

VISITOR SATISFACTION OF KANCHONG DARAT HOMESTAY, SELANGOR – A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT: Homestay development has become one of the most important agenda in Malaysia. The importance of homestay in tourism industry has drawn many scholars’ interests to understand the factor that influences the visitors to stay in the homestay. The purpose of this research is to study the visitor satisfaction and factors influencing their decision to visit homestays in general, and Kanchong Darat Homestay in specific. To undertake this study, quantitative research methods were utilized. Data was gathered using questionnaires as data collection instrument in September 2015 at Kanchong Darat Homestay and analyzed using SPSS 17. Visitors were chosen at random by simple random sampling. The finding of the study shows that the quality of facilities and services have a positive impact on visitors’ satisfaction to the homestay. Via the study, the homestay was also found to be in need of stakeholder action to improve visitor satisfaction, enhance the infrastructure, safety, and services. This study found that the marketing campaign for the homestay was very weak and needed improvement. Based on the research findings, it is highly recommended that homestay should be promoted aggressively in collaboration with government campaigns and private sector outsourcing activities. Moreover, facilities and the quality of services must be upgraded through continuous improvement and training, and aspects such as security, awareness, communication with foreign visitors, and enhance the infrastructure must be improved. This study could be used as a guideline and encourage other researchers for further studies.

Keywords: Visitor, Satisfaction, Homestay, Kanchong Darat, Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

Homestay is a form of tourism where it enables visitors to stay with the host families to learn about their tradition and culture. It is sometimes used by people who wish to improve their language skills and become familiar with the local lifestyle. The homestay programme in Malaysia was introduced by the Ministry of Tourism in 1988 as a strategy to vary the country’s tourism products by offering alternative accommodation facilities for the tourists. Amran Hamzah & Hairul Nizam Ismail (2003) asserted that homestay is a form of accommodation whereby tourists will get the chance to stay with the chosen house-owner or host, communicate with them as well as go through the family’s daily routine which enable the tourists to have a live-in experience of Malaysian cultures. Tourist arrival by country nationality from 2013 until 2015 identify that Malaysia has been visited by many international tourists as a famous holiday destination. Tourism Malaysia statistics showed an increase in arrivals for the first quarter from 2.38 million tourists in 2013 to 2.52 million tourists in 2014, with a growth rate of almost 6.3 %. Overall, the January until March tourist arrival season showed the same result that increases in the span from 2013 to 2014

with 10% increase, but decreased to 8.6 % for the same period of 2015. The reasons maybe caused by several crisis and accidents which occurred in Malaysia such as: issue of missing flight MH370, the blast of MH17, Sabah kidnapping, the issues between Malaysia and Philippines and the Sabah earthquake.

Generally, homestay is a form of accommodation or a form of residential facility where tourists are given the chance to live with a host family which is selected in order for them to interact and experience the families' daily way of lives. Tourists also get direct experiences such as the host family's culture. In beginning, the homestay programme was known as a vacation concept that started in the late 1970s in Europe (Zurina Nureen Noor & Nur Adilah as quoted in Mapjabil & Che Ismail, 2012:138). Visitors have the opportunity to visit rural villages and experience the local culture in local community houses. As a result, the host receive economic benefits in the form of rent of the homestay, sale of food and beverage as well as products and services they provide. However, the Kanchong Darat Homestay is not very popular homestay and not top homestay in Selangor. From this study, the researchers have identified that Kanchong Darat Homestay has various problems which make it not the top homestay in Selangor like other homestays such as Banghusris Homestay, Hj. Dorani Homestay and Air Manis.

Previous research indicate that one problem faced the homestay is services provided. Most homestays in Malaysia have problems in service terms. Service not only focuses on how the host give good service to their customer but also products and activities that they provide. In Kanchong Darat Homestay, many activities such as water sports, fishing, mini golf and more are provided to the guests, but most of the activities are not really attractive and there has been no change in activities over the past years, which makes the visitors feel bored and affect their revisit. Moreover, most of activities are far from the homestay and visitors need to walk to reach the activity especially for water sport, but if the visitor is lucky, the host or local village folk will lend / provide transportation to go the place or walk around the village.

Other problems that researchers have identified in the study is that most of homestay in Malaysia also have issues in terms of facilities provided. Facilities can be categorized in terms of accommodation, infrastructure and transportation. For the accommodation there were no problem but for the infrastructure, there is improper road system as most of the road were small and have holes. The homestay also lacked promotion and visitors found it difficult to find the location. First, it is very far from the main road and takes nearly 10 minutes to get to the homestay. Second, the location of each homestay is very far apart and not suitable to attract big groups to stay such as schools, because most of homestays can only accommodate around 10 people. Lastly, the competition from better advertised and unregistered/illegal homestays made it harder for Kanchong Darat Homestay to attract visitors.

2. METHODOLOGY

Methodology used to achieve the research objectives of this study. Researchers collect secondary data from published journals, articles, press release and books that related to this study. The results of previous studies showed that all of the domestic tourists are satisfied with the aspects of facilities, safety and services in the homestay programme. This study is pivotal to the stakeholders in the homestay programme; they could know the exact desire of the domestic tourists toward the quality of the homestay services and facilities provided. The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between tourists satisfaction to Kanchong Darat Homestay. The respondents for this study were Malaysian and international visitors to this homestay. The instructions and particular details about the research as well as the aim of the study and the purpose of the survey had been stated in the information sheet attached to the survey questions. It has also been stated that participation was voluntary and respondents' information gathered from the survey would be kept confidential. The number of survey distributed was 150, and the usable for analysis was 139 survey questionnaires. The survey had been conducted in August 2015. Simple random sampling method was used to collect data the research. It is a method that considered all elements in the population where all the elements have equal chance to be chosen (Sekaran & Roger, 2013). Data collected were coded and analyzed using SPSS 17.0. Prior to undertaking an analysis of the data, reliability scores were calculated to measure the strength of the data collected. The reliability of the results collected was tested using the Cronbach's coefficient alpha test. Paragraph should start here. (Sentence Case, size 11, Justified, Single Spacing)

Theoretical Framework

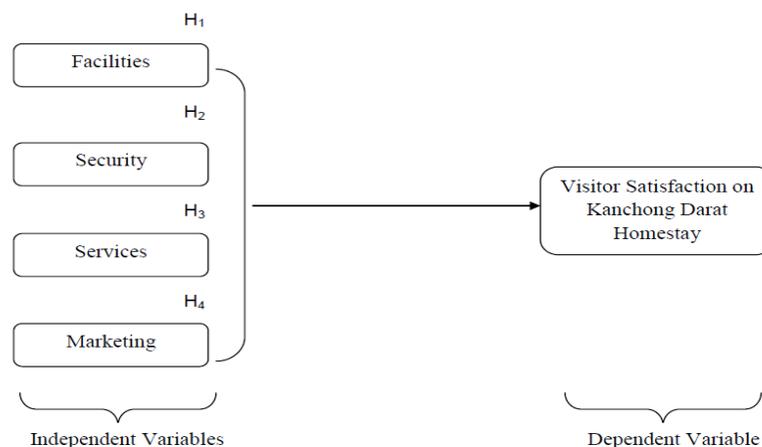


Figure 1. Factors Affecting the Visitor Satisfaction in Kanchong Darat Homestay

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the research. The results are based on quantitative study findings. There are three main sections that had been asked in the questionnaires. The first section provides the tourist's profile and travel information of the respondents. The second section presents results on the respondents' assessment on Kanchong Darat Homestay with 26 attributes to be considered. The demographic information at third Section had eight factors that are considered. The quantitative results are obtained from the descriptive statistics by using Frequency Analysis. This is undertaken as most of the items asked in the questionnaire are categorical. Finally, the last section addresses the results of testing the proposed research hypotheses in terms of correlation analysis by using Pearson Correlation matrix Analysis, multiple linear regression analysis.

The parameter of reliability test was the Cronbach's coefficient alpha test. Nunnally (1978) stated that the data collected with the alpha coefficients of more than 0.75 will generally be considered reliable and acceptable for further analysis. The result of the analysis is displayed in the following table:

Table 1. The Cronbach's Alpha (Reliability Coefficients) Variable

The Cronbach's Alpha (Reliability Coefficients) Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Visitor satisfaction to KDH	5	0.836
Security	7	0.869
Service	7	0.890
Facilities	7	0.851

The results above showed that the alpha coefficient for each factor of the independent variables is more than 0.75. According to Nunnally (1978) psychometric theory, alpha readings near 0.9 represent highly consistent scales while those with scores near 0.75 reflect moderate levels of consistency whereas alpha values below 0.3 levels indicates that the items have little in common. From the results shown, it is therefore clarified that the developed scales in this study are reliable and in fact practically consistent than in a just moderate levels. Thus, this research is qualified to be proceeded for further analysis. All the values of the variables above (visitor satisfaction to Kanchong Darat Homestay, security, service and facilities) have values exceeding the alpha value 0.75, which suggests and verifies that the variables are reliable. Visitor satisfaction to Kanchong Darat Homestay has a value of 0.836, security with 0.869, and service with 0.890 and facilities with 0.851. All the values are near 0.9 so they are highly consistent. The marketing variable was not analysed as it was not measured using Likert Scale. Marketing is tested in the ANOVA and other tests. However using this test, the reliability value is -0.745 is due to negative average covariance. This defies the reliability test alpha value thus the importance of this variable is supported in Pearson Correlation test.

The results shows visitor satisfaction to Kanchong Darat Homestay for each of factor including facilities, services and management of homestay. According the table4, majority of the respondents slightly agreed with the questions provided because range of mean was around 3.55 to 3.84. Below than 3.40 slightly neutral, which mean the respondents had average opinion on Kanchong Darat Homestay. The highest mean shown is 3.84 where the host ensured all the facilities are up to the expectation of the visitors. This was because the host of homestay provided more facilities for their visitor such as good and clean toilet and transportation where the host was willing to lend a motorcycle for the visitors to be used to move around the village. The second highest is the host operators ensuring all the services provided were sufficient at Kanchong Darat Homestay with the total mean of a difference of 0.04 which is 3.80. In this homestay the host was very focused on giving the services to their visitor especially in term of food in breakfast, lunch and dinner. The third highest mean is 3.73 where the majority of respondent agree that they very satisfied with overall aspect in Kanchong Darat Homestay. The main factor that most of the respondent liked was the environment of homestay was very calm, nice and the host provided more traditional activities. This allowed the visitors to get the best experience and create memorable moments. Next mean shows 3.65 where the host operators ensured all the services were up to visitors' satisfaction at Kanchong Darat Homestay and the lowest mean shows 3.55 where the host operators paid a lot of importance to create a good visitor satisfaction at Kanchong Darat Homestay. Overall, the host families need to concentrate more on carrying out their action on creating visitors satisfaction rather than planning on what will create it.

The relationship between security and visitor satisfaction in Kanchong Darat Homestay. The highest mean that we could see was 3.88 where the host operators ensure all the cupboard locks were available at Kanchong Darat Homestay. This could conclude that the host cared about the valuables of their visitor that must be stored in a safe place. The second high mean is 3.64 where the most of the respondent were very satisfied with the security system in Kanchong Darat Homestay. The third means with a difference of only 0.01 is 3.63 where the host operators provide in-house bathroom at Kanchong Darat Homestay. Researchers noticed that the host focus on security part where the host provided bathrooms in the house for security especially at night. Next, the mean of 3.58 is showed where the host operators were good in guarding Kanchong Darat Homestay, this mean show more decrease with the difference of almost 0.30 from the highest mean 3.88. Furthermore for mean 3.61 shows the respondent agreed where the host operators ensured all the room locks was functioning at the Homestay.

Moreover, for the host operators ensured the security was sufficient such as parking spots at Kanchong Darat Homestay shows the mean only 3.54 and the lowest mean 3.39 where the host operators ensure the lighting is sufficient around the area at Kanchong Darat Homestay. This shows the respondent had average opinion on Kanchong Darat Homestay because when the mean is below 3.40 is it slightly neutral. This because at Kanchong Darat village there are not enough street lamps provided and it is very dangerous for visitors to carry out activities at night. So the management of homestay and the locals in Kanchong Darat Homestay need to find ways to get more street lamps to ensure safety.

The relationship between service and visitor satisfaction in Kanchong Darat Homestay. Service is one of the most important part to attract and obtain visitor satisfaction. From the table above we could see the highest mean is 3.80 where the Host operators provide satisfying meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and the food is delicious and enough for visitors. The lowest mean is 3.46 where the Host operators provide visitors with transportation services to move around Kanchong Darat Homestay. The transportation were only provided in the evening when the visitors wanted to walk around the village and the transportation can only be used when the host was not using it. So, to solve the problem the host must set aside a special vehicle for the visitors to use it during their stay at the homestay.

The relationship between facilities and visitor satisfaction in Kanchong Darat Homestay. In this table, the highest mean is 3.89 where the respondent agree the facilities (room environment) are relaxing, calming and fresh during their stay at Kanchong Darat Homestay. The lowest mean is 3.50 where the toilet is very clean and suitable to be used at Kanchong Darat Homestay. Although it got the lowest mean but it still can be categorised that respondents agree the toilet is clean and suitable for use, however the host need to improve the toilet by make sure it is very clean every time. The second highest mean is 3.82 where the bedroom is very clean and suitable to use at Kanchong Darat Homestay and the third highest is 3.80 where the Wi-Fi facility is sufficient at Kanchong Darat Homestay. Wi-Fi is an important facility for visitor satisfaction because usually the homestays without Wi-Fi will make a bad first impression for the visitor. Next, the overall respondents agree that they were satisfied with facilities provided at the homestay, it can be seen when the mean show 3.71 and this still be category highest mean and followed by 3.70 means that the respondent were satisfied with the transportation provided. As for the condition of facilities (television, refrigerator, mattress and bed), it is good at Kanchong Darat Homestay as it got a mean of 3.66.

4. CONCLUSION

Findings of the study suggest that all of the attributes proposed in the model had significant impacts on the visitors' satisfaction of Kanchong Darat Homestay. This study showed that the quality of services, which include facilities, security aspects and service aspects, in Kanchong Darat Homestay have contributed to the number of domestic and international visitors to the homestay. All three aspects have satisfied visitors and the management's role in this is vital. The homestay operators need to ensure they create satisfaction in visitors from the beginning till the end of visitor stay at the homestay. Security need more efforts to be enhanced especially in guarding, lighting around the area and the provision of parking spots for guests' cars. Operators should pay more attention in communicating effectively with the visitors and take efforts to reduce language barriers. Also, more attention on keeping the toilets clean and ensuring the condition of facilities like television, refrigerator, mattress and beds would in turn increase satisfaction of visitors. Marketing was found not to be very significant in this study and in this aspect; the government and other agencies could help in this matter and promote homestay aggressively in collaboration with private sectors. Moreover, facilities and quality of services can be upgraded through continuous housekeeping courses and maintenance which all parties should collaborate together. Recommendations to improve and promote with intensive marketing such as own website, Facebook,

Twitter, Instagram and others are put forward in order to further the development of Kanchong Darat Homestay.

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