

YOUTH DRIVEN ENGAGEMENT IN THE HOMESTAY PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Community-based tourism (CBT) is one of the tourist attracting ways involving local community which aims to develop and to enhance the area as well as to bring renewal to the local community. It includes the involvement of youth. CBT comes in various types and this study was conducted to find how CBT can create youth engagement in the homestay program. There were various factors that motivate youth to participate in homestay program. This study involved one case study of a qualitative study conducted in a district in Sabah, namely in Kundasang. In this study, Mersilou Homestay and Walai Tokou Homestay were chosen to be used as a place of study to review factors youth engagement in the homestay program. Data collection was through interviews in partial structures. Data were analyzed using Nvivo 10 software and based on certain themes. The findings shown that there were several factors which drive engagement of youth in the homestay program in terms of interests, income, parental encouragement and comfort working in their own areas. In conclusion, the engagement of youth in the homestay program is based on the factors discovered in the study.

Keywords: community based tourism, homestay, migrate

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the most important resources and encouragement for investment on infrastructure and helps to improve the living standards of local residents, especially rural communities (Harun et al., 2012). In many developing countries, tourism serves a development strategy, especially in rural areas and plays a role in generating employment opportunities as well as a catalyst for infrastructure development in the rural communities (Razzaq et al., 2014).

The development of an area will give impact to the growth of local economy. Typically, it is associated with the transformation agenda undertaken by the Government for the people's welfare and development as a result of an increasingly rapid economic growth. In Malaysia, through the New Economic Policy (NEP), the government has been striving to bring development to rural areas to promote progress in an area and the rural community improvement has progressed. These efforts are undertaken to curb the migration of rural residents to cities (Miskam and Shafii, 2013).

Continuous effort by the Ministry to change rural condition from being labeled as backward and suffered from unemployment and poverty had been altered through the restructuring of the community with the national development policy. As a result, a negative view of the State of the rural area slowly be deleted (Omar, 2010). It's help to increase a value of rural area. However the transformation is seen as leading to positive changes, at the same time, it also contributes to a negative migration of the population. Migration is the movement of people from one place to another whether across international borders or state borders (Yaakob and Masron, 2010; International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2011). In addition, they also migrate from areas of low income to higher-income areas (Castles and Miller, 2003). This situation gives an overview of internal migration in moving toward balance certain economic space.

Internal migration is not only happening in Malaysia, but this internal migration also occurs in developed countries such as USA, Europe and all other countries around the world. Migration and out to the place of destination is a major factor contributing to the

economic growth of a country in which the migration of professional workers to the place of destination (better employment opportunities is also a key factor migration). This has resulted in the migration of their original area experiencing a shortage of professionals and may lead to economic growth in the area of origin is seen moving slowly relative to economic growth in developing regions (Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, 2010). Number of internal migration in the country is increasing due to factors of towing migration to the destination area. Many factors have become the driving force of migration, including education, marriage, employment, and geographical factors (Statistic Department, 2010). The Department of Statistics (2010) reported that occupational factors are the main factors that cause migration. It is one of the factors affecting the survival of one's life that involves the individual family members.

In Malaysia, data released by the statistics department show rates of migration for the period 2010-2011 is 2.5 percent or 711.600 people. This percentage increased by 0.6 percentage points compared with the migration rate for the period 2009-2010, namely 1.9 percent. The number of migrants has increased by 181.200 people of the total migrant 530.400 from the previous period.

Sabah had the third highest rate of migration with 3,5 percent during the years of 2010–2011, an increment of 0. 3 percentage points compared to the period from 2009 to 2010 after the Penang in the first place and W. P. Putrajaya in second place. The majority of residents have left their homes in Sabah focused on migrants in the country with a share of 2.9 percent. While migrants between the country and the international migrants was 0.4 and 0.3 percent. The migration causes the balance of the government's efforts in rural areas become unstable. This is due to the people in rural areas who migrated to the city to cause emptiness in the employment sector. It also affected the tourism sector which is the community-based tourism in rural areas and rural residents. In

Malaysia, besides manufacturing sector, the tourism industry is the second contributing sector to the national income (Ministry of Culture, Art and Tourism Malaysia, 2011). On the other hand, the tourism sector continued to grow rapidly with active involvement by all parties including the Ministry of tourism and other agencies over the last six decades (Ministry of Culture, Art and Tourism Malaysia, 2011). Popular sector in community-based tourism is a homestay program. Malaysia homestay program differ from others. In general the term 'homestay' refers to a variety of accommodation types, such as bed and breakfasts and small hotels, in which tourists have the possibility to stay with the locals and experience their culture (Gu and Wong, 2006; Lynch, 2005).

The homestay program is able to achieve both the objectives outlined may it be at the national, local or community level. This is supported by a study done by Kayat and Mohd Nor (2006), which stated that homestay program improves income and job opportunity to the local community of Relau homestay in Kedah. Razzaq et.al (2011) also added that the homestay tourism also improve the involvement opportunity of women, youth and retirees. The youth participation is highly sought as to ensure the development of this homestay program is continuous (Yahya, 2004).

When a Homestay village lacks replacement hosts, it will affect its sustainability and vulnerability in the future (Mohd Nor & Kayat, 2010). Based on Pusiran & Xiao (2013), when host homestay has no heir, then it will affect the continuity of the homestay and the homestay will cause the closing. Ultimately, there is no credible successor to continue the struggle to advance in the development of the homestay program. It is pointless without any continuity in the future. Nonetheless, the benefits resulted from the homestay program are in fact being wasted as majority of the locals are still reluctant in participating in this program. The lack of participation is due to inadequate exposure and

encouragement, as well as training/advice in the field of village tourism; besides, there should also be high enthusiasm and understanding among the locals involved (Yahya & Abdul Razzaq, 2009).

Homestay is a combination of two words, 'home' and 'stay'. In English, the word 'home' means residence, while 'stay' means reside. The combination of these two words formed the homestay program concept; whereby in the Malaysian context, the tourists live with the selected host families and the location is at villages in rural areas (Rural and Regional Development, 2012). Through this concept, the tourist is able to directly experience the family's daily life and culture (INFRA, 2012). In addition, there is significant direct effects of family culture toward interest (Nurmala, 2012). By interacting directly with the culture of the family in a tourist spot will increase the interest to go back to these tourist destinations. Generally, the main concept of homestay is to provide tourist with the opportunity to interact and understand the culture or way of life of the locals. Additionally, to introduce various food, clothing and customs, festivals and arts and daily jobs that can be categorized as village activities (informal employment) to tourists (Peterson, 2004).

In Malaysia, the Homestay programme can be traced back to the early 1970s at the then 'drifter enclave' of Kg. Cherating Lama in Pahang, where a local lady by the name of Mak Long took in long staying drifters bor hippies and provided breakfast, dinner and accommodation within her humble house (Hamzah, 1997). Subsequently, small villages or otherwise known as 'kampongs' followed a similar arrangement to gain the benefits of the influx of domestic and international tourists who are looking for a different travel experience i.e. to learn and experience culture through Homestay.

Back in 1988, the first Homestay program began at Desa Murni Homestay which consists of five villages namely as Desa Murni Sanggang, Desa Murni Sonsang, Desa Murni

Kerdau, Desa Murni Ketam and Desa Murni Perangap. These villages are located about 15 minutes' drive from an east coast state in Malaysia, Temerloh, Pahang. These local village communities worked together to create a Homestay programme and its success has had a dramatic effect on the local economy in terms of financial benefits (Kayat, 2007; 2009).

Homestay can be categorized as a catalyst for socio-economic development of communities, especially in rural areas (Razzaq et al., 2012; Mitchell & Ashley, 2010; Ibrahim and Razzaq, 2010; Scheyvens, 2007). The wealth of natural resources due to location factors especially in remote areas as well as cultural life of the local community created the opportunity to allow homestay to transform into a form of unique alternative tourist attraction. Homestay program may also be the stimulant in rural economic growth as well as promoting local tourism products; and produce several effects such as solidarity, generate job opportunity, generate source of income as to alleviate the locals' standard of living, as well as providing infrastructure and facilities to the locals (Johan & Ahmad, 2009). The generated economic benefits are also supported by Husin (2008).

The main purpose of this study is to identify factors that can attract youth participation in the development of rural homestay. It is to explore the factors that influence the youth to participate in the homestay program. This provides a benchmark for the homestay program in an area which will continue to grow and have the heir to continue the program.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative case study approach conducted in Mesilou Homestay and Walai Tokou Homestay at Kundasang Sabah. The data collected was through semi-structured interview method on samples selected based on the method of purposive sampling. A total of 9 key informant was involved in this study

consisted of homestay operator, youths, and *malim gunung* who are involved directly or indirectly with the construction of a homestay. The number of participants in this study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants in interview session

No.	Participant	Total
1	Homestay operator	2
2	Youth	5
3	<i>Malim gunung</i>	2

The data collected through interviews were analyzed according to themes with the help of software Nvivo and presented as a result of the study report. Based on the result, 4 themes that showed output from the interviewed session. The involvement of the researcher during the interview process allows researchers to understand in depth the development process in these two places.

This study was carried out in Kundasang, Sabah. The village of Mesilou occupied by the majority Kadazan-Dusun. Researchers have chosen this location because the homestay programme in Kampung Mesilou has the potential to grow and can become one of the tourism industry in Sabah in the future. This is caused by the natural beauty of the surrounding area sights include the high ground, plants that attract besides gardening vegetables and relatively low temperatures more comfortable, there are also various cultural ramble in the form of product art and practice of the life of the unique Hamlet expected can advance the homestay program established in the village. The distance of the journey than Kota Kinabalu takes time for 2 hours 30 minutes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main factor which has become a major factor to youth engagement to join the homestay program at Mesilou Homestay is due to interest. Interest is one of feeling present in them and motivates youth to engage in CBT. In addition, interest is also present due to youth self who always want to know

about developments in the area. It is also at once will display the youth in the area work sincerely and will offer themselves to perform and develop their area without any compulsion from any party.

The next factor to engagement of youth in CBT is encouragement from their parents. The study also shows the parents always give moral support to children such as giving support to undergo the courses made by the parties involved, such as the Ministry of tourism and culture Malaysia (MOTAC) and INFRA. This proves that parents always give moral support to their children so that together in developing for the future of homestay and homestay family. Similiarly, Novita (2015) states that child demands are: (1) parents often give motivation to the child rather than the materials, (2) parents who establish close communication with the child; and (3) parents who understand the problems and needs of children. That finding shows that parents play an important role in fostering their child's interest to engage in CBT. Further, the engagement of youth in CBT is resulted from source of income. Based on the results of interviews, on average, youths in the area are low income earners and homestay is one of the reasons for them to be involved so that they could earn a higher income. Most of the youth in the area work as farmers growing vegetables. In addition, there are some teenagers who work as assistants in retail stores. However, the wages earned are only able to pay the House bills. Therefore, the appropriate approach to youth here is developing homestay. The effect is very significant because youth can generate income especially during the holiday season and special season. In addition, there is also a youth managed to create some homestay theirselves and they can bear theirselves and family, but they also capable of travelling up to abroad. This proves that the income factor became a major factor in bringing youth to engage in CBT.

The latest findings shows that youth is

comfortable when they work at home. Most of the youth in the region lives with their family. According to them, they are more comfortable when they work near home and can take care of their parents. This makes them more eager to work if they are in their own areas. In addition, there are also youths who impressed with his own place and be willing to live in the village and do not intend to migrate to cities. In addition, the youth do not show interest to migrate to the outside because they are inconvenient considering their life that they have to rent a home, to bear the high cost of living between urban and cannot be in a noisy and dirty. In their village or region, they are free from noise and air is fresher than in the city. Therefore, the findings prove this factor also makes them a reason to engage in a homestay or CBT.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, youths showed their involvement in the homestay or CBT is caused by several factors that researchers have stated in addition to the findings above, the youth also has its own reasons to join and participate in activities at their homestay. Overall, the youth have shown a keen interest in managing homestay due to interesting reasons that tare income, parental encouragement and comfort her workplace. Therefore, efforts should be made by the responsible authorities to support youth so that they can show their openness to improve the economy and their households at the maximum level.

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