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## The Determinants of Commitment among Homestay Operators in Malaysia

Yusnita Yusof<sup>a\*</sup>, Mohd Shaladdin Muda<sup>b</sup>, Ahmad Munir Salleh<sup>c</sup>, Yahaya Ibrahim<sup>d</sup> & Wan Abdul Aziz Wan Mohd Amin<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Lecturer, School of Business and Maritime Management, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, 21030 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia

<sup>b</sup>Dean and Professor, School of Business and Maritime Management, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, 21030 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia

<sup>c</sup>Associate Professor, School of Business and Maritime Management, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, 21030 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia

<sup>d</sup>Vice Chancellor, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, 21030 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia

<sup>e</sup>Professor, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, 21030 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia

### Abstract

Homestay operators in Malaysia have long been pursuing their homestay program assisted by the government and their respective communities. However, the homestay operators are still confronted with issues such as the declining number of tourist arrivals which could not generate additional income as expected. This has created other problems such as low commitment level among themselves. Therefore, this study was undertaken to identify the determinants that affect the commitment among homestay operators in Malaysia such as quality of life attributes, attitudes, community roles and the role of government. This study used a survey method using a questionnaire involving 394 homestay operators throughout Malaysia. The study population comprised of 3,211 homestay operators who were registered with the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia as at December 2011. The sample was selected using probability sampling method through multistage cluster sampling procedure. A total of 396 questionnaires were distributed using face to face method but only 337 questionnaires were used for purposes of data analysis. The finding showed that the level of commitment among homestay operators was moderate. The four determinants of the study namely quality of life attributes, attitudes, role of community and the role of government have had positive relationships and become significant predictors to the commitment of the homestay operators in Malaysia.

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\* Yusnita Yusof. Tel.: +6-09-6684280; fax: +6-09-6684238.  
E-mail address: [yusnitayusof@umt.edu.my](mailto:yusnitayusof@umt.edu.my)

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## 1. Introduction

Definition and concept of commitment contains a lot of meaning and perception of each perspective. The concept of commitment in the workplace still a challenge and frequently reviewed, particularly in the areas of management, organizational behavior and human resource management (Cohen, 2003; Somers, 2009). Although many researchers highlight the various definitions as described by Iverson (1996), but the researchers formulated two main things i.e. the commitment of treatment and committed attitude of commitment. According to Porter, Steers and Boulian (1974) organizational commitment is a commitment of the workers to their organizations through the three main components of trust and acceptance of organizational goals, willingness to serve the organization and a strong desire to be part of the organization concerned. An employee who has a strong commitment and willing to sacrifice his/her time and energy tend to remain with the organization in an effort to help realize the objectives and goals of the organization (Brewer, 1996; Yusnita, Wan Abdul Aziz, Mohd Shaladdin, & Yahaya, 2012).

According to Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) organizational commitment means the strength of a person's identity and involvement in the organization that they join. It can be categorized into three related factors, namely 1) a strong belief and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization; 2) the ability to increase the capacity of the organization concerned; and 3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. Therefore, commitment is the active involvement of the individual in the organization of their choice and are willing to take the time and energy to ensure the welfare of the organization. Another alternative view put forward by Meyer and Allen (1993) stated that the commitment is divided into three main components i.e. affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment and involvement is an emotional attachment to the organization, while continuing commitment is attachment based on the cost to be incurred should they leave the organization. Normative commitment also leads to feelings of devotion and loyal to the organization. These commitments form the employee's personal and direct impact on their organizations. If an individual is committed to their organization, they will be more successful and satisfied with themselves, their environment and their personal relationships also improved (Aydogdu & Asikgil, 2011).

According to Mohammad Shatar (2003) from the perspective of community development, local communities and their leaders should have a strong commitment and efforts to promote the community. The commitment shown by the local community will facilitate any transaction or related program development and planning of tourism in their area. A review by Yusnita, Aziz and Shaladdin (2012) showed one of the success factors of homestay development in Malaysia is committed community involvement in the homestay program in each village. In the study by Sirgy, Widgery, Lee and Yu (2010) they found that community well-being index attributes that are owned by the communities involved have a positive influence on the community commitment. They used four sets of data collected from communities in Flint, Michigan, United States from different years of 6915 data in year 1978, 397 in year 1990 data, 1100 data in year 2001 and 856 data collected in year 2006. These four data regarding the overall data shows that there is a positive relationship between community attributes to their commitments. The study also found that the attribute or community well-being index have a positive relationship with their overall life satisfaction.

While a study by Gomes (2009) which examines job satisfaction, organizational commitment and affective organizational changes over 153 hospitality industry employees. His research showed the relationship between affective organizational commitment to organizational change was a positive correlation ( $r = 0.355$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) while the relationship between life satisfaction and organizational changes also show a positive correlation ( $r = .253$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The findings of this study show that the process of organizational change is expected to provide effective guidance on organizational commitment and so also increase the job satisfaction of the workers.

The objective of this study is to identify the determinants of commitment among homestay operators in Malaysia. There are four determinants associated with the homestay operators' commitment namely the quality of life attributes, their attitude, community roles and finally the government roles.

## 2. Methods

The questionnaire for the commitments in this study consists of 22 items by using the questionnaire Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979). OCQ was developed using 15 items to identify three aspects of the commitment in accordance with the definition as they are using. The original OCQ using a seven-point Likert scale. They stated that OCQ validity and high reliability indices of Cronbach alpha reliability index for each function are 0.82 to 0.93. The decision is absolutely comparable to studies of other treatments (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). However, the questionnaire for this study was a modified OCQ to measure the commitment of the homestays in Malaysia. Items in this section has been modified by such studies that have been conducted by Yusnita (2012) in her thesis entitled "Effect of Transformation Leadership and Organizational Commitment Employers Attitudes towards Homestay in Malaysia" which stated the commitment of her study questionnaire validity and high reliability index where the Cronbach alpha reliability test were 0.906. In this study, questionnaire commitment using a five-point Likert scale containing 22 items in total.

A questionnaire-based survey method is a technique often used in tourism, leisure and hospitality research to obtain information on attitudes, behavior and perception which can be calculated (quantified) involving a specific population group (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008; Finn, Elliott- White, & Walton, 2000; Veal, 2006). Using the questionnaire survey method is also ideal for collecting data from a sample group of a large and special purpose to draw conclusions (inferences) on population studies (Rusli & Hasbee, 2011). The population for this study is overall homestay operators registered with the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia under the Homestay Program. The sampling frame for this survey was all homestays nationwide constituted of 3,211 people which were actively registered with the Ministry of Tourism in year 2011. For this study, only those who are registered with the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia only which will be accounted by using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) reference sample size which suggests a sample size of between 341 to 346 people of the total population of 3,211 people was adequate. Sekaran and Bougie (2009) also stated that the sample size is greater than 30 and less than 500 people is appropriate in most research. The number of samples taken for the study were about 356 people. The probability sampling procedures using multistage cluster sampling strategy was carried out in this study.

The total population of homestay operators throughout Malaysia in year 2011 was 3,211 and a total of 356 persons were selected for this study. However, this study also choose a few more additional respondents as a precautionary measure to ensure that the required number of samples can be achieved. Thus, a total of 396 questionnaires were distributed. A total of 346 homestay operators were answered and returned the questionnaires of 396 sets were distributed. It shows the rate of return of the questionnaires was 87.4 percent and the rate obtained showed a very good level in the review of the social sciences. Kerlinger and Lee (1999) stated that the rate of return of questionnaires which reached 80 per cent is satisfactory. However, only 337 usable questionnaires were used for the purpose of data analysis since 9 of them were outliers.

## 3. Results

The mean value of the commitment is 3.24 and the standard deviation is 0.32. This shows that with the mean value of 3.24 (on level 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) of the level of commitment among 337 respondents and standard deviation score of commitment dispersed not far from the mean value implies that the majority of respondents have a relatively modest level of commitment. The stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted and the results are shown in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Effects of Determinants of Commitment

Independent Variables	Beta	Sig. (p)
Attitude	0.40	0.00
Community Role	0.20	0.00
Government Role	0.17	0.00
Quality of Life Attributes	0.05	0.34*

Note. Adjusted R square = 0.345, F3,333 = 59.98,  $p < 0.01$  (using stepwise methods)

(\*  $P > 0.01$ , quality of life attribute is not a significant determinant attributes in this model)

From Table 1 above, the value  $F = 59.98$  and  $GIS. = 0.00$  indicates that there is significant influence between independent variable of the determinants of commitment.  $R^2$  value shows the determinants having an effect of 34.5 percent over the commitment. Of the four independent variables were tested, three variables have a significant impact on the attitude of commitment, the role of community and the role of government. While only one variable that does not affect the commitment i.e. the attributes of quality of life. The stepwise multiple regression analysis was also conducted to identify the most critical factors affecting the commitment of employers. Of the four determinants were tested, three of which have a significant influence on commitment homestay operators with a view to the beta ( $\beta$ ) of attitudes ( $\beta = 0.40$ ), followed by the role of the community ( $\beta = 0.20$ ) and the role of government ( $\beta = 0.17$ ), To investigate further the effects of the determinants of attitudes, the role of community and the role of government to commitments homestays, Table 2 presents a summary of the model.

Table 2 Summary of the Determinant Model of Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.51 <sup>a</sup>	0.261	0.259	0.35894
2	0.573 <sup>b</sup>	0.328	0.324	0.34278
3	0.592 <sup>c</sup>	0.351	0.345	0.33751

a. Determining: (Constant), Attitudes Employers

b. Determining: (Constant), Attitude Entrepreneur, Community Role

c. Determining: (Constant), Attitude Entrepreneur, Community Roles, Role of Government

Dependent Variable: Commitments

From Table 2, 26.1 per cent were found to influence the attitude of commitment homestay operators. When combined the influence of attitudes to the community role, it has increased by 6.7 percent to 32.8 percent. When the effect of the two variables were combined with the government's role, the overall effect is increased again by 2.3 per cent. Therefore, this study concludes that attitude, the role of the community and the government's role affects 35.1 percent of the commitment homestay operators. Influence of 35.1 percent is considered low but still acceptable because there is still a significant effect in the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, only can be shown a larger value of the variation in the dependent variable (Colton & Bower, 2002), This means that this model has successfully accounted for 35.1 percent of the commitment homestay operators and the rest contributed by other factors that were not investigated in this study.

The finding of this study showed a significant difference between the independent variable of the determinants of commitment.  $R^2$  value shows the determinants having an effect of 34.5 percent over the commitment. These findings show that 34.5 percent of the variance in projected commitment by all independent variable, namely the quality of life attributes, attitudes, community role and the role of government. This means that there are as many as 65.5 percent of variance in the commitment of the variables that cannot be predicted by this study. Of the four independent variables were tested, three variables have a significant impact i.e. the attitude, the role of community and the role of government. While only one variable that does not affect the commitment i.e. the attributes of quality

of life. The stepwise multiple regression analysis was also conducted to identify the most critical factors affecting the commitment of employers. Of the four determinants were tested, three of which have a significant influence on commitment homestay operators with a view to the beta ( $\beta$ ) that is the attitude of employers ( $\beta = 0.40$ ), followed by the role of the community ( $\beta = 0.20$ ) and the role of government ( $\beta = 0.17$ ). The finding is consistent with a study by Iverson (1996) who also found several independent variables also affect the commitment of 761 research workers government hospitals in the state of Victoria, Australia.

#### 4. Discussion

The study found that attitudes of the homestay operators themselves affect their commitment. The finding was consistent with studies conducted by Salleh and Zuria (2009), which shows aspects of life satisfaction has helped improve self-confidence of students and help students become more comfortable to study at local universities so as to devote adequate attention to the lesson. This proves that a positive attitude and commitment towards the acceptance of business conduct homestay program has been successful efforts of the community and the government is struggling to design and make the homestay program as one of the community-based tourism programs in Malaysia. This effort succeeded because the homestay operators were satisfied and committed in working together to manage their homestay even though could not generate greater additional income earned from this homestay program. This finding coincides with a study by Kalsom, Nor Ashikin and Mohmad Amin (2006) which also shows that the homestays in the village of Relau, Kedah say they have a high motivation in the homestay program in their village because they want to increase self-confidence, united in the program group and also for personal satisfaction, not for profit alone. This is the philosophy for majority of the operators who tirelessly to improve their homestay.

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