

Sustainable Community Development through Homestay Programme

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Abstract

This study analyses the dimensionality of tourist perceived value in community-based homestay tourism context. A survey of 150 visitors to homestay in Kuching, Sarawak was conducted and used to examine the perceived value dimensions in tourism context, statistical analysis and structural equation model were used to verify the validity and reliability of scales used. Satisfaction Level was measured using tested perceived value with six dimensions that illustrated through structural construct, (i) emotional value, (ii) experiential value (host-guest interaction), (iii) experiential value (activity, culture and knowledge), (iv) functional value (establishment), (v) functional value (price), and (vi) functional value (service). The finding shows that emotional, experiential and functional are important determinants of perceived value which affect the visitor's satisfaction level on homestay tourism. Moreover, statistical findings indicated that only five dimensional have positive affect towards Satisfaction Level while function value (establishment) computed a negative

affect towards satisfaction.

Keywords: Homestay tourism, Tourist perceived value, Experiential value, Emotional value, Satisfaction level, Exploratory factor approach, Confirmatory factor approach

1. Introduction

In Malaysia, eco-tourism development is mainly private-sector led which encouraged to develop and promote eco-tourism destinations in the country (Daud, 2012). Developing eco-lodges, organizing tours and marketing products are led by private sector such as The Malaysia World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Malaysia Nature Society (MNS) that helps to promote eco-tourism activities. In addition, Tourism Industry is the second largest contributor for the economy after manufacturing sector in Malaysia (Abd Aziz, Md Tap and Mahmud, 2013). In the year of 1996, the government of Malaysia accepted national eco-tourism plan that created in 1992 where Malaysian Tourism Policy formulated and identifies eco-tourism as one form of tourism to be expanded and sustained. Furthermore, national eco-tourism plan was intended to serve as an appropriate instrument for sustainable development of Malaysia and it also used as an effective tool for preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the country (Daud, 2012). The idea of homestay is designated to immerse travelers into local culture in the most authentic way. According Ministry of Tourism, the definition of homestay is the place where tourists stay with the host family in both direct and indirect manner. Moreover, homestay is a suggestion for better accommodations which serves potential economic activity in tourism sector (Bhuiyan, Siwar, Ismail and Islam, 2011). Malaysia homestay program allows their cheerful visitors to participate in the hosts daily activities where the learning and communication process can be seen as what stated Kayat (2009), it is an important strength for the homestay program because no other tourism product in Malaysia offers a similar experience of Malaysian rural societies as that offered by the homestay program. Homestay program has gained its momentum in the tourism industry and emerged as an iconic rural tourism activity, even the government of Malaysia also identified Community Based Tourism as a catalyst for rural community development by promoting such program that originally organized by rural societies. The development homestay program in Malaysia was expanding as what have been stated in 9th Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) with main objective where this program will generate income to rural people and willingly to promote the beauty of Malaysia as a best tourist destination by highlighting the amazing various culture of Malaysia. Sarawak is located at the Borneo Island along with Sabah, Brunei and Kalimantan Indonesia. The year of 2013, there are approximately more than 4 million of visitors as stated by Lim (2013). Moreover, the tourism sector has generated revenues from year 2010 to 2012 which is RM8.573 billion and this amount is from both foreign and domestic visitors plus it shows that foreign visitors are more inclined to visit Sarawak rather than domestic visitor for tourism purpose.

Generally, homestay program is practiced in remote and rural areas to promote conservation of nature such as forests, parks, heritage sites and views (Lama, 2013). Furthermore, Sarawak is famous known for its exotic culture backgrounds it's several of indigenous groups such as