

# **Understanding Motivation, Empowerment and Sustainability Outcomes of Women Homestay Entrepreneurs in West Malaysia. A Preliminary Analysis.**

*Intan Osman<sup>\*1</sup>, Noor Hazlina Ahmad<sup>1</sup>, Zainal Ariffin Ahmad<sup>1</sup>, Azrina Husin<sup>1</sup>, Saridan Abu  
Bakar<sup>2</sup> and Nur Diyana Tanwir<sup>1</sup>*

*<sup>1</sup>Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, MALAYSIA;*

*<sup>2</sup>Universiti Teknologi MARA, Selangor Darul-Ehsan, MALAYSIA*

*The participation of women in the homestay industry is a growing phenomenon; yet research in this area is limited especially in Malaysia. Anticipating the potential contribution of homestay industry to the Malaysian tourism agenda, , it is deemed timely that research on women in homestay industry be undertaken to understand their entrepreneurial pursuit.. This paper details the demographic profiles, factors that motivate and, empower women homestay entrepreneurs and their views on sustainability of homestay operations. 483 women homestay operators sampled from the homestay directory, Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia participated in face-to-face survey interviews. The assistance of trained enumerators residing in the sampling site was utilized. The findings reveals that majority of the women homestay entrepreneurs are between the age of 41 to 60 with 89.9 percent completed their lower secondary education, fully own but operate the homestay business on a part-time basis. ). They were motivated by the “pull factors” (personal satisfaction, passion and encouragement by friends) as opposed to the “push factors” (economic depression, unemployment, retrenchment, and dissatisfaction with former jobs). In addition, these women experienced a moderate to high level of empowerment, especially in terms of getting access to training and education services, as well as making decisions on matters related to the business. These women respondents view economic and social benefits as more rewarding than that of environmental. The regression analysis reveals that motivation and empowerment of women*

---

*\* Email: intan@usm.my*

*homestay entrepreneurs are significantly related to both economic and social sustainability and to a lesser extent environmental sustainability. The findings concur that women are important players in the homestay industry as it provides them not only with an additional source of income and personal satisfaction that advance their personal and social positions but also an avenue to help achieve gender equality and empowerment in the national development and policies of Malaysia.*

**Keywords:** *Women entrepreneurs, homestay industry, demographic profile, motivation, empowerment, sustainability, gender equality, Peninsular Malaysia*

### ***Introduction***

Tourism has been identified as one of the most vibrant industries worldwide. As a sub-industry within tourism, the potential of ecotourism has been recognised to grow even further. Realising this, many countries seek to further develop this untapped industry. In Malaysia, services and products with ecotourism characteristics have the potential to grow and sustain and, at the same time, contribute further to our tourism industry. As highlighted in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010), a growth in tourism is seen to have a positive relationship to the expansion of other sub-sectors, especially the homestay industry as well as in others that carry ecotourism-related products and services. The Malaysian government views the homestay industry as an industry that has unique Malaysian appeal and thus proactively supports the growth of this sector. Homestay industry is usually packaged with local traditions and cultural appeal as well as natural heritage. This, in return, provides visitors with a distinct opportunity to experience the rich and hospitable local culture. On the other hand, homestay industry is also recognised by the government as an industry that will increase the participation of rural population in tourism-related activities. For this reason, rural households are encouraged to seize these opportunities to

supplement and generate their household incomes as well as to be an important part of a budding industry (Intan Osman, Zainal Ariffin Ahmad, Noor Hazlina Ahmad, Sabai Khin and Azrina Husin , 2008).

Although the number of homestay operators has increased to 2,808 from 142 villages nationwide during the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010), research on the homestay industry particularly on women as homestay entrepreneurs is still in its infancy. Noting the potential contribution of the homestay industry not only to the tourism agenda of the country but also to the development of the community concerned, it is deemed timely that research on women's choice in homestay entrepreneurship be undertaken. This will potentially address Norman and McDonald's (2004) call for women entrepreneurs to contribute to the sustainability of the homestay business which offers a multiplier effect on the country's economic, environmental and social aspects (Intan Osman, Zainal Ariffin Ahmad, Noor Hazlina Ahmad, Sabai Khin and Azrina Husin, 2008). Seeking factors that contribute to the sustainability of homestay business led by women is the trust of the paper.

### **Homestay in Malaysia**

The Homestay Program in Malaysia was first introduced by the Ministry of Tourism in 1988 as an effort to diversify tourism products through the provision of an alternative accommodation for tourists. Officially launched in 1995 at several locations in Malaysia, homestay differs from hotel accommodation where the latter enables tourists to stay with a host family and experience the Malaysian lifestyle and traditions throughout their stay.

With the inception of the homestay program, the National Eco-Tourism Plan calls upon small villages to be involved in the ecotourism industry through homestay activities. In

Malaysia, the homestay program is an ecotourism package, offering agro-tourism, nature-tourism and/or cultural-tourism package, In 2008 the website [www.homestay.motour.gov.my](http://www.homestay.motour.gov.my), listing homestay operators in Malaysia was launched to promote the homestay program amongst foreign and local tourists. Since then, there were 2,808 homestay operators from 142 villages nationwide (New Straits Times, 25 September 2008) with each state featuring its own unique homestay program. Organisations including the State Tourism Action Board, State Homestay Co-ordinator, and State Homestay Management Committee are also mandated to promote the homestay programs in their respective state. As a result, there were 27,763 homestay tourists in Malaysia with the highest number of arrivals in Southern and Central Peninsula and East Malaysia between January to Jun 2008.

Given the scenario discussed above and coupled with the fact that the homestay program is also a strategy of the Malaysian government to improve the living standard of the rural community, especially that of women, it is vital to study women's contribution to this promising industry by identifying the factors that influence the sustainability of the homestay operations. Current study will focus on motivational, empowerment and sustainability factors affecting women's entrepreneurial choice in the homestay industry.

### ***Literature Review***

One of the central questions in the field of entrepreneurship is trying to understand why some individuals engage in entrepreneurial activities while others do not (Baron, 2005). Various school of thoughts ranging traits based research to studies emphasizing cognitions are making fundamental assumption that entrepreneurship is a process enabling an individual to voluntarily engage in to pursue desired goals. Although human agency has a critical role in

entrepreneurship process, research on what motivates individuals to participate in entrepreneurial activities and the choices they make to pursue desired goals is still limited (Shane, Locke and Collins, 2003). Motivation from entrepreneurship perspectives is seen as a driving factor that mobilizes an individual to pursue the goals, and seen as an expression of a specific attitude that harbors an individual to seek accomplishment, autonomy, creativity, control and risk taking (Cromie, 2000). In addition, the importance of motivation as among the key factors for one to start a business has been cited in the literature. According to Buttner and More (1997), the motivations of entrepreneurs are correlated with the manner these entrepreneurs measure their business success. The importance of motivation which includes psychological traits as one of the key factors in starting a business is not a new phenomena in entrepreneurship literature. Entrepreneurs are said to be individuals who possess personal characteristics such as the desire to seek achievements, ability to take risk, possession of certain leadership styles; they have also undergone a process of socialisation related to business (Brockhaus & Horowitz, 1986). However, the degree to which these traits motivate entrepreneurs may vary from one society to another, as shown in studies on women entrepreneurs in Singapore (Lee, 1996) and Nigeria (Woldie & Adersua, 2004).

On the other hand, motivation also refers to “opportunity structure, an ‘objective’ structure of economic opportunity and a structure of differential advantage in the capacity of the system’s participants to perceive and act upon such opportunities” (Glade, 1967:251 as cited in Thornton, 2009). This in turn points to the social context that turns one into an entrepreneur, such as the influence and roles of markets and firms on the individuals who become entrepreneurs (Thornton, 2009), as well as displacement from previous jobs (Shapiro & Sokol, 1982). The findings of the inter-country differences of the motivation to be self-employed among

entrepreneurs in Malaysia and Australia indicate that even though there were expressions of having been “pushed” into starting a business, the majority of the participants highlight the “pull motives” such as desire for autonomy and independence, a need for more flexibility in managing their life, and an interest in exploring new ideas. Interestingly, there are commonalities with respect to the motives reported by Australian and Malaysian participants (Ahmad, 2007).

Homestay is a home-based industry in which family relations as well as gender issues come to play. Loscocco and Smith-Hunter (2004) show that women who own home-based businesses face less family conflict than those who run their businesses outside the home, and because their primary priority remains their family and their roles within the family, the former may enjoy less success than their female counterparts. A study conducted on family businesses in rural China shows that men tend to run these businesses as opposed to women, thus disproving the notion that women will be at a better position to take advantage of their gender roles within the family (Entwisle et al, 1995).

Homestay industry is also seen as a “community-based ecotourism venture”, a term propagated by scholars to accentuate the benefits gained by the local community whose life, to varying degrees, is touched by tourism activities (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). This developmental approach to tourism is likely to empower the local community at psychological, social, political and economic levels (Scheyvens, 1999). According to Kabeer, N. (2001) empowerment is “The expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.” (p. 19). Kabeer stresses that having resources including economic, human and social; achievement and the factor agency which is the ability to define one’s goal and to add upon them will empower women to make strategic choices in their lives. In addition, Economic gains and independence have been shown to bring about greater empowerment for

women. We are anticipating Malaysian women homestay entrepreneurs through economic and social gains will be empowered to make some changes in the conduct of homestay operations affecting to some extent gender relations at home and community. Valaoras, Pistola and Pistola (1999), found that women's participation in ecotourism in Greece had opened up alternative doors for income generation, as well as created awareness on issues pertaining to environment conservation. On the same note, Pleno (2006) demonstrated how ecotourism projects increased the level of participation, mobilisation and socialisation among women.

According to Colbert and Kurucz (2008), business firms are placing increasing emphasis on their ongoing "sustainability", which implies a simultaneous focus on economic, social, and environmental performance. At a high level, triple bottom line sustainability is a values-laden aspiration—it is a concept that explicitly acknowledges as important the relationship between a firm's economic performance and its performance in social and environmental terms. It is important to see how ecotourism businesses contribute to the environment and the society besides creating financial value since the main tenet of ecotourism is to minimize negative impacts on the nature and socio-cultural environment, provides economic and social benefits to local communities, and supports the protection and conservation of natural and cultural assets according to World Tourism Organization (2002). Therefore, in lieu of the ecotourism activities that homestay business operates in, this study will assess the sustainability of the homestay program from economic, social, and environmental aspects rather than financial aspect alone.

Jamil and Amran Hamzah (2007), in their local study on the role played by a women's association to support women entrepreneurs in the homestay program in central Malaysia, found that the group provided a platform for the women involved in the homestay industry to earn extra

income and be part of the homestay community in the area. The association also empowers these women by equipping them with skills needed in the homestay industry, via training.

The importance of entrepreneurship and sustainable development is linked to the centrality of entrepreneurship in economic development, generation of growth and means for innovation and change (Lordkipanidze, M; Brezet, H; & Backman, M., 2004). In this respect, we are postulating that Malaysian women will have an increased involvement in the homestay industry if tourism continues to generate economic gains. Their strong entrepreneurial involvement in the diversification of local economic activities is needed to cope with increased demand for new types of tourism such as eco-tourism.

### ***Method***

The present study is part of a research project, “Women’s Participation in Sustainable Development: SME’s Entrepreneurship in Ecotourism for Value Creation Services”, a Universiti Sains Malaysia Research Universiti Grant, bearing an Account No: 1001/PKANITA/816051, that examines the participation of women homestay operators, from the perspectives of personal and organizational factors affecting their participation in the sustainable development of homestay industry. Personal factors such as motivation, and empowerment and the sustainability of the homestay operations are the focus of the research variables.

### **Samples**

The sampling frame was based on the homestay directory obtained from the Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia (<http://www.homestay.matour.gov.my>). As of July 2008, there are 137 villages with 106 registered homestays comprising 2808 homestay houses. Calls were also made



to the state tourism agencies to identify homestay operators not listed in the directory. Altogether, a total of 800 operators in eleven states (central, northern, southern, and eastern regions) from Peninsular Malaysia were identified of which 483 data represented women respondents yielding a high response rate of 60.4 %. The employment of enumerators to conduct face-to-face interview surveys at each chosen location contributed to the high response rate comprising 31.5% from Central, 29.8%, Northern, 24.2% Southern and 14.5% Eastern Malaysia.

### **Survey Instrument**

Items reflecting “motivation” (i.e., pull and push factors) were adapted from Ahmad (2007); they comprise 20 items, out of which 13 reflects the pull factors. The remaining 7 items reflect the push factors. A 5-point Likert scale was used, allowing ratings from 1 (*very low*) to 5 (*very high*). On the other hand, “empowerment” was measured using 8 items adapted from Kabeer (2001). Participants rated each item in terms of the extent to which they agree to the statements reflecting empowerment issues including “allow to make decision on matters related to homestay”, “tend to have control over decision making on matters related to homestay” on a 5-point Likert scale, allowing ratings from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Sustainability measures were adapted from Lordkipanidze, M; Brezet, H; & Backman, M. (2004). Respondents were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale items related to economy such as “ a source of income to the community”, “ a diversification of local economic activities.” For environmental sustainability, respondents rated on a 5-point Likert scale items including “safeguarding environmental qualities”, and “reduction of the usage of the natural resource from the environment, “allowing the ratings from 1 (*very low*) to 5 (*very high*).

## **Data collection procedure**

Twenty-four enumerators, comprising Management and Social Sciences students from three Malaysian universities were trained prior to data collection. Each enumerator was provided with several sets of questionnaires with instruction to collect data at the selected locations and regions within Peninsular Malaysia. Prior to data collection, calls were made to each site informing the management of the homestay committee about the visit with the intention to gather data from women homestay operators as study respondents. These respondents were briefed and given a consent letter before proceeding with the interview. Enumerators were given a month to complete the data collection.

SPSS version 16 was used to analyse the descriptive data and to conduct the regression analysis. The factor analysis on motivation, empowerment and sustainability was run and the results are shown on the last three pages of the paper.

## ***Results and Findings***

### **Demographic Profiles of Homestay Repondent Samples**

Most of the women respondents are married (83.2%), operating homestay on a part-time basis (55.3%) while one-third (44.7%) are full-time operators at the time of the research. The majority of the respondents (68.1%) are between 41 to 60 years old with 89.9% completed eleven years of schooling. Those with more than four but less than six children (47.3%) and between 1-3 of these children assist them (47.6%) in the management of homestay. Prior to their involvement in the homestay operations, 39.5% of the respondents were unemployed, 21.5% self

employed, 16.6 % employed while 22.4% were homemakers. A total of 122 (25.3%) of these respondents are currently serving as homestay committee members. In terms of years of involvement, 41.2 % of the respondents have been in the homestay business between 1-3 years with 65.8% registered as homestay owners.

### **Motivation of the Homestay Operators**

At the outset of the study, it has been highlighted that studies investigating the participation of women homestay operators in Malaysia are rather limited. Current study hopes to address the inadequacy and identify the motivating factors that stimulate women to participate in the homestay industry.

As depicted in Table 1, it is evident that the homestay operators were motivated by the “pull factors”. The most important reasons for engaging in homestay industry are passion in this business ( $M=4.14$ ) followed closely by personal satisfaction ( $M=4.07$ ), and desire to pursue own interest ( $M=3.90$ ). Having said that, other “pull factors” such as to generate more income, to prove own ability to be successful, to seize available opportunity as well as to have control over one’s own action are also significant motives for involving in this emerging industry.

Interestingly, the “push factors” comprising economic depression, unemployment, retrenchment, dissatisfaction with former job, no job security in the previous employment, frustrated with the level of income in the former job and work pressure due to downsizing, have been rated very low as the reasons to engage in homestay business. This finding suggests that they are not being “pushed” to the industry by these external forces. Rather, the prime motivation is their passion and inclination to pursue something they enjoy doing and this is probably further reflected in the high number of those who engage in this business on a part-time basis.

**Table 1:** Motivation of Women Homestay Operators (N=483)

Items	Mean	SD
<i><b>Pull factors</b></i>		
1. Desire to generate more income	3.81	1.17
2. Passion in this business	4.14	1.02
3. To prove own ability to be successful	3.34	1.41
4. Personal satisfaction	4.07	1.06
5. Pursue one's own interest	3.90	1.35
6. Desire to own a business	2.92	1.56
7. Desire to have control over what one is doing	3.17	1.50
8. Desire for more flexibility in managing own time	3.19	1.46
9. See the opportunity/potential in this business	3.37	1.48
10. Inspired by friends' and other peoples' success	3.57	1.63
11. Encouraged by a friend	3.61	1.60
12. Desire for a balanced lifestyle	2.93	1.61
13. Desire for a balance between work and family	2.83	1.66
<i><b>Push factors</b></i>		
14. Economic Depression	.70	1.34
15. Unemployed	.34	.96
16. Retrenched	.16	.61
17. Dissatisfaction with former job	.23	.77
18. No job security in the previous employment	.22	.72
19. Frustrated with the level of income in the former job	.23	.75
20. Work pressure due to downsizing	.17	.63

### **Empowerment of Homestay Operators**

Empowerment enables women to have a sense of pride and awareness of the importance of their control over their own development (Wearing & Larsen, 1996). As depicted in Table 2, most of the homestay operators have rated the sense of empowerment to be above 3.00, indicating that they experience a moderate to high level of empowerment, especially in accessing

training and education services ( $M=4.10$ ), the ability to make decision on matters related to homestay business ( $M=3.72$ ), the ability to have control over decision making on matters related to homestay ( $M=3.54$ ), as well as the ability to access resources and information required for homestay activities.

**Table 2:** Empowerment of Women Homestay Operators ( $N=483$ )

Items	Mean	SD
1. I am allowed to make decision on matters related to homestay.	3.72	1.24
2. I tend to have control over decision making on matters related to homestay.	3.54	1.31
3. I normally get involved in decision making process at community level on matters related to homestay.	2.98	1.54
4. My voice seems to matter in decision making process at community level on matters related to homestay.	3.07	1.48
5. I tend to have access to training or education services.	4.10	1.20
6. I tend to have access to resources and information required for homestay.	3.32	1.31
7. I normally need permission from the head of the household to decide on matters related to homestay.	3.25	1.78
8. I normally consult head of the household on matters related to homestay.	3.27	1.79

In terms of sustainability as shown in Table 3, homestay operations generate highly on economic sustainability including turning local into entrepreneurs ( $M=3.64$ ), followed by a source of income to the community ( $M=3.56$ ), A source of employment to the community ( $M=3.56$ ), a diversification of local economic activities ( $M=3.33$ ) and new market potential ( $M=3.33$ ). For social sustainability, strengthening the local culture and identity ( $M=3.98$ ) seems to be the highest contributor to homestay operators, followed by increasing awareness of value of heritage and need for protection ( $M=3.73$ ), improvement in quality of life ( $M=3.71$ ), and keeping population locally less migration) ( $M=3.67$ ). The results on environmental sustainability

reduction of waste materials ( $M=3.41$ ), safeguarding environmental qualities ( $M=3.27$ ), less environmental impact ( $M=3.13$ ) and reduction of the usage of the natural resource from the environment ( $M=3.02$ ) are moderate compared to the other two sustainability factors.

**Table 3:** Sustainability of the Homestay Operations ( $N=483$ )

Items	Mean	SD
<b>ECONOMY</b>		
1 A source of income to the community	3.56	1.48
2 A diversification of local economic activities	3.33	1.39
3 A source of employment to the community	3.56	1.35
4 Turning local into entrepreneurs	3.64	1.35
5 New market potential	3.33	1.41
<b>SOCIAL</b>		
1 Strengthening the local culture and identity	3.98	.91
2 Improved knowledge in language, culture, environment, and business	2.35	1.58
3 Increased awareness of value of heritage and need for protection	3.73	1.11
4 Improvement in quality of life	3.71	1.07
5 Keeping population locally ( less migration)	3.67	1.19
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>		
1 Safeguarding environmental qualities	3.27	1.38
2 Reduction of the usage of the natural resource from the environment	3.02	1.39
3 Less environmental impact	3.13	1.32
4 Reduction of waste materials	3.41	1.32
5 Replanting initiatives	2.81	1.79

**Table 4.** Regression Analysis: Motivation, Empowerment and Economic Sustainability.

	<i>Dependent Variable</i> Sustain Economy
<i>Independent variables</i>	
Motivation (Pull Factors)	.000
Empowerment	.022
F value	33.075
R <sup>2</sup>	0.501
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.485

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$

From Table 4, the  $R^2$  value is 0.501, suggesting that 50.1 percent variation in the dependant variables. In this research, economic sustainability can be explained by variation in two independent variables. In other words, nearly most changes in economic sustainability is influenced by the significance of both pull factors (motivation) and empowerment.

**Table 5.** Regression Analysis: Motivation, Empowerment and Social Sustainability.

	<i>Dependent Variable</i> Sustain Social
<i>Independent variables</i>	
Motivation (Push Factors)	.065
Motivation (Pull Factors)	.000
F value	25.253
$R^2$	0.433
Adjusted $R^2$	0.416

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$

The  $R^2$  value as in Table 5, is 0.433, suggesting that 43.3 percent variation in the dependant variables. In this research, social sustainability can be explained by variation in both independent variables. In other words, nearly most changes in social sustainability is influenced by the significant of the pull and push factors (motivation).

**Table 6.** Regression Analysis: Motivation, Empowerment and Environmental Sustainability.

	<i>Dependent Variable</i> Sustain Environment
<i>Independent variables</i>	
Motivation (Push Factors)	.000
F value	12.634
$R^2$	0.526
Adjusted $R^2$	0.276

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

The R<sup>2</sup> value as in Table 6, is 0.526, suggesting that 52.6 percent variation in the dependant variable. In this study, sustainability environment can be explained by variation in one independent variable. In other words, nearly most changes in economic sustainability are influenced the significance of motivation push factors.

### *Discussions*

This study shows that majority of the homestay operators are owners of but operate their respective homestay business on a part-time basis thus the penchant to participate in the industry is more towards “life-style” entrepreneurship. Their choice in homestay entrepreneurship is motivated by personal satisfaction besides having passion in the business.

Having the range of age between 41 to 60 years old indicates that these women are driven by the energy and passion and personal satisfaction to pursue an interest in operating the business. Clearly, the social factor contributes to the motivational pull factors, as operators started their homestay operations after receiving inspiration and encouragement from friends who are themselves already successful in the homestay operation. Homestay entrepreneurship is made possible due to the close-knit nature of the Malaysian culture that emphasises community support and cooperation whilst homestay activities are normally organised as community-based activities.

As for the “push factors”, external factors including being retrenched, work pressure due to downsizing and no job security in the previous employment are not the reasons for the respondents to operate a homestay. Instead, these women chose homestay entrepreneurship out



of the desire to change their position in the society and at home. Despite of not attaining tertiary education and rather new in the homestay business, they are highly empowered to gain access to training or education services ( $M=4.10$ ) and make decisions on matters pertaining to homestay operations ( $M=3.72$ ). We can postulate that these women entrepreneurs are empowered to build their capacity in terms of enhancing human capital to sustain their business, despite running it on a part-time basis.

To these women, managing a homestay business offers a sense of psychological empowerment that could boost one's self-esteem, allowing them to expand their horizon and break the status quo from being traditionally passive to active players in the community. Having control over decision making and exposure to education and training creates an enabling condition to advance at personal and organizational levels. It is also interesting to note the sustainability of homestay business seems to anchor highly on economic followed by social and the environment. This suggests that homestay entrepreneurship can be sustained through a diversification of local economic activities and new market potential (tapping new market).

Additionally, motivation and empowerment of women entrepreneurs in current study are significantly related to both economic, social sustainability and to a lesser extent on environmental sustainability supporting the notion that economic development in any country creates an opportunity for entrepreneurship to provide sustainable economic growth. As depicted in Table 6, the passion in business, the desire to generate more income and to pursue their own interests amongst these homestay entrepreneurs influence significantly on how they measure economic sustainability (sig. at 0.00 where  $**p<0.01$ ). Similarly, the degree of empowerment women experience has a significant impact on economic sustainability (sig. at 0.022 where  $*p<0.05$ ).

The social benefits viewed by women homestay entrepreneurs is significantly influenced by women's pull and push motivation factors. As shown in Table 7, the pull factors, significant at 0.00 where  $**p < 0.01$  whilst the push factors at 0.07 where  $*p < 0.05$  greatly influence the strengthening of the local culture and identity as well as improving their knowledge, culture, environment and business. From environmental sustainability perspective, women are driven by economic depression, dissatisfaction with former job which tend to influence significantly on environmental sustainability, significant at 0.00 where  $**p < 0.01$ .

### ***Conclusion***

Generally, this study provides useful insights and understanding on Malaysian women operating homestay business within the Malaysian context and culture. Women in this study and majority of whom are in the forties and fifties are significantly associated with motivational pull factors, empowerment and sustainability. Their entry into homestay entrepreneurship is highly motivated by personal satisfaction, passion in the business, and encouragement from friends. We postulate that they are characterized by the desire to seek achievements, take some risk, and display certain leadership styles gained from a socialisation process related to homestay business (Brockhaus & Horowitz, 1986).

In addition, having the opportunity to run the homestay business seems to create an enabling condition for them to make decisions and gain access to training pertaining to homestay operations. We could infer that they believe in the importance and relevance of skills and knowledge in homestay management and operations. To these women, managing homestay business offers them a sense of psychological empowerment that could boost their own self-esteem, allowing them to expand their horizon and break the status quo from being traditionally

passive to active players in the community. The sustainability of homestay business seems to anchor highly on economic followed by social and the environment inferring that homestay entrepreneurship can be sustained through a diversification of local economic activities and new market potential.

The fact that motivation and empowerment of these women entrepreneurs are significantly related to both economic and social sustainability shows that women homestay entrepreneurs are more likely to grow in and potentialise the tourism sector which is a fast growing industry in the Malaysian economy. Stimulating and promoting entrepreneurship for tourism development amongst Malaysian homestay entrepreneurs will help generate growth and serve as a vehicle for innovation and change in the tourism sector (Lordkipanidze, Brezet and Backman, 2004). Tourism creates economic development with an opportunity to provide sustainable economic growth. The social benefits of homestay business viewed by women entrepreneurs are significantly influenced by pull and push motivation factors suggesting that these women operators become entrepreneurs due to community-based activities through tourism markets (Thornton, 2009). There seems to be a significant association of motivational push factors with environmental sustainability amongst women in this study. To some extent, the push factors are more likely to push women into homestay entrepreneurship as enabling conditions to generate income and improve living conditions as most of these women are previously homemakers and unemployed.

In a sense, this study offers researchers some new dimensions of rural entrepreneurship amongst women who participate in the homestay industry. It adds fresh insights into the perspectives of motivation, empowerment and sustainability amongst Malaysian women as homestay entrepreneurs as well as advancing the concepts of ethnic and rural entrepreneurship in

the literature. In practical terms, it offers policy makers an informed knowledge on the reasons women participated in homestay industry. Policy developments could address the structures and programs that enable women to choose homestay entrepreneurship thus mobilizing some of the policy thrusts for women and development in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010). Malaysia has made significant move towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment noting from the sharp declining of gender inequality from 1980 (0.340) to 2004 (0.243) and successive Malaysian development plans that placed greater emphasis on mainstreaming women in national development through affirmative multi-sectorial policies and programmes. By playing a variety of roles at the family, community and society levels, women have been able to contribute to national development and prosperity (United Nations Development Programme, Malaysia, 2008). Women who are owners and managers of the emerging subsector (ecotourism) are important human capital and key resources in advancing informal sectors in the Malaysian economy. Women's motivation and empowerment in sustaining rural entrepreneurship in the homestay business could innovatively fill the entrepreneurship gap which tourism sector has created.

## **REFERENCES**

Abdullah, J. L. (2006). " Ecotourism Opportunities in the Asia Pacific Region: Malaysia. 4th Asia Pacific Ecotourism Conference (APECO), Taman Negara Park Malaysia." <<http://www.geocities.com/discoverytravelchannel1/APECO2006/APECO2006-JunaidaLee.htm>>. Accessed on Jan. 10, 2010.

- Ahmad, N. (2007). "A Cross-cultural study of entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Australia and Malaysia." Unpublished Ph.D, dissertation, University of Adelaide.
- Akama, J. (1996). "Western environmental values and nature-based tourism in Kenya," *Tourism Management* 17 (8), 567-574.
- Akpinar, Nevin et. al. (2005). "Rural Women and Agrotourism in the Context of Sustainable Rural Development: A Case Study From Turkey," *Environment, Development and Sustainability*,. 6.
- Anonymous, (2008). Homestay programme goes online; New Straits Times. Kuala Lumpur, 25 Sept. <<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb/?did=1560839861&sid=5&Fmt=3&clientId=27905&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>. **Accessed on Mac. 20, 2010.**
- Baron, Robert A. (2005). *Entrepreneurship: a Process Perspective*. South-Western Publishing: Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Baum, J. R., Locke, E. A., & Smith, K. G. (2001). "A Multidimensional Model of Venture Growth," *Academy of Management Journal*, 44 (2), 292-303.
- Brockhaus, R.H. & Horowitz, P.S. (1986) . "The psychology of the entrepreneur," in *The Art and Science of Entrepreneurship*. Ed. D.L. Sexton & R.W. Smilor. Ballinger:Cambridge, MA
- Buttner, E. H., & Moore, D. P. (1997). "Women's organisational exodus to entrepreneurship: Self-reported motivations and correlates with success," *Journal of Small Business Management*, 35(1), 34-46.
- Cromie, S. (2000). "Assessing entrepreneurship inclinations: some approaches and empirical evidence," *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 9 (1), 7-30.
- Ceballos-Lascurain, H. (1996). *Tourism, Ecotourism and Protected Areas. Gland, Switzerland:IUCN (World Conservation Union)*.
- Colbert, B. A., and Kurucz, E. C. 2008. Three Conceptions of Triple Bottom Line: Business Sustainability and the Role for HRM. <[www.wolfinstitute.com](http://www.wolfinstitute.com)>. Accessed on July 12, 2009.
- Dilly, B. J. (2003). "Gender, Culture, and Ecotourism: Development Policies and Practices in the Guyanese Rain Forest," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Fall (31), p. 58.
- ESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission For Asia and the Pacific). (2003) . "Poverty Alleviation Through Sustainable Tourism Development," paper presented at the Seminar on Poverty Alleviation Through Sustainable Tourism Development, August 26-28.
- Intan Osman, Zainal Ariffin Ahmad, Noor Hazlina Ahmad, Sabai Khin and Azrina Husin (2008). "Participation of Women Entrepreneurs in Ecotourism Industry: A Proposed Model," In RARC

International Conference 2008. Knowledge Infrastructure Management from Tourism Penang Malaysia 3-4 November 2008. *RIKKYO Amusement Research Centre. Tourism Project Series* (02), 212-223.

Jamaliah Jamil and Amran Hamzah. (2007). "Rural Tourism Research: The KPW and Women Roles in Banghuris Homestay," <<http://elib.unitar.edu.my/staff-publications/Jamaliah/rural-tourism.pdf>>. Accessed on Nov 18, 2009.

Johnson, B. & Turner, L. A. (2003). "Data collection strategies in mixed-methods research," In *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research*. Ed. Abbas Tashakkori & Charles Teddlie. Newbury Park: Sage Publication, 297-320

Kabeer, N. (2001). "Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment," *Discussing Women's Empowerment-Theory and Practice, Ida Studies* (3).

Kantor, P. (2005). "Determinants of women's microenterprise success in Ahmedabad, India, In Empowerment and economics." *Feminist Economics*, 11(3), 63 - 83.

Lee, J. (1996). "The motivation of women entrepreneurs in Singapore," *Women in Management Review*. 11 (2) : 18-29

Lordkipanidze, Maia; Brezet, Han; & Backman, M. (2004). "The entrepreneurship factor in sustainable tourism development," *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 13 (2005) 787-798.

Loscocco, K. & Smith-Hunter, A. (2004). "Women home-based business owners: insights from comparative analysis," *Women in Management Review*, 19 (3), 164-173

McCracken G. (1988). *The Long Interview*. London: Sage Publications.

Ministry of Tourism. (2008). <<http://www.homestay.uum.edu.my/>>. Accessed Oct. 25, 2009.

Morse, J. M., & Richards, L. (2002). *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*. California, USA: Sage publications.

Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006-2010, *Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department*, Putrajaya, 2006.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Pleno, M. J. (2006). "Ecotourism Project & Women Empowerment: A case study in the province of Bohol, Philippines," *Forum of international Development Studies*.

Rani, B. S., and Rao, D. K. (2007). *Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurship*, The Icfai University Press. .

Redmond, C. A. (2001). "Endangering Ecotourism: Analysis of Women Participation in Ecotourism in Belize," Applied Research Project Report in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters of Arts Degree in International Development Studies: Saint Mary's University Canada.

Sangpikul, A. (2007). "A Review of Ecotourism Studies in Thailand," *Conference Proceeding: 5th Tourism Educators Conference on Tourism and Hospitality*.

Scace, R. (1993). "An ecotourism perspective," in *Tourism and Sustainable Development: Monitoring, Planning, Managing*. Waterloo. Ed. Nelson, J., Butler, R. and Wall, G. Heritage Resource Centre: University of Waterloo, 59-82.

Scheyvens, R. (1999). "Ecotourism and the empowerment of local communities," *Tourism Management*, 20 (2), 245-249.

Shane, S., Locke, E.A., & Collins, C.J. (2003). "Entrepreneurial motivation," *Human Resource Management Review*, 13,257-279.

Shapiro, A. & Sokol, L. (1982). "The social dimensions of entrepreneurship," in *Encyclopedia of Entrepreneurship*. Ed. C.A. Kent, D.L. Sexton, & K.H. Vesper. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Shaw, E. (1999). "A guide to the qualitative research process." *Qualitative Market Research, An International Journal*, 2 (2), 59-70.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Malaysia (2008). "Malaysia Nurturing Women Entrepreneurs," Kuala Lumpur: UNDP, Malaysia. ISBN 983-3904-10-5

Valaoras, G., Pistola, N. A., and Pistola A. K. (1999). "The role of women in the conservation and development of the Dadia Forest Reserve," *Dadia Women's Cooperative*. <<http://www.mtnforum.org/oldocs/428.pdf>>. Accessed on July 26, 2009.

Wearing, S., and Larsen, L. (1996). "Assessing and managing the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism: Revisiting the Santa Elena Rainforest Project," *The Environmentalist* 16, 117-133.

Woldie, A. and Adersua, A. (2004). "Female entrepreneurs in transitional economy: Businesswomen in Nigeria," *International Journal of Social Economics*. 31 (1/2): 78-93

Women Business Council (WBC) of Brunei. <[http://bruneiwbc.com/wbc\\_news\\_extract.php?](http://bruneiwbc.com/wbc_news_extract.php?)>. Accessed on Aug. 21, 2009.

***FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR MOTIVATION***

**KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.865
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	9938.764

df	190.000
Sig.	.000

**Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Mot18	.937			
Mot19	.916			
Mot20	.897			
Mot17	.882			
Mot16	.848			
Mot15	.698			
Mot14	.544			
Mot13		.805		
Mot8		.799		
Mot12		.797		
Mot6		.755		
Mot7		.696	.396	
Mot3		.661	.371	
Mot9		.631	.301	
Mot1		.389	.349	
Mot2			.818	
Mot4			.793	
Mot5		.388	.744	
Mot11				.947
Mot10				.929

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.



FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR EMPOWERMENT

**KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.586	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4337.505
	df	15.000
	Sig.	.000

**Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component	
	1	2
Empw3	.892	
Empw4	.889	
Empw2	.631	-.514
Empw1	.614	-.523
Empw8		.946
Empw7		.943

Extraction Method: Principal

Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with

Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3

iterations.

FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

**KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.940
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	10303.672
	df
	105.000
	Sig.
	.000

**Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component		
	1	2	3
SusEnv3	.866		
SusEnv2	.865		
SusEnv4	.848	.351	
SusEnv1	.833	.301	
SusEnv5	.723		.405
SusSoc1		.834	
SusSoc3		.760	
SusSoc5	.345	.717	
SusSoc4		.647	.478
SusSoc2			.825
SusEco1		.381	.775
SusEco5		.502	.726
SusEco2		.539	.666
SusEco4	.310	.516	.661
SusEco3		.590	.639

Extraction Method: Principal Component  
Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser  
Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.