
A STUDY OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARD HOMESTAY SERVICE QUALITY AT MERLIMAU, MELAKA

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Abstract

In recent years, the rapid evolution of rural homestays has become a cornerstone of rural revitalization policies. However, the global pandemic that emerged in early 2020 presented formidable challenges to the industry, exposing the vulnerability of self-employed operators to operational failures and economic risks. Recognizing that the tourism sector is Malaysia's second-largest economic contributor, the government has strategically promoted the homestay program as an engine for socio-economic development in rural areas. Central to this development is service quality, a critical determinant that fosters customer satisfaction and long-term brand loyalty. This case study aims to evaluate customer satisfaction toward homestays in Merlimau, Melaka, focusing on three primary dimensions: room cleanliness, facility provision, and interior spaciousness. The research methodology employed a quantitative approach, utilizing online questionnaires distributed to 30 respondents, including members of the Merlimau community and students from Politeknik Merlimau. Data analysis conducted via SPSS revealed an overall mean score of 2.69, indicating that customers are only moderately satisfied with the current service quality. Specifically, facilities recorded a mean of 2.76, cleanliness 2.68, and interior spaciousness 2.66. Significant dissatisfaction was identified regarding aesthetic room themes (mean 2.30) and fundamental upkeep, such as floor cleanliness and the condition of bed linens (mean 2.50). To address these gaps, the study proposes strategic solutions, including investing in high-quality sanitation products, modernizing technology such as Wi-Fi and Smart TVs, and optimizing furniture layouts to enhance the perception of space. In conclusion, the findings suggest that homestay operators in Merlimau have yet to meet optimal guest expectations. Continuous service transformation is essential to bridge the satisfaction gap and enhance the competitiveness of rural tourism in the region.

Keywords : Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality, Rural Tourism, Mean Score Analysis, Community-Based Tourism
