

Assessing the sustainability of the homestay industry for the East Coast of Malaysia using the Delphi approach

ABSTRACT

Homestay ecotourism in Malaysia has been extensively examined in terms of its concepts, approaches, activities, and community engagement. However, a comprehensive assessment of the sustainability factors pertaining to host families remains a critical area awaiting exploration. This is paramount for ensuring the long-term viability of homestays and fostering economic benefits within rural communities. The present study seeks to establish direct subjective measurements for evaluating the interplay between local communities, tourism, and resources in safeguarding sustainable homestays. Utilizing the Delphi approach, this research conducted interviews with 51 experts who were actively involved in six homestays located on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The objective was to identify key evaluation indicators pertinent to the homestay industry. The findings underscored the pivotal roles played by community resources and tourism in the sustainability of homestays. Additionally, environmental, economic, and social factors emerged as crucial components for maintaining the industry's sustainability. This innovative assessment methodology offers a valuable instrument for enhancing the sustainability of the homestay sector, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. By embracing this approach, homestay operators can fortify their sustainable management practices and prepare themselves for future pandemics. This study represents a significant contribution to the field of homestay ecotourism, emphasizing the imperative for continued research in this dynamic domain.