

**INTERNATIONAL TOURIST SATISFACTION ON LOCAL OWNED
GREENVIEW BED & BREAKFAST (B&B) OF SUKAU VILLAGE, LOWER
KINABATANGAN, SABAH, MALAYSIA**
(KEPUASAN PELANCONG ANTARABANGSA TERHADAP GREENVIEW BED
& BREAKFAST (B&B) MILIK TEMPATAN DI KAMPUNG SUKAU,
KINABATANGAN, SABAH, MALAYSIA)

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Abstract: This paper examines the level of satisfaction of international tourists towards products, facilities, and travel services as well as the level of security provided by the locally owned Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast Downstream, at Kinabatangan, Sabah. The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches using in-depth interviews and questionnaire survey as study methods. A series of in-depth interviews were held among selected upper managers of Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast resort. In addition, the method of questionnaire was used to assess the level of satisfaction of over 62 international tourists who visited Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast resort. The results from the study revealed that majority of international tourists are satisfied with the products, facilities and services offered by the local owned service providers in Sukau Village. Most importantly, this study revealed that the majority of the international tourists who came to Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast resort did not have any security problems or sustain injuries. This shows that the management of the locally owned Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast resort has taken rigorous monitoring of the safety aspect. In academia, studies pertaining to international tourists' satisfaction towards products, services and security aspects are given less attention by tourism researchers in Malaysia to measure the satisfaction level of international tourists who visited tourist destinations in Malaysia, especially in Sabah. Thus, this study bridges the current gap and the future research on tourist satisfaction related issues. Given this kind of research, it can improve the quality of tourism in Malaysia and increase the presence of international tourists in Malaysia.

Keywords: International tourists, satisfaction, Sukau Village, Greenview Bed & Breakfast resort.

Abstrak: Artikel ini menilai tahap kepuasan pelancong antarabangsa terhadap produk, kemudahan, perkhidmatan dan tahap keselamatan yang disediakan oleh Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast yang dimiliki oleh penduduk setempat di Kampung Sukau, Kinabatangan Hilir, Sabah. Kajian ini menggunakan kedua-dua pendekatan iaitu kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Kutipan data temubual mendalam dan survei temubual dengan menggunakan borang soal selidik adalah kaedah kutipan data yang digunakan dalam kajian ini. Beberapa siri temubual mendalam telah diadakan dengan beberapa orang bagi pihak pengurusan Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast resort. Manakala kaedah kutipan data melalui borang soal selidik dilakukan terhadap 62 orang pelancong antarabangsa yang menginap di Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast bagi menilai tahap kepuasan mereka. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan pelancong antarabangsa berpuas hati dengan produk, kemudahan dan perkhidmatan yang ditawarkan oleh B&B milik penduduk tempatan di Kampung Sukau ini. Hasil kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan pelancong antarabangsa tidak mengalami sebarang masalah keselamatan dan kecederaan semasa menginap di Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast. Ini menunjukkan bahawa pihak pengurusan Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast milik orang tempatan ini mengawas dan mengambil berat aspek keselamatan ini. Hasil kajian

ilmiah secara umumnya menunjukkan bahawa kajian terhadap kepuasan pelancong antarabangsa terhadap produk, perkhidmatan dan keselamatan kurang diberi perhatian oleh para penyelidik di Malaysia terutamanya di Sabah. Oleh itu, kajian ini adalah jambatan bagi menghubungkan dan memenuhi jurang tersebut bagi penyelidikan di masa depan. Hasil kajian sebegini penting kerana ia boleh membantu meningkatkan lagi kualiti pelancongan dan jumlah kehadiran pelancong antarabangsa ke Malaysia.

Kata kunci: Pelancong antarabangsa, kepuasan, Kampung Sukau, Greenview Bed & Breakfast resort.

Introduction

Tourism development has generated positive impacts for a certain destination in terms of economy, environmental and social state by uplifting the socioeconomic status of the local community, improving the quality of the environment and enhancing the relationship between tourists and the locals. However, tourism industry precipitated several negative impacts too such as economic leakage, environmental degradation and disturbances on the local community such as noise pollution and social problems. Comprehensive and solid planning is vital to warrant perpetual satisfaction and benefits for every party especially the visitors. Excellent planning will take account each aspect before execution stage of a development while arising problems can be managed by blueprinting several appropriate measures. This will find a long-lasting development and positive impacts constantly added and eventually bringing satisfaction to tourists who will enjoy the tourism havens especially Malaysia (Mohamad Zaki Ahmad, 2012).

Besides, a plethora of tourism products will be developed in tourism development such as the local culture to capture the interest of the visitors. These assets have their own strength, advantages and weaknesses either from the acceptance of the locals or their level of sustainability. Asset development such as Homestay, Bed & Breakfast (B&B henceforth), long house, Lodge, local delicacies and even land development shows that anything can be utilized for tourism purposes. Most research regarding tourist satisfaction was done on Homestay and Lodge visitors. Little attention has been given to the satisfaction of international tourist on B&B accommodation run by the community.

Hence, this study is focused on the satisfaction level of the international tourists towards community based B&B in Sukau Village, Lower Kinabatangan, Sabah. This study will identify the factors contributing to the level of satisfaction of the tourists in the chosen research area.

Community--based B&B tourism is a new type of accommodation in the context of ecotourism as opposed to homestay and lodge found in lower Kinabatangan, Sabah. In Sabah, especially in Sukau village, community-based B&B was just starting to emerge (preliminary observation of the researchers on August 2015). For instance, Sukau Greenview B&B, Barefoot B&B, Sukau B&B, Sukau Ever Green B&B and many more where most of them had been operating since 2006. The genesis of B&B can be traced back from homestay accommodation where homestay operators make a drastic conversion of their homestay into B&B. The major difference between homestay and B&B is the concept where homestay lodgers will stay together with the homestay host but B&B takes the Lodge concept where visitors will stay in an independent shelter. Moreover, in homestay only one or two rooms are offered to visitors (Hussin, 2006; Chan & Baum, 2007) while community-based B&B offers more room than homestay but less than those of Lodges and mass tourism resorts. Usually the number of rooms in a B&B operated by the local community is in the range of 8 to 10 rooms only.

Literature Review

Conceptual Definition

Bed and Breakfast or B&B concept can be defined as a personal shelter in 14 rooms or less

which offer lodgers a place to stay and provide breakfast with no additional cost. B&B lodgers are those who stay in the period of less than 30 days (Hussin, 2006; Chan & Baum, 2005). On the other hand, homestay, or also known as ‘*inap desa*’ in Malay, may vary between countries. Generally, homestay is a type of accommodation where tourists will have the chance to stay together with the family of the host to interact and enjoy their way of life. In this way, the tourists will be able to experience the culture of the hosts. The Homestay program originated in from Europe in the late 1970s and known as a vacation concept (Zurina Nureen Noor in cited in Mapjabil & Che Ismail, 2012).

Tourist Satisfaction

According to Bailey and Pearson (1983, p. 531) “satisfaction in a given situation is the sum of one’s feelings and attitudes toward a variety of factors affecting that situation.” Thus, management of tourist destinations and attractions is one of the vital factors to increase tourist satisfaction (Cooper 2003). The definition of satisfaction in terms of tourist satisfaction is assorted. It can be collated into several main components such as:

- 1) Tourist satisfaction as a response (emotional or cognitive);
- 2) The response is associated with a certain focus such as product expectation or the experience during experiencing something;
- 3) The response is given in the occurrence of an event (after using something, after choosing or based on previous experience).

These components play a huge role in defining satisfaction that it can be interpreted that satisfaction consists of three components that are response associated with a certain focus that is predetermined at a certain time. In fact, satisfaction has been one of the agendas in information systems (Khalifa and Liu, 2004). Apart from that, Oliver (1981) states that tourist satisfaction is an evaluation made by the tourists over a certain exchange illustrating the relationship between the tourists’ expectation and their real perception of the product and

services that they received. In here, expectation can be defined as a short term prediction and tourist satisfaction is a reflection of the quality of a service. Tourist satisfaction will exist when both are the same or exceeding each other (Comm & Taylor, 1992; Kolter, 1991).

Tourism Product

The familiarity of the mass with the term ‘tourism product’ has been clichéd into only the visible things such as handicraft or waterfall. While the real definition of a tourism product is every single element that contributes to the quality of the person’s travelling experience from the moment he stepped out from his place to the activities he was engaged in places he visited until he came back home. It involves the main components that are imperative in, the supply sector as classified by Gunn (1994); that is transportation, accommodation, services, attraction, information and promotion.

Besides, Kotler (1984) defined tourism product as anything that is offered to the market to be observed, bought, used or enjoyed to cater to tourists’ needs and desires. Apart from that, Medlik and Middleton (1973) elucidated that tourism product is a mosaic of activities, services and benefits which eventually shapes the tourist experience as a whole. This includes attraction, facility, accessibility, image, service, hospitality and price.

Services and Facilities for Tourist

Facility for tourists includes safety (Inskeep, 1991). Inskeep state that:

“Facilities and public safety services that need to be considered is including trust, effectiveness and honesty of the police force in tourism area, safety measures practiced by hotels and other accommodations to arrest fire risk for the tourism facility and other capacity in tourism destinations to preserve political stability and to retain peace from terror attack. Apart from that, visitors’ health is a crucial part in providing facility and safety to the tourist.”

Hence, he suggested that facility provided to tourists should also cover their safety to encourage visitors to come to a destination apart from adding value to its attractiveness. According to Inskip (1991), the number of tourist influx is highly dependent on the attraction and services provided at the destination. Apart from that, facility and services should cover every aspect in life as stated in Maslow's hierarchy of needs; facility and services in tourism are in line with a human's daily needs.

The Concept of Tourist Safety

The definition of safety in tourism is numerous and covering multitude of aspects such as safety when visiting a destination especially the urban area. Cases such as snatch-theft, kidnapping, robbery, rape and others are happen frequently to foreign tourists (Page & Callander, 2002). It is a known fact that every accident that involves tourist will induce negative impacts to the tourism industry (Clift & Page, 1996; Greenaway, 1996; Wilks *et al.*, 1996) and safety is one of the main factors considered by tourist in choosing a destination (Bovet, 1994; World Tourism Organisation, 1996). When the number of accidents involving tourists is high at a certain place, the chance for it to be chosen as a main destination will be slim. Hence, tourist's notion or perception is one of the main factors affecting destination choice. Many of the Western scholars take interest in the perception of safety voiced by tourists and one of them is Richard George (2003). In his article 'Tourist's perceptions of safety and security while visiting Cape Town', he linked tourist perception on safety to the tourist's socio-demographic factor.

Community Participation

Local people participation is one of the most important elements in tourism development. The participation of each person in a community is integral to the tourism development which not only contributes to the tourism destination development but it will also generate benefits for the local community. Tourism academicians have dissected the issue of local participation on tourism development in a great detail

(Scheyvens, 2000; Dowling, 2002). This is because, local people is one of the most important parties who plays an important role in tourism development.

According to Rina Ilyana (2007), participation of local people in tourism activity have positive impacts for them. Buhalis (2003) further stressed that the participation of the local people in tourism activities, it helps the local communities to boost their economy, social life and culture. This is because it open new jobs for the local people apart from having the chance to sell local products and doing other businesses related to tourism activity (Mowforth & Munt, 2003; Timothy, 1999).

Research Methodology

The main approach of this study was quantitative method because most research regarding tourist satisfaction is using a similar design (Chan & Baum, 2007). However, mixed methods were also employed for data collection. This was done by interview using questionnaire. About 50 to 60 international tourists were chosen at random as respondents. Apart from that, in-depth interview was also done on three employees of the Sukau Greenview B&B management; a housekeeper, a tourist guide and a receptionist. Two international tourists who have stayed in Sukau Greenview B&B were also interviewed to get feedback and perspective on tourist satisfaction. Observation was also done to study the respondent's behaviour and the environment of the site. Secondary data was also used to harvest necessary information for this study.

Result and Discussion

Background of Respondents

The subjects of this study came from multiple countries such as America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Europeans made up most of the total number of visitors who stayed in Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast which was 69% out of the 62 respondents, 53.23% of them were males and 46.77% were females. Their education

level shows that 83.9% of them possess tertiary education (diploma, bachelor’s degree, master’s degree and doctoral degree) while 16.1% of them possess secondary and primary education. In terms of incomes level, 27% of the respondents earned monthly income of 1,500 - 2,000 USD and 25.8% of them earned 2,500 - 3,000 USD monthly. Marital status shows that 57% of them were single, 40% of them were married and 3% are divorced.

Analysis of Tourist Satisfaction

The majority of the tourists were very satisfied with the tourism product offered at Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast which is 43% out of 62 respondents. While 39% of the international tourists rated satisfied and this is equivalent to 24 respondents. Out of the 62 respondents, only two were not satisfied with the tourism product they received which make up only 3% of the total respondents. Hence, this shows that the majority of the tourist who stayed at Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast were very satisfied with the tourism product offered to them.

A diverse and unique tourism product is an important feature to ensure the satisfaction of the international tourists who come to visit Sukau Greenview B&B. In terms of tourism product offered by the management, the researcher found that on the whole, international tourists were satisfied with the uniqueness of the

product offered. Tourist satisfaction is important to ensure that the destination will be visited again. This shows that the product offered in Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast fulfilled the international tourist satisfaction level. It can be seen from the statistics that shows 27 out of 62 respondents, equivalent to 43%, expressed satisfaction. Since its conception, the management of Sukau Greenview B&B has executed multiple planning and improvement which is welcomed and have received encouragement from the international tourist.

Based on the collected data, the majority of the international tourists who visited Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast were satisfied with the services and facilities provided. This can be seen from the table above where 27 out of 62 respondents were satisfied with the services and facilities provided by the B&B while the numbers of unsatisfied respondents was only two who were Asian. They rated the services and facilities of the B&B as moderate. These spectra of responses are normal because the visitors have their own expectation as opposed to the services and facilities provided by the management.

As stated earlier, where tourist satisfaction is the governing factor whether a destination will be visited again or not can be linked to the quality of services and facilities and an exceptional quality will warrant returning visitors. Hence,

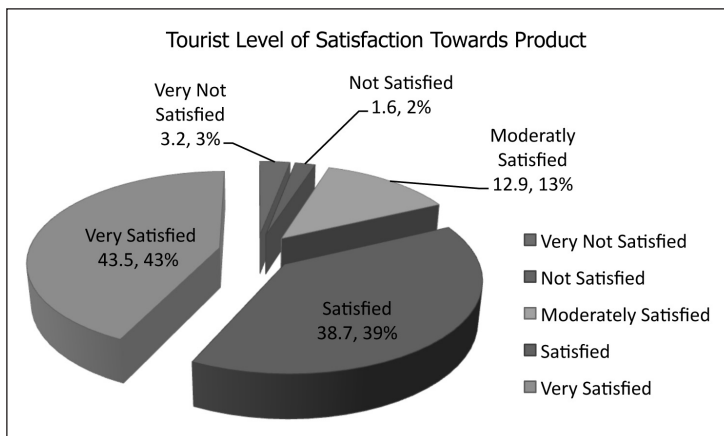


Figure 1: International tourist satisfaction towards tourism product
Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Table 1: Overall tourist satisfaction on services and facilities in Sukau Greenview B & B according to nationality

OVERALL SERVICES AND FACILITIES OFFERED ARE VERY GOOD					
Nationality	Very Not Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Overall Count
America	0	0	3	2	5
Africa	0	0	1	0	1
Europe	0	2	18	23	43
Australia	0	0	2	5	7
Asia	2	0	3	1	4
Total	2	2	27	31	62

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

the management have to be acutely aware of the services and facilities they offer to the visitors to win their loyalty. Thus, the metric used by the visitors of Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast comprises many forms for example, clean and comfortable toilet, multiple room packages such as ‘Single Room’, ‘Double Room’ or ‘Dome’. A warm welcome given to the visitors will trigger the feeling of satisfaction and also the feeling of being appreciated. This will instil a sense of loyalty in them towards the destinations they visited such as Sukau Greenview B&B.

In a study by Err (2013), in terms of perception, most tourists will choose Malacca as their family vacation spot because of the multitude of national heritage and historical

sites. For instance, the heritage buildings such as A-Famosa, Stadhuys and the preserved traditional shop houses in the town have an intact aesthetic value. Plus, the cultures of the people in Morten Village are engaging too such as their dance and traditional music, puppet show, art and their beautiful batik. Tourists opined that the local people especially the local vendors, homestay operators or tourist guides are a treasure for the place too for being gracious and warm-hearted. However, the tourist also suggested that, apart from the well-preserved culture and heritage, infrastructural facilities and cleanliness can still be improved to achieve a better level of sustainable tourism.

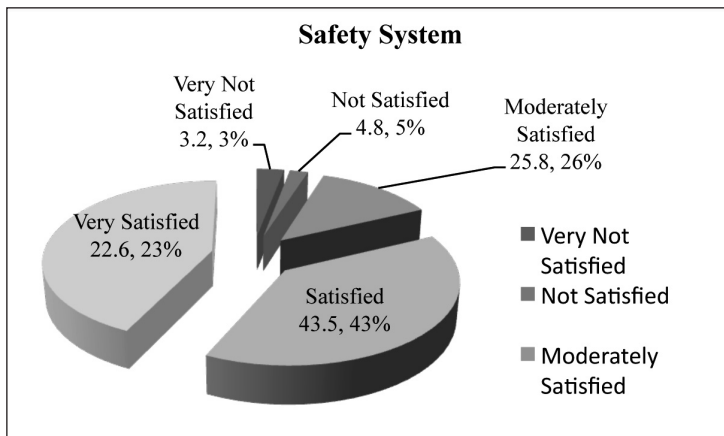


Figure 2: Satisfaction Level on Safety System
Source: Fieldwork, 2016

The management of Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast seriously considered the aspect of security by employing several safety measures such as patrolling the B&B area at night especially when night walk activity is carried out. This is due to the fact that the tourism industry is susceptible to natural disaster, war, disease and economic crisis. Hence, control and safety in tourism are required to ensure the safety of the tourists in certain destination. The most memorable incident that still echoes today is the terror attack in New York and Washington. The tourist influx to America reduced as a result of these attacks. The bombing and riot incidents in Bali and South Thailand caused a serious decline in the number of incoming tourist (Pizam, 1996).

Hence, safety measures are very important to avoid incidents and unwanted events from happening to tourists especially in the forest. Below are the quotes taken from the in-depth interview with the management of Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast on the aspect of safety:

“Very satisfied, because normally before carrying any activity in here, we will give a safety briefing and we will make sure each and every one of them is following the safety instructions for each other’s safety. Besides, every room will be provided a single unit of fire extinguisher and in terms of food, we will ask the tourists beforehand what type of food they can and cannot eat.”

“As far as I can remember, there is none yet, it’s just that we lack of tourist guide. Apart from that, in terms of safety, no accidents ever happen here because we are very attentive in ensuring the safety of the tourists.”

“We provide security guard especially during the night walk and the guard will patrol the area every hour to ensure the safety of the tourist. Besides the receptionist will check every tourist and ensure they are in their room especially after the night cruise.”

In Malaysia, the government have paid serious attention to the tourism industry since the mid-1980s. On average, the tourist influx to Malaysia has been projected to increase and income from this industry will increase 13.9% yearly to 59.4 billion ringgit to that effect in 2010 and it has been predicted that it will contribute a large sum of earnings in the services account of balance payment. Hence, security aspect is important because it will influence the tourists’ behaviour when they are in a certain place. However, it is shown that tourist who had stayed in Sukau Greenview B&B felt safe when they are doing any sort of activity.

Based on Table 2, the number of male and female visitors who wanted to revisit Sukau Greenview is similar, which is 21 respondents for both genders. Thus, 42 out of 62 respondents express their desire to revisit the place which is equivalent to 68% and 20 respondents equivalent to 32% are not sure whether they wanted to revisit Sukau Greenview. The 20 respondents consist of 12 males and eight females respondents. This

Table 2: International tourist who wanted to revisit Sukau Greenview B&B according to gender

TOURIST WHO WANTED TO REVISIT ACCORDING TO GENDER			
Gender	Yes	Not Sure	Overall Count
Male	21	12	33
Female	21	8	29
Total	42	20	62
Percentage (%)	68%	32%	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

shows that, the majority of the international tourists who stayed in Sukau Greenview Bed & Breakfast were very satisfied and pleased with the place.

Most of the tourists who came to Sukau Greenview wanted to come again. Gitelson and Crompton (1984) are the first persons to recognize the importance of re-visitation and its contribution to the marketing sector. They stated that, beach and resorts need re-visitation from the tourists in order to flourish. In their findings, they have found five reasons why a tourist will make a re-visitation to a destination. The five reasons are lower risk of uncertainty, lower risk of dissatisfaction of similar experience, emotional urge to visit a place, further exploration of a destination and to show a place to another person. Previous findings show that most tourists will revisit a destination when they are satisfied with the service or attraction in their first visit (Kozak, 2000).

Tourist perception on the service and experience they received in a tourism destination will indirectly become an influencing factor on their decision whether to revisit the place again or not (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Baker & Crompton, 2000). Apart from perception and experience, the attribute and character of the tourists are another governing factor of why they revisit a place, something that is beyond their control (Brown, 1988; Crompton & Love, 1995 in Baker & Crompton, 2000). Every aspect of tourist perception needs to be attended to encourage re-visitation. Tourist satisfaction and positive experience are good indicators in projecting whether a tour package will be bought again (Petrick, 2002).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that overall, the main factor that triggers the desire of international tourists to revisit a place is their positive and enriched experience when they stayed a certain place. Hence, services offered have to be considered in great detail such as a warm welcome to tourists, a solid tourism product, quality of the

services and facilities, reasonable price, a sound security measure and an image of a tourism destination that is environmental friendly to guarantee satisfaction for international and domestic tourist. This will generate a considerable amount of returns in the years to come to Malaysian tourism settings by inviting more international tourists to multiple tourism destinations, especially in Sabah. Thus, the goal of the government to make Malaysia a developed country by 2020 in the Eleventh Malaysian Plan can be achieved with the significant contribution of the tourism industry to the country's economic growth.

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