

Homestays as Catalysts for Local Economic Growth and Environmental Conservation: A Study of Selangor and Perlis

Norziaton Ismail Khan¹, Amrizah Kamaluddin¹, Shukriah Saad¹, Aida Hazlin Ismail¹,

Radziah Mahmud¹ & Nadiyah Ibrahim¹

¹ Faculty of Accountancy, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Alam, Malaysia

Correspondence: Norziaton Ismail Khan, Faculty of Accountancy, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Alam, Malaysia.

Received: March 2, 2025

Accepted: March 13, 2025

Online Published: March 13, 2025

doi:10.5430/afr.v14n2p1

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/afr.v14n2p1>

Abstract

This study explores the role of homestay tourism in promoting local community welfare, cultural heritage, and environmental sustainability in Selangor and Perlis, Malaysia. The study used quantitative designs to collect data through a questionnaire survey, utilising a simple random sampling technique. The data was distributed to 200 homestay guests, but only 106 responses were collected and usable. This study uses descriptive analysis to convey the findings effectively. The survey conducted among homestay guests assesses several factors, including the economic impact of homestays, their accessibility, the promotion of local culture, and their contribution to environmental awareness. Results indicate that homestays significantly contribute to the local economy by generating income for host families, with both regions reporting a strong belief in the value-for-money homestays offered compared to other accommodations. Guests also view homestays as platforms for promoting local products, delicacies, and cultural traditions, highlighting their role in preserving and sharing regional heritage. Furthermore, homestay tourism in both states is seen as encouraging environmental awareness and fostering a love for nature, with eco-tourism practices being emphasised by hosts. However, the study reveals areas for improvement, particularly in terms of accessibility for people with disabilities, with some respondents indicating that homestays lack necessary facilities for disabled individuals. Selangor is noted for its proximity to natural resources and environmental attractions, making it a popular eco-tourism destination, while Perlis has fewer homestays near such attractions. Homestays in both regions provide economic, cultural, and ecological benefits. However, there is potential for further development in improving accessibility and expanding eco-tourism offerings, particularly in Perlis, to enhance the sustainability of homestay tourism in the future.

Keywords: economy, environment, homestay, tourism

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries and is critical in driving economic development, promoting cultural exchange, and fostering global understanding (UNWTO, 2020). In particular, homestay tourism has become an increasingly popular form of travel, allowing tourists to experience local cultures and lifestyles while contributing directly to local economies (Mason, 2016). In Malaysia, regions such as Selangor and Perlis have seen a rise in homestay tourism, leveraging their rich cultural heritage, natural resources, and affordable accommodations to attract domestic and international travellers (Teng, 2018). Homestays provide unique cultural experiences and significant economic benefits by generating income for local communities, making them a valuable part of Malaysia's broader tourism strategy (Siti, 2017).

Despite the growth and benefits of homestay tourism, several challenges need to be addressed to optimise its potential. While homestays contribute to economic development by supporting local businesses and creating job opportunities, issues such as accessibility for people with disabilities, pricing inconsistencies, and the need for more integrated eco-tourism initiatives remain prevalent (Nor et al., 2019). Additionally, sustainability is a concern, as homestay tourism can lead to environmental degradation if not properly managed (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). In regions like Perlis, there is also an opportunity to utilise natural resources better to create more eco-friendly tourism experiences, which could strengthen the appeal of homestays as an alternative to conventional hotels.

This paper examines the challenges facing homestay tourism in Selangor and Perlis. It comprehensively analyses how local environments, cultural practices, and sustainable tourism strategies can be utilised to improve homestays and promote economic growth. Specifically, the study seeks to (1) assess the role of homestays in the economic development of both states, (2) explore the barriers to growth, including accessibility and pricing issues, and (3) offer policy recommendations to improve the effectiveness of homestay tourism as a tool for sustainable economic growth and environmental conservation in both regions. Through this, the paper aims to provide a strategic framework for policymakers and local stakeholders to enhance the benefits of homestay tourism for the broader community while promoting cultural and environmental sustainability. The homestay sector in Malaysia provides visitors with an authentic experience of traditional "kampung" life in select villages across the country (Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, 2025). This homestay program is categorised as community-based tourism (CBT) and operates as independent accommodation (Mat Kassim et al., 2016). Many tourists prefer this option due to its affordability. The Ministry of Tourism actively supports participants by facilitating activities such as preparing traditional meals, harvesting local produce, and engaging in cultural experiences. Furthermore, Samsudin and Maliki (2015) emphasised that tourists often seek to immerse themselves in the cultural landscape of their chosen destinations. Additionally, the growth of cultural tourism has significantly contributed to reducing environmental pollution, which is often a consequence of inadequate tourism management practices.

The homestay industry provides tourists with a memorable travel experience while contributing significantly to rural communities' revenue (Ab Ghani et al., 2024). This influx of tourist funds is crucial in boosting the local economy. Furthermore, expanding the homestay sector has increased job opportunities within these communities (Zamzuki et al., 2023). As the homestay concept gains popularity among travellers and job prospects continue to grow, it emerges as a valuable asset for developing rural tourism. This highlights the relationship between cultural tourism and sustainability within the homestay industry (Samsudin & Maliki, 2015).

Sustainable tourism enables future generations to reap the benefits of industry activities currently in practice. Mat Kassim et al. (2016) emphasise that the sustainability of homestays is centred on resource conservation in response to both demands and development needs. Additionally, Ramele and Yamazaki (2014) noted that one of the primary goals of launching the homestay program was to counteract the declining population, particularly among youth in rural areas who migrate to urban centres. The growth of job opportunities through homestays instils confidence in young people that they can earn a living and generate income while remaining in their rural communities.

In addition to their contributions to rural development, Janjua and Krishnapillai (2022) highlighted that homestays in Malaysia promote female empowerment, as a significant number of homestay operators are women. From the guests' perspective, this environment fosters safety for all-female travel groups exploring Malaysia. Supporting the assertion regarding job opportunities made by Zamzuki et al. (2023) and Quang et al. (2023), women also dominate the role of homestay operators in Vietnam. However, despite the availability of these job opportunities, the labour division remained significantly gendered, with women often undertaking more supportive tasks, such as housekeeping. At the same time, their male counterparts were more likely to engage in customer-facing roles, such as negotiations and communications.

Ab Ghani et al. (2024) have observed that, despite the notable growth of homestays within Malaysia's tourism sector, revenue distribution remains significantly uneven. Specifically, more strategically located destinations, such as Sabah, Sarawak, and Pahang, generate higher income than smaller states like Perlis. Bernama (2024) also reported that the Selangor government is committed to establishing essential policies and guidelines for homestays situated on agricultural land. Nevertheless, while the homestay sector across all states generally exhibits consistent income generation, as indicated by Ab Ghani et al. (2024), Mikil (2024) noted that Malaysia's tourism focus tends to prioritise shopping, dining, and nightlife, none of which are directly linked to the homestay industry.

The stagnation in the growth of Malaysia's homestay industry is mainly attributable to its heavy reliance on local government initiatives (Janjua & Krishnapillai, 2022). Central to this situation are the policies and strategic plans established by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC). According to Idris (2014), MOTAC is the governing body for Malaysia's Homestay Programme. However, as Amir et al. (2015) noted, despite the strong connection between the rural community and MOTAC, homestay services were excluded from the Tourism Malaysia Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 (Tourism Malaysia, 2021). This indicates that while the homestay industry may not be a primary focus within the broader tourism sector, it remains dependent on government funding for its development.

Generating revenue is crucial for rural tourism entities, as increased income empowers them to improve their services (Radović et al., 2020). Without the ability to self-finance, these rural tourism communities struggle to make necessary investments, which diminishes their attractiveness to tourists. To enhance profitability, it is vital to

reevaluate strategies related to pricing and promotions. Tiamiyu et al. (2020) also emphasised that guests often make lodging decisions based on the unique experiences offered by accommodations. This underscores homestay operators' importance in earmarking funds specifically for tourism-related investments.

Operators should prioritise generating direct revenue from tourists to enhance the financial viability of homestay programs. Hayrol Aziz and Selamat (2016) emphasised the significant impact of attentive homestay hosts on their guests, significantly improving the overall tourist experience. Additionally, Mat Kasim et al. (2016) raised concerns about the declining number of homestay operators, attributing this trend to their challenges in attracting visitors. This decline ultimately affects the long-term sustainability of the homestay sector.

In conclusion, Malaysia's homestay industry relies heavily on government support and guest revenue. To diminish their reliance on government funding and ensure the ongoing viability of their homestays, operators must focus on generating income through lodging guests. Consequently, understanding guests' perspectives on their homestay experiences is crucial for sustaining the tourism sector.

2. Literature Review

Mat Kassim et al. (2016) identified that "hospitality" holds a low priority among homestay operators, ranking eleventh out of twelve criteria essential for homestay sustainability. "Maintenance" also ranks among the bottom three factors. Both of these elements significantly affect the experiences of guests staying in homestays. However, the study did not thoroughly analyse the reasons behind these rankings. As a result, additional research has been employed to synthesise the findings presented by Mat Kassim et al. (2016). The lack of gender representation in the demographic data collection raises questions about whether the findings of Quang et al. (2023), which highlighted significant differences between male and female roles in homestay operations, influenced the responses gathered by Mat Kassim et al. (2016). Notably, the top-ranking factors identified by Mat Kassim et al. (2016), such as "commitment" and "organisational management and leadership," were recognised by Quang et al. (2023) as predominantly male-centric roles. In contrast, responsibilities associated with "hospitality" typically fell to female hosts.

Rural tourism, particularly in homestays, encounters considerable financial challenges that jeopardise the sustainability of its business operations (Radović et al., 2020). Although this study was conducted in Serbia, its findings resonate with Asyraf et al. (2024), who emphasise that homestay operators increasingly depend on government support for their growth. Furthermore, Azmi et al. (2024) highlight the crucial role of tourism in contributing to Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and foresee an urgent need for enhanced government financial backing to strengthen the industry. This support is viewed as a strategic investment to bolster the Malaysian economy through the "Visit Malaysia" campaign.

However, the approach to government aid varies between these studies. Radović et al. (2020) suggest that the reduction of mandatory taxes should be offered as a reward for homestay operators adhering to sustainability principles and providing loans or grants to foster sustainable tourism development. Such initiatives could empower homestay programs to enhance their services and infrastructure, leading to a more sustainable tourist experience. Conversely, Asyraf et al. (2024) indicate that homestay operators need government support for crisis management.

The research conducted by Tiamiyu et al. (2020) reveals that the sense of home created within accommodation offers tourists a distinctive experience, enhancing their emotional attachment. Although this study focused on Airbnb guests in Malaysia rather than traditional homestays, its findings are still applicable, as both types of accommodations provide an alternative to conventional hotel stays. This perspective is further supported by Hayrol Aziz and Selamat (2016), who emphasise that the relationship between homestay guests and operators is crucial in delivering an unforgettable experience and fostering a "family dynamic" during their stay.

Additionally, Azmi et al. (2024) discovered a correlation between the experiences of homestay guests and the revenue generated by the homestay itself. Positive guest feedback through various channels can attract more tourists, encouraging them to immerse themselves in the local culture. Furthermore, Chen et al. (2024) noted that the rapport between guests and homestay operators significantly influences the likelihood of guests returning or sharing favourable reviews. Aziz et al. (2014) concluded that considering the guests' perspective is crucial for generating sustainable income. The feedback received enables homestay operators to pinpoint areas for improvement. Consequently, the guests' viewpoint aligns with the interests of both parties in meeting their expectations: guests pay for services, and in return, homestay operators must deliver exceptional services that match the price. Furthermore, Zhou et al. (2022) emphasised that while guests expressed satisfaction with the hospitality, they were dissatisfied

with the maintenance and infrastructure of the homestay. Additionally, the cleanliness of the homestay plays a significant role in shaping guests' perceptions (Chin et al., 2024).

There are varying opinions regarding guests' perceptions of the unique experiences offered by homestays. Chin et al. (2024) found that guests who have experienced multiple homestays may become indifferent to the experience, as it often follows a similar template. In contrast, Inversini et al. (2022) pointed out that guests find cultural experiences during their stay meaningful, as activities ranging from artistic pursuits to skills development enhance their visit. It is important to note that the two studies adopted different data collection methods: the former utilised closed-ended questionnaires, while the latter conducted exploratory interviews. This discrepancy may have influenced the responses obtained in each study.

In summary, previous studies indicate that guest perspectives significantly influence tourists' interest in homestays, contributing to overall homestay revenue. By acknowledging guest feedback and interests, homestay operators can identify areas for improvement, allowing for more efficient resource management and enhanced income streams. Many studies have highlighted homestay operators' considerable financial challenges. To ensure the sustainability of homestay tourism, these operators must improve their self-financing capabilities while also receiving appropriate support from the government.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach to examine the homestay economy and its environmental impact in Selangor and Perlis, Malaysia. Data was gathered through a questionnaire survey, utilising a simple random sampling method to select participants. This strategy ensures that the sample accurately reflects the broader community, enabling reliable extrapolation of the findings to the overall population. The research focuses on homestay guests in Selangor and Perlis. Of 200 distributed questionnaires, 106 were identified as usable for analysis, with 60 from Selangor and 46 from Perlis. The survey instrument was crafted based on a thorough review of relevant literature and authoritative reports. It comprises fifteen questions organised into four sections, starting with six demographic inquiries, followed by questions related to social attributes, economic factors, environmental considerations, and government support. The survey was administered face-to-face in March 2024 and remained open until the final responses were gathered in July 2024. To uphold the integrity of the data collection process, the survey was designed to be anonymous, ensuring participants that their responses would remain confidential and that no personally identifiable information would be disclosed. This emphasis on anonymity was intended to promote honest responses from participants. This study utilises a quantitative research design to comprehensively investigate the homestay economy and its environmental implications in Selangor and Perlis, Malaysia. Data was collected through a meticulously crafted questionnaire survey, employing a simple random sampling method to ensure a representative selection of participants. This methodological approach is critical in guaranteeing that the sample accurately mirrors the characteristics of the broader community, thus allowing for valid extrapolation of the findings to the entire population of homestay guests in these regions.

4. Analysis of Data

A close-ended questionnaire was distributed to homestay guests in Selangor and Perlis. The survey received responses from 60 guests in Selangor and 46 guests in Perlis. As shown in Table 1, most respondents are Malaysians, with only four individuals holding foreign nationality; notably, none of the foreign respondents stayed at homestays in Perlis. Additionally, there is a slight gender skew among the respondents, with more females participating in the survey.

4.1 Demographic Information

Table 1. General Demographic

	Gender		Age			Nationality	
	Male	Female	18 to 25	26 to 40	Above 40	Malaysian	Foreigner
Selangor	28	32	26	22	12	56	4
Perlis	16	30	21	12	13	46	0
Total	44	62	47	34	25	102	4

The lodging behaviour detailed in Table 2 reveals that most respondents stay in homestays on fewer than three occasions each year. Selangor has more people visiting only once a year (23), whereas Perlis has more people visiting twice yearly (19). This could suggest that Selangor, a highly urbanised and economically diverse state, attracts a more transient population with occasional stays. In contrast, Perlis, which is smaller and less urbanised, appears to have a more stable group of visitors who return more frequently, perhaps due to stronger familial or cultural ties.

Table 2. Homestay Guests' Lodging Pattern

	Frequency of staying in a year					Duration of staying		No. of members staying		
	1	2	3	4 to 5	Above 5	1 to 2 days	3 to 5 days	1 to 10	11 to 20	Above 20
Selangor	23	13	11	9	4	33	27	51	4	5
Perlis	6	19	6	11	4	31	15	34	9	3
Total	29	32	17	20	8	64	42	85	13	8

In both regions, the frequency of stays tends to decline as the number of stays increases. Most people in both states stay only once or twice a year, reflecting the general trend of periodic visits rather than continuous or frequent stays. This could be due to factors like the cost of travel, distance, or personal priorities. Additionally, the relatively low number of people staying more than five times a year in both regions suggests that even regular visitors may not stay often enough to be considered frequent.

In Selangor, the higher number of one-time stays could indicate the need for more short-term accommodation options or services targeting transient visitors. Meanwhile, Perlis might benefit from fostering its appeal as a destination for regular short-term visits, such as family reunions, leisure activities, or short business trips. Besides, Selangor and Perlis are divided into two categories: 1 to 2 days and 3 to 5 days. The numbers indicate the people staying for each duration in the respective regions. Both regions have more visitors staying 1 to 2 days than 3 to 5 days, but Selangor has more medium-term stays than Perlis. This could be due to Selangor's status as a commercial hub, attracting people for work and business. In contrast, Perlis is more rural and might attract short-term visitors for cultural or familial reasons.

Selangor has a significantly higher number, reflecting its appeal to business travellers, small families, and urban tourists. While lower in numbers, Perlis still attracts small groups, likely for short visits or local tourism. The data reveals that both Selangor and Perlis predominantly attract small groups of visitors. Being more urbanised, Selangor appeals more to business travellers, small families, and short-term tourists, while Perlis attracts slightly larger groups, likely due to its cultural and familial appeal. The analysis suggests strategic opportunities for each region to tailor their tourism and accommodation services better to meet the needs of their respective visitor demographics.

4.2 Social Attributes for Homestay Guests

The survey in Table 3 shows that homestays in Selangor attract visitors primarily seeking cultural immersion, village experience, and the opportunity to learn new languages and traditions. In contrast, Perlis focuses more on convenience, nature experiences, and direct interaction with the local community. Both regions offer high levels of hospitality, with Perlis showing a stronger appreciation for the "village concept" and nature experiences. A detailed explanation of the findings will be discussed below.

Table 3. Social Attributes for Homestay Guests

What is the reason for staying at a homestay instead of any accommodation type?	Selangor	Perlis
Convenience	30	35
Experience stays at the village	41	16
Experience of a new culture	33	20
Others	11	3
Activities that you do with the local community	Selangor	Perlis
Cooking	36	19
Fishing	37	15
Jungle Trekking	4	16
Local Tradition	26	15
What do you learn from the local community engagement?	Selangor	Perlis
New language	33	24
New delicacy	40	34
Local tradition	20	6
Experience stays at the village	33	14
What is the uniqueness of the homestay that you went to?	Selangor	Perlis
Village concept	34	40
Experiencing the nature	20	36
Do you have any interaction with the local community?	Selangor	Perlis
Yes	34	40
No	20	36
Does the homestay provide more enjoyable experiences?	Selangor	Perlis
Yes	34	40
No	20	36
Do you think you get warm and cordial hospitality from the homestay hosts?	Selangor	Perlis
Yes	34	40
No	20	36

4.2.1 Reasons for Choosing a Homestay

A moderate number of individuals indicated that convenience was their primary reason for choosing a homestay, suggesting that ease of access or location is a factor in their decision. However, it is not the foremost reason. In Perlis, more respondents selected convenience, indicating that accessibility—potentially due to location, availability, or proximity to attractions—plays a more significant role in this region. Homestays may be viewed as more convenient than other accommodation types in Perlis.

In contrast, many participants from Selangor place a high value on the experience of staying in a village, seeking the rural, traditional, and authentic lifestyle that homestays can provide, particularly for those from urban backgrounds. This experience may involve engaging in farming, cooking local dishes, and learning about regional traditions. While some respondents in Perlis also appreciated the village experience, the numbers were notably lower. Given that Perlis is already a rural area, individuals may not find the village experience as distinctive or appealing as those from more urbanised regions like Selangor. This also implies that many homestays in Perlis already offer a similar environment.

Many individuals in Selangor are drawn to the opportunity to experience new cultures, often involving exploring diverse ethnic groups, cuisines, traditions, and customs. This fascination reflects Selangor's multicultural essence, where Malay, Chinese, Indian, and other cultures intertwine. Visitors may opt for homestays to better appreciate these rich cultural variations. In contrast, the interest in cultural experiences is less prominent in Perlis. With a predominantly Malay culture, Perlis offers a more homogeneous experience, meaning visitors may not encounter as much of a "new" cultural landscape as they would in areas characterised by greater ethnic diversity.

4.2.2 Activities with the Local Community

This section focuses on guests' activities with the local community, which can enrich the homestay experience by providing deeper cultural immersion. Cooking activities are popular in Selangor. Guests may learn how to cook traditional dishes from local hosts, a hands-on way of experiencing local culture. Fewer participants in Perlis engage in cooking activities, possibly reflecting fewer opportunities for cooking-related activities or different expectations for visitors.

Fishing is another activity that is relatively popular in Selangor. This might involve fishing in local rivers, lakes, or traditional coastal activities. In Perlis, fewer people participated in fishing, which could reflect different activities available or simply a lower emphasis on this particular aspect of local life in Perlis. Jungle trekking is less prevalent in Selangor. This could be because Selangor, despite being partly rural, is more urbanised and less focused on nature-oriented activities. In contrast, more people in Perlis (16) engage in jungle trekking, which is understandable given Perlis' natural environment and proximity to forests and mountains. Trekking may offer an adventurous opportunity for visitors to explore the local flora and fauna. In Selangor, 26 people indicated participation in local traditions, including attending local festivals and ceremonies or experiencing heritage crafts and rituals. In Perlis, fewer people participated in local traditions. This could reflect the region's less diverse traditional offerings or simply a different focus for visitors when staying in the area.

4.2.3 Learning from Local Community Engagement

More people in Selangor (33) learned a new language, likely due to the multicultural environment of Selangor. The diversity of languages spoken, such as Malay, Chinese dialects, and Tamil, could motivate visitors to learn a few phrases or words from the local community. While language learning is still relatively common in Perlis, fewer people (24) are likely to experience a drastic change in language, given that the local language is Malay and less linguistically diverse than Selangor.

Many people in Selangor (40) reported learning new delicacies, likely reflecting the state's cultural diversity. Guests could be exposed to various foods, such as Malay, Chinese, Indian, and others, enhancing their culinary knowledge. Food plays a significant role in the homestay experience in Perlis, with 34 people learning about new delicacies. However, given Perlis' more straightforward culinary traditions, it could suggest that guests are introduced to regional or unique local dishes. In Selangor, 20 people reported learning about local traditions, indicating an interest in understanding the customs and rituals of various communities within the state. Fewer people in Perlis (6) learned local traditions, which may reflect the region's more uniform cultural practices and a lower perceived novelty of local traditions than those in more culturally diverse areas.

Staying in a village is a unique learning experience in Selangor, where the rural lifestyle contrasts with the modern urban environment. In Perlis, this is still an engaging experience but is less emphasised because the area is already predominantly rural, so the novelty of this experience may be reduced.

4.2.4 Uniqueness of the Homestay

Many people in Selangor value the "village concept" in homestays, which likely offers a peaceful, rural setting away from city life. This could involve aspects of farm life, traditional housing, and close-knit community experiences. The "village concept" is even more appreciated in Perlis, where homestays may be viewed as an authentic way to experience rural life. Given that Perlis is a rural state, the village concept might feel more immersive and representative of the region's culture.

Less emphasis is placed on nature experiences in Selangor. This could be due to the urbanised nature of the state and the availability of more city-based attractions rather than natural settings. In contrast, nature experiences (such as experiencing local forests, mountains, or natural reserves) are highly valued in Perlis, home to more natural landscapes and outdoor activities.

4.2.5 Interaction with Local Community

A significant portion of guests in both regions had interactions with the local community. This suggests that homestay experiences foster engagement between visitors and locals, enhancing cultural exchange and enriching the stay.

4.2.6 Enjoyable Experiences

Both regions report a positive experience, with more people in Perlis stating they had an enjoyable time. This reflects that homestays in both areas offer memorable and satisfying stays.

4.2.7 Hospitality

The warmth and hospitality of the hosts are a key component of any homestay experience. Both states report high levels of hospitality, indicating that hosts in both regions provide welcoming, cordial environments for visitors. This suggests that the homestay hosts are likely trained or committed to ensuring positive guest interactions.

4.3 Economy Attributes Towards Homestay

The survey responses suggest that homestays are perceived as valuable, affordable, and culturally enriching accommodations in both Selangor and Perlis. They help generate income for the local community, promote local culture, and offer reasonably priced products and services. While the general sentiment is favourable, slight variations, such as the mixed opinion on homestay prices in Perlis, indicate that certain homestays' pricing and affordability may differ slightly depending on the location. Table 4 illustrates the economic attributes perceived by the guests.

Table 4. Economic Attributes Towards Homestay

	Selangor		Perlis	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Is homestay able to assist the local community in generating additional income?	60	0	46	0
Do you think homestay offers value for money?	60	0	46	0
Does a homestay offer lower prices compared to other accommodations?	60	0	43	3
Should homestay promote local products, local delicacies, and local entertainment?	60	0	46	0
Do you think local products, delicacies, and entertainment prices are reasonable?	59	1	46	0

4.3.1 Is Homestay Able to Assist the Local Community in Generating Additional Income?

This question measures the perceived economic impact of homestays on the local community. Selangor and Perlis respondents agree that homestays help generate additional income for the local community. All participants in both states (60 in Selangor and 46 in Perlis) answered "Yes," believing homestays provide an income boost for local families. This could be due to homestay hosts offering accommodations, selling local products, or providing cultural activities that attract tourists, thus creating a source of income for the community.

4.3.2 Do You Think Homestay Offers Value for Money?

Staying at a homestay provides good value in terms of the experience compared to the cost. Both Selangor and Perlis respondents overwhelmingly agree that homestays offer value for money. This suggests that guests feel the benefits they gain (such as a unique cultural experience, local interaction, or accommodations) justify the cost. The high number of "Yes" responses (60 in Selangor and 46 in Perlis) suggests that homestays are affordable and worthwhile accommodations for visitors in both regions.

4.3.3 Does a Homestay Offer Lower Prices Compared to Other Accommodations?

Are homestays perceived as more affordable than other accommodations? In Selangor, all respondents (60) agree that homestays are cheaper, while in Perlis, 43 people say "Yes" and three say "No." The fact that more respondents in Perlis answered "Yes" than "No" suggests that homestays are still considered cheaper than other accommodation types, but a small percentage of people may feel this is not always the case. This could be due to different market conditions, such as the availability of cheaper or more competitive accommodations in some regions of Perlis.

4.3.4 Should Homestay Promote Local Products, Local Delicacies, and Local Entertainment?

Selangor and Perlis respondents unanimously agree that homestays should promote local products, delicacies, and entertainment. This suggests a strong belief that homestays can play a significant role in supporting and showcasing local culture. By promoting regional products (such as handmade crafts or traditional food), homestays can provide a more authentic experience while supporting local businesses and artisans.

4.3.5 Do You Think Local Products, Delicacies, and Entertainment Prices Are Reasonable?

In Selangor, 59 respondents believe the prices are reasonable, while only one disagrees. In Perlis, 46 people believe the prices are reasonable, with no one disagreeing. This indicates that most respondents in both states think the prices for local products and experiences are affordable and appropriate for the value they offer. The single "No" response in Selangor suggests that while most find the prices reasonable, there may be a small minority who feel differently.

4.4 Environment and Government Support

Homestays in both states are recognised for their role in enhancing accessibility, showcasing local natural attractions, and promoting environmental sustainability. Notably, Selangor places a slightly stronger emphasis on nature-based tourism and eco-friendly initiatives. However, there is an opportunity for improvement in ensuring that all homestay accommodations are accessible to individuals with disabilities. The specific details are outlined below.

Table 5. Environment and Government Support on Homestay Industry

	Selangor		Perlis	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Are there any facilities for people with disabilities and disadvantages?	47	13	38	8
Are there any local natural resources and environmental attractions and/or nearby homestays?	58	2	36	10
Does homestay tourism encourage a love for the environment?	59	1	46	0

4.4.1 Are there any Facilities for People with Disabilities and Disadvantages?

This question evaluates whether homestays are inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities or disadvantages (e.g., older adults and those with physical challenges). In Selangor, 47 respondents believe homestays provide the necessary facilities for people with disabilities or disadvantages, while 13 disagree. This indicates that while many homestays in Selangor are perceived as accessible, there is still room for improvement, with many respondents indicating that accessibility might not always be available. In Perlis, 38 respondents think homestays are accessible to people with disabilities or disadvantages, while eight do not. This suggests that while most homestays are considered accommodating, a small proportion of respondents believe there could be better provisions for people with special needs.

4.4.2 Are there any Local Natural Resources and Environmental Attractions and/or Nearby Homestays?

Homestays are located near natural resources and environmental attractions, which can be essential factors in attracting tourists interested in eco-tourism or nature experiences. In Selangor, a significant majority (58) believe homestays are located near local natural resources or environmental attractions, while only two disagree. This indicates that Selangor offers a wide range of nature-based attractions near homestays, including parks, forests, beaches, and natural reserves, making it a popular destination for eco-tourism. In Perlis, 36 respondents agree that homestays are near such attractions, but 10 disagree. This could reflect that Perlis has a relatively minor number of

prominent environmental attractions compared to Selangor or that some homestays are not located near nature reserves or eco-tourism spots.

4.4.3 Does Homestay Tourism Encourage a Love for the Environment?

Does homestay tourism help foster an appreciation for the environment? Since homestays often emphasise local, sustainable living practices, it is essential to understand if they inspire guests to care for and protect the environment. In Selangor, 59 respondents believe homestay tourism encourages a love for the environment, with only one disagreeing. This suggests that the homestay experience in Selangor often highlights environmental sustainability, such as promoting eco-friendly practices or teaching visitors about local conservation efforts. In Perlis, all 46 respondents agree that homestay tourism encourages a love for the environment. This shows that homestays in Perlis might strongly incorporate environmental themes, and guests are likely exposed to conservation practices or sustainable ways of living that raise awareness about protecting the environment.

5. Conclusion

The surveys conducted in Selangor and Perlis provide insights into the role of homestays in promoting local community welfare, environmental sustainability, and tourism development. The results highlight several significant trends in economic impact, accessibility, cultural promotion, and environmental consciousness. It highlights homestays' considerable role in boosting local economies, promoting cultural heritage, and fostering environmental sustainability. Homestays are seen as valuable sources of income for local communities, with respondents in both regions agreeing that they offer affordable and enriching experiences for travellers. These accommodations also contribute to preserving and promoting local products, delicacies, and traditions, providing visitors with authentic cultural experiences. Additionally, homestays are recognised for encouraging environmental awareness and eco-friendly practices, with most respondents agreeing that homestay tourism helps foster a love for the environment. However, there is room for improvement, particularly regarding accessibility for people with disabilities. While most homestays are perceived as accessible, there is a need for greater inclusivity.

However, this study provides valuable insights for the government to develop policies and measures to promote economic growth through homestay tourism in Selangor and Perlis. By analysing homestays' economic, cultural, and environmental impacts, the government can encourage local economic growth by supporting homestay operators through incentives, subsidies, and training to enhance their service offerings and attract more tourists. Promote cultural tourism by integrating local products, traditional crafts, and cultural experiences into homestay packages, ensuring regional heritage preservation while providing authentic experiences. To attract environmentally conscious tourists, develop eco-tourism by investing in infrastructure and promoting natural resources in areas like Perlis, where eco-tourism potential can be expanded. Improve accessibility by implementing guidelines and financial support for homestays to cater to people with disabilities, broadening the market for inclusive tourism. Standardise pricing strategies to ensure homestays remain affordable while maintaining quality, helping to position homestays as competitive alternatives to other accommodations. The government can foster sustainable tourism, boost local economies, and create a stronger, more inclusive tourism sector through these strategies.

This study offers valuable insights for the government in formulating policies and strategies to promote economic growth through homestay tourism in Selangor and Perlis. By examining homestays' economic, cultural, and environmental implications, the government can stimulate local economic growth by supporting homestay operators through incentives, subsidies, and training to enhance service offerings and attract more tourists. Additionally, cultural tourism can be promoted by incorporating local products, traditional crafts, and cultural experiences into homestay packages, ensuring regional heritage preservation while delivering authentic visitor experiences. Investing in infrastructure and promoting natural resources in regions like Perlis can expand eco-tourism, drawing in environmentally conscious travellers. Furthermore, enhancing accessibility by establishing guidelines and financial assistance for homestays can help accommodate individuals with disabilities, broadening the inclusive tourism market. Standardising pricing strategies is essential to ensure that homestays remain affordable while maintaining quality, positioning them as viable alternatives to traditional accommodations. The government can facilitate sustainable tourism, stimulate local economies, and create a more robust and inclusive tourism sector through these strategies.

In conclusion, homestay tourism in Selangor and Perlis is crucial for economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. Homestays provide authentic, enriching, and affordable experiences for travellers while supporting local communities. However, there are opportunities for improvement, particularly in accessibility for people with disabilities, pricing consistency, and eco-tourism development in Perlis. By addressing these challenges and building upon existing strengths, homestays in both Selangor and Perlis can continue flourishing as

key contributors to Malaysia's tourism industry. Moving forward, a strategic and sustainable approach to homestay management will ensure that these accommodations remain attractive, competitive, and beneficial for visitors and host communities.

Acknowledgement

The authors gratefully acknowledge the support given by the University Teknologi MARA Cawangan Selangor, Kampus Puncak Alam, Malaysia, through the DUCS-Fakulti Grants 600-UITMSEL (PI.5/4) (092/2022).

References

- Ab Ghani, H. H., Ab Ghani, N. I., Roslan, F., Wan Mohd Zain, W. M. A. B., & Gunawan, M. A. (2024). A conceptual framework for effective homestay governance practices. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 14(12). <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v14-i12/24320>
- Amir, A. F., Ghapar, A. A., Jamal, S. A., & Ahmad, K. N. (2015). Sustainable tourism development: A study on community resilience for rural tourism in Malaysia. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 168, 116-122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.10.217>
- Asyraff, M. A., Hanafiah, M. H., Md Zain, N. A., & Suhartanto, D. (2024). Malaysian homestay experience programme: A qualitative investigation on operator's crisis management practices and resiliency strategies. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 111, 104736. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2024.104736>
- Aziz, N. I. A., Hassan, F., & Jaafar, M. (2014). Exploring tourist experiences in the kampung being homestay programme. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism (APJIHT)*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.7603/s40930-014-0002-2>
- Azmi, A., Abdullah, A., Kamal, S. B. M., Isa, N. M., Sirait, N. N., & Purba, M. H. Y. (2024). The critical success factors towards homestay development in Penang. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 3(7), 3235-3250. <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i7.4457>
- Bernama. (2024, November 20). *Selangor will introduce guidelines for homestays on agricultural land*. The Sun. https://thesun.my/malaysia-news/selangor-to-introduce-guidelines-for-homestays-on-agricultural-land-IA13317906#google_vignette
- Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (2011). *Tourism and sustainability: Perspectives and implications*. Routledge.
- Chen, H., Fu, S., & Lyu, B. (2024). Homestays in China: Mediator effects of brand perception upon host-guest interaction and Tourist behaviour intention. *Heliyon*, 10(8), e29820. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29820>
- Chin, C. H., Ngian, E. T., Wong, W. P. M., & Sia, I. M. H. (2024). Understanding travellers' intention to stay at rural homestay: A comparative study between actual and potential homestay guests. *Journal of Responsible Tourism Management*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.47263/JRTM.04-01-04>
- Hayrol Aziz, F. S., & Selamat, N. H. (2016). Constructing authenticity through hospitality: Examining host-guest relations of a Malay homestay program. *Asian Journal of Tourism Research*, 1(Special). <https://doi.org/10.12982/AJTR.2016.0009>
- Idris, A. (2014, April 21). *Malaysian Homestay Programme*. Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Official Portal. <https://www.motac.gov.my/en/faqs/malaysian-homestay-programme>
- Inversini, A., Rega, I., & Gan, S. W. (2022). The transformative learning nature of Malaysian homestay experiences. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 51, 312-320. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2022.03.008>
- Janjua, Z. ul A., Krishnapillai, G., & Rehman, M. (2022). Importance of the sustainability tourism marketing practices: An insight from rural community-based homestays in Malaysia. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 6(2), 575 - 594. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-10-2021-0274>
- Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board. (2025). *Homestay*. Corporate Site. <https://www.tourism.gov.my/niche/homestay>
- Mason, P. (2016). *Tourism impacts, planning and management*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315781068>
- Mat Kassim, M., Kayat, K., Ramli, R., & Ramli, R. (2016). Sustainability Criteria for the Malaysia Homestay Program. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 6(S77), 250-255.

- Mikil, F. D. (2024, June 17). Malaysia is among the top trending tourist destinations in Asia. *The Star*. <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/travel/2024/06/17/malaysia-is-among-the-top-trending-tourist-destinations-in-asia>
- Nor, F. M., Hashim, A. H., & Saleh, M. M. (2019). Challenges and issues in developing homestay tourism in rural Malaysia. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 21(4), 490-501.
- Quang, T. D., Phan Tran, N. M., Sthapit, E., Thanh Nguyen, N. T., Le, T. M., Doan, T. N., & Thu-Do, T. (2023). Beyond the homestay: Women's participation in rural tourism development in Mekong Delta, Vietnam. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 24(4), 499-514. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14673584231218103>
- Radović, G., Petrović, M. D., Demirović Bajrami, D., Radovanović, M., & Vuković, N. (2020). Can proper funding enhance sustainable tourism in rural settings? Evidence from a developing country. *Sustainability*, 12(18), 7797. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187797>
- Ramele, R., & Yamazaki, J. (2014). The effects of the Malaysian homestay program on the economy, environment, society, and culture of Malay kampung. *Journal of Architecture and Planning (Transactions of AIJ)*, 79(705), 2433-2442. <https://doi.org/10.3130/aija.79.2433>
- Samsudin, P. Y., & Maliki, N. Z. (2015). Preserving Cultural Landscape in Homestay Programme Towards Sustainable Tourism: Brief critical review concept. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 170, 433-441. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.004>
- Siti, A. (2017). Homestay tourism in Malaysia: A catalyst for local economic development. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 6(2), 1 - 8.
- Teng, T. T. (2018). Homestay tourism: The case of Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 23(7), 718 - 730.
- Tiamiyu, T., Quoquab, F., & Mohammad, J. (2020). Antecedents and consequences of tourists' attachment in driving guests' booking intention: A case of Airbnb, Malaysia. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 14(4), 525-544. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-11-2019-0200>
- Tourism Malaysia. (2021). *Tourism Malaysia Strategic Plan 2022-2026*. Tourism Malaysia.
- UNWTO. (2020). *Tourism highlights*. United Nations World Tourism Organization. Retrieved from <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284422456>
- Zamzuki, F. A., Lola, M. S., Aruchunan, E., Muthuvalu, M. S., Jubilee, R. V. W., Zainuddin, N. H., Abdul Hamid, A. A. K., Mokhtar, N. A., & Abdullah, M. T. (2023). Assessing the sustainability of the homestay industry for the East Coast of Malaysia using the Delphi approach. *Heliyon*, 9(11). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e21433>
- Zhou, X., Wang, Y., & Ma, P. (2022). Survey on the tourist satisfaction of rural homestay based on the theory of importance-performance analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.940345>

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).