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ATTACHMENT AND FACTORS OF INVOLVEMENT AMONG YOUTH TO PADDY FIELD ACTIVITIES IN HOMESTAY PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

The homestay programme is a community-based tourism that offers tourists to experience the local lifestyle and heritage culture. Many studies focused on challenges of homestay programme, place attachment of hosts, contribution of homestay programme to rural economy. However, very few studies have focused on youths' involvement in homestay activities. This paper aims to examine the youth's involvement in homestay activities. A focus group discussion was conducted among the youth aged 20 - 34 years old. A non-probability sampling, that is, purposive sampling was employed. Multiple case studies in Homestay Kampung Jeruju, Homestay Kampung D'Belimbing and Homestay Kampung were selected to determine the differences between the locality factors. These findings indicate that youth's involvement in paddy field activities is based on social, physical, and economic factors. Thus, to attract youth to be involved in paddy field activities, it is recommended for the tourism players to pay attention to these three factors.

Keywords: Homestay programme, community-based tourism, attachment

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between landscape and experience demonstrate that rural landscape characters are essential elements that need to be conserved and preserved to attract visitors to visit the rural area (Zakariya, Che Haron, Tukiman, Ab. Rahman & Harun, 2020). Homestay programme promotes a distinctive rural setting and unique cultural values for the visitors. Homestay programme has shown a steady growth since the Ministry of Tourism and Culture started to support this programme due to potential in rural tourism and community-based tourism (Aminudin & Jamal, 2006). However, one of the key issues in homestay programmes in Malaysia is the low involvement of rural youth in homestay activities. Numerous studies (Kayat, 2007; Sood, Lynch, & Anastasiadou, 2017) have shown that interest, motivation, and concerns of rural youth to engage in homestay activities are decreasing. Tourism development in rural areas will achieve success when it is supported by understanding and involvement of the community. This study aims to investigate the perception of youth involvement in paddy field activities in the homestay. According to Ibrahim & Razzaq (2011), youth involvement is an important aspect that needs to be developed in the Homestay Programme as they represent the majority population in rural settlement. Youth participation is highly sought to ensure that the development of this homestay programme is continuous (Ibrahim, 2004). According to Pusiran and Xiao (2013), the host homestay has a limited number of apprentices and this will affect continuity for future generations. According to Kayat (2009), Homestay Programs fail due to lack of local involvement, local leadership, knowledge, and skills, poor planning, and community structure. Hall, Kirkpatrick, and Mitchell (2005) explained that limited skills and knowledge of tourism could contribute to false expectations about the benefits of tourism and a lack of preparedness for the change associated with tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Youth involvement and participation in homestay programmes cannot be discussed without considering power relations for equal rights. It is important that all youth could get involved in programmes which directly affect their lives. Community involvement is an essential part of community development and one of the most important factors in the community-based tourism development process, which allows involvement of people in the different stages of decision making (Aref & Ma'rof, 2008; Bozlul, 1994). In this study, the focus group are the rural youth who live in homestay villages. This study investigates the details on 'rural youth's involvement' in rice field activities in homestay.

Factors of Youth's Involvement in Homestay

Numerous studies have shown that there are many factors that influence youth to participate in homestay programmes. The factors include social, physical, and

economic factors. Previous studies by Kayat (2007), Razzaq et al. (2011), Pusiran and Xiao (2013), Sita and Nor (2015), Harun et al. (2017), and Sood, Lynch and Anastasiadou (2017) have listed a few factors that encourage youth to get involved in homestay programmes. The factors are social factors, physical factors, and economic factors.

Social factors

Social factors play an important role to encourage youth to get involved in homestay activities. Kayat (2010) found that family support is an important aspect to motivate youth to get involved in homestay activities. Furthermore, a study conducted by Harun et. al. (2017) explained that parents should give moral support to their children such as giving support to participate in the courses made by the parties involved. Youth's interest in the activities is also categorised as part of the social factors. Interest is one of the driving factors that motivate youth to get involved in the homestay programme. Youth who volunteer to help in the homestay activities are interested to know the cultural activities offered in the homestay programmes. Therefore, the previous findings prove that social factors play important roles in influencing rural youth to get involved in homestay activities.

Physical factors

Physical factors make a significant contribution to encourage rural youth to get involved in homestay activities. However, only a few studies were found to be in concern with the physical factors, especially the green natural environment. A study conducted by Razzaq et. al, (2011) revealed that only a few (34%) of youth joined the programme due to the physical factors. Furthermore, much of tourism developments depend on the environment. The relationship with the environment is related to the physical and human surroundings. Tourism development must protect the intrinsic values of resources of current and future (Murphy & Watson 1995). According to Latip et al. (2020), tourism can substantially support environmental conservation, protection and sustainable use of natural resources and restoration of biological diversity. Tourism development in the community's neighbourhood has created awareness among locals; this is because they noticed that the value of environmental resources has created tourism demands (Kuvan & Akan, 2005).

Economic factors

Another important factor that encourages youth to get involved in homestay programmes is the economic factor. From previous studies conducted by Kayat and Mohd Nor (2006), Razzaq et.al, (2011) and Harun et. al, (2017), the researchers revealed that income is one of the main reasons why youth are involved in homestay programmes. According to a study conducted by Razzaq

et.al. (2011), there were changes in income levels of communities before and after participating in the Homestay Programme. Before joining the programme, most of the operators earned income values in the range of RM500-RM1000. After participating in the Homestay Programme, their income increased. Participants found that the programme created opportunities for additional income. In addition, most participants indicated that the programme leaders in their communities played an important role in convincing them to become involved in the programme. This proves that economic factors have become a major factor in bringing youth to get involved in homestay programmes.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in three homestays in the state of Kedah, which are Homestay Kampung Jeruju, Homestay Kampung D' Belimbing and Homestay Kampung Pantai Jamai. The selection of homestays represents the natural settings of the paddy fields in Malaysia. Multiple case studies create a more convincing theory when the suggestions are more intensely grounded in several pieces of empirical evidence. Thus, multiple cases allow the wider exploration into the research questions and theoretical evolution (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The criteria of case studies selection were based on age distributions of population and social organisation in rural areas (JKKK). This study adopted a qualitative method by using focus group discussion (FGD) on exploring in-depth information among rural youth aged 20 to 34 years old. A non-probability sampling, that is, purposive sampling was employed in this study. To achieve the aims of the study, the researcher decided to choose a smaller sample size. Hence, thirteen youths were selected for focus group discussions. The respondents were selected according to their family background, involvement in paddy field activities in homestays and their attachment to paddy field activities. The total respondents in focus group discussion using photos were 13 rural youths aged 20-34 years old (Refer Table 1). The researcher managed to conduct three focus group discussions with five respondents in Kg. D' Belimbing, five respondents in Kg. Pantai Jamai and three respondents in Kg. Jeruju, respectively. A thematic analysis was conducted in analysing the responses from the FGD session.

Table 1: Number of Respondents in each homestay

Homestay	Number of Respondents
Kg. D' Belimbing	5
Kg. Pantai Jamai	5
Kg. Jeruju	3
Total Sample Size	13

Thirteen respondents were named as R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12 and R13. The list of respondents in each homestay is listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Respondents in each homestay

	Homestay		
	Kg. D' Belimbing	Kg. Pantai Jamai	Kg. Jeruju
Respondents	R1	R6	R11
	R2	R7	R12
	R3	R8	R13
	R4	R9	
	R5	R10	

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the thematic analysis, seven themes emerged from the transcribed data. These themes are family support (1), establishing a relationship with tourists (2), gaining knowledge (3), contributing ideas (4), incentive (5), income (6), and environment (7). Based on these themes, three main categories were developed which are social factors, physical factors, and economic factors.

Category 1: Social Factors

Data from the focus group discussion indicate that rural youths who were involved in tourism activities related to rice field activities were those who were supported by their families. Out of 13 youths, 9 of the youth mentioned that they were involved in rice field activities because of family tradition. Some of the youths mentioned that they were involved in the activities to establish a relationship with tourists, gain knowledge and contribute ideas for homestay activities. Furthermore, some of the youths were involved in rice field activities to help the homestay operators to demonstrate the traditional activities to tourists.

Family support

From the focus group discussion, in Homestay Kg. D' Belimbing, two respondents who were R1 and R2 agreed with the previous research by Kayat (2009) that stated family support as one of the main reasons why youth are motivated to get involved in homestay activities. According to R1, family tradition as a paddy farmer is the main reason he participates in homestay activities. The respondent stated that he started to learn paddy farming in primary school. The respondent had always followed his father doing paddy farming and other rural farming activities. R1 stated that,

" I always asked my father about homestay activities.... Sometimes, my father asked me to join the homestay events.... I was so excited to follow my father

to the events.... He added that, ".... *If my father did not support me to get involved in homestay activities, maybe I would not be exposed to homestay activities....*".

Establishing a relationship with the tourist

The second theme is making a relationship with tourists. R3 and R4 in Homestay Kg. D' Belimbing agreed with the factor. All respondents from Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai also agreed with the factor. In Homestay Jeruju, R12, did not agree with the factor because he found that the tourist factor is not a pull factor that motivates him to get involved in homestay activities.

Gaining knowledge

In Homestay Kg. D' Belimbing, R3 explained that he was willing to get involved in homestay activities because he had never experienced relationships with tourists or foreign tourists. In Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai, all the respondents who participated in homestay activities, R6, R7, R8 and R9 agreed that homestay activities could establish the relationship between youths and tourists. All respondents in Homestay Kg. D' Belimbing, Kg. Pantai Jamai and Kg. Jeruju agreed that their involvement in homestay activities would give them the opportunity to gain knowledge. R1 explained that homestay activities give him new knowledge. Before he was involved in homestay activities, he got to know about homestay activities from his parents, and he never experienced the activities. R2, R3, and R4 gave a similar expression. They also gained knowledge from homestay activities, and before they were involved in the homestay activities, they did not know about traditional activities, such as, catching fish, making kites, making *orang-orang* and planting paddy. From these activities, now they gain basic knowledge on the activities. R3 and R4 have also started to help the homestay operators to demonstrate the traditional activities to the tourists. In Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai, R6, R7, R8 and R9 also agreed that being involved in homestay activities gives them the opportunity to gain new knowledge.

In Kg. Jeruju, only R12 was involved in homestay activities, so he explains:

"Yes, I am gaining new knowledge from homestay activities. Before I got involved in homestay activities, I did not know about traditional activities. When tourists came to my village and asked me how to do this or that, I did not know how to answer their questions. However, now, when I have participated in homestay activities several times, I managed to answer all the questions. The committee also imparts a lot of knowledge to me. Now I enjoy giving knowledge to other youths in my village, and I hope more youths in my village can get involved in homestay activities".

According to R1,

" Half of the youth in my village participate in homestay activities and normally they are helping the organiser to give ideas in homestay programmes. Youth normally helps in active programmes namely. telematch games, paddy field activities and prepare food for tourists".

According to R6, almost all youths in the village would participate in homestay activities. This is because they have a special association for the youths in the village. For every event, the operator of the homestay will normally discuss with local youths for ideas to improve the homestay programme in the village. In addition, the involvement of youth in activities will allow them to be rewarded with some cash. R2 and R3 also agreed to R1's statements. R2 and R3 added that they participated in homestay programs to demonstrate how to make kites and play kites to tourists. R4 was also involved in homestay activities such as playing kites and catching fish in paddy field. R5 had never been involved in homestay program activities directly but she participated in homestay seminars for future generations. R5 explains that:

"The seminar is remarkably interesting as the organiser encourages youth to participate in homestay activities. I am extremely excited to get involved in homestay activities if tourists come to my village. I enjoyed the seminar very much and the seminar gave me a lot of knowledge on how to welcome the tourists, how to manage homestays and skills in traditional activities".

These findings revealed that social factors, especially family support, are the most significant factors that influence youth to get involved in homestay activities. The highest theme in social factors is establishing a relationship with tourists. The youth were found to interact with tourists because they appreciate building up new friends and getting new knowledge and information from tourists. They also like to know different cultures and exchange experiences in cultural activities. Regarding the second theme in social factors, which is social support, most of the youth mentioned that they have always seen their fathers being involved in homestay activities, and their fathers asked them to join the homestay events. These youth are so excited to follow their fathers' involvements in the homestay events. The findings confirmed that youth are attached to the rice field when their parents frequently use the rice field and perform rice field activities in their daily lives. If their parents like to plant paddy, their children also would be interested in doing the activities. Some other youths like playing traditional games in the rice fields, such as playing kites as their fathers frequently play kites. These findings confirm that parents play essential roles in shaping how their children use the rice field and become involved in rice field activities. This

finding is also consistent with previous studies that have suggested that family values towards nature form the most substantial factor that influences youth to get involved in the homestay programme (Kayat, 2007; Razzaq et al., 2011; Pusiran & Xiao, 2013; Sita & Nor 2015; Harun et al., 2017; Sood, Lynch, & Anastasiadou, 2017) through exposing them to natural landscapes.

The third theme in social factors is gaining knowledge. Knowledge gained through actual experiences of individuals and social groups is called tacit knowledge. It can only be shared or exchanged through people's interactions. Additionally, this knowledge is intangible, in contrast to the knowledge that can be made explicit and become information. Until now, tacit knowledge has not been favoured in productive processes nor formal education. However, rural communities have relied upon tacit knowledge for their development, survival, and resistance.

The last theme in social factors is the opportunity to give new ideas for homestay development. When comparing within three homestays, only Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai has a unique association for youth. In this association, the committee can discuss homestay developments and youth's problems in villages. Additionally, when there is a meeting that involves the rural community in villages, the elderly can invite the committees of the association to the meeting. The youths in Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai have opportunities to give ideas and opinions on the development of their villages. They have higher opportunities to give ideas for homestay development in Homestay Kg. D' Belimbing although some of the elderlies may disagree with their youths' ideas. This reaction was faced by the youth in Homestay Kg. Jeruju. When the youths participated in a meeting, the elders did not accept the youths' ideas and kept on using their existing ideas and strategies in managing homestay programmes. A few elderly villagers ignored the new ideas because they were not confident about the youths' potentials and capabilities in giving new ideas and strategies. The youths will be more appreciated in a community when their ideas and views are considered in homestays' development.

Category 2: Physical Factors

The environment is one of the main factors that encourages youth to get involved in homestay activities. When the youths are attached to the environment or a place, they will be excited to get involved with the activities. From the discussion, respondents R1, R2, and R3 in Homestay Kg. D'Belimbing and R6, R7 and R8 in Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai agreed that the environment is one of the reasons why they participated in homestay activities.

Environment

R2 explained that the environment in his village itself encourages him to participate in the homestay activities. He added that the scenery of the paddy field

in his village is so beautiful, and the environment made him feel calm. When he saw the beautiful scenery of the paddy field, he always imagined how the paddy farmers plant the paddy and how they harvest the paddy. He also wondered why people did not fly kites every day. When he participated in the homestay activities, all the questions were answered. He hopes that the environment will remain for future generations. He is afraid that developers might try to build hotels or modern facilities for tourism purposes.

This finding indicates that physical factor is one factor that encourages youths to get involved in homestay activities in Homestay Kg. D'Belimbing and Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai. In contrast with the youths in Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai, none of the respondents agreed with the factor. This result also suggests that youths who have a connection with the natural environment will appreciate their surroundings and get attached to the place. Youth who agreed with the physical factor expressed their feelings towards the paddy field as beautiful scenery and loving their village's environment. Environment plays a vital role in providing youth opportunities to get involved and attached to nature, including paddy field landscapes. The youth mentioned that they are frequently involved in nature-based activities such as planting paddy, harvesting paddy, and playing near the paddy field. The results show that the paddy field's scenery in the village is so beautiful, and the environment makes them feel calm. Culture including the cultural landscape remind us of history and contribute to a sense of place (Suraiyati, 2013) This study found that attachment among the rural youth to the rice field and rice field activities were high regardless of their family backgrounds. This result also indicated that the youths' experience in rice field activities depends on how their family practices their daily lives.

Category 3: Economic factors

Income and incentives

In Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai, the economic factor is one of the main reasons that encourages youths to participate in homestay activities. In Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai, R6 interestingly answered that,

"Our committee has special fees for members who participate in our association. We use the money to prepare food or unique events. This is our own initiative to encourage youth to get involved in homestay activities.-preparing traditional food and delicacies, the committee will cook the traditional dishes using all the ingredients that we can easily get in our village. For example, we catch fish, get the ulam-ulaman, chillies for making sambal belacan, pucuk ubi for making masak lemak cili padi, and other menus to save the budget in preparing dishes. So, the committee will have extra money to give special incentives to the committee members. The activities that we offer to tourists also do not involve high budgets; for example, for playing kites, we use recycled paper

and collect the bamboo sticks in our kampong. For some of the activities, youths volunteer to help and are willing to get involved in homestay activities".

From R6's explanation, the researcher found that rural youths in Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai have strong social connections with each other. The economic factor is one of the main reasons why they are involved in the homestay activities and are attached to the activities. In Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai, rural youth have collected special fees for youth, and they used the money for homestay activities such as giving extra incentives for youths involved in homestay activities and preparing the activities. Interestingly, in Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai, rural youth catch fish, get the *ulam-ulaman*, chillies for making *sambal belacan*, pucuk ubi for making *masak lemak cili padi*, and other menus to reduce the cost in preparing dishes.

R8 and R9 were involved three times in homestay activities. They enjoyed catching fish and playing kites in the paddy field. Besides that, R10 explained that she is interested in joining the homestay activities, but she is working and has limited time. R10 hopes that she could get involved in homestay activities in the future. As opposed to Homestay Kg. Jeruju, only 3 participants participated in the discussion, including one male (R11) and two females (R12 and R13). In homestay Homestay Kg. Jeruju, only R12 has participated in homestay activities. Economic factors include incentives and income. Youth involvement in Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai, which offers income and incentives to youth, has the highest results than the other two homestays. The findings showed that only Kg. Pantai Jamai and Kg. D' Belimbing offers incentives for youth. Most of the youth in Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai explained that the committee gives extra income to any youth who participate in homestay programmes. Giving incentives and extra income for youth has motivated them to participate in homestay activities. The committee of youths' association in Homestay Kg. Pantai Jamai has collected fees for members who participated in the association. The youth will use the money to prepare food or organise unique events. Moreover, when preparing traditional food and delicacies, the committee will cook the traditional dishes using the ingredients they can quickly forage in their village. So, the committee will have extra money to give special incentives to the committee members. The activities offered to tourists only utilise small costs such as flying kites. This is because only recycled papers and collected bamboo sticks in their village were used to make kites by the youth. For some of the activities, the youth volunteered to help and were willing to participate in the homestay activities.

In Homestay Kg. Jeruju, the committee members do not give incentives to the individuals who participate in homestay activities. Youth participated in homestay activities because of their initiatives and voluntary activities, but the numbers were still small. Youth in Kg. D' Belimbing, and Kg. Jeruju were

involved in homestay activity because of their interest in traditional activities, and they have a 'sense of pride' towards their villages and culture in the villages. They would participate in the activities, whether the activities offer income or not. As a result, income and incentives are significant to encourage youth to get involved in the homestay.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the differences in social interaction between youths and elderlies in homestays influence youth involvement in Homestay Kg. D' Belimbing, Kg. Pantai Jamai and Kg. Jeruju. Social, physical, and economic factors are the main factors that motivate youth to get involved in homestay activities. Although previous studies have discussed homestay involvement, those studies lack focus on youth's homestay activities. Most of the studies explored the youth's involvement in the homestay programme as homestay operators. This research is distinctive because it explores the youths' involvement in rice field activities in the homestay programme. This study would help to ensure the sustainability of culture in tourism activities, and rural youths can learn the traditional activities in their daily lives. Further research with different methods and larger samples are recommended to be used to achieve stronger findings.

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