

Challenges and Usage of Social Media Marketing by Homestay Entrepreneurs in Sabah: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

This conceptual paper explores the challenges faced by homestay entrepreneurs in Sabah, Malaysia, and their utilization of social media marketing as a strategy to overcome these challenges. The study focuses on the dynamic landscape of the homestay program in Sabah and its impact on entrepreneurial success. It also examines into the critical role of social media marketing in enhancing the visibility and profitability of homestay businesses. This study reveals a fluctuating income trend within the Sabah Homestay program. The challenges faced by homestay entrepreneurs are complex, encompassing issues like lack of marketing and promotion, lack of training, lack of commitment of the community, lack of funding, lack of tourist and withdraw from homestay program. The study focus on solving SDG goals 1, end poverty. This study employs a quantitative approach to investigate the relationship between the use of social media marketing and the success of homestay entrepreneurs in Sabah, Malaysia. It uses purposive sampling to select 391 participants from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture's homestay directory in 2023. Data will be collected through a survey questionnaire based on previous research, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale. The theoretical framework for the study is based on the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. The paper also emphasizes the importance of government support, educational institutions, and industry associations in providing training, financial assistance, and community involvement to bolster the homestay sector. Additionally, recommendations are made for enhancing English language proficiency among homestay entrepreneurs to effectively engage international tourists through social media. In conclusion, this study sheds light on the challenges and opportunities within the Sabah Homestay program, offering valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners. By addressing these challenges and harnessing the power of social media marketing, homestay entrepreneurs can contribute to the growth of the local economy while providing unique cultural experiences to tourists.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial, Entrepreneurial Success, Entrepreneurial Competencies, Homestay Business, Entrepreneur Homestay

Introduction

This conceptual paper is to investigate the challenges and usage of social media marketing in Sabah, Malaysia. The rapid spread of social media platforms has revolutionized marketing strategies for various businesses, including homestay entrepreneurs. This study examines the common usage of social media marketing by homestay entrepreneurs and the challenges they encounter in this homestay program. One of the key indicators of Sabah Homestay performance is the income generated. Based on Table 1, indicated that over the years, the income has displayed notable fluctuations. In 2011, Sabah Homestays collectively earned RM 3,059,462, a figure that remained relatively stable in 2012 at RM 2,651,841. However, 2013 witnessed a slight increase to RM 2,433,501. A significant turning point occurred in 2018 when income surged to an impressive RM 6,235,688, followed by an even more remarkable RM 7,950,954 in 2019. This surge can be attributed to various factors, including improved marketing, enhanced infrastructure, and increased tourist interest in homestay experiences. Unfortunately, 2020 saw a sharp decline in income, plummeting to RM 1,940,289. This decline can be largely attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely impacted global tourism (Bosma et al., 2021). While Sabah Homestays were not immune to the pandemic's effects, it is important to note that the industry demonstrated resilience and adaptability. In a surprising turn of events, 2022 recorded an impressive recovery, with income rising to RM 8,113,591. This suggests that Sabah's homestay industry remains dynamic and can rebound after external setbacks.

Table 1

Statistic of Sabah Homestay performances until 2023

Year	Income (RM)	Homestay Coordinator	Homestay Operators
2011	3,059,462	16	228
2012	2,651,841	16	228
2013	2,433,501	17	242
2014	2,052,043	17	242
2015	2,329,718	21	293
2016	2,678,772	22	293
2017	3,795,065	24	316
2018	6,235,688	28	369
2019	7,950,954	30	406
2020	1,940,289	30	406
2021	2,140,965	32	436
2022	8,113,591	31	391
Total	21,461,547		

Source: Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism (MOCAT), Statistics, 2023

The success of homestay programs relies not only on income but also on the number of coordinators and operators involved. Homestay coordinators play a crucial role in facilitating

the homestay experience, while operators are the host families that provide accommodations and cultural interactions (MOTAC, 2019). From 2011 to 2013, the number of coordinators remained relatively stable, hovering around 16 to 17. However, there was a noticeable increase in coordinators from 2014 onwards, reaching 32 in 2021 and slightly dropping to 31 in 2022. This steady growth in coordinators indicates a sustained interest in promoting homestay experiences. Similarly, the number of homestay entrepreneurs increased from 228 in 2011 to 436 in 2021 before decreasing to 391 in 2022. This growth reflects the expanding participation of local families in the homestay program. Therefore, a study to be explored what is the cause for this declining number of homestay entrepreneurs. In conclusion, the Sabah Homestay program has experienced significant rise and fall in income and participation numbers over the years. Notably, the industry faced a major setback in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a sharp decline in income (Tshin et al., 2022). However, Sabah's homestay sector demonstrated resilience and adaptability, as evidenced by the remarkable income recovery in 2022. The growth in the number of homestay coordinators and operators suggests ongoing interest and support for homestay initiatives in Sabah. These programs not only contribute to the local economy but also provide tourists with unique cultural experiences. To ensure the sustained success of Sabah homestays, it is crucial for stakeholders, including government authorities and local communities, to continue monitoring and adapting to changing circumstances. By doing so, Sabah can continue to leverage its natural and cultural assets to attract tourists and provide them with memorable homestay experiences. This study incorporating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into a homestay can have a positive impact on both the environment and the local community. It is to solve SDG number one (SGD 1). Social media has gained widespread popularity in the context of the current marketing mix, particularly within the promotion mix. However, academia and practitioners alike are struggling their way toward more effective social media marketing (Zhu & Chen, 2015). As a matter of fact, there are still limited research measures for social media marketing to toward entrepreneurial success in the homestay business. Most studies focused on social media marketing adoption (Dahnil et al., 2014; Durkin et al., 2013; Murniati et al., 2023; Taiminen & Karjaluo, 2015) , but less focused on the usage of social media marketing. This study is to fill the gaps from past study to investigate the effectiveness of the social media marketing in homestay programs.

Based in Table 2, Sabah received the most tourists from South Korea, with 16,880. The second-largest group of tourists came from a combination of China, Hong Kong, and Macau, totalling 1,240 visitors. Some tourists came from Europe, totalling 1,159 European tourists.

Table 2

Three highest international tourism arrival statistics in Sabah

No	Country origin	Total tourist
1	South Korea	16,880
2	China, Hong Kong, Macau	1,240
3	Europe	1,159

Source: Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism (MOCAT), Statistics, 2023

Based in Table 3, the largest group of international tourists go to Sabah, with a total of 19,950 visitors. This means that a lot of international tourists go to Sabah. The second-largest group of tourists go to Pulau Pinang, with 1,010 visitors. It's a smaller group compared to Sabah, but

still a significant number of tourists. Some international tourists go to Johor, with a total of 844 visitors. While it's fewer compared to the first two, it's still a notable group of tourists.

Table 3

Most International tourists come to homestay program In Malaysia

No	Country origin	Total International tourist
1	Sabah	19,950
2	Pulau Pinang	1,010
3	Johor	844

Source: Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism (MOCAT), Statistics, 2023

Problem Statement

Addressing these challenges is crucial for the entrepreneurial success of homestay program and their contributions to local economies. One potential solution to enhance their viability is to embrace social media marketing strategies to reach a wider audience and attract more tourists. Homestay entrepreneurs encounter several challenges that hinder the successful business operation in the homestay program. Therefore, a study needs to be explored by identify the challenges and usage of social media marketing that can improve the performance of homestay program.

Objective of the Study

1. To investigate the challenged that homestay entrepreneurs faced.
2. To examine the relationship of usage of social media marketing and entrepreneurial success.

Literature Review

Definition of Homestay Entrepreneur

There are many definitions of homestay entrepreneur in the literature. For example, homestay entrepreneurs are the homestay operators and homestay coordinators who manage, handle, and operate the homestay as a source of additional income (Ariff et al., 2015; Yassin & Naidu, 2017). Meanwhile, Yamamoto, Unruh, and Bullis, (2012) have mentioned that people who do not have an incorporated business entity, but they earned money by their activities. The term "homestay entrepreneurs" has been used in many homestay studies such as (Yassin, 2015; Mohamad et al., 2013; Osman et al., 2009; Yong et al., 2019). Therefore, we define homestay entrepreneurs as individuals who manage these establishments of homestay operation to generate additional income, even if they may not have a formal business entity. Their primary goal is to provide visitors with a unique and memorable experience of living with residents in rural areas. They can be acts as homestay operators and homestay coordinators.

Challenges Faced by Homestay Entrepreneurs in Social Media Marketing

Lack of Marketing and Promotion

The lack of marketing and promotion is a critical challenge for homestay businesses, impacting their ability to attract guests and grow their income. To address this issue, homestay owners should invest in effective marketing strategies that align with their unique offerings and target a broader audience, both locally and globally. This investment can ultimately lead to increased bookings, generating income, higher occupancy rates, and long-

term success in the homestay program. However, many homestay businesses face difficulties in effectively marketing and promoting their services. Previous existing research (Jabar et al., 2015; Janjua et al., 2023; Kunjuraman, 2022; Kunjuraman & Hussin, 2017; Kunjuraman & Roslizawati Che Aziz, 2019; Murniati et al., 2023; Pradhan et al., 2022) highlights this as a significant barrier to attracting guests and promoting their homestay packages.

Lack of Training in Managing Homestays

The lack of training in managing homestays is a challenge that can delay the growth and success of these homestay business. Proper training can empower homestay entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge needed to provide exceptional guest experiences, navigate the difficulties of the industry, and build a sustainable and thriving homestay business. Governments, private institutions, industry associations, and educational institutions can play a crucial role in providing accessible and relevant training programs to support homestay entrepreneurs in their activities. Entrepreneurial skills and knowledge in managing homestays are often lacking among owners. Research findings (Achten, 2014; Danthanarayana et al., 2021; Dash, 2022; Pusiran & Xiao, 2013; Pradhan et al., 2022) underscore the importance of proper training in homestay management.

Lack of Commitment from the Community

Community support and involvement are vital for the success of homestay businesses. However, a lack of commitment from the local community (Bachok et al., 2018; Nor & Awang, 2017; Supian et al., 2022) can hinder the sustainability and growth of these ventures. Some study proved that commitment homestay operators in the organization is affected by transformational leadership (Yusnita et al., 2012). Amin & Ibrahim (2016) conclude that participation in the community-based tourism is influenced by the community members collective to participate. These collectives could be explained by numerous factors such as their collective about handling activities among the participants, teamwork spirit, and their personality motivation.

Lack of Funding

Financial constraints are a common issue for homestay entrepreneurs. Most recent studies highlighted that limited access to funding sources can block the development and improvement of homestay facilities and services (Kunjuraman, 2022; Kunjuraman & Hussin, 2017; Kunjuraman & Che Aziz, 2019; Supian et al., 2022). However, some literature review indicates that government business support programmes such funding, have a substantial impact on the survival and success of micro and small enterprises, especially during the current COVID-19 crisis. (Salmah Topimin & Siti Rahayu Mohd Hashim, 2021).

Lack of Tourists

The availability of tourists is a fundamental factor in the success of homestay businesses. Challenges in attracting tourists (Miraz et al., 2015; Tshin et al., 2022; Yassin & Ramlan, 2015) can lead to low occupancy rates and revenue. This because with tourist arrival, homestay entrepreneur cannot sustain their homestay business.

Withdraw from Homestay Program

More registered operators are also likely to withdraw if they do not earn enough money from their participation in the programme (Bureau of Innovation and Consultancy UTM, 2009;

Supian et al., 2022). As a result, nearly ten homestay programmes had either withdrawn or dropped their MOTAC business registration, this is because homestay do not receive any income (Zulkefli et al., 2023). Therefore, addressing these challenges is crucial for the entrepreneurial success of homestay businesses and their contributions to local economies. One potential solution to enhance their viability is to embrace social media marketing strategies to reach a wider audience and attract more tourists.

Social Media Marketing Usages

The deployment of social media in SMEs is challenging as few SMEs. In most cases some SMEs are not capable of creating interesting content on the various platforms available to them like a blog, Facebook or Twitter (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). In this study, it can conclude that some homestay entrepreneurs do not have interesting content in promoting their homestay business to the public. According to Chikandiwa, Contogiannis, & Jembere (2013), social media marketing is describe as a system that allowing marketer to connect, cooperate with each other, interact and exploit collective intelligent crowd sourcing for marketing purposes. In order to attract more visitors to homestay tourism, marketer should talk advantages of the advertising and promotion opportunity available online (Jamal et al., 2015).

Products

It is important for homestay entrepreneurs to integrate social media together with traditional marketing as the results indicate that their visitors consume both media. However, homestay entrepreneurs should use social media and promote their products to Facebook, blog, YouTube, and twitter to enhance their businesses. In addition, study had been done on exporting firms' actual adoption of social media technology is expected to have a positive effect on performance (Alarcon et al., 2015). In fact Weinberg, (2009), defined social media marketing as a process that allows individuals to present their own web sites, products or services through online social channels to communicate in large community and to listen to that community.

Access to Information

Social media can provide users with the ability to share their related experience, opinions, and knowledge with similar interest. Entrepreneurs should ensure their online social media forums offer credibility, relevance, and the ability to keep in touch with their customers (Wang & Kim, 2017). Therefore, homestay entrepreneurs should utilized the social media platform such as Facebook, Instagram , website and YouTube to promote their homestay business by giving the potential customer the information. Chang et al (2015) suggest that marketing manager or entrepreneurs can use collaboration method and invite famous individual with connection, posting a topic, to promote marketing through YouTube and Facebook. In addition, previous studies by Ainin et al (2015) indicated that more than half (63.3 percent) of the organizations reported that they post information on their organizations' Facebook page twice a day, 17.8 percent post once a day and 10.4 percent post information at least twice a week.

Communication

Social media marketing is an influential marketing method. Sharing and liking can increase the effect of popular cohesion and message diffusion in the social media messages (Chang et al., 2015). Social media marketing enables businesses to leverage social media platforms to

cultivate relationships with consumers, employees, communities, and other stakeholders. However, some businesses might perceive social media as merely another means to communicate with customers (Felix et al., 2016).

Customer Retention

The information provided suggests that digital media marketing plays a crucial role in helping companies and brands retain loyal customers. For example, digital media marketing helps companies and brands gain loyal customers (Nuseir, 2018). Where, recent studies indicated that social media marketing significantly affects customers retention for SME, Hotel, and high tech products (Adejuwon & Lawal, 2022; Cheraghalizadeh & Dědková, 2022; Yang et al., 2022).

Brand

Previous research has extensively explored the relationship between technology and performance, with a particular focus on the impact of technology on sales performance. This technology often entails the utilization of social media platforms to increase sales performance, which in turn contributes to overall business success (Rodriguez & Ajjan, 2014). In the fashion industries, marketing communication is used by social media such as twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to promote luxury fashion brands. Traditional designer usually provide live broadcasting fashion shows on their blogs such Louis Vuitton (Kim & Ko, 2012). These are the gaps that need to be investigated, how social media marketing can be useful for business success by promoting its brand. Some research has found that using internet marketing and digital media helps companies and brands become more popular and gain loyal customers (Nuseir, 2018). A conceptual paper by Vlachvei & Notta (2015), indicated that social media can bring benefit for companies performance. First goals are to bring brand building awareness such as increasing traffic visitor, improved reach, and gain visibility.

Entrepreneurial Success

There was a lack of study in measuring entrepreneurial success in the homestay contexts. Many parameters have been used to measure the success rate of entrepreneurs. But there are still limited studies on measures on entrepreneurial success. However, these parameters are still debatable (Genty et al., 2015). Success can be found into two distinct dimensions which is economic success and entrepreneur satisfaction (Solymossy, 1998). Meanwhile, Walker & Brown (2004) suggested that financial and nonfinancial measures match each other and provided a richer description of actual performance for success. A meta-analytic review indicates that the majority of entrepreneurial success variables include profit, income, sales growth, and employment growth (Unger et al., 2011). In this study, the evaluation of entrepreneurial success focused on financial-related indicators, such as profitability, return on investment, overall satisfaction, sales, and profit, as outlined by (Solymossy, 1998). Previous studies have emphasized the significance of employing a variety of metrics to thoroughly evaluate the sophisticated parts of small business performance (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005).

Methodologies

The study will use a quantitative approach to identify the relationship between social media marketing usage and entrepreneurial success of the homestay entrepreneurs. Secondly, it will highlight the challenged that homestay entrepreneurs faced in the homestay program.

Purposive sampling method samplings will be used in selecting the respondents which consisted of homestay entrepreneurs that participated in the homestay program in Sabah, Malaysia. The data collection was analysed through utilization of the statistical package for the social sciences version 26 (SPSS 26) and Smart PLS 3.0. Theoretical framework for study used resource-based view (RBV) and Society Exchange theory (SET). A total of 391 homestay entrepreneurs will be sampled from the homestay directory at the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) in 2023. The survey questionnaire will be distributed to homestay entrepreneurs. The survey questionnaire will be created based on past literature (Ainin et al., 2015; Yong et al., 2019), using 5 Likert scale, (1: very disagree and 5 : very agree). An expert validation will be conducted to assess the validity of the survey questionnaire. The contents are requested by feedback consisting of comments, clarity, grammar checking, quality of each item and approval to distribute the survey questionnaire. The draft of the survey questionnaire will be evaluated by local university academicians. Afterward, the survey questionnaires will undergo a second evaluation by industry experts, including one homestay coordinator and one officer from the Institute of Rural Advancement (INFRA). Then, a pilot study will be conducted as part of the research. The importance of utilizing a pilot study is to enhance the quality and efficiency of the main study. (Hazzi & Maaldaon, 2015). A reasonable sample size of at least 30 or greater is preferable for a pilot study (Whitehead et al., 2016). However, there is a study where the sample size that ranges from 10 to 15 is good enough in providing for pilot study (Johanson & Brooks, 2010). The survey questionnaire will be distributed to homestay entrepreneurs via they homestay coordinators and during homestay workshops or seminar, researchers will ask permission to organizer to distribute the survey questionnaire.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study used resource-based view (RBV) to conceptualize the relationship between social media marketing usage and entrepreneurial success. The Resource Based-View (RBV) normally focuses on firm level to understand business performance. For this study, it uses resources-based view theory to construct the conceptual framework. The Resource-Based View theory examines the performance differences of organizations based on their resources (Peteraf & Barney, 2003). The theory makes two main assumption, first the organizations within an industry may differ in their resources, and secondly these resources may not be perfectly mobile across organizations, so organizational differences in resources can be very long lasting (Barney, 1991). According to (Miles, 2012) definition, a resource can be defined as anything that could be thought of as strength for an organization. The resources include any tangible or intangible assets that are linked to an organization. At the same time, they lead the homestay business to be successful in the future. Therefore, it matched with definition of (Miles, 2012) about resource-based view, where resources can be defined as anything that could be thought of as strength for an organization. In this study, the strength lies in the knowledge and skills required to operate social media marketing on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to promote the homestay business.

Conceptual Framework

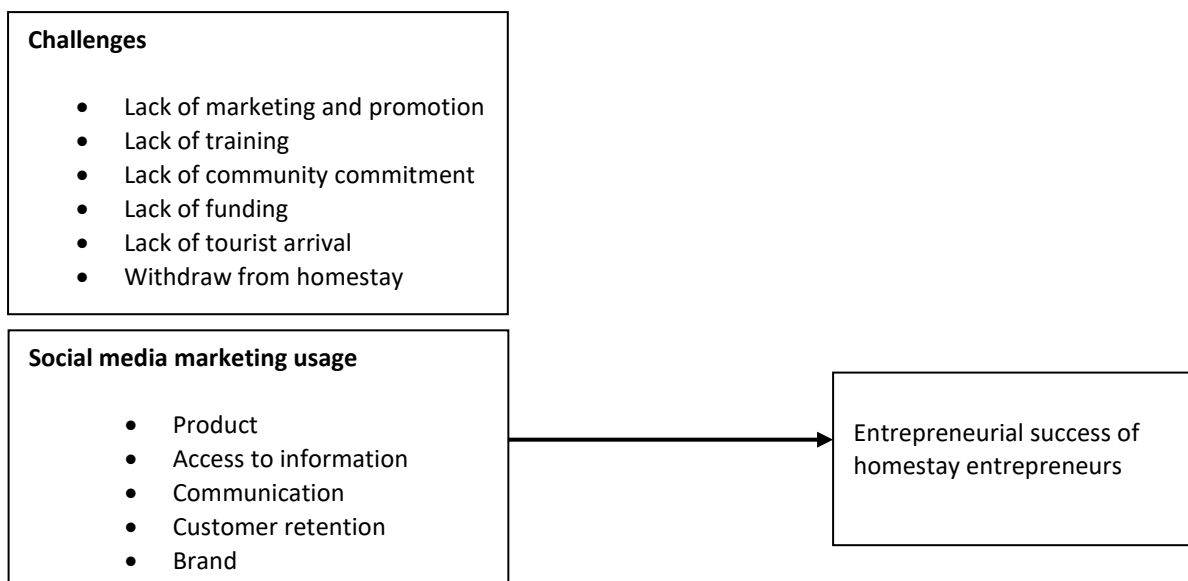


Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework

Recommendation of the Findings

The study presented a comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced by homestay entrepreneurs in Sabah, Malaysia, and their usage of social media marketing to overcome these challenges. This discussion will examine into the key findings and implications of the study, highlighting the significance of addressing these challenges for the entrepreneurial success of homestay businesses. The findings of this study have several implications for homestay entrepreneurs, government agencies, and educational institutions. Government agencies can provide support through financial assistance programs, training initiatives, and community engagement efforts. Educational institutions can collaborate with the industry to develop and offer training programs tailored to the needs of homestay entrepreneurs. Future research in this field should further explore the impact of social media marketing on entrepreneurial success in the homestay business.

Additionally, investigations into the role of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in enhancing the environmental and community impact of homestay programs can provide valuable insights. This sustainable development goals in study are to solve goal SDG 1: end poverty. Homestay entrepreneurs can contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1), which aims to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, through various linkages: Homestay businesses create income-generating opportunities in rural or impoverished areas. Hosting tourists and generating income through their services allows homestay entrepreneurs to contribute to poverty alleviation for both them and their local communities. Operating a homestay typically entails employing local personnel for tasks like cooking, cleaning, and guiding. This job creation directly supports SDG 1 by offering employment prospects, particularly for individuals with limited access to other job opportunities. As conclusion, addressing the challenges faced by homestay entrepreneurs and effectively utilizing social media marketing can contribute to the entrepreneurial success of homestay businesses in Sabah, Malaysia, ultimately benefiting the local economy and providing unique cultural experiences to tourists.

Table 4

Summary suggestion of social media marketing usage

Author	Findings
(Yong et al., 2019)	The study suggests utilizing skills and knowledge on using social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, blogs, and YouTube in promoting the homestay business.
(Murniati et al., 2023)	Realize the advantages of social media marketing and post relevant content in social media.
(Nindum, 2021)	The study suggests using storytelling to tell a story about their homestay experiences as adding value to the homestay entrepreneurs
(Cheuk et al., 2017)	The website infrastructure can be established with the expertise of the local university, which currently has research sites and projects in the area. However, a website is more than just form and function; it needs to be populated with interesting content, such as write-ups and photos of tourism attractions and activities.
(Tshin et al., 2022)	Social media platforms are undeniably crucial in revitalizing the tourism industry in the wake of the ongoing pandemic. More specifically, social media engagement can play a pivotal role in promoting positivity and countering pandemic-induced discrimination, one of the homestay operators is creating a video about their current course of action during ongoing pandemic in Kundasang.
(Robert et al., 2021)	The study suggests that homestay operators should consistently produce high-quality content on social media to capture the interest of individuals confined to their homes and yearning for outdoor experiences. As a result, it is imperative for homestay operators to invest time in mastering the effective use of social media to promote increased engagement across various virtual platforms.

Source: Authors summary

Practical Implications

Since there is a relationship between social media marketing usage and entrepreneurial success, the government such as the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC), Sabah Tourism Board, Institute of Rural Advancement (INFRA) and Sabah Homestay Association play an important role on training and motivate homestay entrepreneurs to enhance their skill and knowledge in operating successful homestay business. The Institute of Rural Advancement (INFRA) is the government body that could help homestay entrepreneurs to obtain license and training. Social media marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for promoting and growing homestay businesses. We suggest that homestay entrepreneurs should embrace social media marketing to enhance their visibility, engage with potential guests, and ultimately boost bookings and revenue. Therefore, local Universiti can provide a module to teach homestay entrepreneurs updated techniques for using Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok for their businesses. This aligns with Universiti knowledge transfer program.

Meanwhile, most homestays have a Facebook page for their business. However, they often lack an offered website for their homestay business. Therefore, a module can be developed to teach website creation using tools such as Google Sites, Canva, and Wix. Additionally, a module for teaching AI marketing for homestays can be developed. Given that most today's businesses utilize AI to enhance their operational efficiency and overall business performance, providing instruction in AI-driven marketing strategies is essential. This addition aligns with the current industry trends where AI plays a pivotal role in optimizing marketing campaigns and improving guest experiences. It recommends that homestay entrepreneurs acquire proficiency in English for effective social media marketing targeting international audiences. In cases where homestay entrepreneurs have limited English language skills, it is proposed that an English communication class be established to aid them in crafting copywriting content for social media tailored to international tourists. Consequently, the Sabah Homestay Association (SHA) can intend to implement an English writing course designed specifically for social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. This course will equip homestay entrepreneurs with foundational English language skills and the ability to create English content that resonates with the international audience. This module can help to reduce the challenges faced by homestay entrepreneurs such as lack marketing and promotion, lack of finding, lack of training, lack of commitment, lack of tourist and withdraw from homestay program. Meanwhile, government agency can give grant to new and established homestay entrepreneurs to improve facilities of the homestay accommodation. To increase visitors to visit homestay program. Homestay entrepreneur can create program such corporate social responsibility (CSR) with local University, such as activities aimed at benefiting the local community where it operates. For instance, they could invest in projects that enhance the well-being of the residents. This might include funding educational programs, healthcare initiatives, or infrastructure development like building a community centre or providing clean drinking water. The homestay program should arrange team-building activities to enhance community participation within the homestay cluster. The reason for organizing team-building activities within the homestay program is to foster stronger bonds and collaboration among community participants in the homestay cluster. team-building exercises can improve communication, trust, and teamwork among individuals, which can lead to more effective and harmonious community involvement. These activities can help participants work together more cohesively, leading to a more successful and enjoyable homestay experience for both visitors and the local community.

Conclusion

This study is to investigate the challenges that homestay entrepreneurs faced in the homestay program. Secondly, to investigate the relationship with social media marketing usages and entrepreneurial success. The findings of this study are important for theoretical and practical implication both scholar and practitioner. The Malaysian homestay program is marked as the alternative tourism product to domestic and international travellers. Therefore, there are many roles that are involved in its policy and development. The key players included Malaysian homestay association (MHA), tour agency, travel agents. Sabah homestay association, and Sabah Tourism Board. The finding of this study is to provide a better understanding of the homestay program, which determines the success of homestay performances, and solving SDG goals 1 which is end poverty. The result of the study helps the Homestay Program function as a community development tool that manages tourism resources. It also helps them to increase their knowledge and skill in operating the homestay

business efficiency and effectively. Thus, to help the community in improving local economy and creating job opportunities in rural area. The contribution, in this context, is rooted in the resource-based view (RBV) which can be linked to homestay entrepreneurs. Based on resources theory, resources can be defining anything that can be the strength of the organisation. This included skill and knowledge of the homestay entrepreneurs in operating the social media platform. Future research suggests used SWOT-TOWS analysis to measure the homestay entrepreneur operation. Secondly, investigate the structural relationship between social media marketing usage and entrepreneurial success in the Sabah homestay program to further explore the outcome of the study.

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