

## PROVISION OF GREEN PRACTICES AMONGST HOMESTAY OPERATORS IN KELANTAN

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**Abstract:** *This paper reports on the initial findings on environmental decision-making in the context of Malaysian small service accommodation called Homestay. The study was conducted in Kelantan and involved registered Homestay operators whereby the list was obtained from the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural, Malaysia. In order to determine the main activity of green practices by the Homestay operators in Kelantan, 108 questionnaires have been distributed through the implementation of purposive sampling method. Descriptive analysis was applied and it can be concluded that there is certain application of green practices in these small service accommodations.*

**Keywords:** *Green practices, Homestay, tourism industry*

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### Introduction

Over the years, there has been noticed an increasing awareness within hotel operators on the importance of going green and adopting various environment practices. The importance of the environment has become a social issue; customers' preferences are shifting to include more eco-

friendly products and services when they choose an accommodation for their trip (Laroche et al., 2001). According to Han (2009) in the lodging industry, following ecological initiatives such as the International Hotels Environmental Initiatives (IHEI) in 1993, there have been growing efforts to green the hotel industry by reducing energy and water consumption, local/nondurable goods, and emissions released into the air, water, or soil.

A tourism sector is the large contribution sectors with total RM 49.6 billion towards Malaysia's economic compare manufacturing industries (Yahaya, 2008). Therefore, government in Malaysia is improving the tourism industry by upgrading Homestay activities (Siti Falindah, 2013). As a result, hospitality and tourism industry has general responsibility to include green practice in environmental (Chou, Chen & Wang, 2012). Similarly, Zein (2008) defined that green practices includes water management, energy management and waste management whilst Mensah (2006) highlighted that in the hotel industry, environmental management can be defined as the implementation of suitable programs and activities that are carried out and influenced by the management to reduce negative effects on the environment. Therefore the objective of this paper is to reveal the concept of green practices among Homestay operators in Kelantan. This paper used a systematic review of previous literature in order to achieve the objective.

## **Problem Statement**

Nowadays, homestay are becoming popular among tourist. This service is provided at tourism destinations, which are located further from the cities. As these tourism destinations are located in the outskirts/rural areas and have no accommodation services such as hotels, resorts and chalets, the village communities have taken the initiative to provide accommodation facilities by hosting the tourists at their homes. Holding into the perspective of accommodation services, in the hotel sector, which is one of the main business sectors in the hospitality industry, generating much more negative environmental impression than the public notices, consuming an enormous amount of local and imported non-durable goods, energy and water, as well as releasing a great amount of carbon dioxide (Bohdanowicz, 2005; Kirk, 1998). Nevertheless, with proper planning and implementation, operational regulation and management, appropriate development and financial allocation in homestay operation would be ensuring sustainable ecotourism development in east coast region.

Literature indicates a rising awareness of adopting green practices in the service sector in general and in the hospitality industry in particular. However, the implementation of green practices within the hospitality arena has not gained widespread acceptance for a number of reasons, regardless of the increased awareness and publicity in relation to this concept of environmental practices (Doody, 2010). Furthermore, with limited awareness amongst small business owners such as Homestay operators in sub-urban areas (Tzschentke et al, 2008), lack of knowledge compounded with limited support (Hillary, 1998), the implementation of green practices among Homestay operators is hardly to be done (Hillary, 1998). It is also believed that, some hospitality managers still operate in outdated methods and does not recognize or appreciate completely the demand and value of the environment correlate to their business (Butler, 2008).

Similarly, in the case of Malaysia, specifically in east coast region which consists Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang, some weaknesses have been identified for home stays development, whereby most of the homestay operators have marketing problem, low standard of lodging, improper lavatory facilities, lack of hospitality experience, and also lack of campaign been done

in order to improve their facilities for the tourists and what more on the environmental sustainability issues (Md. Anowar, Chamhuri, Shaharuddin & Rabiul Awal, 2011). Hence, this study aim to investigate what are the main activities of green practices that are applied in Homestay in Kelantan. The green practices will be focused by three dimensions; water management, energy management and waste management.

## **Literature Review**

Besides to protect the environment, the demand to force green practices in accommodation industry through their operation in order to fulfill customers' needs and satisfaction, which has been highlighted recently. Butler (2008) highlighted if a hotel fails to adopt environmental friendly practices, it may lose potential customers to other green operators. Furthermore, literature has found that customers who wants to travel are now start looking for eco friendly accommodations (Bender, 2013) which gives them more satisfaction during the stay (Slevitch, Mathe, Karpova & Halsell, 2013). Hence, these explain the necessity of hoteliers including homestay operators to practice green activities at their lodging.

Several studies were revealed in the area of green hospitality industry in terms of perception; specifically from the managers on environmental management (Kirk, 1998; Prayag et al., 2010; Okeiyi et al., 2005) and sensitivity of tourists on the green operation (Kelly, et al., 2007; Sukkay, 2012). Meanwhile, they were still lack on the studies on the green practices of the operation (Scanlon, 2007; Oreja, et al., 2012; Peršić-Živadinov et al., 2010; Imran et al., 2012). Similar to Malaysian cases, there are still lack of studies regarding the rate of participation in green practices by the lodging operators focusing on homestay services (Zeenat & Mariam, 2013). Thus, the following sections were discussing on the previous literatures regards to green activities that had been implemented by the previous lodging operators as future guidelines for the operators.

### *Green Practices*

The green practices are one of the important aspects that should be concerned, which is broad, and varying based on the perspective (Kim, 2005). The most essential sectors for green practices are water management, energy efficiency and waste management whereby the significant of these three sectors that should be focused on green practices due to high visibility and well known among the consumers (Levy & Duverger, 2010). According to Gupta and Sharma (1996), they defined the green practices as an environmentally friendly management principles which executive the levels of convert natural resources into good outputs or products. Jauhari (2007) defined that green practices as the commitment of various sound practices that can minimize the negative environmental and negative impacts for example, saving energy, saving water and reducing solid waste. Hu, et.al, (2012) said that the green practices were categorized into two dimensions. First dimension is practices customers are exposed to recycling and composting, energy and water efficient equipment and eco-friendly cleaning supplies and packaging (Chou, Chen & Wang, 2012). The second dimension is practices operated at the back of house such as using energy efficiency in lighting (Chou, Chen & Wang, 2012).

### *Water Management*

Water has been described as one of the major resources in the hotel industry (Hotel Online Special Reports, 2002). Water is needed in the lodging services for various activities including food production and preparation, bathroom, laundry and other outdoors facilities (Baker, 2005). Radisson (2006) agreed that there was high level of water consumption among hotels which also depending on each accommodation capacity, standard and the type of facilities and services provided (Bohdanowicz, 2005). Among the particular large consumption in water are leisure activities related with swimming pools and spas in luxury hotel (Kasim, 2007), also water for kitchen, laundry, circulation in air conditioning, and hot water for guest bathrooms (Kirk, 1995). In order to control the water usage, Mensah (2006) suggested to make use of the water efficiently; low water volume toilet, use of water efficient laundry equipment and dishwashers, placing water meters in guestrooms to track usage, adoption of water saving campaigns in kitchens such as washing dishes when there are full loads are water conservation practices of hotels.

### *Energy Management*

Hotel sector is one with the most energy consumption with high-energy utilities (Becken, Frampton & Simmon, 2001; Sloan, Legrand & Chen, 2004; Mensah, 2006; Park, 2009). It was reported by some of these researchers that virtually, all the operational areas requires and uses energy in the form of electricity and fossil fuels. The consequence of this high usage of energy in the hotel often resulted to the increase emission of toxic chemicals in the form of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide (Chan & Lam, 2002). The final result led to acid rain and global warming, which are two of the most recent issues of environmental concerned. Furthermore the use of energy resources in the hotel industry contributes to high cost of operating hotel business (Chan, 2008).

Energy management among hotels operators of accommodation facilities, energy management practices include the following: implementing renewable energy program such as the use of wind power, solar power and run-off river power, adoption of automated (computerized) energy control systems, installation of energy-efficient laundry equipment, use of digital thermostats to control guestroom energy consumption, installation of occupancy sensors, which automatically turn the lights out when guests leave the room (International Energy Agency, 2014), reduction of air-circulating equipment through implementation of smoke-free policies, use of energy star-qualified products, installation of triple-glazed windows or reflective glass to save energy for heating and cooling, replacement of outdoor and exit signs with Light Emitting Diode (LED) signs and use of waste heat from the power generators (Kuuder et al., 2013).

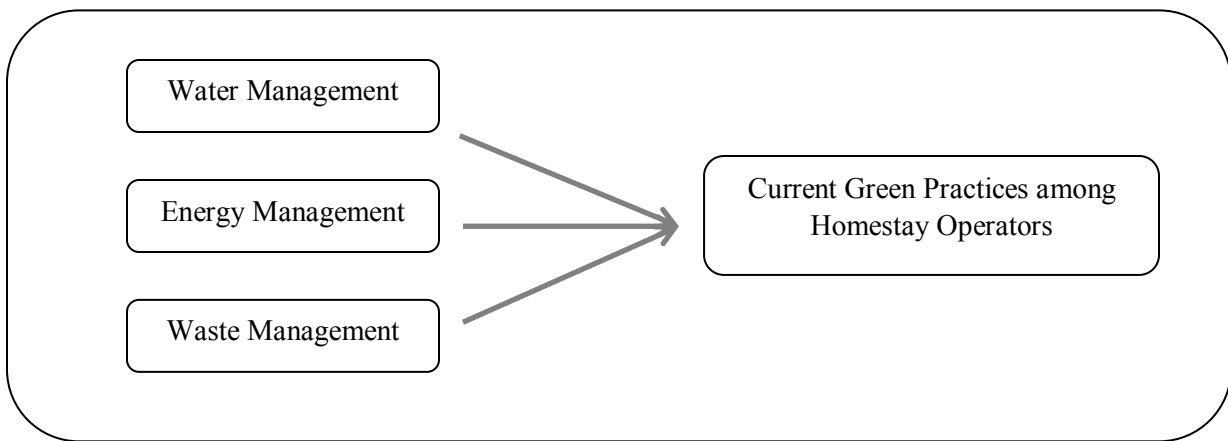
### *Waste Management*

Since the hotel sector has been identified as the largest consumer of durable and non-durable goods, it is expected that the sector generates huge amount of waste (Chong, Wong & Lo, 2009; Bohdanowicz, 2005). For instance, the food and beverage department generates various solid and organic waste in the form of packaging and food waste, aluminum cans, glass bottles and cooking oil (Baker, 2009); while the housekeeping department generate wastes in the form of cleaning materials and plastic packaging. It is essential to manage the waste properly as most of homestays have traditional toilet systems, which it evolved an adaption to the harsh environment (Anand, 2012). The waste management is focusing on effective waste management in preventing pollution at the source of products as well as manufacturing process rather than removing it after

it has been created (Amemba, 2013). In managing waste disposal, Siti Nabiha et.al (2011) mentioned that, environmentally friendly products were widely used among a majority of resorts in Malaysia as more suppliers providing such products and resorts considered these an easy marketing tool. Recycling and reusing programs were implemented in all resorts and employees were educated on proper ways to practice recycling sorting. According to the Erdogan and Baris (2007), working with recycling programmed and local government can significantly promote the waste sorting and recycling activities in the hotels. Placing the recycling bins in front and back-of-house areas, adopting donation programmed, composting organic kitchen waste will practices the waste management have been adopted by hotels.

### *Research Framework*

According to the objective of the research, thus the conceptual framework has been constructed as Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Research Framework**

### **Research Methodology**

A quantitative approach has been applied into this research and it involves secondary sources in order to perform the literature and primary data from the self-administered questionnaire.

### *Population & Sampling Design*

The population for this study was 152 registered Homestay Operators in Kelantan (Ministry of Tourism & Culture, 2015) with the sampling size of 108 respondents (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). In total, there were eight registered Homestay in Kelantan which are Homestay Bukit Jering Kuala Balah, Homestay Renok Baru Gua Musang, Homestay Batu Papan Gua Musang, Homestay Nelayan Pantai Suri Tumpat, Homestay GDW Seterpa Kota Bharu, Homestay Kubang Telaga Bachok, Homestay Kampung Kemuncup Machang and Homestay Jelawang Dabong Kuala Krai (Ministry of Tourism & Culture, 2015). Purposive sampling method has been applied for this study.

### Research Instrument

Research Instrument is self-administered questionnaire (SAQ), which has been adopted and adapted from previous studies (Effa, 2013). The structure of the instrument was divided into three sections based on the sectors on current green practices; Water Management, Waste Management and Energy Management. The items were constructed based on five aspects and were measured by using Likert Scale:

*1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Slightly Disagree, 4: Slightly Agree, 5: Agree, 6: Strongly Agree.*

The aspects that have been focused is shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Current Green Practices by each aspects**

<b>Water Management</b>	<b>Waste Management</b>	<b>Energy Management</b>
The usage of water reservoir compared to rain water for bathroom	The usage of natural lights (solar)	Flush system for toilets than sewage systems
Provide the active system for leaking of taps, toilets and shower	Planting trees to reduce to maintain the temperature	Usage of solid waste traps in the drains.
Active maintenance system for bathrooms (to prevent leaking)	The usage of censors for electricity to save electricity	Discourage the usage of polystyrene
Reuse of linens to guests at night	Inform the guest on the saving electricity when not in use (written or oral)	Provide waste bin based on types of recyclable waste (3R)
	The usage of save energy bulb lamps	Provide dustbin at the Homestay

### Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was employed in order to investigate the main activity on green practices among the Homestay operators in Kelantan by taking the value of highest and lowest mean score for each aspect of green practices mentioned in previous section.

### Finding and discussion

From Table 2, it displays the respondents will make sure all guest save the electricity whenever not in use which has the highest mean score 5.19. On the contrary, there were top four lowest mean scores which are 2.14, 2.15, 2.22 and 3.08 where the respondents represent disagree to provide an active system for detecting and repairing toilet water, taps and shower heads leaking,

using timers or sensors on lighting in order to save the electricity whenever not in use and the re-usage of linen fabric for beddings to the guests, respectively.

**Table 2: Analysis of Current Green Practices among Homestay Operators in Kelantan**

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I use water reservoirs method compare with showers in bathroom.	108	4.57	.988
I provide an active system for detecting toilet water, taps and shower heads leaking.	108	2.15	.526
I provide an active system for repairing toilet water, taps and shower heads leaking.	108	2.14	.555
I am offering re-usage of linen to guests at night to avoid excessive water usage.	108	3.08	1.137
I am using the timers or sensor to save electricity in this Homestay.	108	2.22	.660
I am using energy-saving lights bulb are lower Watt lights in all rooms.	108	4.92	.810
I will make sure all guest save the electricity whenever not in use.	108	5.19	.483
I will put the notice or inform in oral to guest for save the electricity whenever not in use.	108	4.76	1.058
I provide a lot of trash can accord waste type such as wet and dry waste in every corner of the Homestay.	108	4.86	.703
I do the recycling of goods after the guest check out from the Homestay.	108	4.33	1.068
I use flush in the toilet for effective sewage management system in Homestay than ordinary tap water.	108	4.21	1.094
Valid N	108		

## **Discussions**

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that most of the Homestay operators in Kelantan practices the basic green activities daily. The results also indicates that they still practice the green activities; to ensure all guests save the electricity whenever not in use during stay (indication of oral or written notice at their Homestay), the usage of energy saving electric bulbs, trash cans provision around Homestay in order to manage wet and dry waste, the use of water reservoir rather than rainwater for small scale gardening activities, recycle waste after the guest checked out and flush system for sewage. However, the Homestay operators in Kelantan still inexperienced in certain areas of green practices such as to conserve the water usage in managing linen changing for guests, to provide an active system for maintenance of toilet water, taps and shower heads leaking and the usage of timers or sensor. It is noticeable that most of the non-practices of green activities were related to a more complex mechanism such as application of censor and maintenance systems.

Through this study, most of the Homestay operators admitted that their lack in knowledge and support from the authorities made them not concern and aware on the particular green activities. This findings is align with Bohdanowicz (2005) which agreed that without the support from the government, social support and family empowerment, efforts from respective parties; pro environment and educators could not be done further, and yet Aini, Fakhrul, Razi, Laily, Jariah, (2003) concluded that, the level of concern and knowledge from the educators and environmentalist were significant in determining the practices of environmentally responsible behavior.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

Homestay has been recognized as one way to provide cheap budget accommodation to visitors and the best way to get close to the culture and tradition of a particular ethnic group. The capability of Homestay that can provide the unique and enjoyable experience to the tourists lies in the people who uphold a traditional culture to be exhibited to others (Pusiran & Xiao, 2013). Thus, it is essential to increase awareness level among these Homestay operators since most of these Homestays located in rural areas to accommodate the demand for green tourist, which has been increasing nowadays. For future research, instead of focusing in Kelantan, the scope of the study may be widening to other states in Malaysia. Furthermore, the list of green practices also very limited which may not cover other green practices that might be practiced by the Homestay operators.

## **Conclusion**

This research aims to investigate the current green practices by Homestay Operators in Kelantan. It can be concluded that, even though majority of the Homestays in Kelantan did implement the green practices, yet the results show that the implementation of environmental green practices among Kelantan operators were still minimal. This is due to the lack of understanding and



knowledge on the variety of ways and means that can be used to reduce the impact on environment. Since Homestays is one of the community based tourism product, it can be seen that the Homestay programmed has great potential to develop as a valuable tourism product with its own uniqueness. Thus, it is suggested that all Homestay operators to apply a proper environmental management practices through support from related authorities and with a continuously monitoring, it will create a positive impacts of its operation simultaneously building a knowledge-based to sustain the work and environment (Borobia & Waddington, 2012).

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