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COMPARISONS OF TOURIST CIRCUIT PATTERN AT SELECTED TOURISM DESTINATION IN SABAH, MALAYSIA

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Abstract

The tourist circuit pattern is one of the factors that are influenced by tourists' willingness to pay for a vacation at a tourist destination. As such, this article will examine the relationship between tourist space and willingness to pay in Kundasang - Ranau and Kota Belud, Sabah. The assessment and case study methods were used in the research. The study used quantitative methodologies, including a questionnaire survey of 150 respondents who visited selected tourist locations in Kundasang-Ranau and 93 respondents who visited Kota Belud. The survey's findings indicated that the majority of respondents (87.3% - Kundasang, Ranau) and (61.3%- Kota Belud) who visited the two study locations traveled privately and prioritized destinations they had never visited while selecting tourist destinations. The majority of respondents (70%) in Kundasang - Ranau agreed that the fee rate charged has an effect on the direction of their journey. In Kundasang - Ranau, the respondent's roaming space is dictated by the tourism package, and the tourist attraction visited by the respondent is nearby, whereas in Kota Belud, the opposite is true. Following that, the bulk of respondents who arrived at Kota Belud were determined by their roaming space in accordance with the institution or organization's determination. The study's findings also revealed that the majority of respondents who visited the two study areas did so on their own and that the tourist destinations visited were relatively near together.

Keywords: Tourist Roaming Space, Willingness to Pay, Tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the travel of people in a short period of time to a destination that is not their home or place of work (Muljadi, 2009; Yu et al., 2017). Tourism is defined by Vanhove (2005) and Badrudin (2001) as a temporary visit activity that lasts at least 24 hours in the location visited. The UNWTO (2020) underlines that tourism is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that entails a person traveling to a country or location beyond their normal environment for personal, business, or professional reasons. Tourism geography considers a variety of factors, including tourism activities that are spatial in nature. In this sense, the spatial dimension of tourism activities can be viewed on four distinct scales: global, national, regional, and local (Pearce, 1995; Lau & McKercher, 2006).

Tourism research entails three major geographical components in the movement of a tourist. Among these components are tourist-generating places, tourist destinations, and travel routes connecting two groups of locations referred to as transits (Leiper, 1979; Leiper, 2004; Flognfeldt, 2005). When tourists engage in tourism activities, this mobility results in the creation of the idea of tourist space. A tourism wildlife route is one that connects at least three main tourist locations (Dam, 2016; Leiper, 1979; Cullinan, 1977). The tourism spots are in close proximity to one another. According to Chowdhury (2011), the tourist circuit pattern is influenced by the short stay period at each stop on the promenade, the planned route, and the classification of provincial and local tourism attractions. According to Sisodia (2011) and Lau and McKercher (2006), tourist roaming spaces can be formed within a country (intra-border) or between two or more countries (inter-border) (cross-border).

According to Syed Muhammad Rasy and Hairul Nizam (2014), it is critical to understand tourist circuit pattern in order to create a more acceptable tour pattern and to offer intriguing sites and quality selections. A better understanding of how tourists move through diverse locations will have a bigger impact on the construction of infrastructure and transportation (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Edward & Griffin, 2013; Syed Muhammad Rasy & Hairul Nizam, 2014). Dejbakhsh (2009) and Nor Afifin et al. (2021) emphasized that the characteristics of tourist movement can be classified into two broad categories: the destination, or the goal of the visit, and the characteristics of the tourist visit. These two factors vary according to the type of visitor. According to some experts, the primary factor affecting a tourist's wildlife space is the tourist's own conduct. Simultaneously, the movement of travelers might reveal a tourism destination's attraction (Kim et al., 2018; Zhong et al., 2019). The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between willingness to pay and tourist space in two study regions in Sabah, namely Kundasang - Ranau and Kota Belud. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the relationship between willingness to pay and visitor roaming space. Additionally, the importance of fee payment rates in determining

the direction of tourist travel was analysed, as were the primary characteristics considered by respondents when choosing a tourist location.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

(i) Kundasang - Ranau

Kundasang-Ranau, Sabah is a locality in the Ranau district of Sabah, Malaysia. It is located in the Crocker Range at an elevation of around 4,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level. Kundasang is surrounded by lush evergreen trees. The Kinabalu Park is located four kilometers from the town of Kundasang. It contains one of the world's oldest tropical forest reserves and is rich in biodiversity. Mount Kinabalu, Southeast Asia's highest peak, is located within this forest reserve region. It is the pride of the state of Sabah. Kundasang is 15 kilometers from Ranau town. This region is home to several significant villages, including Lembah Permai, Cinta Mata, Kaulan, Sinisian, Dumpiring, and Kinasaraban. The distance between Kota Kinabalu's city center and Kundasang is approximately 92 kilometers. Kinabalu National Park, Strawberry Garden, Kundasang War Memorial, Desa Dairy Farm, and Mesilou Cat Village are the five tourist places investigated in Kundasang, while Arnab Village and Tagal Luanti, Kampung Luanli, Ranau are the two research locations in Ranau.

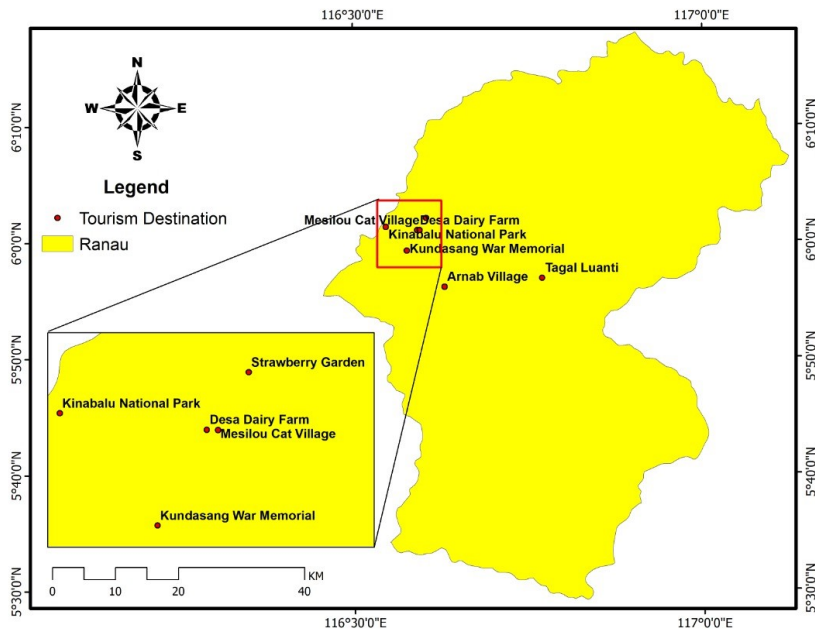


Figure 1: Study Area in Kundasang, Sabah
Source: Modified from Google Earth (2021).

(ii) Kota Belud

Kota Belud is a district located in the West Coast, Sabah. The distance of this area to Kota Kinabalu is about 70 kilometers. The district has several villages such as Kampung Rampayan, Kampung Siasai, Kampung Sembirai, Kampung Pirasan, Kampung Kulambai and Kampung Kelawat (Jabil et al., 2021). There are many tourist destinations in Kota Belud, but only seven tourist destinations were selected in this study, namely Polumpung Melangkap View Campsite (PMVC), Cabana Retreat, Melangkap Nabalu Rafflesia, Tambatuon Homestead, Ekopelancongan Melangkap Tiong, Aura Raudhah Village Beach and Nahandang Melangkap Homestay and Campsite.

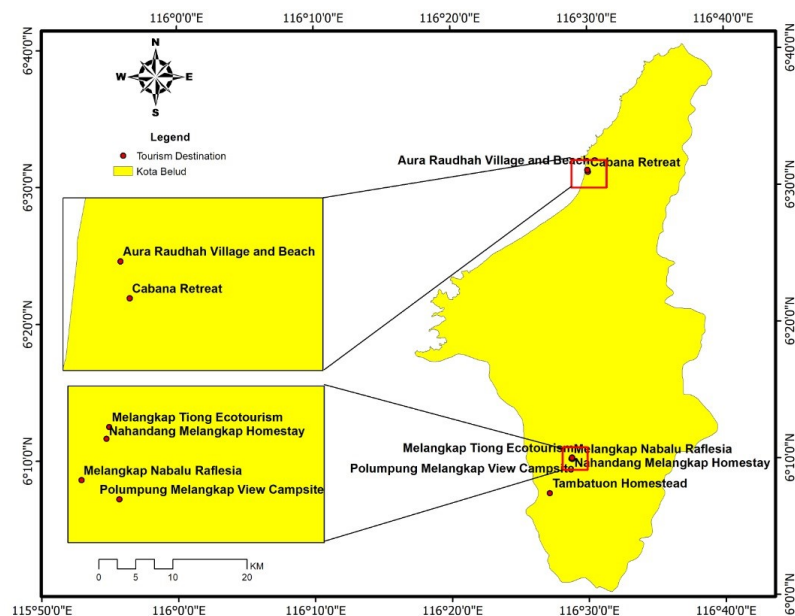


Figure 2: Study Area in Kota Belud, Sabah

Source: Modified from Google Earth (2021).

Methods

The researcher focused on analyzing and compare the patterns of tourist wandering space in two selected resort areas in this study. As a result, a survey and a case study were employed to conduct the study. A survey design is a systematic process for gathering data directly from a target population (Kraemer, 1991; Showkat & Parveen, 2017). A survey is a type of scientific inquiry that focuses on individuals, significant facts, beliefs, views, attitudes, motives, and actions (Mathiyazhagan & Nandan, 2010; Salaria, 2012). Case studies are a frequently utilized tool in the social sciences (Cope, 2015). Case studies should

be simple to comprehend in order to accomplish the researcher's purpose of identifying the study's issue and then comparing it to prior research to ensure the study's reliability (Guftasson, 2017; Faridah & Mohd Razimi, 2021).

In Kundasang - Ranau, the number of respondents involved is 150 people while in Kota Belud, the study involved a total of 93 respondents. The targeted sample in this study is visitors who come to selected tourist destinations in both study areas. The sampling method used is simple random sampling, i.e. all visitors who come to the study location have an equal chance of becoming study respondents.

In this study, data related to the travel status of respondents to tourist destinations, the influence of fees in determining the tourist locations visited by respondents and the main criteria taken into account by respondents in choosing tourist destinations to visit are analyzed using Statistical Package for The Social Science software. (SPSS). Then, the analyzed data will be presented in tabular form taking into account the total frequency and percentage. For data related to tourist wandering space in tourist destinations determined by the tourism package, organization or institution and privately is presented in the form of tourist wandering frequency mapping. This mapping is made and analyzed using basic Geographic Information System (GIS) software.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Relationship between Willingness to Pay and Tourist Circuit Pattern

According to Table 1, the respondents' travel status to the tourist sites analyzed was classified into three distinct categories. The study's findings indicated that the majority of respondents who travelled to the two selected tourist sites did so privately. This demonstrates that the communication system to tourist locations is effective, as it enables tourists to travel independently and choose their destination. These findings corroborate Alias et al. (2016)'s assertion that Malaysian tourists are extremely sensitive to cost and pricing changes in tourist sites. The increase in pricing will result in a drop in visitor arrivals, as competing places offer lower prices. Due to the changing nature of the tourism market, tour operators must alter the activities and packages they offer travelers to reflect the present scenario. Travel packages are a fundamental product for tour package operators, and a significant portion of their income are generated from tour package revenues (Huang et al., 2010; orevi & Hristov-Stani, 2016).

Table 1: Tourist Travel Status to Tourism Destination

Travel Status	Kundasang - Ranau		Kota Belud	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Trip is set in the tour package	11	7.3	3	3.2
Trip is set by organization (university, school, department)	8	5.3	33	35.4
Trip is set privately	131	87.3	57	61.3

Payment Rates and Tourist Travel Direction

The relevance of payment rates in determining the locations visited by respondents in tourist destination areas is seen in Table 2. The findings indicate that there are disparities in the importance of fee payment in influencing which tourist destinations respondents visit in both study areas. The majority of respondents who visited selected tourist locations in Kundasang - Ranau agreed that the payment rate has an effect on their decision regarding which tourist destinations to visit. According to respondents who visited Kota Belud, they believed that the fee rate had little bearing on their decision to visit a tourist location. The outcomes of this study indicate that price supply has a significant impact on tourist travel since it relates to the quantity of money spent. According to the researcher's observations, varying charge prices for different tourist destinations enable tourists to make a choice regarding the tourist destination's direction based on their allocated budget and the level of service available. This demonstrates that travellers are extremely conscientious about the worth of the costs charged at tourist locations.

Table 2: Payment Rates Influence Respondent Travel Direction

Variable	Kundasang - Ranau		Kota Belud	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	105	70	45	48.4
No	45	30	48	41.6

Key Criteria Considered by Tourist in Choosing a Tourism Destination

Five criteria are used to determine respondents' preferences when it comes to selecting a tourist place to visit. The findings indicated that the majority of respondents who visited the two tourist locations chose never-before-visited tourist places as their primary criterion for destination selection. The appeal factor

of a tourist site is the primary aspect that motivates a visitor to attend (Blazeska et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2015). Stepchenkova and Mills (2010) observed that persons who live in close proximity to a tourist site have more accurate and realistic perceptions of the place. The image associated with a tourist site is critical in this scenario. This is because travelers' perceptions of a tourism site will influence their purchasing decisions. If a person has a favorable impression of a tourist destination, their desire to visit that destination is likely to be high (Beerli & Martins, 2004; Bonn et al, 2015).

Table 3: Key Criteria Considered in Selecting a Tourism Destination

Criteria	Kundasang - Ranau		Kota Belud	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A tourist destination that has never been visited	59	39.3	34	36.6
Contagious (viral) travel destinations on social media	43	28.7	15	16.1
Entrance fees apply	28	18.7	30	32.3
Plan spontaneous visits by family and friends	12	8.0	3	3.2
On the decision set by the organization promoter	8	5.3	11	11.8

TOURIST TRAVEL STATUS TO TOURISM DESTINATIONS

The findings of this study give insight on the respondents' trip plans as decided by the travel package. This section examines the respondents' journey through three lenses: the previous location, which refers to the respondent's location prior to arriving at the location where the researcher conducted the questionnaire; and the current location, which refers to the respondent's location while conducting the questionnaire with the researcher. Following that, the current location refers to the researcher's meeting with the tourist at the tourist destination, and the future location refers to the tourist's next destination.

i) Tourist Trip Determined by Tourism Package

Based on 150 respondents, a total of 11 respondents who use travel package services to visit Kundasang - Ranau. When the study was conducted, three tourists were in Tagal Luanti, four were in Desa Dairy Farm and four others were

in Taman Kinabalu. These visitors consist of domestic tourists from Kelantan and Johor. Tourist wanderings are as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Tourist Circuit Pattern Determined by Tourism Packages in Kundasang-Ranau

Respondent	Location		
	Before	Current	After
1	Sabah Tea Garden	Duration Luantı	Arnab Village
2	Sabah Tea Garden	Duration Luantı	Arnab Village
3	Sabah Tea Garden	Duration Luantı	Arnab Village
4	Kundasang War Memorial	Dairy Farm Village	Strawberry Garden
5	Kundasang War Memorial	Dairy Farm Village	Strawberry Garden
6	Kundasang War Memorial	Dairy Farm Village	Strawberry Garden
7	Kundasang War Memorial	Dairy Farm Village	Strawberry Garden
8	Kota Kinabalu	Kinabalu National Park	Pekan Kundasang
9	Kota Kinabalu	Kinabalu National Park	Pekan Kundasang
10	Kota Kinabalu	Kinabalu National Park	Pekan Kundasang
11	Kota Kinabalu	Kinabalu National Park	Pekan Kundasang

In Kota Belud, a total of three respondents used the tour package service when visiting Kota Belud, Sabah. When this study was conducted, a total of two respondents were at Aura Raudhah Village and Beach while another was at Polumpung Melangkap View Campsite. Table 5 shows the roaming space of the three respondents.

Table 5: Tourist Circuit Pattern Determined by Tourism Packages in Kota Belud

Respondent	Location		
	Before	Current	After
1	Kota Kinabalu	Aura Raudhah Village and Beach	Complementing Tiong Ecotourism
2	Kota Kinabalu	Aura Raudhah Village and Beach	Complementing Tiong Ecotourism
3	Kundasang	Polumpung Completes Campsite View	Kota Belud

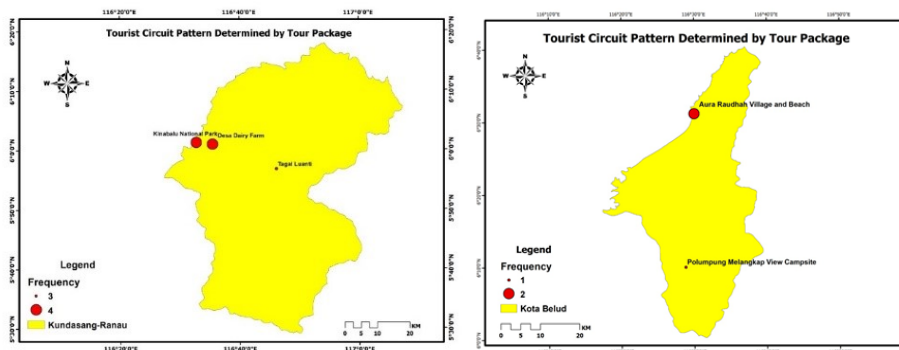


Figure 3 and Figure 4: Tourist Circuit Pattern Determined by Tour Package in Kundasang-Ranau and Kota Belud, Sabah

The results show that there are significant differences for tourist roaming space determined through tourism packages in Kundasang - Ranau and Kota Belud. Based on Figure 3 and Figure 4, the tourist space in Kundasang - Ranau is focused on nearby tourist destinations only. Compared to Kota Belud, the tourist exit space is quite far away.

ii) Tourist Trip Determined by Organization or Institution

This section examines the respondent's travel across three location modes, namely the previous location, which refers to the respondent's location prior to arriving at the site where the researcher conducted the questionnaire. Following that, the current location refers to the researcher's meeting with the tourist at the tourist destination, and the future location refers to the tourist's next destination. Eight respondents had their trip defined by the organization or institution, based on the 150 respondents surveyed. According to Table 6, five out of every eight participants on study excursions are school pupils. Their journey began at Kundasang town and continued to Desa Dairy Farm and Strawberry Garden. According to the researcher, the activities are excellent in terms of providing pupils with the opportunity to discover new places and settings. Following that, the three respondents are public officials that use this tourist location as a layover on their way to Semporna, specifically from Kota Kinabalu. Table 6 illustrates this respondent's wandering space.

Table 6: Tourist Circuit Pattern Determined by Organization / Institution in Kundasang - Ranau

Respondent	Location		
	Before	Current	After
12	Kota Kinabalu	Duration Luanti	Semporna
13	Kota Kinabalu	Duration Luanti	Semporna

14	Kota Kinabalu	Duration Luanti	Semporna
15	Pekan Kundasang	Dairy Farm Village	Strawberry Garden
16	Pekan Kundasang	Dairy Farm Village	Strawberry Garden
17	Pekan Kundasang	Dairy Farm Village	Strawberry Garden
18	Pekan Kundasang	Dairy Farm Village	Strawberry Garden
19	Pekan Kundasang	Dairy Farm Village	Strawberry Garden

Thirty-three respondents out of the 93 polled had their journeys decided by an organization or institution. According to Table 7, the majority of responders whose journey is dictated by their organization or institution are students. According to observations and questionnaires, a total of 19 respondents are students who attend in groups. Table 7 illustrates the respondent's output space movement.

Table 7: Tourist Circuit Pattern Determined by Organization / Institution in Kota Belud

Respondent	Location		
	Before	Current	After
4	Pekan Kota Belud	Ecotourism Complements Tiong	Polumpung Completes Campsite View
5	Pekan Kota Belud	Ecotourism Complements Tiong	Polumpung Completes Campsite View
6	Kota Marudu	Ecotourism Complements Tiong	Polumpung Completes Campsite View
7	Kota Marudu	Complementing Nabalu Rafflesia	Kota Kinabalu
8	Kota Marudu	Complementing Nabalu Rafflesia	Tambatuon Homestead
9	Kota Marudu	Complementing Nabalu Rafflesia	Kota Kinabalu
10	Kota Marudu	Complementing Nabalu Rafflesia	Kota Kinabalu
11	Kota Marudu	Complementing Nabalu Rafflesia	Kota Kinabalu
12	Kota Marudu	Complementing Nabalu Rafflesia	Kota Kinabalu
13	Pekan Kota Belud	Complementing Nabalu Rafflesia	Kota Kinabalu
14	Kota Marudu	Complementing Nabalu Rafflesia	Tambatuon Homestead
15	Kota Marudu	Complementing Nabalu Rafflesia	Kota Kinabalu

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16	Kota Marudu	Cabana Retreat	Tambatuon Homestead
17	Tambatuon Homestead	Aura Raudhah Villange and Beach	Kota Kinabalu
18	Kota Marudu	Polumpung Completes Campsite View	Kota Kinabalu
19	Kota Marudu	Polumpung Completes Campsite View	Pekan Kota Belud
20	Kota Marudu	Polumpung Completes Campsite View	Tambatuon Homestead
21	Kota Marudu	Polumpung Completes Campsite View	Kota Kinabalu
22	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
23	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
24	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
25	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
26	Kota Kinabalu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
27	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
28	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
29	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
30	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
31	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
32	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
33	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
34	Pekan Kota Belud	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu
35	Pekan Kota Belud	Tambatuon Homestead	Polumpung Completes Campsite View
36	Kota Marudu	Tambatuon Homestead	Kota Kinabalu

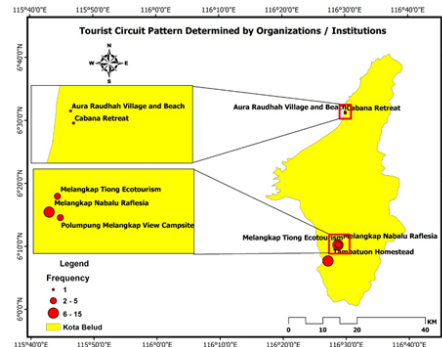
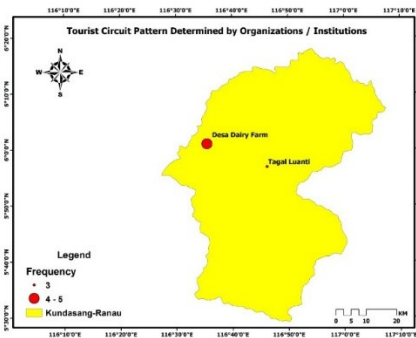


Figure 5 and Figure 6: Tourist Circuit Pattern Determined by Organization/Institution in Kundasang - Ranau and Kota Belud

For respondents' travel determined by organization or institution, there were significant differences for the two study locations. The majority of respondents who come to Kota Belud are to determine their journey through organizations or institutions. This is closely related to the findings of the study that the respondents who came to Kota Belud were mostly from the students.

iii) Tourist Trip Determined Personally

The results showed that majority of respondents who came to Kundasang - Ranau and Kota Belud, Sabah were assigned privately. Individually determined tourist roaming spaces have more variety than tourist roaming spaces determined by travel agencies and organizations or institutions. This is because tourists who visit a destination alone are free to determine their journey. Based on Figure 7 and Figure 8, respondents who set up their trips privately are more likely to choose tourist destinations that are close to each other.

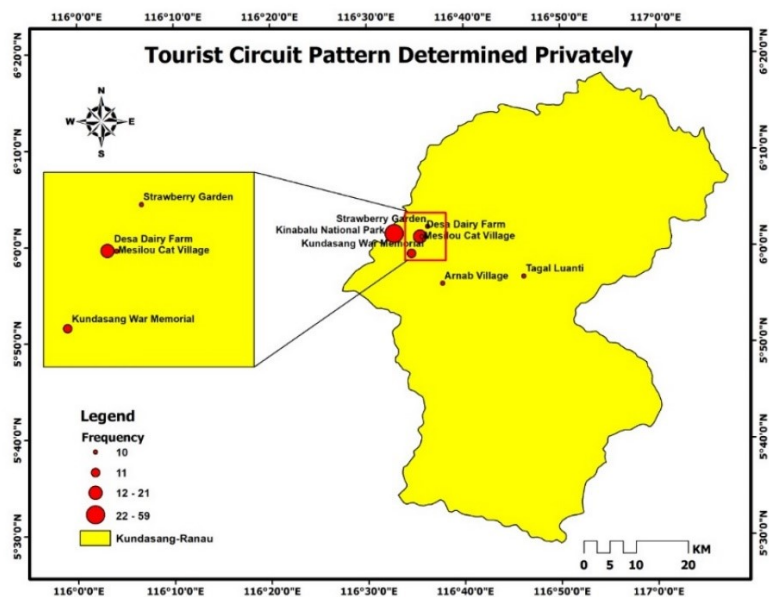


Figure 7: Tourist Circuit Pattern Determined Personally in Kundasang – Ranau

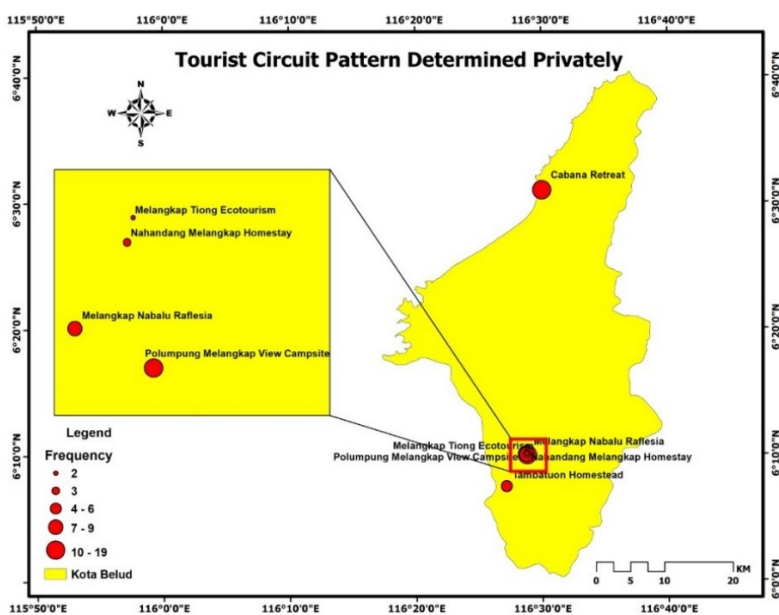


Figure 8: Tourist Circuit Pattern Determined Personally in Kota Belud

CONCLUSION

Tourists' willingness to pay at tourist destinations is highly impacted by the pricing structure. Additionally, the WTP is influenced by tourism locations' attractions and services. Additionally, tourists consider additional criteria such as visiting a tourist destination for the first time, visiting a tourist destination that is contagious (viral) on social media, visiting spontaneously without a travel plan set by family or friends, and visiting a tourist destination set by an organization while attending workshops, courses, or the like. The research's primary finding is that there is an interaction between the tourist space and travel management to a location, whether through travel packages, handled by organizations and institutions, or privately managed.

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