

What Makes Tourists Stay in Homestay? The Correlation Between Service and Occupancy at Homestay Around Borobudur Super-Priority Destination

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ABSTRACT

Homestays are an alternative form of community-based accommodation that allows tourists to experience local wisdom in the community. Homestays in Borobudur Superprioritas-Tourist-Destinations should provide a comfortable accommodation option for tourists. However, they have not been managed optimally yet since limitation resources. This study aims to determine the service factors related to homestay occupancy. This research was part of the need assessment of homestay improvement programs. This study was observational-quantitative with a cross-sectional design. The respondents were twenty-two owners and managers of homestays in Candirejo Borobudur Village. Data were collected by self-administered questionnaire and analyzed by fisher-exact-test. The results showed that the quality of service related to occupancy. The service items associated with occupancy were booking procedures, payment notes, and rate information. Furthermore, factors associated with excellent service were older age and participation in homestay management training.

Keywords: Borobudur, Homestay, Occupancy, Service, Tourist

INTRODUCTION

Borobudur Temple is one of the super-priority destinations in Indonesia. The temple, which is a historical relic from the 8th century AD, has become a magnetism tourist destination because of its blend of historical, religious, and artistic attractions. The Borobudur Temple area was developed as a destination with strength and attractiveness based on heritage potential and has been recognized by UNESCO as World Cultural (Borobudur Conservation Body, 2019; Rahma, 2021). Borobudur Temple is a monument of human history as well as a landmark that can improve the surrounding community's socio-economic conditions and becomes an asset to increase tourist visits nationally.

Data from the Central Statistics Agency for Magelang Regency recorded domestic tourist visits in 2018 totaling 3,663,054, increasing to 3,747,757 in 2019 and decreasing to 965,699 in 2020, while foreign tourists totaled 192,231 in 2018, grew to 242,082 in 2019 and dropped dramatically to 31,551 in 2020 (Central Bureau of Statistics of Magelang Regency, 2021). The sharp decline in domestic and foreign tourists was due to the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. After the success of the Indonesian government in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and the opening visit for foreign tourists, the tourism industry in the Super-priority area of Borobudur Temple prepared to welcome tourists by providing adequate amenities. One of the tourist amenities that is important to note is lodging.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, homestay occupancy is low, with some even without occupancy. They were hard to make an innovation to attract tourists and still manage their business conventionally. The homestay owners are locals with limited experience and competencies in hospitality services. Universitas Dian Nuswantoro collaborated with PT WIMBO (Wisata Menoreh Borobudur) in 2022 to develop a digital platform to manage the homestay effectively. PT Wimbo oversees a group of homestays (26 homestay owners) in Candirejo Village, Borobudur Subdistrict. It also offers a tourism package in the villages around Borobudur. This study is a part of the need assessment of the service quality related to homestay occupancy. This study aims to determine the service factors related to homestay occupancy and the determinant of service quality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Homestay is one of the amenity facilities that needs serious attention because its management is based on the empowerment of local communities. Homestay is a very suitable concept to support the development of tourism amenities, considering that Indonesia's tremendous tourism potential is culture and nature (Mertha & Pitanatri, 2018; Wedatama & Mardiansjah, 2018).

The Benefits of Homestay in the Tourism

Homestays benefit many stakeholders; communities, families, the environment, and tourists. For the community, homestays may unite communities by amplifying local voices, acting as a multiplier in the local economy, and diversifying livelihoods when administered with a community-wide strategy that is fair, open, and transparent. In addition to homestays, community-based tourism offers locals the chance to offer a variety of goods and services, such as transportation, fresh food, traditional cuisine, and crafts, as well as guiding activities.

For families, running a family business, like a homestay, can help families achieve financial independence, free up money for education, and develop the self-assurance and capacity needed to secure their futures. For the environment, creating livelihoods

centered on tourism not only lessens the community's dependency on natural resources but also fosters communal pride, environmental curiosity, and shared passions.

Finally, for tourists, homestays give visitors a chance to engage in a genuine and meaningful cultural exchange while visiting distant locations of exceptional natural beauty that are frequently off the beaten path. These models are created and managed by the local communities, who are pleased to share their knowledge and introduce others to their way of life. Additionally, visitors know that their money is benefiting the neighborhood and helping conserve local livelihoods and ecosystems (Blue Ventures, 2022).

Homestay is an alternative tourism where tourists will stay with the host family in the same house and experience the daily way of life of the local family and community (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016). Staying in a homestay is considered to be able to add experience and information about the activities and habits of local people. Tourists can learn about the living culture of local communities through direct interactions that exist between tourists and the local community. Small things such as daily routines, the local language used, and customs and traditions are interesting experiences for tourists. This interaction is an added value to the existence of homestays (Mertha & Pitanatri, 2018).

The Pillars of an Effective Community Homestay Model

There are six pillars that support the community homestay run effectively. Firstly, the community-led. Any homestay association's foundation and identity must derive from the needs and aspirations of the local neighborhood. While an NGO's facilitation can greatly speed up and improve this process, true community ownership is essential for the success of community-based tourism.

The second pillar is entrepreneurship. By using interactive resources and training, community members can foster the growth of their entrepreneurial instincts and expertise, which they can subsequently pass on to younger generations, creating a culture of entrepreneurship in the area.

The third is access to markets. Market reach and engagement improvements will boost the possibility of long-term demand for tourism services. Remote villages may find it difficult to enter the global tourism market. Market research and training in digital communications can assist in discovering the best entry channels, whether they be through customized booking platforms, aggregator listing websites, or social media.

The fourth pillar is collaborative self governance. A system that fosters the community's shared vision and values, fosters trust and establishes shared obligations is known as collaborative self-governance. A shared understanding is that maintaining high standards for all aspects of tourism enhances livelihoods and safeguards natural resources for the benefit of the entire community.

The fourth is supporting local products and services. Homestays, which are frequently found in rural and remote places, cannot function well without the support of local goods and services that promote local diversity and keep the community cohesive. Tours, activities, and catering improve both the visitor experience and the feedback from the larger community.

Finally, sustainability should be maintained. To guarantee long-term success, business models must demonstrate their potential to be financially self-sufficient and sustainable. Although it may take time, this should be the final objective (Blue Ventures, 2022). The people living in a tourist destination need to have an optimistic attitude towards

environmental sustainability because that is where the natural-based tourist attraction is (Nababan, Manalu, Siboro, & Manik, 2021).

The Reasons for Choosing a homestay

The reasons for selecting a homestay can vary. Foreigners typically need to integrate themselves through social and cultural interactions with locals and are motivated by the need to protect the environment by reducing pollution as well as by the desire to encourage volunteerism and destination development (Agyeiwaah, 2013).

Homey atmosphere, value for money, local flavor, guest-host relationships, unique accommodations, individualized services, the host's local knowledge, the home-cooked meals, and the unique activities offered in the area are key characteristics that motivate tourists to choose alternative accommodations like homestays (Gunasekaran & Anandkumar, 2012; Venkatesh & Mukesh, 2015).

RESEARCH METHOD

The research was an observational study with a cross-sectional design. The variable of study occupancy, services, and characteristics of homestay owners or managers. The population of the study was homestay owners or managers in Candiroto Village Borobudur Subdistrict, and the sample was all populations that met the inclusion criteria: more than 17 years old, had been managed homestay for more than three months, could fill the self-administered paper-based questionnaire and will to be respondents.

The data was collected in October 2022. The occupancy was counted for the last three months, the homestay services contained twelve items, and the characteristics were age, education, managing homestay as a main job or not, duration in managing homestay, and attending training. The number of all respondents was 22 from the total homestay 26 because four owners could not be met. Data were analyzed by SPSS, while Fisher exact was employed to test the correlation between variables.

RESULTS

The uniqueness of the homestay form in the Borobudur area is the use of exposed bricks as the main component of the building. If a tourist walks along the village, they will see the characteristics of a house with a matching facade so that it can be a characteristic of the house as a homestay. Homestay management is coordinated by the cooperative so that the distribution of guests can be fair between homestay managers. The cooperative also offers tour packages such as a tour with a "delman" (horse-drawn carriage) and a jeep around tourist villages and various attractions such as visiting stone crafts, clay craft, souvenirs, gamelan, dances, and culinary delights. Tourists could see and even practice these attractions.

Table 1. Characteristics of Homestay Owners ($N=22$)

Characteristics	Category	f	%
Education	Elementary schools	3	14.3
	Junior school	3	14.3
	High school	14	66.7
	Diploma	1	4.5
Age (years)	19-25	5	22.7
	26-35	6	27.3
	36-45	6	27.3
	46-55	5	22.7
Duration as homestay manager (years)	< 5	15	68.2
	≥ 5	7	31.8
Manage Homestay as a primary job	Yes	2	9.1
	No	20	90.1
Another job	Housewife/No job	8	36.4
	Seller	8	36.4
	Employee	3	13.6
	Student	2	9.1
	Artist	1	4.5
Speak foreign language	Yes	6	27.3
	No	16	72.7

All of the homestay owners and managers live in the Candirejo Village and rent a room in their house. Most of them graduated from high school (67%), but 14% only graduated from elementary school. Most respondents were of productive age (19-45 years old) and managed homestay for less than five years (68%). Managing homestay was only a side job (90%), while their main jobs were the seller in Borobudur park, employees, students, and artists. Only 27% of the respondent could speak a foreign language.

Table 2. Characteristics of Homestay ($N=22$)

Characteristics	Min	Max	Mean	SD
The establishment of Homestay	1	7	3.6	2.5
Number of room	1	7	2.3	1.7
Number of guest stay last three months	0	50	7.6	13.5
Room rate (IDR)	75,000	350,000	171,875	100,778
	f		%	
Payment methods				
- Cash	20		90.9	
- Bank transfer	4		18.2	
- E-money	0		0.0	
- Cooperation	2		9.1	
The origin of guests				
- Domestic	21		95.5	
- Foreigner	4		18.2	

The homestays were established for 1-7 years, and each had 1-7 rooms for rent. In the last three months, six homestays had no guests. The mean of guests was eight people. The room rate of the homestay was between IDR 75,000 to 350,000. There was no homestay that received e-money or applied for online payment. At the previous time, PT

Wimbo joined an online travel agent. Unfortunately, they get a case of payment fraud because they can not get verification immediately. They had mostly domestic tourists, and only 18% had foreign guests.

Respondents asked for twelve items of homestay services: booking procedure, guest registration note, payment note, regular homestay cleaning, regular room cleaning, safety guarantee, amenities guarantee, complaint management, rate information, attraction and cultural information, particular space for administration, and cashless payment.

Table 3 showed that the total services had a significant correlation with occupancy (p-value 0.040). Among twelve questions about homestay services, there were three variables related to occupancy: booking procedure (p-value 0.017), guest registration note (p-value 0.023), and written rate information (p-value 0.023)

Table 3. Correlation Between Service and Having Guests in Three Months ($N=22$)

Service	Category	Having a guest in three months				p-value
		No		Yes		
		f	%	f	%	
Total Services	High	9	81.8	2	18.2	0.040*
	Low	4	36.4	7	63.6	
1. Booking procedure	No	10	83.3	2	16.7	0.017*
	Yes	3	30.0	7	70.0	
2. Guest registration note	No	6	100.0	0	0.0	0.023*
	Yes	7	43.8	9	40.9	
3. Payment note	No	7	70.0	3	30.0	0.305
	Yes	6	50.0	6	50.0	
4. Regular homestay cleaning	No	1	50.0	1	50.0	0.662
	Yes	12	60.0	8	40.0	
5. Regular room cleaning	No	0	0.0	1	100.0	0.409
	Yes	13	61.9	8	38.1	
6. Safety guarantee	No	2	50.0	2	50.0	0.550
	Yes	11	61.1	7	38.9	
7. Amenities guarantee	No	1	25.0	3	75.0	0.167
	Yes	12	66.7	6	33.3	
8. Complaint management	No	6	66.7	3	33.3	0.439
	Yes	7	53.8	6	46.2	
9. Rate information	No	12	75.0	4	25.0	0.023*
	Yes	1	16.7	5	83.3	
10. Attraction and cultural information	No	8	80.0	2	20.0	0.082
	Yes	5	41.7	7	58.3	
11. Particular space for administration	No	11	73.3	4	26.7	0.064
	Yes	2	28.6	5	71.4	
12. Cashless payment	No	11	68.8	5	31.3	0.155
	Yes	2	33.3	4	66.7	

The total homestay services were divided into two categories, with the median cut of point (7). The low homestay service for a total score of 0-7, and the high for a total score of 8-12.

Table 4 describes that factors related to total homestay services were age (p-value 0.018) and attending homestay training (p-value 0.012). Older people give better services than younger people. Among people with high total homestay services were those who attended the training (71%) compared to people who were not attending the training (13%).

Table 4. Factors Related to Total Homestay Service (N=22)

Variables	Category	Total homestay services				p-value
		Low		High		
		f	%	f	%	
1. Age	Older (46+)	0	0.0	5	100.0	0.018*
	Younger(≤45)	11	64.7	6	35.3	
2. Education	Low	2	28.6	5	71.4	0.181
	High	9	60.0	6	40.0	
3. Manage Homestay as the main job	No	11	55.0	9	45.0	0.238
	Yes	0	0.0	2	100	
4. Duration as homestay manager (years)	< 5	7	46.7	8	53.3	0.500
	≥ 5	4	57.1	3	42.9	
5. Attend homestay training	No	7	87.5	1	12.5	0.012*
	Yes	4	28.6	10	71.4	

DISCUSSION

Managing a homestay is not easy for lay people with no educational background in hospitality and tourism. However, this is a challenge considering the opportunities for supporting community-based tourism (CBT) development (Junaid, Salam, & Salim, 2019). With various prospects for developing tourist villages in different locations according to the village's potential resources, Indonesia's CBT trend has positively impacted homestay growth, notably in Borobudur, which has been a popular tourist attraction for a very long time. Otherwise, the development of homestay is one aspect that can support CBT (Mertha & Pitanatri, 2018; Wedatama & Mardiansjah, 2018; Junaid, Salam, & Salim, 2019)

The idea of homestays as a type of community-based tourism is well-accepted as a tool for rural development in many countries. The homestay program can improve local quality of life by increasing local income, promoting local culture, arts and crafts businesses, encouraging the restoration of local and historic places, and supporting community-based environmental conservation initiatives. A more systematic homestay development will be essential in developing a "new brand" of tourist experience, showcasing the rural way of life and providing an affordable form of vacation with a high degree of cultural and educational elements (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016).

Candiroto Village is next to Borobudur Village, where Borobudur Temple is located, so the villagers are used to welcoming tourists. Most homestay owners also work as tour operators at Borobudur Temple, both as souvenirs, food traders, and artists. Their closeness to tourism and the desire to serve tourists well have become the values they present.

The tourism atmosphere in the Tourism Village around Borobudur is quite unique. The place has beautiful scenery, and traditional attractions not found in other areas are available in this region. The activities offered in the village are key characteristics that

motivate tourists to choose alternative accommodations like homestays (Venkatesh & Mukesh, 2015). Supported by the local government, residents and homestay managers have been able to take advantage of the potential of the region, existing resources, and cultural arts. This uniqueness must be maintained by improving the quality of services, such as the foreign language skills of homestay managers, defining tariff information for homestays and tour packages offered, and guarantees for service quality.

Besides the environmental potencies, homestay services should be excellent (Ismail, Hanafiah, Aminuddin, & Muftafa, 2016; Voon et al., 2022). The service quality influences the loyalty of customers. Another Borobudur tourist loyalty homestay survey was shown to be predicated on service quality, image, tourist satisfaction, and tourist trust (Novitaningtyas, Verawati, & Achsa, 2021). However, in this survey, the homestay did not provide the guarantees described in the information. They still carry out activities manually, even though tourists will usually look for information online and want to make their travel simpler by online searching and booking. Accepting only cash payments is one of the concerns.

Cooperatives and homestay associations need to be encouraged to use information technology in homestay management and services. Service integration with online booking and payment systems is urgently needed, especially to anticipate travelers who now want to be simpler. The cooperative under PT Wimbo has tried to manage cashless payments, but it has become an administrative obstacle for older owners with low digital literacy. Some homestay managers are elderly and are not familiar with gadgets and information technology. Besides providing them digital literacy training program, a homestay management system needs to be created where homestay owners can easily provide service information, such as an easily accessible booking and payment system, facilities provided, fair prices, and other information that attracts tourists. The results of the study show that booking/registration information, notes of tourist data, and rate information are service aspects related significantly to occupancy. Utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) was a significant aspect of homestay occupancy (Prabawa, 2018; Wedatama & Mardiansjah, 2018). The ICTs can be provided by Online Travel Agent (OTA), but for local management, it is worth developing the homestays' own system.

The young people are more familiar with ICT, but on the other hand, older homestay owners provide better service (p-value 0.018). This condition is the assets they can come together to empower each other. The ICTs can encourage young people to participate in community development and education, which increases their sense of dedication and empowerment (United Nations, 2013). In the homestays group, the young owner can empower older people to use ICTs while the older owner can train the young owner to give excellent services. Homestays are usually managed by families with older people with more experience in giving service and younger ones with more digital-literate. Family empowerment is needed to increase the cooperation of family members in homestay management.

Rural homestays rooted in communities are being developed, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Unfortunately, crucial subjects like homestay branding, entrepreneurship, ICT proficiency, and homestay operator training and development regarding sustainability are rarely covered (Janjua, Krishnapillai, & Rahman, 2021).

Furthermore, using a foreign language actively is also an important point for homestay managers. In this survey, only 27% of respondents can speak a foreign language, and 18% had foreign guests. Homestay managers need to interact and learn to improve their skills in foreign languages (Suryaningtyas & Muliawanti, 2020). The government, NGOs,

and academia facilitation can significantly speed up and improve homestay skills in serving and management (Blue Ventures, 2022; Ismail, Sumardjo, Lubis, & Kinseng, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The study showed that services had a significant correlation with occupancy. Nevertheless, improving the services is challenging for lay people with limited hospitality education and experience. The sub variable that related to occupancy are booking procedure, guest registration note, and rate information. Furthermore, the services were correlated to age and attending homestay training. Older homestay managers give better services than younger one and attending training increased the homestay services.

The tourism office should provide training in excellent service for homestay owners and managers. Training on excellent homestay services should be given frequently, especially for young people who are just starting to become homestay managers. Clear information is a kind of service that gives tourists a security feeling. The programs to improve services by providing clear information to tourists should include the utilization of ICTs. Furthermore, it needs the consequence of giving digital training to owners, especially older people. The family empowerment program is needed to increase the cooperation of family members in homestay management. Further research should conduct actual service assessments and assess homestay customer satisfaction to gain a better understanding of service quality.

LIMITATION (OPTIONAL)

This survey was conducted on homestay owners located close to Borobudur Temple, namely Candirejo Village, and undertaken in 2022, which has just experienced the Covid-19 pandemic and a decrease in the number of tourists. It is necessary to perform a more comprehensive survey when tourism enthusiasm stabilizes in the coming year.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

None of the conflicts of interest was declared.

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