MODELING QUALITY OF LIFE AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONGST HOMESTAY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

In Malaysia, tourism is the second largest contributor to the economy after the manufacturing sector. In 2008, the numbers of tourists recorded was 22.05 million and tourism had contributed RM49.6 billion (USD13.4 billion) in revenue. Furthermore, total receipts of RM6.3 million was contributed by the homestay programme from 68,416 domestic visitors and 23,117 foreign visitors. The rural Tourism Master Plan 2001 was formulated to promote the homestay programme as a catalyst for rural community development. The homestay programme provides a positive effect to the quality of life among the participants. For example, increases in household monthly income, job opportunities, improved public facilities and infrastructure in the rural area. The implementation of the homestay programme also increased work satisfaction amongst participants. A total of 306 samples were identified from the Homestay Programme participants. All data were processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Amos. Among the analysis has been used in this study are factor analysis and reliability analysis, descriptive and inferential analysis. This paper discusses the modeling of Homestay Community Quality of Life and life satisfaction based on the data as well as its contribution to the rural community development in Malaysia.

Keywords: quality of life, life satisfaction, human development, Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry in Malaysia has become more important in the era of globalization in the 21st century. In fact, tourism is the second largest contributor to the economy after the manufacturing sector. In 2008, the number of visitors recorded was 22.05 million and contributed a revenue of RM49.6 billion (USD13.4 billion). A total of RM6.3 million was contributed by the homestay programme from 68,416 domestic visitors and 23,117 foreign visitors. The concept of homestay programme in Malaysia may be different from other countries. In Australia the term is mainly related to farmhouse accommodation, while in the United Kingdom it can be associated with learning English (for foreign visitors). According to Lanier and Berman (1993), the homestay programme can be described as a private home where the rooms are not used for the purpose of increasing rental income. According to the ministry of tourism, the homestay programme is a tourist staying with host families and experience the way of daily family life both directly and indirectly. Yahaya and Abdul Rasid (2010) states that the homestay programme
provides an opportunity for guests to interact, gain knowledge, and experience the lifestyle and culture of the adoptive parents and the local community. These elements involve guests who eat, cook, and are involved in many activities with their host families and different cultural backgrounds to interact and learn from each other. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop model of quality of life and life satisfaction among the homestay participants based on the quality of life attributes, attitudes and government role and community role contribute to the life satisfaction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been done on the quality of life in tourism industries (Liu and Var, 1986; Dogan, 1989; Lankford and Howard, 1994; Gursoy et. Al. 2002). Nevertheless, little research has been conducted on the quality of life attributes, attitudes, government and community roles contributing to life satisfaction. For example, a research by Kadir (1993; 1995) found that the tourism industry has contributed to the creation of employment opportunities for local people and increase their income. The study by Amran (2003) claimed that the homestay programme can improve self-satisfaction, healthy living and changing socio-economic level of the participants. The growth of this homestay programme will not only increase revenue and infrastructure but also change the mindset of the local culture to realize the importance of safeguarding and preserving cultural heritage to be shared and developed together with the global community (Yahaya et al, 2009). Studies by Hall (2001), found that the homestay programme also contributed to the preservation and conservation of the environment through the control of logging activities that may affect the river water pollution.

There are many definitions of quality of life, for example, one definition is given as a condition where one feels excited, good and at ease and feels that his/her life is meaningful (Renwick, R. 2006). Another definition says that it is actually an effort to overcome problems and enhance the quality of one’s life until he/she reaches a situation where one’s life is safe, healthy and comfortable: physically, socially, and psychologically (Muhamad Fadhil Nurdin 2003). Besides discussing the definitions and the concept of quality of life, the literature also discusses the attributes of quality of life, which are related to life satisfaction. Among the variables used in the study relating to the quality of life are income, education, health, housing, transport and communication, peace and safety, family, working environment and social involvement (Pollnac, R.B, Pomeroy, R.S, and Harkes, I.H.T., 2001) (Binkley, M., 2002). Li Liu has carried out a study on general well-being in China and used five domains of life, namely, health, family, social relationship, occupation and environment as variables (Li Liu, 2006).

Moreover, quality of life has two dimensions that need to be measured, involving the objective dimension that is external to the individual, and a subjective dimension that reflects feelings and perceptions. Cutter (1985) noted that quality of life in the community is comprised of the sum of the objective conditions, and individual community feelings concerning the perceptions of the objective conditions within the community, such as economic, social and cultural institutions, and environmental conditions. Whereas the subjective of quality of life is concerned with the emotional and value-laden, surrounding factors as life satisfaction, happiness, feelings of well-being, and belief about one’s standard of living (Davidson and Cotter, 1991; Diener and Suh, 1997; Dissart and Deller, 2000). Undoubtedly, factors determining the general well-being, which were typically used by the researchers mentioned above, correspond to the factors listed in the Quality of Life Index of Malaysia issued by the Prime Minister’s Department, 1999 (UPE, 1999).

The results of the previous studies show that tourism development has positive effects on the quality of life. Liu and Var (1986) concluded that the tourism industry has increased the standard of living of the community with higher income and
improved their business prospects. On the other hand, tourism also affected cultural change and community development. According to Dogan (1989), tourism development has a direct effect on changes in attitudes, beliefs, daily life and values, which are likely to cause many problems for human development in a community.

3. METHODOLOGY

Based on the review of literatures and the corresponding theoretical perspective, this study has proposed the theoretical model as shown in figure 1. Several variables have been identified which have been used as the hypothesis of the study which is shown in figure 1. A stratified random sampling based on number of participants in the Homestay Programme was selected from several locations in Malaysia. According to the Tourism Services Division, Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia, June 2009, the number of participants in the Malaysian Homestay Programme is 3,264 people. A total of 306 samples were taken from the Homestay Programme participants and the data was processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Among the analysis is a reliability test, descriptive and inferential analysis.
3.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaire consists of five main sections. **Section A** consists of the demographic factors such as sex, age, marriage status, level of education, period working as a participant of homestay, monthly income, house ownership status, land and transport. **Section B** consists of quality of life attributes. They are:

- *income* – the idea is to get a picture of whether the income as a participant of homestay is enough to support the family, to know whether he is satisfied with the income and to make a comparison whether the income now is better than before;
- *expenditure* - to know whether a participant of homestay is satisfied with the expenditure capability for the family, and to see whether he can foresee that his family expenditure in the future will be better than what he has now;
- *saving* - to know whether he has enough saving to use for his family, whether he is satisfied with his saving now, and whether his saving now is better than before;
- *house residence* – to know whether the current house that is resided able to accommodate all his family members, whether he is satisfied with his current resided house and also whether his house will be better in the future;
- *utilities* - to know whether the utilities provided are adequate and better than ever before and expecting a better service in future
- *land* – to know whether the land where he built the house is able to accommodate his family’s needs, whether he is satisfied with the land and whether the land will be better or more valuable in the future;
- *transport* – whether he owns any transport and satisfied with the current transport that he owns and whether he hopes that he will own a better transport in the future;
- *health* – to identify whether working as a fisherman can deteriorate his health or it will make him healthier and whether he is satisfied with his current level of health; and
- *education* – to know whether they are satisfied with their current level of education, whether they feel that education is important to improve their standard of living, and whether they agree that better or higher education can improve their standard of living as participant of homestay.
- *Safety* - to know whether the level of security in good condition and guaranteed to improve quality of life.

**Section C** consists of questions to identify the role and responsibilities of the government in an effort to enhance the life satisfaction of the homestay participant. The role and responsibilities of the government are in:

- *infrastructure* – to know whether the infrastructure provided by the government is adequate, whether they are satisfied and whether the existing infrastructure provided is better compared to before;
- *course and training* - to find out whether they had ever attended courses or training organized by the government, whether such courses or training being publicized or known by the participant of homestay;
- *counseling* - to know whether the participant of homestay know that there is a counseling service provided by the government, whether they are satisfied with the services rendered
and also whether the counseling given to them is able to enhance their standard of living;
• **marketing** - is aimed to know whether participant of homestay are satisfied with the role of the government in stabilizing the price of homestay rental.
• **enforcement** – this is seen whether the enforcement is able to increase the income of the participant of homestay, also to see whether they are satisfied with the level of enforcement and whether they understand matters regarding enforcement;
• **research and development for** participant of homestay – whether they are aware that there is a research and development for them and whether the results from the research and development for participant of homestay have given them any benefits.

Section D consists of questions to perceive attitudes, and section E is a measurement of community role among the homestay participants.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Profiles.

The finding shows that 34.0 percent are males and 66.0 percent are female. Based on randomly chosen respondents, it was found that more than 60 per cent of the respondents were between 40 to 59 years old. Concerning marital status, it was found that 80 per cent were married. With regard to education, 30.1 percent had completed primary school, and the highest level of education was the completion of Malaysian Certificate of Education (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia) schooling, at 39.2 percent.

Table 1: Demographic Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Profile</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Below 20 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 to 29 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 to 39 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 to 49 years</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 to 59 years</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 years and above</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Status</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>79.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widower</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Never go to School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SRP/ PMR (completed form 3)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPM (completed form 5)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STPM</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Reliability Test and Data Normality

The alpha cronbach’s values for the factors in the study are as in Table 2. The alpha value for Quality of Life Attributes is 0.958, government’s role is 0.902, and attitude is 0.937. The alpha value for dependent variable that is life satisfaction is 0.891. All these alpha values are higher than 0.6 meaning that the factors used in the study is suitable and can be accepted as a measurement (Sekaran, U., 2003). Furthermore, normality tests for quality of life attributes, government’s role, and general well-being shows that the data is normally distributed since the value of skewness and kurtosis is below ±3 (Coakes, J. S. and Steed, G. L., 2003).

Table 2: The Alpha Cronbach’s Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life Attributes</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government’s Role</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.891</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 The Assessment of Fitness For The Model

Structural equation modeling technique was use to estimate multiple and interrelated dependence relationships and used to represent the unobserved concept in these relationships and account for the measurement error in the estimation process (Hair, 1998). In this study the unobserved exogenous variables are quality of life attributes, attitudes and government role and community role, and unobserved endogenous variable is life satisfaction. Amos version 6 was used to measure the model fit. Several measures of goodness of fit were evaluated for the structural model: Chi-square/degree of freedom, Goodness of fit index, Adjusted goodness of fit index (GFI), Normalized fit index(NFI), Comparative index (CFI) and Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goodness of fit model Index</th>
<th>Recommended good fit value*</th>
<th>Proposed Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square</td>
<td>649.369</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability</td>
<td>&gt; .05</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.f</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square/degree of freedom</td>
<td>&lt; 2.00</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>&gt; .90</td>
<td>0.865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFI</td>
<td>&gt; .90</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>&gt; .90</td>
<td>0.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>&gt; .90</td>
<td>0.942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>&lt; .08</td>
<td>0.060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Criteria suggested by Hair, Anderson, Tatham, Black (1998) and Arbuckle & Wothke (1999)

The overall model fit is marginal with the values of GFI, NFI, TLI, CFI and RMSEA. The likelihood ratio chi-square value 649.369 with 310 degree of freedom is statistically at the 0.05 significant level. It may be concluded that significant differences exist between the proposed model and the recommended model. The GFI value 0.865 is at a marginally acceptable level, but the RMSEA has a value which falls inside the acceptable range of 0.08.
Modelling Quality of Life and Life satisfaction

Chisquare=2044.342
df=585
Probability=.000
Ratio=3.495
GFI=.715
NFI=.752
IFI=.810
TLI=.794
CFI=.809
RMSEA=.090
Modification Modeling Quality Of Life And Life Satisfaction

Chisquare=649.369
df=310
Probability=.000
Ratio=2.095
GFI=.865
NFI=.895
IFI=.942
TLI=.934
CFI=.942
RMSEA=.060
5. Discussion Concerning Modifications to the Model

Model was constructed based on the recommendations proposed by Amos 6.0 to ensure that this model fits the data. To determine the suitability of the model, several items in the quality of life attributes, the role of government, the role of the community and the attitude were dropped for not fulfilling the criteria recommended by Hair (1998) that the item has a factor loading less than 0.7. With regards to the attributes of quality of life, the four items dropped were Q8, Q9, Q10 and Q11. For the role of government, four items were dropped G1, G2, G3 and G6. For the role of the community, two items were dropped C1 and C6. Adjustments are also made to the dimensions of restructuring attributes quality of life through the correlation of the e18-e22, e16-e21, e21-e22, and e15-e16. For the attitudes there is correlation between s1 and s2. Through the recommendations made by Amos 6.0 can modify the initial model to better model the chi square was reduced from 2044.342 to 649.369 with probability 0.00, GFI value increased from 0.715 to 0.865, NFI increased from 0.752 to 0.895, TLI value increased from 0.794 to 0.934, the CFI also increased from 0.809 to 0.942 and RMSEA values decreased from 0.09 to 0.06. These values indicate that this model has a "goodness-of-fit" (Hair et al.1998).

The attribute of the quality of life showed three items in terms of standardized regression weights that contribute to these dimensions is Q1 (β = .81, p <0.001), Q2 (β = .81, p <0.001) ,Q4 (β = .84, p <0.001), and Q7 (β = .80, p <0.001). Q1 refers to income earned whether he or she is satisfied with the income and to make a comparison whether the income now is better than before. While Q2 refers to the participant of homestay is satisfied with the expenditure capability for the family, and to envisage whether he can foresee that his family expenditure in the future will be better than what he has now.

The government’s role is also important in improving quality of life for homestay participants. Advisory services provided by the government which has formed the government role of G4-dimensional (β = .76, p <0.001), G6 associated with homestay policies (β = 0.86, p <0.001) and G7 enforcement rules (β = .79, p <0.001). The role of government has shown the overall effect of β = .52 on the role of the community. This finding in line with the government’s role in enhancing the development of tourism by encouraging community participation in the homestay programme. (Kamaruddin, 2002).

The role of government has shown the overall effect of β = .25 to the attitude of homestay participants. Through the training courses were conducted by the government, the participant are willing to accept technological changes related to the homestay S2 (β = 0.80, p <0.001), the participant is cognizant of the homestay programme development projects undertaken S3 (β = 0.82, p <0.001), they also strive to become a successful homestay participants S5 (β = 0.85, p <0.001), have a strong spirit to move S7 (β = 0.84, p <0.001) and attitudes can interact with others without feeling of inferiority (β = 0.84, p <0.001). The findings also indicated that the attributes of quality of life, the role of government, community and the attitude have contributed 28.2% to life satisfaction among homestay participants. This shows that the homestay programme are able to improve rural community quality of life through increased income and job opportunities expressed by economic activities carried out.

6. Conclusion

This study proves that the homestay programme was implemented to boost the life satisfaction of the participants. The homestay programme development can change the landscape of many rural communities that depend on economic activity based on changes to the activities of agriculture-based economy to tourism. The government plays an important role in encouraging participation, support and willingness
of local communities to ensure the success of this programme. Participation of residents in this community-based programmes can empower themselves through participation in activities carried out.

References


