

## Exploring the Perception and Involvement of Gen Y in Homestay Program Sustainability in Malaysia: A Case Study of Joho State

### การสำรวจการรับรู้และการมีส่วนร่วมของคน Gen Y โครงการโฮมสเตย์ยั่งยืนในมาเลเซีย: กรณีศึกษารัฐยะโฮร์

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#### Abstract

This study aims to investigate the perception of Gen Y of their involvement in the homestay program, and to examine ways to enhance Gen Y's passion in the homestay program. A qualitative method was employed in this study using in-depth interviews and observations. The homestay program is one of the most successful programs established by the Malaysian Government to develop rural areas as a tourist destination. Since its inception in 1988, the program has gained popularity to become an iconic rural tourism product. The program immerses tourists in the Malaysian culture and way of life when they stay together with the host family and interact with the local community through a variety of cultural performances and activities. Stakeholders involved in the homestay program comprise homestay operators, Gen Y, rural development agencies, the Government and tour promoters, each playing a separate role in a cumulative effort in ensuring the program's viability. However, the future sustainability of the program has often been overlooked because of the uncertain involvement of Gen Y in it, despite the expectation that a high number of Gen Y will dominate the future workforce. This study revealed that Gen Y does have a positive perception of and involvement in the homestay program. The findings are crucial to provide strategies for homestay operators and the Government in establishing future policies for the homestay program.

**Keywords:** Gen Y's, perception, involvement, homestay program

#### บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาในครั้งนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อสำรวจการรับรู้ของกลุ่ม Gen Y เกี่ยวกับการมีส่วนร่วมในโปรแกรมโฮมสเตย์ และตรวจสอบวิธีการเพิ่มความสนใจของกลุ่ม Gen Y ในโปรแกรมโฮมสเตย์ โดยใช้วิธีการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพผ่านการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก และการสังเกตการณ์ การพัฒนาโฮมสเตย์ในมาเลเซียเป็นโครงการพัฒนาที่ประสบความสำเร็จมากซึ่งรัฐบาลจัดทำขึ้นเพื่อพัฒนาพื้นที่ชนบทให้เป็นแหล่งที่ท่องเที่ยว โดยตั้งแต่ปี 1988 โฮมสเตย์ได้รับความนิยมและกลายเป็นผลิตภัณฑ์ของการท่องเที่ยวในชนบทที่โดดเด่น ทำให้นักท่องเที่ยวได้สัมผัสวัฒนธรรมมาเลเซียและวิถีชีวิตเมื่อได้อยู่ร่วมกับครอบครัวเจ้าบ้าน (Host) และได้ปฏิสัมพันธ์กับชุมชนท้องถิ่นผ่านการแสดงและกิจกรรมที่หลากหลาย โดยผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียได้เข้ามามีส่วนร่วมกับการพัฒนาโฮมสเตย์ ประกอบด้วย ผู้ประกอบการที่พักโฮมสเตย์ คนกลุ่มเจนวาย หน่วยงานการท่องเที่ยวในชนบท ภาครัฐ และผู้ส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยว ซึ่งทุกฝ่ายต่างมีบทบาทในการพยายามผลักดันโครงการให้สำเร็จร่วมกัน แต่ความยั่งยืนของโฮมสเตย์ยังถูกมองข้าม

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จากการมีส่วนร่วมของกลุ่ม Gen Y ซึ่งจะเป็นกลุ่มกำลังแรงงานหลักในอนาคต การศึกษาครั้งนี้ใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ โดยใช้การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกและการสังเกตการณ์ ผลการศึกษาพบว่า คน Gen Y มีการรับรู้และมีส่วนร่วมในโครงการโฮมสเตย์ในเชิงบวก โดยข้อค้นพบจากการวิจัยนี้สามารถนำไปใช้ในการกำหนดกลยุทธ์สำหรับผู้ประกอบการโฮมสเตย์และภาครัฐในการกำหนดนโยบายการพัฒนาโฮมสเตย์ในอนาคต

**คำสำคัญ:** กลุ่มคนเจนวาย การรับรู้ การมีส่วนร่วม การพัฒนาโฮมสเตย์

## Research Problem

In Malaysia, rural tourism through the homestay program has gained popularity as a sustainable tourism product and has significantly contributed to the development of rural villages. Recognizing its role as a catalyst for rural community development, the homestay program was incorporated into the 11th and 12th Malaysia Plans to uplift lower to middle-income earners. Unlike other tourism products, homestays uniquely engage the rural community in tourism while fostering local development. The Malaysian Homestay Experience Program offers more than affordable accommodation, providing an authentic lifestyle experience with local traditions, cuisine, culture, and natural heritage (Ahmad, Jabeen and Khan, 2014; Hussin, 2008; Ibrahim and Razzaq, 2009; Jamaludin, Othman and Awang, 2012).

Many developing countries, including Ghana, Indonesia, Laos, Namibia, Nepal, and Thailand, have adopted the homestay concept to promote rural tourism and provide social and economic benefits to rural communities for a better quality of life (Acharya and Halpenney, 2013; Agyeiwaah, 2013; COMCEC, 2013; Kontogeorgopoulous, Churyen and Duangsaeng, 2013). In Malaysia, the homestay program began with operators in the beach areas of Cherating (Hamzah, 1997; Razzaq et al., 2011) and has since evolved into a mainstream tourism product. The younger generation, referred to as Generation Y (Gen Y), plays a significant role in the program's success, enhancing the overall experience of participants through their involvement.

In most cases, Gen Y is involved in activities such as performing traditional dances, playing traditional games as well as other recreational activities. They also often play roles such as 'tourist guides' in the local community because they are young and energetic. Gen Y are generally categorized as people who were born from 1980 to 2000 (Islam et al., 2011; Tay, 2011; William, 2008) whereas the Malaysian Youth Council (1985) defined the younger generation or Gen Y as those aged between 15 and 40 years old. This research defined Gen Y people at the same range of age according to Malaysian Youth Council definition as it fit to the Malaysian plan context and consider more closer ranges not over 39 as this study emphasize on youth. However, in the context of this study, the age ranges from 15 to 39 years old were felt to be more appropriate although Mat Jali and Junaidi (2012) suggested that Gen Y should be classified as youths aged between 15 to 30 years old. Gen Y are seen to contribute and play a bigger role in expanding and strengthening the homestay program in the community where the program takes place. As they are expected to dominate the total population in future years (Kavita, Souji and Prabhu, 2011), they play an important role in supporting homestay program activities. Therefore, this research aims to justify the importance of Gen Y's involvement in the homestay program.

However, despite villagers opening their homes, these ventures have not really improved the lives of village dwellers, as they might have hoped. According to Hussin (2008); Ibrahim and Ahmad (2009); Kayat (2009), several homestay programs have failed due to the lack of local participation in the program, lack of skills among the

operators, poor planning, unorganized community structure as well as a lack of leadership skills among the coordinators of the homestay program (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2013; Yusof et al., 2013). A further problem is the widespread migration of the younger generation to urban areas to seek better work opportunities, which has resulted in a shortage of young people in rural areas. This has become one challenge for the sustainability of the homestay program (Bhuiyan, Siwar and Ismail, 2013; Chheang, 2010; Hussin, 2008). The homestay program in Malaysia contributes to 0.2% of employment to the tourism industry, which was an insignificant value, but the government has projected that homestays will contribute 5% of total tourism revenue by 2020 (Balasingam and Bojei, 2019).

The perceptions of the younger generation, as program stakeholders, need to be addressed to identify how they view the homestay program as a mechanism to develop their rural communities (Arif Kamisan, 2015). It was learned among homestay operators that there were concerns among the older generation about Gen Y's lack of interest and the fear that this could lead to a bleak future for the homestay program. This statement has been supported by Hussin (2008), Hjulmand, et al., (2003) and Razzaq et al. (2011), indicated that the participation of Gen Y in the homestay program was important to ensure its sustainability. As a strengthening element for homestay, it is therefore vital to investigate the involvement of the local Gen Y to ensure the success of the program as a tool for the economic development of their villages (Bhuiyan et al., 2013). Moreover, local leaders and the community, which Gen Y become in recent future, have to play their roles in given supportive and participative in the development to sustain the program (Amin, and Ibrahim, 2015).

The problem addressed by this study is the limited and often disengaged involvement of Gen Y in the homestay program, despite its potential benefits for local economic and social conditions. This gap in engagement may stem from insufficient economic incentives and a lack of understanding of the program's value. The research objectives are to investigate Gen Y's perceptions of their involvement in the homestay program and to identify strategies for enhancing their participation. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, which suggests that individuals assess their participation based on perceived costs and benefits, this study aims to explore how balancing economic rewards, and social opportunities can improve Gen Y's commitment and contribute to the program's sustainability.

## Research Objectives

Through a case study in a homestay village in the state of Johor in Malaysia, this research seeks to shed light on the underlying issues of importance for the future of the homestay program from the Gen Y's perspective. In other words, the study aims to explore Gen Y's perception as well as involvement in the homestay program. Specifically, the objectives of the study can be stated as follows: 1) to investigate the perception of Gen Y of their involvement in the homestay program; and 2) to examine ways to enhance Gen Y's passion in the homestay program. The findings of this study could contribute towards understanding the factors that influence the success or failure of homestay operations. It could point the way for the community development of the homestay industry as well as providing some guidelines for new homestay operators prior to their joining the industry and additionally, to cast light on how the relevant stakeholders see the importance of Gen Y's commitment in ensuring the sustainability of the homestay program.

## Research Methodology

1. Type of Research: This study employed qualitative research method. The study was conducted in Homestay Kampung Sarang Buaya which is among one of the pioneer homestay villages established in the Johor state. Homestays in Kampung Sarang Buaya focused on agro-tourism products and agricultural activities were the main highlights in the homestay program. Although conducted some time ago, the study's findings remain relevant today, as Gen Y's focus on social networking and preference for meaningful experiences continues to influence their involvement in tourism activities. Technological advancements, especially in digital marketing and online platforms, offer new opportunities for Gen Y to take on leadership roles in promoting homestays. In light of declining tourist arrivals and the demand for more diverse, creative, and economically rewarding experiences—intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic - the study's insights are still valid but should be updated to reflect current trends like digital tools and a stronger emphasis on sustainability and community-driven initiatives.

2. Population and Samples: The population of the study consisted of homestay operators registered in the homestay program offering at least one room, the village community leader, members of Gen Y, the youth leader in the community, tourist and relevant tourism authority personnel. For this research, the selection of informants was based on the snowballing and purposive sampling techniques. The key informants were aged between 15 to 39 years old according to Gen Y definitions.

3. Research Instrument: This study utilized in-depth interviews based on semi-structured questionnaires which included open-ended questions. In-depth interviews enabled the researcher to gain a wide range of information from the participants, while open-ended questions gave freedom to the respondents to think and express their views without restrictions or boundaries.

4. Data Collection: Field work was conducted from early March 2014 to the middle of May 2014 at the selected homestay village. Informal interviews were conducted by talking to the local community, especially Gen Y as well as other villagers and tourists. Each interview took between 40 to 90 minutes and was recorded using a tape recorder with prior permission from the respondents. Secondary data were also gathered from articles, academic journals and other relevant documents related to homestay and Gen Y.

5. Data Analysis: The information gathered from interviews audio tapes was transcribed and read in order to understand the content as well as the overall message that the informants were trying to convey. Significant statements and phrases pertaining to the phenomenon under study were extracted, and meanings were in turn derived from these significant statements. The meanings were then clustered into themes. QSR NVivo software was utilized in the data analysis to organize and manage the data. The data after analysis was assembled and interpreted to describe the perceptions of Gen Y toward Homestay Program.

## Findings

The findings of the study revealed some interesting findings which answered the objectives of the study. A total of 29 respondents among the stakeholders which included homestay operators, Gen Y employees, tourism authorities, tourists, Village Head and youth leader were involved in the interviews as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Profile of Respondents

	No. of respondents		No. of respondents
Gender		Education	
Male	25	Primary School	7
Female	4	Secondary School	9
Category		Tertiary School	13
Homestay Operator	9		
Gen Y	8	Marital Status	
Tourism Authorities	3	Single	9
Tourist	7	Married	13
Village Head/ Chairman/ Homestay Coordinator	1		
Youth Leader	1	Total	29

The majority of the respondents were male, homestay operators between the ages of 15 to 39 years old. The results shown in Table 2 gave a better understanding of the perception of Gen Y towards the homestay program in Kampung Sarang Buaya. From the findings, Gen Y seemed to have mixed perceptions and generally, Gen Y related their perception by comparing the differences they noticed before and after the homestay existed in their village. The positive impacts and benefits to the village and to themselves have become the factors that contributed to their perception of the homestay program. Among the factors mentioned constantly was the feeling of pride towards the village.

**Table 2** Extracted Coding of Gen Y's Perception

Domain	Sub-Domain	Category/themes	Keywords/attributes	
Perception	Positive	Feelings for themselves	Happy Interested	Like Supportive
		Feelings for village	Cleaner village area Lively village Better infrastructure	Good social interaction Cooperation More activities
	Negative	Feelings for themselves	Small monetary reward Not interested No fixed income	Not really exposed No clear concept No time to join
		Feelings for village	No creative activities	Mundane

The positive perception of Gen Y towards the homestay program was mainly due to the fact that the existence of the homestay program in the village had made it well-known to the public. The Gen Y respondents proud to show other nearby villages that their village has many tourists coming to experience their homestay program. The popularity of the homestay program seems to have increased the community's quality of life socially

and economically. The Gen Y respondents also felt that the homestay program gives them the opportunity to develop friendships with many people from other places who visit. From the interviews, the results showed that Gen Y had good, positive feelings towards the homestay program as reflected in Table 2 which showed the different facets of positive and negative thoughts. The positive impacts from the homestay program affected the Gen Y's perception to the point that they were mostly willing to help the homestay operators or Village Head whenever they were asked to participate in or organize activities in the homestays. Good cooperation and camaraderie were prevalent among Gen Y in assisting with the homestay activities. The opportunity to interact with tourists has made the village livelier with activities. For some Gen Y, they were given the chance to venture into small cottage businesses. Moreover, the village was able to obtain better infrastructure and also became much cleaner. The overall community stood to achieve better economic gains derived from the homestay program.

However, some interviewees had a negative perception of homestays, due mainly to the fact that they were not fully explained about the concept of the homestay program. Additionally, they participated on an 'invitation only basis', resulting in insufficient attraction and motivation for Gen Y to take ownership and become part of the program in its entirety. In some other instances, the Gen Y respondents mentioned that the homestay program seemed mundane and boring. This was probably due to the lack of activities at certain times and the lack of variation in the same activities. Such lack of creativity may have led to their perception that the homestay program was tiresome and unchallenging. It was understood that after a tourist was offered a typical standard package, no other effort was made to change or modify the package to make it more interesting to attract the tourist's attention while retaining the interest of Gen Y. This perception is related to the Social Exchange Theory as Gen Y would be concerned with the question 'what benefits can I get out of doing something?'. In this regard, the benefits would refer to the economic returns that they can gain or receive through their homestay involvement. This is evidenced from Gen Y responses such as: "...many of Gen Y in this village have moved out from the village to find a better job in the city and earn a better income" and "If homestay can give me economic benefits to support my income perhaps, I will stay in this village but if there is none, then I have to move somewhere else...". Due to the smaller economic returns from the homestay program, most Gen Y look for better employment opportunities from outside their village. The interest they may have by participating in and organizing homestay activities proved insufficient for them to sustain a reasonable income in the village.

Nevertheless, they do occasionally still make the effort to return to their village and assist in the activities in whatever capacity they can. Most of the older generation and working Gen Y often do not have much time to spare due to their work commitments while the younger Gen Y must juggle their schooling and extracurricular activities. Hence, they were more likely to help during the weekends or public holidays. To recapitulate the findings, the positive and negative perceptions of Gen Y towards the homestay program were mainly due to the limited knowledge of tourism and experience on how tourism can help local community development. Despite little knowledge of tourism, Gen Y still saw some physical benefits they could reap from the homestay program which contributed towards their positive perception. In Malay society, the elderly are much respected; hence dissatisfaction with the homestay program was not usually voiced out directly or openly. As a result, Gen Y does not have much of a say or have any power in any of the decision-making processes related to the homestay program. They merely took orders or

instructions from the Village Head and homestay operators, and did not do anything more than that. The problem was made more complicated when most of the Gen Y already had their own jobs outside of the village, making them busy and having limited time to focus on helping with the homestay program. Gen Y did not feel inclined to continue living in the village because they were not earning enough to make a decent living from the homestay program.

The findings indicate that Gen Y's involvement in the homestay program is influenced by both positive and negative factors. Positively, Gen Y valued the social and economic benefits, including increased tourism, social networking opportunities, and improved village infrastructure, which fostered pride and a willingness to support the program. Conversely, negative perceptions stemmed from a lack of understanding of the homestay concept and insufficient economic incentives. Many Gen Y members felt little ownership, leading to limited engagement and a preference for job opportunities outside the village.

## Discussion

### Perception of Gen Y when they get involved in the homestay program

It is crucial to discover how to make Gen Y feel more accepted or empowered in their current situation in this village. This was due to the fact that many factors point to them being confused, indifferent, lacking in interest, not overly concerned, disillusioned, and so on. The findings showed that generally Gen Y had a good perception of the homestay program despite having some confusion on how they can play a better role in it. Their perception came from the understanding that homestays had brought some positive benefits not only to Gen Y but also to their village. However, one of the positive benefits as mentioned by Gen Y did not involve monetary reward which ended up as the rejection factor in not becoming too deeply involved in the homestay program.

The excitement of seeing international tourists such as those from European countries coming and staying in their village contributed a lot to their positive perception. Gen Y were able to improve their communication skills with the international tourists who generally communicated with them in English. This is related to the Gen Y characteristic which places importance on the value of friendship and creating relationships through socialization (Choi, Kwon and Kim, 2011; Richardson, 2010). In rural tourism context, the opportunity to interact with foreigners was a valuable experience to expand their social networking. This was justified by a Gen Y respondent who stated, "Before the program existed in our village, there were not many activities and no tourists visited our village but after we had homestays, we saw many international tourists from Korea, Japan, etc. coming to our village. They learned about our culture, food, fruits, etc." Thus, this resulted in the enhancement of self-esteem of most Gen Y who were co-operative in helping with the activities in homestays. In relation to this, having external appreciation of their culture's uniqueness and value, natural resources as well as traditional knowledge raised the self-esteem of each member of the community (Scheyvens, 1999). As a result, Gen Y in the village had gained much psychological and social empowerment to improve the community's cooperation and unity in making the homestay venture work successfully (Razzaq et al., 2011; Salleh, et al., 2013).

The Gen Y in the local community generally agreed that they have a good perception of the homestay program despite their shallow understanding of the concept. However, Gen Y's good perception of homestay seemed to have receded due to the decline of tourist arrivals to the village. As such, this situation had slowly

diminished the positive perception of Gen Y on the viability and survival of homestays, in line with the Social Exchange Theory. Furthermore, it is disheartening to note that the overall good perception did not reflect the views of the entire Gen Y in the village. This was because some Gen Y whose parents were not totally involved as registered homestay operators had slightly different perceptions of the homestay program. It was noticed also that some Gen Y were indifferent in their attitudes and did not care to be involved in the homestay activities. This subgroup did not feel that they were part of the homestay community and hence, there was no need for them to participate as much.

Overall, Gen Y respondents provided more positive than negative feedback, appreciating the homestay program's positive impact. Their favorable perception was shaped by the socio-cultural, environmental, and economic benefits they experienced both before and after the program's introduction. The main reasons for Gen Y's interest in participating were the socio-cultural and economic advantages, particularly the improvement of language and communication skills. These socio-cultural benefits enhanced their open-mindedness, self-esteem, confidence, and overall positive outlook, aligning with their values, behavior, and lifestyle when engaging with diverse people. Many homestays program in various area have the potential to be developed because of its natural resources but it was found that the local community faced many challenges during their homestay operation, such as lack of trained human resource and poor local leadership, that cause the homestay program operation to be unsustainable (Kunjuraman, and Hussin, 2017). Thus, the focus on human resources in working ages such Gen Y cannot be overlooked. Beside homestay businesses can adapt to changes and recover from the prolonged impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Asyraff et al., 2024).

From the economic impact, the study found that the villagers were more interested or inclined to join the homestay program if they could gain monetary rewards from tourism activities. Many Gen Y respondents stated that they expected more economic benefits from tourism particularly in terms of employment. This resulted in Gen Y and other members in the community not perceiving good benefits to be derived because they do not see direct and stable financial income, which is sufficient to sustain their livelihood, coming from their involvement in the program.

Gen Y often preferred to look for financial benefits to be obtained from their involvement in homestay activities. But they were not able to make enough money to sufficiently earn a living from doing homestay activities. Thus, many Gen Y have left the village in search of better employment opportunities in the nearby towns or bigger cities. This finding does not support that noted by previous studies which found that homestays could create many job opportunities for community members (Hamzah, 2007; Mapjabil and Che Ismail, 2012). This could be due to several factors such as declining tourist arrivals, lack of leadership support and lack of creativity, among others.

The findings provided evidence that the involvement of Gen Y in homestay program activities was mainly motivated by monetary reward. However, the limited amount of monetary reward gained through homestay activities has made them opt for other benefits such as social and environmental benefits to complement their good perception of the homestay program. Financial gains were among the things considered crucial as mentioned by Gen Y during interviews. Hence, the findings in this study supported the Social Exchange Theory as Gen Y seemed to be motivated by monetary rewards in exchange for their involvement in homestay activities.

### Ways to enhance Gen Y's passion in the homestay program

To attract the attention and increased involvement of Gen Y in tourism and cultural activities, relevant and special training, courses and workshops can be provided by tourism authorities to encourage and motivate them as well as allow a better understanding of the whole impact of the homestay program. Gen Y must also be more proactive and show more initiative to gain inroads into the roles they want to play in the entire program's organization structure. They should not wait for 'goodies' to be served on a platter for them but instead to work hard and show more creativity as characteristically noted for typical Gen Y.

Establishing a Gen Y tourism center in the village would help young people understand the role of tourism in sustainable economic development, social integration, and international understanding. This center could serve as a meeting place for sharing ideas, setting goals, and planning activities to make the village more attractive to tourists. Additionally, they could brainstorm ways to enhance the environment and improve the homestay experience. Increased support from the government and tourism authority is needed, including training and workshops for Gen Y. The findings indicated that Gen Y has expressed their request for such initiatives in order to enhance their knowledge and skills for them to contribute more to the homestay program. Courses such as entrepreneurial skills training, English language, communication and interpersonal skills as well as the definition of tourism are much needed to help instill more interest and realization of the significance of developing tourism ventures and projects.

Gen Y can develop business plans and implement venture projects with the help of government agencies, especially for rural communities that lack business expertise. They are well-positioned to promote tourism through advertising, online promotion, and public relations, while also benefiting from soft loans or credits to start small cottage businesses like food stalls and handicrafts. Additionally, by attending tourist guide training, Gen Y can attract visitors to homestay programs, leveraging their knowledge of the village to enhance tourism. Government support through licensing and training can help them generate income from these activities.

In addition, Gen Y can play a crucial role in sustaining the homestay tourism program by using their tech skills to market the homestay through social media, attracting younger tourists. They can also create new cultural and adventure activities to enrich visitor experiences and boost economic potential. By getting involved in the management and operations of the program, Gen Y can help ensure financial sustainability and foster a stronger sense of ownership within the community, making them essential for the long-term success of the homestay initiative.

### Conclusion

As a conclusion, the study managed to explore the issues of the importance of Gen Y for the future sustainability of the homestay program. Currently, there is a lacuna of studies focusing on the importance of Gen Y in the development and success of the homestay program. This study highlights the vital role Gen Y can play in ensuring the sustainability of homestay programs. By leveraging their skills in technology and social media, Gen Y can help promote homestays and attract tourists. Additionally, offering clear economic incentives and involving them in leadership and decision-making roles can foster a deeper sense of ownership and long-term commitment. While these findings provide valuable insights, they may not be applicable to all homestay contexts, as local circumstances can lead to different outcomes. Hence, this study was able to identify several mechanisms and roles that Gen Y can

play to ensure the future sustainability of the homestay. Moreover, this study was able to provide some insights into the perception of Gen Y of the homestay program. However, the result of this case study may not be generalized to other homestay villages as different prevailing circumstances may give rise to different findings.

The study investigating Gen Y's perception of their involvement in the homestay program revealed generally positive views, primarily due to the program's social and cultural benefits, such as improved communication skills and friendships with tourists. However, their participation was hindered by a lack of understanding of the concept and limited economic benefits. The second objective highlighted that economic incentives are crucial for sustaining Gen Y's interest, as the lack of monetary rewards deterred long-term involvement. The study emphasized the need for greater Gen Y involvement in decision-making and recommended financial incentives, creative activities, and ownership opportunities to boost their enthusiasm.

The limitation of this study is it was conducted several years ago, which may affect its relevance given current trends and conditions. Additionally, the findings are specific to one village and may not generalize to other locations with different socio-economic contexts. The research mainly captured the views of engaged Gen Y, potentially missing perspectives from those less involved. Moreover, the reliance on interviews and self-reported data could introduce biases.

## Recommendations

To enhance the engagement of Gen Y in homestay programs, several recommendations emerge from the findings of this study. First, it is essential to address the confusion surrounding the roles of Gen Y participants. Educational initiatives should be developed to clarify the homestay concept, detailing specific roles and responsibilities. This could involve tailored training programs, workshops, and community discussions aimed at increasing awareness of the economic, social, and cultural impacts of homestay participation. Additionally, financial incentives play a crucial role in motivating Gen Y to engage in these activities. Strategies to improve the economic viability of homestay programs are necessary,

Furthermore, the positive socio-cultural impacts of the homestay experience should be leveraged. Community leaders can strengthen these benefits by incorporating leadership development and cultural exchange programs that enable Gen Y to take on more significant roles within the homestay framework. This approach can foster a greater sense of ownership and connection to the initiative.

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