

DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM FRIENDLY AUDIT
CHECKLIST FOR AGRO-BASED HOMESTAY SPATIAL
ORGANIZATION

BY

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ABSTRACT

Homestay concept can be defined as the owner of the house hosting the guests by providing all the needs. The homestay program is a genuine idea of local rural community in searching for additional source of income. It can be traced back from the early 1970s where the homestay program started at Kampung Cherating Lama, Kuantan. In 1995, the program has been officially established under MOTAC and presently homestay program has become one of the official tourism activities. With an opportunity to elevate the economic status of local rural community, homestay program appeared to be more distinct compared to other accommodation. However, the current situation of local homestay program in term of fulfilling the concept of Muslim friendly accommodation is still unclear. Therefore further assessment is needed to assess the practicality of *shari'ah* compliance inside and outside of homestay provider houses. The research aimed to develop Muslim friendly Audit Checklist for local agro-based homestay guideline which will lead to further understanding of the spatial organization and elements distribution inside and outside of the house. In order to execute the aim, three objectives have been constructed namely; 1) to identify the spatial organization and elements distribution for indoor and outdoor spaces of local agro-based homestay, 2) to assess the spatial organization and elements distribution of local agro-based homestay as according to Muslim friendly approach and 3) to construct Muslim friendly audit checklist for local agro-based homestay program. The data collection started with preliminary study on agricultural homestay by reviewing existing articles and journals. From the review, a preliminary checklist has been constructed as an instrument for data collection on sites to ensure the comprehensive coverage. From the literature review of several documents including academic articles, guidelines and standards, there are nineteen elements found that need to be covered in Muslim friendly homestay. Through observation and semi structured interview with the house owner, the preliminary checklist is further examined for improvement. The study is conducted at three different villages in three different region which practicing agricultural activities. The sites are selected based on the authenticity and type of activities conducted. From the data analysis, it can be found that the element of providing privacy for male and female is the most difficult element to comply. Among other elements that homestay providers failed to comply the most are provision of female prayer garments, a copy of al-Quran and prayer time information. All in all, the proposed audit checklist was verified by the experts through the discussion during one-on-one interview session. The suggestions from the experts were taken into consideration and the updated checklist was constructed. The construction of the audit checklist is expected to be the key towards the improvement of the organization of the spaces and elements distribution inside and outside of the houses in order to fulfill the needs of Muslim guests. Also the audit checklist can lead to the establishment of an official rating system for local homestay.

خلاصة البحث

الإقامة المنزلية تعرف بأنها خدمة يقدمها مالك المنزل أو المضيف بتوفير جميع احتياجات الضيوف. وتعتبر الإقامة المنزلية فكرة رائعة للمجتمع الريفي لزيادة دخل الفرد. بدأت هذه الفكرة في أوائل السبعينيات في كامبونج شيراتينج لاما، كوانتان. في عام 1995، تم إدراج برنامج الإقامة المنزلية تحت وزارة السياحة والفنون والثقافة و أصبح برنامج الإقامة المنزلية حالياً أحد الأنشطة السياحية الرسمية. وكذلك يعتبر فرصة لرفع الوضع الاقتصادي للمجتمع الريفي. يعتبر برنامج الإقامة المنزلية أكثر تميزاً مقارنةً بغيرها من أماكن الإقامة. ومع ذلك فإن الوضع الحالي لبرنامج الإقامة المنزلية المحلي من حيث الوفاء بمفهوم الإقامة الملائمة للمسلمين لا يزال غير واضح. لذلك فإن الإقامة المنزلية تحتاج إلى تقديرات لفرض وتطبيق الشريعة الإسلامية داخل وخارج المنازل التي تقدم خدمة الإقامة المنزلية. يهدف البحث إلى تقديم قائمة مرجعية للمبادئ التوجيهية المحلية للإقامة المنزلية لتطوير التدقيق الإسلامي الودي والتي ستؤدي الى فهم التنظيم المكاني وتوزيع العناصر داخل وخارج المنزل. من أجل تنفيذ غاية البحث تم اختيار ثلاث أهداف وهي: 1- تحديد التنظيم المكاني وتوزيع العناصر للمساحات الداخلية والخارجية لأماكن الإقامة المحلية القائمة على الزراعة، 2- تقييم التنظيم المكاني وتوزيع العناصر لأماكن الإقامة المحلية القائمة على الزراعة وفقاً للنهج الإسلامي، 3- بناء قائمة مراجعة للمسلمين لبرامج الإقامة المنزلية القائمة على الزراعة. جمعت البيانات من دراسة أولية عن الإقامة المنزلية الزراعية عن طريق مراجعة المقالات والمجلات. من المراجعة، تم إنشاء قائمة تحقق كأداة لجمع البيانات على المواقع لضمان تغطية شاملة لجميع المواقع. من مراجعة الدراسات السابقة، بما في ذلك المقالات الأكاديمية والمبادئ التوجيهية والمعايير، تم العثور على تسعة عشر عنصراً يحتاج أن يتم توفيرها في الإقامة المنزلية للمسلمين. من خلال المراقبة والمقابلات القصيرة مع مُلاك المنازل، يتم مراجعة القائمة الأولية لمزيد من التحسين. أجريت الدراسة في ثلاث قرى مختلفة في ثلاث مناطق مختلفة تمارس الأنشطة الزراعية. تم اختيار المواقع بناءً على جودة ونوع الأنشطة التي تتم في تلك المواقع. من تحليل البيانات، يمكن العثور على أن عنصر الخصوصية للذكور والإناث من الصعب تحقيقه. من بين العناصر الأخرى التي فشل مقدموا الخدمة المنزلية في الالتزام بها أكثر من غيرهم هي: توفير ملابس صلاة للنساء، ونسخة من القرآن الكريم وأوقات الصلوات. وبشكل عام، تم التحقق من قائمة التدقيق المقترحة من قبل الخبراء من خلال مناقشة أثناء مقابلة فردية. تم أخذ اقتراحات الخبراء في الاعتبار وتم إنشاء قائمة مراجعة محدثة. من المتوقع أن تكون قائمة التدقيق المقترحة هي المفتاح لتحسين تنظيم المساحات وعناصر التوزيع داخل وخارج المنازل من أجل تلبية احتياجات الضيوف المسلمين. كما يمكن أن تؤدي قائمة التدقيق إلى إنشاء نظام رسمي لتصنيف أماكن الإقامة المنزلية.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a nation rooted in the traditional custom and Islamic value as it is stated in the constitutional. This is the base that holds the nation's pride, dignity, and image. This quality makes Malaysia as a well-known tourism hub globally and offers familiarity and comfort to the fellow Muslim visitors while promoting a good set of Islamic virtues in Malay culture to the non-Muslim visitors. In the past, Malay culture ran in parallel with the Islamic principles (Hanita, Zuraini, Hanum & Syukri, 2015). The Islamic principles can be found at the facades as well as the indoor layouts of traditional Malay architectures. From that perspective, the researcher chose homestay as a research subject as it is a good platform to portray the local custom as well as Islamic virtues to the world. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the spatial organization, services and social interaction in local agro-based homestay in relation to the Islamic Built Environment.

The organization of Chapter 1 is divided into ten sections. Section 1.1 will briefly introduce the intention of the research, Section 1.2 will define the key elements of the research, Section 1.3 will identify the research problems, Section 1.4 and 1.5 will outline the research aim and research objectives respectively, Section 1.6 will raise the research questions that need to be answered, Section 1.7 will explain the research gap that can be filled in, Section 1.8 will state the scope of the research and the research limitation, and Section 1.9 and 1.10 will present the structure of the

research and research significance accordingly. Finally, Section 1.11 summarizes the chapter.

1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Introduction of Homestay

The concept of homestay began in the early 1970s in Europe. However, there is no specific interpretation about homestay since the concept of homestay is subjective (Jabil & Suriani,2015).The program of homestay in Malaysia does not have many differences compared to the homestay program in foreign countries. In Australia, homestay program refers to farm tourism which shares similar characteristic with homestay program in Malaysia where the homestay refers to the provision of sleeping space, breakfast and involving with daily routine or cultural activities of the host. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MOCAT) has introduced the homestay program in 1988. Some other terms that can be found related to homestay are like “*kampung stay*” and “farm stay”. Nowadays, the concept of homestay is widely applied in Malaysia with several themes such as cultural, heritage, educational, leisure, natural, and urban. According to Kalsom and Nor Ashikin (2005) and supported by the Ministry of Tourism & Culture Malaysia (2011), homestay is a concept where the visitors experience what have been experienced by the host through the days and nights. Homestay provides an opportunity to preserve the traditional culture and promote the rural tourism sector in the eyes of the world besides raising the economic status of rural people. This statement is supported by Yusnita, Shaladdin, Aziz and Yahaya (2013) as they described that homestay program is an effective platform to promote the local culture to foreign visitors while improving the socio-economic status of the rural community since they are the ones who are still

practicing and preserving the local customs. For foreign tourists, they are more likely to participate in homestay program to experience the culture and lifestyle, and feel the ambience of the rural or village area. While for domestic tourists, they are more likely to participate in homestay program for educational purposes like language study and motivational courses.

1.2.2 Agro-based Tourism

In Malaysia, agriculture is a symbol of the cultural image. Malaysia is blessed with fertility where various natural resources can be found. Ever since, agriculture has played a vital role in contributing to the national and local community economic status by providing more job opportunities to the farmers (Neda & Azimi, 2011). Over the years, culture and agriculture have played a significant role in Malaysian tourism sector. The introduction of agricultural activities sees the potential to bring the homestay program further. Therefore, they need to be encouraged and supported with a proper guideline in order to achieve the sustainability.

1.2.3 Islamic Built Environment

Islam is a way of life comprises a holistic approach in every way. In the concept of Islamic Built Environment, the application does not focus on the physical aspect only but also on the aspect of spiritual (Azila & Alias, 2015). Therefore, the program should be taken into measure comprehensively according to the Islamic principle from the elements of inside the house and the interior space organization until the open spaces surrounding the house affecting the quality of social interaction, activities and the ecosystem. Thus, there are three aspects in the Islamic Built Environment that need to be understood:

The Relationship between Man and the Creator

The selected homestay should consider the needs of Muslim as a servant of Allah. The criteria should focus on the cleanliness, the *ikhtilat* boundary, *qiblat* marker, comfortable space for prayer, and other prayer necessities.

“... And not I have created the jinn and the mankind except that they worship me...” (Ad-Dhariyat 51:56)

The relationship between man and man

The selected homestay should focus on the needs of visitors by having quality activities and experiences and promoting togetherness between the visitors and the host regardless of their religions or races. Allah has strictly mentioned in the Quran to be not divided among mankind and Muslim in order to promote Islam through kindness.

“... And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves...” (Al-Imran 3:103)

The relationship between man and the environment

Allah has appointed human as *khalifah* on earth so that human can prosper the earth as a place of living for all of these are not only for mankind. In the Quran, Allah emphasizes the importance of the environment as mankind always depends on the environment in order to survive and preserve on earth. Allah stated in the Quran preventing mankind to do harm on earth.

“... And do not desire corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corruptors...” (Al-Qasas 28:77)

Islamic Built Environment concept also should focus on the aspect of Maqasid shari'ah in order to ensure the five objectives are achieved which are faith, life, intellect, lineage and property of all parties involved can be preserved.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENTS

1.3.1 No Proper Guideline of A Muslim Friendly Regular House Layout and Planning in the Local Homestay Program

From the preliminary study, there was insufficient documentation on the existing house layout that has been registered under the local homestay program. Most of the reading materials reviewed the concept and definition of homestay in Malaysia. Only one article analyzed the layout of the local existing homestay, which was written by Rashidi et al. (2015). The article includes three case studies located at Sungai Besar, Selangor. However, the documentation was insufficient due to lack of details in term of the distribution elements inside the house and the spatial organization outside the house. Following the insufficiency, it is difficult to get the images of regularity layout both indoor and outdoor of homestay program that are available in Malaysia and to understand how homestay program actually work between the host and visitors.

1.3.2 No Specific Regulations n Islamic Practices between the Host and the Guests

Since the opportunity bloomed, many operators registered for the homestay program. The candidates who want to register their houses will go through several phases of evaluation and workshop. However, how far the houses that have been registered follow the quality and comply with the Islamic principles in term of the space layout, activities provided, and the values that can be offered to the guest? From the preliminary study, only one article written by Rashidi et al. (2015) that relates the

layout composition to the Islamic principles. However, the data presented is insufficient because the outdoor spaces, activities offered, and other values like aesthetic are missing. Without a comprehensive evaluation, there will be an inconvenience, disturbance and tedious environment. This issue has also been presented by M. Nor and Awang (2017) in their writing where the issue of lack of regulations in the local homestay program had caused a number of operators to decrease in operating the homestay.

1.3.3 There is A Need or Demand in Establishing An Audit Checklist for Muslim Friendly Homestay

Islamic tourism emerged as a top sector in elevating economic level not just in Malaysia but in other countries as well. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, in 2016 Malaysia received around 5.5 million tourists from all over the world in which 3.5 million of the total figures are from the The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries. The statistics showed that Malaysia is receiving a major numbers of Muslim visitors. It seemed like an appropriate effort to uplift the local homestay program as one of the main tourism attractions. However, there is no establishment of standard rating system for the local homestay industry based on the level of Islamic principles practiced. On the other hand, the rating system (scorecard) has been established for hotels and resorts.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM

This study aimed to develop a Muslim friendly audit checklist for the local agro-based homestay program in term of spatial organization and distribution elements inside and outside of the houses.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the spatial organization and distribution elements for indoor and outdoor spaces of the local agro-based homestay.
2. To assess the spatial organization and distribution elements of the local agro-based homestay according to a Muslim friendly approach.
3. To construct a Muslim friendly audit checklist for the local agro-based homestay program.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the patterns or regularity of space layout and elements distributed on the inside and outside of the homestay?
2. How Islamic teaching is being practiced in term of spatial organization and distribution elements inside and outside of the homestay?
3. What are the elements and criteria of Muslim friendly homestay that need to be included in the checklist?

1.7 RESEARCH GAP

From the preliminary study, there are several articles related to the elements of this research subject, which are local homestay, culture and agro-tourism, and Islamic Built Environment. The article written by Rohaslinda et al. (2017) explained solely about the evolution of homestay from the year 1970 to 2012, which helpful in determining the history of homestay and its relation to agricultural industry. The article written by Salleh, Idris, Rashidi and Suliza (2013) explained the potential of homestay program in elevating rural community income. Yusnita, Shaladdin, Aziz and Yahaya (2013) presented the review of the current condition of the local homestay. In

term of culture and agro-tourism, Puteri and Zarifah (2015) explained the essence of the cultural landscape in building a sustainable tourism development. Meanwhile, there are several articles related to the Islamic Built Environment. According to Hanita, Zuraini, Hanum and Syukri (2015), the traditional Malay buildings were found to be following the *shari'ah* compliant design, which can be integrated into a hospitality building that can improve the tourism industry. A compilation of literature reviews on the Islamic principles in Muslim homes has been well presented in an article written by Zulkeplee, Rosemary and Laurie (2014), while Fatemah and Badaruddin (2015) explained the strategy of Malaysia in becoming a top country that offers *halal* tourism. All the reading materials have covered all related elements of the research. However, there was insufficient data related to the comprehensive study on layout design of the local homestay according to the *shari'ah* compliance. Therefore, this research was constructed to fill in the gap and improve the availability of reference related to the local homestay program. The following Table 1.1 presents the summary of the gap found in the research field.