

MOTIVATION TOWARDS HOMESTAY ENTREPRENEURS: CASE STUDY IN STATE OF JOHOR

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Abstract

Malaysia is one of the fastest growing countries in Asia. Nowadays, Malaysia is well known as eco-tourism as it is endowed with rich natural heritage, and state of Johor has been ranked as third in tourism destinations after Kuala Lumpur and Penang. The growth of Johor's tourism industry has caused the high demand for homestay tourism product. Currently, there are 140 homestay with 227 villages throughout Malaysia with total of 3,264 houses offering 4,463 rooms until June 2009. This numbers is forecasted to be increased in the future. The focus of this paper was to identify the motivation factors that encourage the growing numbers of homestay entrepreneur particularly in the state of Johor, as well as the barriers that constraint them in managing homestay business. The findings of this paper were based on the questionnaires and series of interviews conducted along the research process. The respondents participated in this study were homestay entrepreneurs including homestay coordinators and homestay operators. The findings identified that the homestay entrepreneurs in the State of Johore were highly motivated by internal factors to involve in the homestay business, even though they have facing many challenges and problems in managing the homestay business. This results will be benefitted to the homestay entrepreneurs to improve and enhancing the homestay business in future.

Keywords: Barriers, Homestay, Motivation, Homestay entrepreneur, Homestay industry

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tourism has grown to become Malaysia's second largest sector contributing to national income after the manufacturing sector (Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, 2010). According to United Nation World Tourism Organization, Malaysia has been the most visited country for last three consecutive years from the year 2009 to 2011. In 2011, Malaysia was visited by 24.7 million tourists and receipt USD 19 billion (Malaysia Tourism Ministry, 2011). The sub-industries of tourism contributes that contributed to this growth are eco-tourism, medical tourism and cultural or heritage tourism. These sub-industries of tourism are supported by various tourism products. One of them is homestay.

In 2004, Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism Malaysia (MOCAT) has been renamed as Ministry of Tourism Malaysia. The Ministry of Tourism Malaysia was assigned to coordinate and implement government policies and strategies pertaining tourism industry, as well as introduced homestay as an alternative accommodation offered for the tourists to overcome the problem unable to accommodate the overflowing numbers of tourists arrivals by the big hotel and other entrepreneurs (Kayat and Nor, 2006). As a result of the continuous efforts of Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, the tourism industry had experienced a rapid growth and gained importance in Malaysia's economy (Amran, 2004).

Homestay is a tourism product which was introduced to give a chance to the tourist to stay with selected local family and experience their daily lifestyle and learn their cultures. Ministry of Tourism Malaysia does not list the homestays as a part of accommodation industry because of its concept is more focused on lifestyle and experience which include culture and economic activity (Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, 2011). Currently, there are 140 homestay with 227 villages throughout Malaysia with total of 3,264 houses offering 4,463 rooms until June 2009 (Ibrahim Y. *et.al*, 2010).

Homestay has large contribution towards the growth of ecotourism and heritage tourism. This is because eco-tourism and heritage tourism was introduced to promote nature, culture and adventure aspects of Malaysia. Malaysia has many ranges of different rain forest ecosystems. Malaysia also has many ethnic heritages of Malay, Chinese, Indians, Kadazan, Dayak and many more. Each ethnic has their own unique culture and believes respect to wedding ceremony, games, foods, lifestyle and festival celebrations. Homestay is one of the effective medium for Malaysians to share their lifestyle and cultures to outsiders or tourists. So, Malaysia views this industry as an industry that has unique Malaysian appeal and proactively supports the growth of its activity. Malaysian government also views this industry as an opportunity for rural community to participate in tourism industry and encourages the households to grab this opportunity as chance to supplement and generate household income (Osman *et al*, 2010).

Therefore, this research aim to identify the motivation factors that encourage the growing numbers of homestay entrepreneur particularly in the state of Johor, as well as the barriers that constraint them in managing homestay business. The results will be used in enhancing the tourism industry especially in the homestay tourism business.

2.0 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This section explains the relevant definitions related to homestay industry; scenario of homestay industry in international, national and State of Johor levels; comparison between homestay business of Malaysia and bed & breakfast of the foreign countries and homestay entrepreneurial factors.

2.1 Definition of Homestay

According to Ministry of Tourism Malaysia (2007), homestay as “an arrangement that provides accommodation for students or tourists in the home of the family in exchange for payment where the trip includes a homestay in a traditional villages, accommodation arrangement for students and school groups; and live with a local family in homestay and learn the language and culture of the locals”.

Thus, homestay is an accommodation that ensures local community’s sustainable wellbeing in term of economic, social and culture aspects where the main concept which homestay is representing is the diversification of local people to attract the visitors (Din Mapjil, Chaiyatorn *et.al.*, 2010).

2.2 Definition of Entrepreneur and Homestay Entrepreneur

The word entrepreneurship is derived from the French word ‘*entreprendre*’ which means ‘to undertake’. The entrepreneur is the innovator who introduces something new into the economy (Schumpeter, 1934), the decision makers in a particular situation and utilizes opportunity. So, the entrepreneur is someone who is willing to take risk, grab the available opportunity, have desire to be own boss, willing to face the challenges, able to make own decision and lead the path.

In the homestay context, the homestay entrepreneurs are the homestay coordinators and homestay operators who manage, handle and run the homestays as a source of income. In addition, the homestays were followed the standards required by the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia and they were registered under the Malaysia Homestay Program.

2.3 Concept of Homestay

Homestay is a facility that provides a chance to stay with selected host family. Homestay concept was introduced informally around 1970s in Cherating, Pahang. There were certain numbers of villages of Cherating, Pahang who already started to provide accommodations for the tourists who wish to stay for a long period of time to enjoy the beauty of Cherating beaches. The villagers opened doors for the tourists and allow them to stay in their families and the house owners provided breakfast for the tourists who stay at their house (Amran, 2004). However, at that time, community participating in homestay industry was not that much widespread because the homestay industry was just used as an alternative accommodation option besides chalet or resort for those who wanted to save on accommodation expenses.

According to Lanier and Berman (1993) homestay is a house of an individual having several vacant rooms which are not used for the personal purpose are rented to those who wish to stay in those vacant rooms. Therefore, those vacant rooms have become a source of income to the owner of the house (Henderson *et.al.*, 2004).

In contrast, in western countries, the rural tourism concepts also known as agriculture tourism or agro-tourism which enables tourists to enjoy the lifestyle of a farmer (Roberts and Hall, 2011). Agro-tourism is different from normal the Homestay Programs because it doesn't involve a whole community of the village in arranging tourism activity due to the farms are well off in a large land area. So, agro-tourism only involves the families of the farmers in arranging the tourism activities.

2.3.1 The Malaysian Homestays

Homestay is a new industry in Malaysia. The Malaysian homestays which operates under the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia's Homestay Program have its particular definition and concepts are as follows:-

- (1) These homestays are meant to provide a place to stay and serve the tourists with home-made foods and delicacies and take care of the tourist like their own family members;
- (2) The Malaysia Homestay Program offers a unique concept of staying accommodation by pressing on giving special services in the house of the villagers who participated as host family in this program.
- (3) Homestay also plays an important role in development of other tourism products like heritage tourism, nature tourism and agro-tourism by promoting and enabling tourists to enjoy those products through the Homestay Program's activities.
- (4) The Malaysia Homestay Program offers the tourists the tourists to enjoy and learn the Malaysia lifestyle and culture directly by living it.

2.4 Entrepreneurial factors

According to Osman, et.al (2011), the homestay entrepreneurial factors can be categorized into pull factors and push factors. The possible pull factors that shall cause an individual to involve in homestay industry that have been highlighted in past studies are desire to generate more income, passion in homestay business, to prove one's own ability to succeed, personal satisfaction, pursue one's interest in entrepreneurship, desire to own a business, desire to have control over what one is doing, desire for more flexibility in managing own time, opportunity or potential that available homestay industry, inspired by friend's and other people's success and desire for a balance lifestyle and desire for a balance between work and family.

While, the push factors that promote the homestay entrepreneurs are economic depression, unemployment of the host, retrenched, dissatisfaction with former job, lack of job security in previous job and unsatisfactory income level received in former job.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, a quantitative research strategy was adopted as a strategy for the data collection. The survey was carried out within State of Johor, Malaysia and the respondents were 214¹ homestays operators who were registered under Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, and actively participated in homestays industry.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondents Profile

The Table 1 below summarizes the profile of the respondents who were participated in this study.

Table 1: Respondents' Profile

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
1. Gender:		
Male	129	60
Female	85	40
2. Age:		
40 to 50 years old	18	8.4
51 to 60 years old	40	18.7
61 to 70 years old	46	21.5
More than 70 years old	110	51.4
3. Race:		
Malay	214	100
4. Education Level:		
Primary Level	56	26
Secondary Level	92	43
Higher Secondary Level	34	16
University / College	32	15
5. Years of Operating:		
1 to 5 years	130	61
6 to 10 years	84	39

¹ Of the total 478 homestay operators in State of Johor Bahru, only 214 respondents were participated in this study. The number of samples was sufficient enough to make a generalization for research finding.

4.2 Motivation of Homestay Entrepreneurship

From the results, there were several factors were identified as a motivation factors for the homestay entrepreneurship, as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Motivation Factor of Homestay Entrepreneurship

NO	FACTOR	MEAN SCORE
1.	Potential in the business	3.77
2.	Pursue own interest – to own business	3.70
3.	Flexibility to manage time	3.59
4.	Desire to generate more income	3.54
5.	Personal satisfaction	3.53
6.	Passion in business	3.36
7.	Balance life style	3.33
8.	Wanting to prove ability to succeed	3.06
9.	Inspired by friend's success	2.99

From the table, generally, the main reasons for people to involve in homestay entrepreneurship business are highly motivated by to improve their financial status. Moreover, the homestay entrepreneurship business also offers a sense of psychological empowerment that could boost the self-esteem. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Osman I. et al (2011) whereby the research concludes that the source of income were the dominant factor that encouraged entrepreneurs to start with homestay business in Malaysia.

4.3 Barriers of Homestay Entrepreneurship

From the interview conducted with six homestay coordinators, there were several barriers or challenges faced by the homestay coordinators in managing the homestay including financial problem, management, maintenance and communication. Figure 1 below summarizes the challenges in managing the homestay.

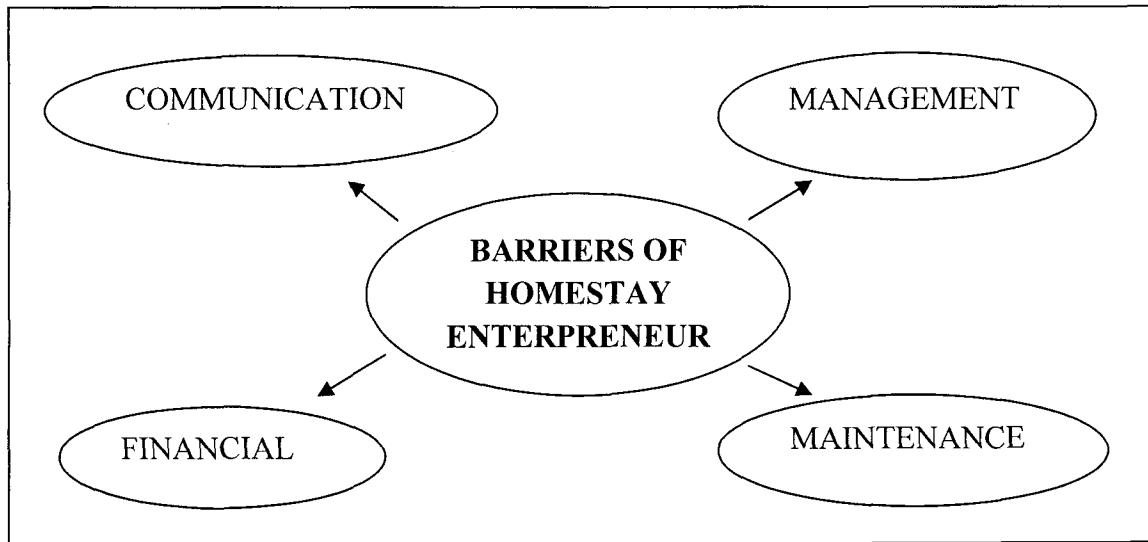


Figure 1: Challenges in Homestays Entrepreneurship

From the results, financial problem was identified as a main challenge in managing homestay because homestay industry is unable to sustain the income every month. Based on the occupancy report, most of the homestays were occupied on seasonal basis, for example during school holiday (local and international) and public holiday. Moreover, management was also identified as a challenge in managing homestay due to differences in visitors' culture and living style. In addition, majority respondents agreed that the maintenance and communication were the least challenges in managing homestays.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This paper examined current practice of homestays entrepreneurship in the State of Johor, as well as the drivers and barriers factor behind the successfulness of the business. From the results, it can be concluded that the number of homestays entrepreneurship is significantly growing in the future. Moreover, there were several factor that motivated the homestay entrepreneur including; Potential in the business, Pursue own interest – to own business, Flexibility to manage time, Desire to generate more income, Personal satisfaction, passion in business, Balance life style, Wanting to prove ability to succeed, and Inspired by friend's success; and several barriers that constraints towards successfulness of homestay entrepreneurship including; financial problem, management problem, maintenance problem and communication problem.