students to visit Kundasang, Sabah, numerous destination attributes were studied, including novelty, adventurous activities, affordability, history and culture, and natural resources. According to Yang, Ayavoo, and Ab Aziz (2023), a destination with high quality, affordable rates, convenient access, fantastic location, supporting policies, and unique features can attract visitors and foster favourable word-of mouth and repeat visits. Natural resources were shown to be a strong motivator for visitors to these sites. According to Hassell, Moore, and Macbeth (2015), the majority of visitors prefer to spend their free time in nature. Item 6, 'I wish to experience the wonderful scenery in Kundasang', garnered the most highly agreed responses, with 106 out of 150 respondents choosing this answer. The destination's natural beauty fulfils students' need for a peaceful and picturesque environment, providing an unforgettable experience. Lončarić, et al. (2021) found that travellers are inspired by natural beauty and landscapes, regardless of location. The natural features, including Mount Kinabalu, lush green valleys, and a temperate atmosphere, offer a unique backdrop for outdoor activities. According to Geetha et al. (2021), hiking is an adventurous sport that promotes health and relaxation while enjoying beautiful mountain views, dawn and sunset, and comfortable temperatures.

The examination of gender-based motivations for visiting Kundasang, Sabah, indicates significant disparities in push and pull factors between male and female respondents. Females tend to agree more on push factors, which are innate motives that drives people to travel. A high number of female respondents (82 out of 150) strongly agrees that the primary motivators are reducing stress, experiencing a new surroundings, and relaxing their brains. In comparison, just 18 of 150 male respondents strongly agree with these motivations. This gap shows that females prefer to travel for emotional and psychological relief. This finding is consistent with recent studies showing that woman prioritise mental relaxation and escape in their travel reasons (Kim et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2022).

Gender disparities exist in both thrill-seeking and social reasons. 72 female respondents strongly agree with craving thrills and excitement, but just 18 males do. Similarly, females are more likely to agree with social incentives like meeting new people and expanding their social circles. This pattern suggests that females are more motivated by the social and adventurous aspects of travel than males. These findings are consistent with research indicating that woman appreciate learning about different cultures and participating in physical activities during vacation (Chiang & Jokubauskaite, 2022; Li et al., 2021).

Regarding pull factors, which are a destination's external attractions, Kundasang's natural beauty and pleasant weather appeal to both genders. However, the strength of this attraction caries, with 87 females and 22 males

strongly believing that the scenery is a major draw. This shows that, while both genders value natural beauty, females have a larger preferences for such qualities. This choice is consistent with research showing that women place a higher value on destination qualities such as natural scenery (Wong et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2023). Female respondents place a high value on cultural and historical attractions. Fifty-six females strongly agree that cultural and traditional reflections are appealing, while fewer males do so. This suggest that women are more interested in cultural experiences, which supports the conclusion that cultural possibilities motivate women's travel decisions (Chiang & Jokubauskaite, 2022; Li et al., 2021).

Adventure activities emerge as another significant pull factor for gender differences. Sixty-eight females and seventeen males strongly support engaging in such activities. This contradicts several research that imply men are more drawn towards adventure tourism (Kim et al., 2010), demonstrating that in the case of visiting Kundasang, female are more enthusiastic about adventure activities. Recent research show that as social norms change, women are more increasingly engaging in risky and experiential travel (Yang et al., 2022). Affordability considerations such as lodging and entry fees elicit neutral views from both genders, with a higher majority of females agreeing they are reasonable. This implies that, while cost is important, it is not the primary motivator for either gender. However, the slightly higher agreement among females may represent a stronger sensitivity to price, which is consistent with studies showing that women value price and cleanliness feature more than men (Wong et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2023).

The findings indicate that different age groups exhibit varying degrees of motivation influenced by push and pull factors when deciding to visit Kundasang, Sabah. According to the findings, the 23-24 age group is most driven by both push and pull forces while planning a trip to Kundasang, Sabah. This population is motivated mostly by the need to relieve work stress, seek new experiences and engage in social contacts. Their keen interest in adventurous activities, cultural discovery and the natural beauty of Kundasang demonstrates their desire for immersive and innovative experiences. These trends are consistent with previous research indicating that younger individuals prioritise experiential and emotional relief through travel (Crompton, 1979; Yousaf et al., 2018; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). In contrast, the group aged 25 and up has the lowest levels of agreement across all categories, implying that older people are less motivated by emotional and experience drivers. Their diminished participation could be attributed to lifestyle constraints and a desire for familiar situations (Dann, 1981). The 18-22 age group is moderately motivated, reflecting their transitional period between scholastic expectations and social exploration (Pearce, 2005).

The study found that financial considerations such as accommodation and entry fees have no significant impact on travel motivations across age groups, implying that the perceived value of the experience surpasses cost concerns (Kim et al., 2011; Chen & Chen, 2015). These findings have important implications for Kundasang tourist marketers, who may benefit from targeting the 23-24 age group with ads that emphasise adventure, cultural encounters, and mental rest. Future research should look into additional demographic variables, such as education and income levels, to gain a better understanding of travel reasons and optimise marketing methods.

The study found that the source of income has a substantial impact on the push and pull variables that motivate visitors to Kundasang, Sabah. PTPTN loan receivers have the highest levels of motivation, driven by the desire to reduce stress, explore new locations, and participate in adventure activities, which aligns with Crompton's (1979) push-pull hypothesis. Scholarship recipients are also highly motivated, particularly towards natural beauty and adventure, implying that consistent financial support encourages participation in various and meaningful experiences (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). Respondents who rely on family allowances, on the other hand, showed modest motivation, probably due to financial constraints that limit their travel behaviour (Jang & Wu, 2006). Those with other money sources have the lowest motivation across push and pull elements, demonstrating that external financial assistance is important in determining travel preferences (Kozak, 2002). Kundasang's scenic environment, pleasant weather, and cultural legacy continue to be important draws for people of all economic levels, however financial considerations differ. These findings indicate that marketing methods emphasising affordability and unique experiences would be most effective in reaching financially supported young adults (Dann, 1981; Kim et al., 2019).

In conclusion, the current study found substantial gender disparities in travel reasons to Kundasang, Sabah. Females have a larger preference for both push elements (emotional relief and social involvement) and pull aspects (natural beauty, cultural experiences, and adventure activities). Males, while likewise drawn to these qualities, have a lesser level of agreement on these factors. These findings show that Kundasang's tourism marketing strategy should account for gender disparities. Promoting emotional relaxation, cultural richness, and adventure opportunities may appeal more to female travellers, but emphasising other characteristics may be more beneficial for male audiences. Future research should explore deeper into the underlying causes of these gender discrepancies, perhaps investigating social influences and personal beliefs that determine travel intentions. Furthermore, investigating other demographic variables, such as age and socioeconomic position, may provide a more thorough picture of visitor motivations, allowing for more targeted and effective marketing campaigns.

According to the study, age has a significant impact on travel motives, with the 23-24 age group showing the highest levels of enthusiasm to visit Kundasang, Sabah. This group is primarily motivated by the need to relieve stress, explore new settings, and participate in adventurous and cultural experiences, demonstrating a high willingness to try new and interesting activities (Iso-Ahola, 1982). The 18-22 age group is moderately motivated, balancing academic commitments with social and experimental activities. In contrast, the 25 and older group has the lowest motivation, implying that older persons may prioritise other duties or have different leisure preferences (Dann, 1981). These patterns demonstrate how life stages impact the push and pull variables that influence travel decisions. Financial issues, such as lodging and registration costs, have no substantial impact on travel decisions across any age group. Instead, emotional and experiential aspects, including stress alleviation and sensory stimulation, are more important—especially among younger respondents. These findings have practical significance for Kundasang tourism marketing, highlighting the necessity of promoting the area's natural beauty, adventurous activities, and cultural richness. To maximise impact, marketing initiatives targeting the 23-24 age range should focus on themes of exhilaration, stress alleviation, and cultural immersion (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Future research might investigate additional demographic characteristics such as wealth, education, and travel frequency, or use a longitudinal approach to follow how motives change over time (Li et al., 2013). Understanding these patterns will allow tourism stakeholders to adapt experiences to a variety of age groups and increase visitor satisfaction.

Finally, the study found that the source of income has a substantial influence on the push and pull variables that drive visitors to Kundasang, Sabah. Motivated by more spending power, PTPTN loan beneficiaries are the most motivated, driven by psychological needs and the destination's price, although scholarship recipients are also quite interested, particularly in natural and cultural attractions. Those who rely on family allowances or other sources of income, on the other hand, are less motivated, highlighting the importance of financial freedom in shaping travel behaviour (Jang & Wu, 2006). As highlighted by Lim et al. (2015) that young people prioritise cost-effective travel while planning their vacation. These findings suggest that tourism marketing methods should be customised to different socioeconomic groups, emphasising low-cost adventure and natural experiences for financially supported students while advertising exclusive services to individuals with independent or family financial assistance. Future research should look into additional elements including social media influence and peer recommendations, as well as longitudinal studies to see how financial conditions change people's willingness to travel. Such insights would allow tourism stakeholders to create more successful, tailored marketing strategies that address the different motives of potential Kundasang, Sabah visitors (Chen & Wu, 2009).

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