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The Motivational Factors of Homestay Providers

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Abstract: Homestay is one of many tourist attractions in Malaysia. From the economy prospect, homestay provides a business sources for the provider and other parties as well. As any other perks of tourist attraction, homestay may only reach its maturity peak after a certain time of period. At this level, homestay may suffer a step backwards due to lack of visitor or the providers. In other words, there are needs for homestays to maintain its visitor as well as the venue providers. This qualitative paper investigates one of the pull factor of homestay providers to sustain in this national level program. These study focuses on the motivational factors among them since there has always been a sensible fear that the younger generations will cease doing this business and the entire homestay industry will come to a halt once the current generations passes on. Thus, it is essential to investigate the motivational factors of current homestay provider in order to guarantee its continuity. This study attempts to investigate the motivational factors of homestay providers. Upon completing this study, several motivational factors were identified, which are family support, side income and hobby. Twelves respondents were interviewed in this study. To maintain the future availability of homestay as attractive Malaysia product, these motivational factors could be considered as initial point to attract people to become homestay hosts.

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Keywords: homestay provider; family encouragement; side income; sustainability

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Based on the Tourism Malaysia statistic for 2015, RM69.1 billion revenue was generated from tourism industry from its 25.7 million visiting tourist. Income from this community-based tourism (CBT) was a staggering RM27.7 million in the 2016, which saw a continual upsurges for the past seven consecutive years (Homestay Statistics, 2017). This program provides the opportunity for tourists to stay with a local host and their family while indulging in the local culture (Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, 2010). However, most CBT will undergo a futile phase at its earlier stages without support from the government, a role that should never be underestimated (Reed, 1997).

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Homestay Program might not offer permanent employments to the surrounding communities or villagers, but it is an effort to involve them in other aspects of trades (Ghapar, Othman & Jamal, 2014). The capacity of the Homestay Program generates income and other additional tourism byproducts, make it crucial to be maintained and sustained. The issue of current provider as well as successors needs to be addressed or else this program can be expected to take a nose dive into abyss. Park and Yoon (2008) commented some villagers are facing problems including depopulation; age disproportionate and decrease in labor force which may affect the stagnation of the rural economy. They also mentioned this phenomenon would cause the degradation of the quality of rural life. Shakur and Holland (2000) noted that when homestay providers become older, their children would choose to live separately with own family away from the family business. This situation would influence the existing of homestay in coming years with least successors to continue their parent's homestay business.

1.2 Problem statement

From the economy point of view, homestay is defiantly considered as an entrepreneurship since it does the business transaction, sales as well as profit and loss. Homestay generate small scale business for it providers and contribute to family and national income. However beyond the dollar attractions, there must be other motivational factors that influence local community to sustain their participation in homestays. These factors may acts as a booster to keep current homestay provider and at the same time encourage new comer to come in. Mohamed & Aminudin (2016) explained to enhance participation and continuous involvement from other layer of villagers, related authorities must ensure these motivated homestay providers are supported and assisted.

2. Literature Review

The contribution of tourism towards national income make the government tries to create viable and competitive tourism products to increase monetary receipts. Homestay program is one of the products created. Homestay was promoted as accommodation to guest who seeks for local culture and at same time provide economic benefits to the villagers (Bhuiyan, Siwar, Ismail & Islam, 2011). Harwood (2010) described community-based tourism mainly is to provide development that bring in benefits to the whole community. In addition, job opportunities and young population development may enhance through establishment of homestay in rural area (Kumar, Gill and Kunasekaran, 2012). There were 5354 rooms being offered through 340 homestay nationwide in 2016 (Homestay Statistics, 2017). This statistics also recorded the tourist arrivals for homestay were about 410,522 and RM27.7 million income receipts for the same period.

Yoon and Uysal (2005) described a motivation as internal motive associated with drives, feelings, instincts, knowledge or beliefs, usually supported by push and pull factor. Park and Yoon (2008) mentioned motivation as a set of needs that cause a person to participate in tourism based activity. Financial success appeared to be a secondary motivation of operators interviewed (Shoereder, 2004). A further research by Salleh, Idris, Othman and Suliza (2013) found the encouragement by the villagers, family, association and government lead the homestay provider to participate in homestay. They also mentioned the encouragement are influenced by interest, occupy free time, increase individual skills, gain new experience, sources of income, SME business, preserve community living, preserve traditional culture, preserve natural environment and preserve traditional houses.

Perales (2002) concluded tourism contributed to the rural economy, new jobs and boosting new economies. It also provides local economies with employment and investment opportunity and stable income (Bhuiyan, Siwar and Ismail, 2013). Sustainable CBT need enough incentive as of key element to motivate local people (Salazar, 2011). Through tourism, rural people gain income. They also appreciate the value of heritage, culture, tradition and local life (Nguangchaiyapoom, Yongvanit and Sripun; 2012). Beside it, tourism generates high levels of seasonal, part-time employment to first-time workers and youngsters as well as supplemental income for retired people and experienced workers (Marcouiller, 2007). However, Pusiran and Xiao (2013) mentioned income generated from homestay operation was insufficient as main source of operator's livelihood. Silparcha and Hannam (2011) supported income from homestay is not sufficient to afford the operators life, thus actually they need an extra income to survive. Lynch (2005) wrote several motivational factor to become a rural host for tourist namely enjoy to see people, own the business, sharing their ideas, become country representor, guiding tourist in local culture and history and able to perform particular rural skills.

People start thinking about how to make more income through farming (Shroeder, 2004). Silparcha and Hannam (2011) discovered children and women have a good chance to participate in homestay operation. Ibrahim & Razzaq (2011) mentioned

homestay operator must be confident, supported and motivated and involve all age level. The motivational factors they suggest are income, hobby, environment, image and family encouragement. However, the above motivational factor are also influenced by other minor factor including large house, low capital requirements, business opportunities to combine with family commitments and to learn about other people (Ateljevic, 2009). Harwood (2010) mentioned the community development approach to CBT is to let all community members have same equal access to improved quality of life. In certain situation, monetary gain may not be a main motivation for people to join homestay program (Mohamed & Aminudin, 2016).

3. Research Methodology

This qualitative study was done out at Banghuris Homestay and Sungai Sireh Homestay. Both homestay located within Selangor State. Selangor was selected as study setting since it performs decreasing in homestay provider quantity from 458 in 2012 to 443 in 2013. This number remains unchanged for 2014, 2015 and 2016. While other states recorded consistent increasing or upwards fluctuate for the same period, Selangor homestay provider never increases for the last four consecutive years. Kg Sungai Sireh was awarded the Best Malaysian Homestay Award 2013 while Kg Banghuris won the Excellent Homestay Award 2013. Samples of this study were the homestay provider. A total of twelve successors were interviewed using open-ended questions. This study used a non-probability technique and employ snowball sampling to ensure equal chances and to eliminate a problem to locate the homestay provider since they have insufficient time or complex daily routine. Beside it, this study also used secondary data obtained from Tourism Malaysia as main source. This is to ensure synchronization of the data.

4. Finding And Discussion

The informants consist 58.3% female and 41.7% male. Female informants were fulltime housewives. They had enough time to do homestay routine task while doing house chores. On the other hand, mostly male informants were employed as teacher, factory sector as well as general worker, and they were assisted by their wives and children to run the homestay. Their level of education comprised 83.4% informant left school with Malaysia Certificate of Education, while another 16.6% are diploma holder. Some of the diploma holder has employed elsewhere before deciding to quit their full time job and returned to their village to operate homestay.

The results from the data analysis concluded there are three factors that motivate successor to participate in homestay at study area. Regardless they were the first generation or successor of the homestay, definitely they have own motivational factor influencing them to participate. All those factors were parallel with most of other previous researchers' findings. There is however some motivational factors found by other researchers that are not found in this study. Three motivational factors identified in this study are: family encouragement; side income; and as a hobby. The following part discussed the finding of this study based on the interview transcribed.

4.1 Family Encouragement

Family encouragement among successor closely related to the successor acceptance on parent's advice. It is about how successor observe or perceive the homestay benefits and operation during their parents' time. The perception may be divided to before and after the parents joined the homestay program. Perception includes extra income gained, happiness to entertain guest, friendly and togetherness among community. They saw that the program provides better family harmony, as found by Kumar *et al.*, (2012) earlier.

My late mother was a homestay operator in this village since it was opened. I was exposed to homestay life...after married I moved out from this house to live in other place...followed my husband. After she passed away I returned to this house and re-registered this house for homestay under my own name. My late mother gave me lot of guidance while she was alive. Since I am young, she trained me. That is why now I still feel that homestay is suitable for me...luckily my husband worked at nearby area, so our family can stay at this house and operate as homestay. Furthermore I can get extra money monthly from the group arrival. I do frozen food too. Through income from homestay and frozen food, I can help my family. [Informant 2]

Some family quite obsesses with homestay program, thus this kind of homestay provider able to motivate the rest of family to become homestay provider as well.

My father is an ex-Village Committee; he is one of the earliest homestay operators in this village in 1996...until now he still provides accommodation for guest occasionally. My siblings and I are really motivated to follow his decision to join homestay program. [Informant 6]

I joined homestay because of my father...my sisters and brothers are also homestay operator...family motivated. That is the main reason I turned my house into homestay. [Informant 7]

I join homestay because of my father...like my siblings, my father give us full motivation to register as homestay operator. There are five siblings in my family who join homestay totally. My father joined homestay since 1996; he is very consistent with homestay program. [Informant 8]

Starting with my father, my siblings and I became homestay operator...our houses all are nearby, if tourist coming by bus, 40 people, they all can be accommodated in all our houses. We have five houses all. Our family as a group. So I join homestay because follow other siblings. They encouraged me. [Informant 9].

Some encouragement also might come from other relatives or villagers who quite close to the family.

...during my children wedding, headman come to my house...he told me to turn my house into homestay and register with association because I have extra bedroom. Since then I start operating my homestay...because of the headman advice. [Informant 3]

4.2 Looking for side income

I am optimist in continuing to operate this homestay because it provides us side income...really help me. Current life requires more money to survive. I still remember, immediately after moving out from my parents' house, I registered this house for homestay... start receive guest with limited number due to lack of bed. With the income I got from the homestay business, I started saving the money to buy extra bed...extra curtain and...furniture. Homestay really help me and I will never quit. [Informant 5]

In homestay operation, income is characterized to direct and indirect income. Direct income would be from accommodation and meals provided. This kind of income from homestay is very welcomed especially unemployed female operator. This is alike to the discovery made by Kayat (2010). Indirect income is usually received by youngster, who could also be the children of operators who helps around in show, activities, cleaning and transporting the visitors by motorcycles. Indirect income was also enjoyed if the operator happened to be operating small medium enterprise such as frozen food which is also bought by tourists.

I feel that homestay can add side income. I registered my house as homestay, now doing some renovation so that guest will more comfortable. My husband is working somewhere nearby...luckily I can drive myself, so I do most of homestay business like picking up guest from community hall and sending them there for activities. [Informant 4]

4.3 Participate as a hobby

In this study, hobby was less frequent to be the main motive. Hobby comes after the above two factors. Informants who answer this seem to have sufficient time and personality, since entertaining guest as a hobby request full commitment of the doers. Hobby became the last factor may be due to the changed in demographic and intention to participate in homestay. For instance, current situation require higher expenditure push villagers to find more income compare to fulfill empty time without monetary benefits.

I run small medium enterprise...crackers making...I accept homestay guest quite seldom...because I worry I cannot entertain them very well since I am quite busy during certain time. Only accept guest when nothing to do...if I feel that during group arrivals season I have lot of free time, then I accept guest. It gives me something to do, and I have more time for them. We need to entertain them, spend a lot time...bring them around the village. It gives side income...provide me some cash, but that is not my priority...the important is the time we spend with them must be enough. [Informant 1]

Besides motivational factors, this study also initiated that homestay provider was ready in terms of attitude. The attitudes were explored on the community and guests. Homestay providers were prepared in term of attitudes and perceptions towards communities and guest.

As government has pumped in such a big amount of money into homestay programs and many villages in Malaysia are now permitted to offer homestay products to maintain its sustainability. One of the issues presented is homestay may lose its initial momentum and lack of sustainability due to several reasons. One of the reasons is homestay provider may not be able to continue their parents' homestay operations because they have better careers or moving to other places. The way to make homestay keep staying in the village and continue the business is by keeping them motivated to get engaged in homestay program. This study revealed that three main motivational factors that keep them to stay in the village and continue homestay business are encouragement by family, side income factor and hobby.

Tourist arrivals at Homestay in Selangor were fluctuating up and down for year 2013 until 2015. It could be caused by internal and external factor including promotion, travel advise by outside country, economy situation as well as immigration procedures. Though, the number of homestay provider and villages involve was remain same, except for 2012. This concluded that current number of homestay provider still able to accommodate demand from tourist who seek homestay service. Commonly, each bedroom in homestay program can accommodate up to four tourists with sufficient size and bed facilities. If one homestay house offered two bedrooms, meaning it can accommodate up to four to eight tourist in each house. Its depend on the size of bedroom provided. The larger number of tourist stays inside, the more homestay provider could earn. This earning will be used to cover facilities provided and meals during the stay. Each homestay provider usually will receive certain number of tourist as portioned by headmen or homestay committee. According to tour guide who assisted during the study, the minimum number of homestay house required to start homestay program at particular village were 10 houses. It is acceptable capacity to accommodate at least one group of tourist, equivalent to one tour bus passenger.

In the Figure 1 below, total number of homestay (villages) participate were 15. Some homestay (village) might consist of few small villages to make it one big homestay destination. For example, Banghuris Homestay consisted of Kampung Bukit Bangkung, Kampung Ulu Chucoh and Kampung Ulu Teris. Homestay Sungai Sireh on the other hand consisted of Kampung Sungai Sireh, Kampung Ampangan, Kampung Parit 2, Kampung Parit 3 and Kampung Sawah Sepadan.

In brief, total number of homestay provider in Selangor dropped since 2012 from 458 to 443. Even the drop percentage was small, it could bring impact to the homestay performance if continuously decrease. However, income from homestay program in Selangor keeps increase for the same period. Increasing in monetary gain might be influenced by amount spent during tourist stay, number of nights, types of activity the tourist joined and shopping behavior especially local handicraft products. The decrease in homestay provider could be caused by current provider quit from the program due to health reason and not interested anymore. It is because to operate a homestay house, they need sufficient time and willingness to accept and entertain tourist in their house during the stay.

Years	2012	2013	2014	2015
Indicators				
Tourist Arrivals	37599	64257	58195	58934
No of Provider	458	443	443	443
No of Homestay (Villages)	15	15	15	15
Income (RM)	2.18 billions	3.82 billions	2.28 billions	3.11 billions

Fig. 1: Selangor Homestay Performance for 2012 – 2015

5. Conclusion And Recommendation

Upon pinpointing factors that motivate the homestay provider, which are family encouragement; side income; and as a hobby, it is pertinent that the factors are supported for continuation of the program (Mohamed & Aminudin, 2016). A community-based tourism requires the assistance from the authority, thus it is suggested that the successor are also give training to enhance their skill in leadership and homestay operation, including the promotion of the homestay. This would loosen their dependency on government and hopefully it would make the running of the program more interesting and professional.

Encouragement by family is premeditated as a factor to continue homestay business. Thus, they must be keeping motivated. At certain level of age, first generation of homestay would be old enough to do all the homestay business routine. This may limit them and as time goes by, they would quit from managing homestay and no longer accepting guests. Finally, the village would have less or even lacking of homestay houses in future if there is no successors available to take care of their parents' homestay. Second motivational factor found in this study is side income factor. Side income acts as an extra income to the operators. Based on majority of operators' opinion, the operators must have main income other than homestay income. However, homestay business for side income among certain operators is still not confirmed. It is because homestays can turn guests and hosts closer and finally income is not a priority to the hosts. Some hosts spent exceed than income to entertain their guests during the stay. Few days of family relationship make the host spent extra money on travelling and shopping for their guests during the stay. Host family bought souvenirs for guest and serves more foods more than the menu stated by committee or travel agents. Third motivation factor found in this research is hobby. The nature of hobby is to occupy people's leisure time. Nowadays, more people are employed and can occasionally do their hobby. Homestay business can be concluded as hobby that generates money as income compared to certain hobby that will not generate money to the doers. Even the purposes of hobby are to occupy their free time, but the income generated from the homestay business is still well appreciated by the operators according to this study.

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