GENDER ROLES IN CONSTRUCTING AUTHENTICITY AND HOSPITALITY: A STUDY OF HOMESTAY PULAU AMAN, PENANG

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GENDER ROLES IN CONSTRUCTING AUTHENTICITY AND HOSPITALITY: A STUDY OF HOMESTAY PULAU AMAN, PENANG

by

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PERANAN GENDER DALAM PEMBINAAN KEASLIAN DAN HOSPITALITI: SATU KAJIAN TERHADAP HOMESTAY PULAU AMAN, PULAU PINANG

ABSTRAK

Kajian kualitatif ini mengkaji pembinaan keaslian dan servis hospitaliti dari perspektif gender di Homestay Pulau Aman, Pulau Pinang. Melalui kajian literatur, hanya terdapat sedikit penyelidikan yang dilakukan di kawasan penginapan homestay, terutamanya daripada perspektif gender dan kerangka teori pembinaan keaslian. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji peranan wanita dalam proses pembinaan keaslian (authenticity) dan servis hospitaliti melalui Program Homestay di Pulau Pinang, dan juga untuk mengkaji cabaran dan strategi yang diguna pakai oleh operator homestay wanita semasa mengantara peranan mereka untuk kerja-kerja domestik, dan pada masa yang sama, menyediakan servis hospitaliti dan menunjukkan budaya Melayu yang asli kepada pelancong. Selain daripada itu, kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk melihat persepsi pelancong mengenai peranan wanita dalam pembinaan keaslian dan servis hospitaliti. Data telah dikumpul daripada pengendali homestay dan juga pelancong yang melawat Pulau Aman menggunakan pendekatan kajian kualitatif. Temubual mendalam (IDI) telah dijalankan dengan pengendali homestay wanita dan penyelarasa program homestay. Selain IDI, perbincangan kumpulan berfokus (FGD) dan pemerhatian mendalam digunakan untuk mengumpul data mengenai program pelancongan ini. Sesi-sesi FGD dijalankan bagi mengupas idea tentang konsep hospitaliti dan pembinaan keaslian dalam kalangan pengendali homestay, juga bersama dengan sekumpulan pelancong yang melawat Pulau Aman. Pendekatan pemerhatian mendalam dijalankan untuk mengumpulkan data tentang pembinaan
keaslian dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Analisis daripada data yang dikumpul
menunjukkan bahawa wanita sebagai pengendali homestay menjalani pelbagai
peranan dalam rutin harian mereka, termasuk menjadi ibu, isteri dan peniaga. Servis
hospitaliti yang ditekankan oleh pengendali homestay ini dilihat sebagai penyumbang
paling aktif dalam industri pelancongan di kampung tersebut. Cabaran dan isu-isu yang
dihadapi oleh pengendali homestay semasa memastikan kelestarian program homestay
turut dibincangkan dalam bab analisis. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa pembinaan
keaslian di Pulau Aman dapat dijalankan melalui servis hospitaliti oleh pengendali
homestay wanita. Oleh itu, lebih banyak kajian lanjut diperlukan untuk mengenal pasti
isu-isu dan cara untuk meningkatkan kualiti industri pelancongan di Malaysia.
ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study examining the construction of authenticity and hospitality from a gender perspective, in Homestay Pulau Aman, Penang. From literature reviews, there has been very little research conducted in the area of homestay accommodation, especially from gender perspectives and using authenticity framework. The purposes of this research are to identify roles of women in the homestay business in constructing authentic experience and hospitality services, as well as to study the challenges and strategies women homestay operators taken in mediating their roles at domestic levels while providing hospitality services and staging authentic Malay culture to tourists. Other than that, the study aims to explore the perception of tourists about the role of women in constructing authenticity and hospitality. Data was collected from homestay hosts and tourists who visited the Pulau Aman through a qualitative approach. In-depth-interviews (IDI) were conducted with women homestay operators and the coordinator of the homestay program. Apart from IDI, focus group discussion (FGD) and participant observation were utilised to gather data of the tourism programme. The FGDs were focusing on establishing ideas about concept of hospitality and authenticity among homestay operators and a group of tourists who visited the island. The aspects of authentic living were gathered through an extensive participant observation approach. Analysis of the collected data reveals that women operators undergo multiple roles in their daily routines, which includes being a mother, wife, and entrepreneur. By being hospitable, the homestay host were seen as the most active contributors in hospitality services in the village. Challenges
and issues of the homestay operators faced while ensuring the sustainability of the programme were also discussed. It is concluded that the construction of authenticity in Pulau Aman is gained through the performance of hospitality by the women operators. Hence, it is established that further research is required in order to identify more issues and ways to better the Tourism Industry in Malaysia.
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

Tourism is an ever growing industry worldwide, and it has continued to grow and becoming the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world (UNWTO, 2016). Modern tourism includes a growing number of new destinations and it is closely linked to development. In turn, these dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress (UNWTO, 2016). The iconic rural tourism enable product such as homestay programme to be a highlight in the Malaysian tourism industry as it exemplifies diversification that many tourists were looking for. As mentioned in the official website of Malaysia Travel, the fastest and easiest ways to experience homestay in a traditional village or “kampung” is the option you have to get to know the real Malaysia. When it comes to homestay programme, hospitality is an important element in the whole experience.

Authenticity and hospitality are significant in tourism study as it concerns the aspects of everyday life, language, food and rituals practiced by a particular community. According to Bruner (1994), authenticity means “originals, as opposed to a copy”, and he adds that no reproduction is equal to original. Whereas hospitality is functioned by establishing a relationship or to promote an already established relationship (Selwyn, 2001). The association between experiencing authenticity and act of hospitality is therefore used in this study to understand homestay program from a gender perspective. The concept of hospitality is often referred by homestay operators as “services” and is also considered as the most important tourism asset in
ensuring that tourist can experience the authenticity of homestay experience (MOTAC, 2016).

The thesis uses Anthropological lens to understand and explain how human societies work (Burns, 1999). Anthropology has expanded and changed radically by including many sub-field of study, including Anthropology of Tourism. In tourism studies, anthropologists have made significant contributions to a number of issues and cases, which includes the understanding of tourism’s impact on host communities; the impact of travel on an individual; the power relationships in tourism developments; heritage and culture commodification; types of tourism and tourists; and the relationships between tourism and ethnicity, identity, material culture, nationalism, and the environment (Montero, 2012). Studying tourism using anthropological lens helps to uncover many grounds of research that often left untold. As reviewed by Stronza (2001), tourism can be an ideal context for studying issues of political economy, social change and development, natural resource management, and cultural identity and expression.

1.2 Problem statement

Studies on gender and tourism are vital because they give us a wider perspective on the domesticated roles that are often delegated to women. A number of scholars argue that through tourism, the role of women becomes significant as they can break through from their stereotyped domestic role at home (Ashley et al, 2000; Ferguson, 2010; Kinnaird et al, 1994). Homestay, for example, has been argued to be a pro-women tourism opportunity as it promotes sustainable community development
by fostering gender equality (Acharya and Halpenny, 2013). Studies also show that women in tourism were mostly concentrated in the lowest paid or lowest skilled sectors of the industry, while carrying out a large amount of unpaid work, part time job, particularly in family tourism businesses (Jucan & Jucan, 2013). So, in the case of women in homestay programme, the questions whether homestay business can really close or even widen the gender gap is still left unexplored.

In this study, the role of women in constructing hospitality and authentic experience will be explored. It will focus on the daily life routine activities of women homestay operators, including their responsibility to ensure that their houses stay clean, food preparation for tourists, and giving tender and warmth care to their guests. The characteristic of women’s role is therefore studied to reflect the Malay hospitality that the homestay program is based on. The study also aims to look at the strategies that women homestay operators employed to achieve balance between their roles as homestay operator and mother as well. While undertaking the role of constructing authenticity and performing hospitality services as homestay operators, these women also faced challenges in doing so.

Besides that, the study also wanted to explore the issues of cultural products being commoditized in the package of homestay program. The problem with exploring this prominent issue in rural tourism is the conflicted desire between the tourists and the hosts. According to Cohen (1988), commoditization of tourism product has apparently changed the meaning of cultural products and of human relations, making them eventually meaningless to the tourist. The authenticity of tourism products showcased by the women in tourism industry were then destroyed because of commoditization as well. In addition, Cohen (1988) argued that “staged
“authenticity” is said to prevent the tourist’s genuine desire for authentic experiences. These conflicted motives for tourist visit are vital in the discussion of authenticity and hospitality services offered in a homestay program.

Hence, the thesis will be examining women’s roles in leadership, and their motivation to emerge as successful entrepreneurs. Lastly, the study wants to examine tourists’ perception in the process of constructing hospitality and authenticity, and how the cultural products in the homestay program were perceived and showcase to the visitors, but at the same time did not neglecting the authentic element that was embedded in the culture. This thesis argues that women homestay operators are significantly involved in the construction of authentic experience while performing hospitality, and at the same time were full filling their domestic duties as care-givers at home.
1.3 Research questions

1.3.1 How do women homestay operators construct authenticity and staged hospitality services in Pulau Aman?

1.3.2 What are the roles of women and their challenges in playing both roles as homestay operators and mothers?

1.3.3 What is the perception of tourists on the staging of authenticity and hospitality in Pulau Aman?
1.4 Research objectives

1.4.1 To explore the ways women homestay operators construct authenticity and staged hospitality services in Pulau Aman

1.4.2 To study the roles of women and their challenges in playing both roles as homestay operators and mothers

1.4.3 To explore the perception of tourists on the staging of authenticity and hospitality in Pulau Aman
1.5 Significance of study

This study aimed to undertake a systematic study on the role of women as the homestay program host in constructing authenticity and hospitality, while at the same time performing their domestic duties as care-giver at home. By exploring and understanding the issue of double burden of women in the homestay industry, particularly when looking at how authenticity is constructed, together with the service of hospitality offered by the women operators at the homestay, the findings could be potent in the development of tourism industry. More so, by understanding the domesticated job that these women must juggle in their daily life while conducting business and caring for the family, issues of gender norms and roles expectation will be examined further. The study wants to examine women’s scope of job at the homestay premises, since pre-arrival of guests, during visits, as well as post-visits.

The thesis is arguing that homestay is a representation of authentic Malaysian life. Therefore, homestay is deemed to be the most suitable vehicle to study authenticity and hospitality for the reason that it reflects the most authentic model for tourism, and at the same time, the gender context is prominent. Homestay represents the way a community live, and ordinarily the women are in the home. As the visible operators in the island, the study is going to present the voices of the women. In addition, homestay is quite unique in the business of tourism in Malaysia as they are the visible operators. Are they really making money, and what are the challenges for their business? The studies will emphasize the practical significance of what works for the women, and what does not work for the women in terms of managing the homestay business and juggling their domestic roles at home. Even though the homestay operation is visibly women, but there is not enough research that really
studies the gender perspectives in a homestay. Most studies have been done on economic perspectives, thus how their business growth contribute to tourism.

Besides, the study will also be examining the operations of Homestay Programme through the construction of authenticity and hospitality, using gender perspective to compliment the research on women and tourism industry. The conceptual significance of employing gender perspectives in this study enable the researcher to examine issues of gender relations and tourism processes. This conceptual framework is based on the recognition that tourism processes are gendered in their construction, presentation and consumption, and the form of this gendering is configured in different and diverse ways which are both temporally and spatially specific. Lastly, the perspective of tourists on the roles of women in the field of hospitality service could add to the pool of knowledge in the field of gender and tourism.
CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section will review related literatures in Anthropology of Tourism and Gender, the concept of rural tourism, and homestay programme as developed by Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC). Issues and challenges in homestay programme will also be explored. The chapter concludes by providing a conceptual framework that will be used in the discussion and data analysis of this study.

2.2 Theories and Concepts

2.2.1 Authenticity

Authenticity is a concept that has received particular attention by tourism scholars. Wang (1999) argues that authenticity raises questions concerning how the ‘Other’ and the ‘Past’ are represented. Other scholars have argued that the tourism industry in this modern era promises an authentic experience but, in fact, most of the experience designed exclusively or made to look more attractive (MacCannell, 1973). The analysis of tourism activities demanded an exploration of how authenticity plays a role in shaping the experience of tourists or visitors. The meaning of authenticity itself tends to be confusing because the term may be used in two different senses; namely authenticity as genuineness of events, and also as a human attribute that signifies being one’s true self (Steiner & Reisenger, 2006).
The concept of authenticity has played a vital role in understanding tourist motivation and experience. Over time, scholars have diverse debates and further analyses have generated a plethora of literature in this field (Cohen, 1988; Crang, 1996). The centre of the debate lies in the meaning of authenticity. Boorstin (1961) argued that tourism concerns a pursuit of inauthentic, while MacCannell (1976) countered that authenticity is in fact an essential component of tourist motivation. Later, Wang (1999) survey of the field identified several theoretical perspectives on authenticity in tourism studies, namely objective; constructive, and existential authenticity. Table below shows the distinction between the three perspectives.

Table 2.1 – Three types of Authenticity in Tourist Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object-Related</th>
<th>Activity-Related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective authenticity refers to the authenticity of originals. Correspondingly, authentic experiences in tourism are equated to an epistemological experience (i.e., cognition) of the authenticity of originals.</td>
<td>Existential authenticity refers to a potential existential state by Being that is to be activated by tourist activities. Correspondingly, authentic experiences in tourism are to achieve this activated existential state of Being within the liminal process of tourism. Existential authenticity can have nothing to do with the authenticity of toured objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive authenticity refers to the authenticity projected onto toured objects by tourists or tourism producers in terms of their imagery, expectations, preferences, beliefs, powers, etc. There are various versions of authenticities regarding the same objects. Correspondingly, authentic experiences in tourism and the authenticity of toured objects are constitutive of one another. In this sense, the authenticity of toured objects is in fact symbolic authenticity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectivism

Wang (1999) attempts to analyse this concept by distinguishing between objective authenticity, constructive authenticity and existential authenticity. According to Wang (1999), the objective authenticity referred to “authentic” attraction visited by tourists and this relates to what is meant by MacCannell. According to this perspective, authentic experience means visitors wanted to see objects that are 'real' and not being staged for the benefit of tourists (MacCannell, 1973). The experience is said to be authentic if tourists feel so (Wang, 1999). However, Wang (1999) also argues that the objective and constructive authenticity may not explain all the motivation and experience of tourists. Thus, he introduced the concept of existential, a condition induced by tourist activities and is contrary to the authenticity that is described earlier.

Constructivism

A constructivist approach describes authenticity as a socially constructed interpretation of the genuineness of the things observed (Cohen, 1988; Taylor, 2001). According to Wang (1999), things appear to be authentic because their genuineness is constructed by beliefs, perspectives, or powers. In the constructivist ideology, no one has access to a real world independent of human mental activity and symbolic language (Schwandt, 1994). According to Silver (1993), authenticity is a projection of tourist’s own beliefs, expectations, preferences, stereotyped images, and consciousness onto toured objects. Cohen (1979) further conceptualised authenticity within a true–false personal continuum of perception ranging from complete authentic, through various stages of partial authenticity to complete falsehood. However, this is not fixed, and according to Cohen (1988), individuals can change
their views along this true–false continuum over time. Cohen (1988) also suggested authenticity is a fluid concept that can be negotiated through a process he calls emergent authenticity such that what is inauthentic may become authentic over time, and vice versa.

**Existential Authenticity**

Regular human relationships commonly occur within institutionalized social contexts, with interactions subject to normative constraints (Kim & Jamal, 2007). Unmediated relationships not governed by social norms and regulations may be accessible when individuals are out of everyday social contexts (Arnold & Price 1993; Belk & Costa 1998; Celsi, Rose & Leigh 1993; Graburn 1983,1989; Lett 1983). Similarly, Wang (1999) suggested that authentic human relationship constitutes an important axis of tourism experience. In such ambience, tourists can ease themselves of the pressures stemming from inauthentic social hierarchy and status distinction (Wang, 1999). Thus, existential authenticity, unlike object-related version, can often have nothing to do with the issue of whether toured objects are real. In search of tourist experience which is existentially authentic, tourists are preoccupied with an existential state of *Being* activated by certain tourist activities. To put it another way, existential experience is the authenticity of *Being* which, as a potential, is to be subjectively or intersubjectively sampled by tourists as the process of tourism.

**Staging authenticity**

According to MacCannell (1973) contemporary traveler’s mission is not only to meet their satisfaction, but also to seek 'authenticity'. However, he argues that this finding is not determined by the quality of a search, but more on how travelers affected
by tour operators, tour guides, promotions and advertising. He said that most of 
authenticity has been staged to tourists by tour operators without knowing the truth. 
MacCannell (1973) was one of the first scholars to introduce the concept of originality 
in the study of motivation and travel experiences. He argues that modern humans see 
that people nowadays do not have the existential value and therefore have to look for 
it elsewhere, either in the community or society outside of their culture.

In his study, Goffman (1959) has described a structural division of social 
establishments into what he terms “front” and “back” regions. The front is the meeting 
place of hosts and guests or customers and service persons, and the back is the place 
where members of the home team retire between performances to relax and prepare 
(Goffman, 1959). Tourists commonly take guided tours of social establishments 
because they provide easy access to areas of the establishment ordinarily closed to 
outsiders (MacCannell, 1973). This kind of tour and the experiences, in which 
outsiders are allowed to be further in than regular visitors. In tourist settings, it may 
be necessary to note the existence of front and back regions. Thus, by referring to 
Goffman’s original front-back dichotomy, it is theoretically possible to distinguish six 
stages of the continuum, as shown in the table below.
MacCannell (1973) has argued that a more helpful way of approaching the same facts is in terms of a modification of Erving Goffman’s (1959) model of everyday life activities. The study of tourist settings front and back is to be treated as ideal poles of a continuum, as the poles were linked by a series of front regions decorated to appear as back regions, and back regions set up to accommodate outsiders. The touristic way of getting in with the natives is to enter into a quest for authentic experiences, perceptions and insights. Since MacCannell (1973) presents

**Table 2.1 – MacCannell’s Stage Authenticity Continuum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage one:</th>
<th>Goffman’s front region; the kind of social space tourists attempt to overcome or to get behind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage two:</td>
<td>a touristic front region that has been decorated to appear, in some of its particulars like a back region. Functionally, this stage is entirely a front region, and it always has been, but it is cosmetically decorated with reminders of back region activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage three:</td>
<td>a front region that is totally organized to look like a back region. This is a problematical stage; the better the simulation, the more difficult to distinguish from stage four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage four:</td>
<td>a back region that is open to outsiders. It is the open characteristic that distinguishes these especially touristic settings (stages three and four) from other back regions; access to most non-touristic back regions is somewhat restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage five:</td>
<td>a back region that may be cleaned up or altered a bit because tourists are permitted an occasional glimpse in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage six:</td>
<td>Goffman’s back region; the kind of social space that motivates touristic consciousness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: MacCannell (1973)*
this concept in tourism studies, there are different interpretations of the concept thus causing a lot of confusion particularly what is meant by “authenticity experiencing”.

**Touristic Quest for Authenticity**

The lived experiences of the tourism performance are the factors that inform the subjective potential of the tourism experience. Postmodernity arrives when true meanings of cultural products and human relations are distorted by the constant reproduction process of signs and images (Kim & Jamal, 2007). The concept of authenticity has played a prominent role in understanding tourist motivation and experience, and diverse debates and analyses have generated a plethora of literature in this field (Cohen 1988a; Crang 1996). The centre of the debate lies in the meaning of authenticity. MacCannell (1976) proposed that “touristic consciousness is motivated by its desire for authentic experience”. Modern society is inauthentic and alienating, thus driving people to travel in search of the authentic since “reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere” (MacCannell, 1976).

If the homestay operator promises to the customers their services, then they must provide what they have offered. In other words, authentic tourism is all about the trust between the services providers and customers as well (Drumond, 2013). Authenticity also indicates making or doing something in the original or traditional way. For example, in a restaurant that serves authentic Finnish foods might be owned by a chef from another nationality, as well as located in another country, but the way of serving meals or foods seems authentic Finnish foods (Pusa, 2013). From this, it can be said that authenticity is a goal of experience. Family ties is a typical example of experiencing inter-personal authenticity, and from most tourists’ personal point of view, tourism or holiday itself is a chance for them to reinforce a sense of authentic
togetherness (Wang, 1999). In recreational tourism, one will gain pleasant experiences not only from sightseeing’s and events or performances, but also simultaneously experienced natural and emotional bond among family members.

Fundamentally, authentic experiences are about escaping places, as well as activities where tourists are available as most of the tourists wanted to visit development spots and later to participate in usual activities offered at the place (Islam, 2015). In this study, the analysis will concentrate of how Pulau Aman is an exemplar case of existential authenticity, as a potential state of being that is triggered by tourism activities – or referred to as activity-related authenticity. Hence, this thesis takes constructivist approach in understanding authenticity and used constructivist grounded theory as its methodological basis. According to Starks & Trinidad (2007), the goal of post-positivist approaches to grounded theory is to develop an exploratory theory of basic social processes. Meanwhile, constructivist grounded theory researchers try to learn how participants construct their experience through their actions, intentions, beliefs, and feelings (Charmaz, 1995). The purpose of this constructivist grounded theory study was to understand tourist perceptions of authenticity of homestay experiences as a whole.

2.2.2 Hospitality

The basic function of hospitality is to establish a relationship or to promote an already established relationship (Selwyn, 2001). Acts of hospitality in achieving the relationship are taking place during exchanges of goods and services, both material and symbolic, between those who give hospitality (hosts) and those who receive it (guests). Hospitality converts strangers into familiars, enemies into friends, friends
into better friends, outsiders into insiders, and non-kin into kin (Selwyn, 2001). The women homestay operators play a prominent role in providing hospitality services that the tourists demand for. Women have been known to be handling the works that involves domestic activities such as cleaning and cooking. In the Homestay programme, it is often women who are taking care of the participating houses in terms of maintaining the cleanliness and keeping the traditional ambience expected by guests.

Literatures on hospitality are mostly written on the issue of management and issue that relate to entrepreneurial activities. The philosophy of hospitableness as argued by Telfer (2000) is referring to the name of the trait possessed by hospitable people. In a simple definition hospitality refers to the act of “giving of food, drink, and sometimes accommodation to people who are not regular members of a household” (Telfer, 2000). The acts of sharing their own sustenance with the guests were done by the givers (or hosts) by providing these things in their own home. The central idea of act of hospitality is that the concept remains of sharing one’s home and provision with others. Hence, the main task of the host is more than just providing food and drink but also warmth and shelter, similar to the role of women homestay operator that is to share their house with their guests.

The term hospitality and homestay industry has been selectively appropriated to denote a large-scale service industry providing overnight accommodation and food services on a commercial basis. In turns, it represents the commodification of domestic labour. Nevertheless, tourism has been represented as a global phenomenon that is the best initiative to empower and help women progress, as its rapid growth and diverse, flexible nature in the business (Pritchard et al, 2007). According to these
authors, tourism has an immense potential in contributing to development and poverty reduction as it may represent an opportunity for women to earn some money, to improve their wellbeing and also to gain access to the public sphere.

**Hospitality and bonding relationship**

The bonding relationship when tourists visit the homestay has occurred as a result of the living together with host-family (Lynch, 2000). The activities between homestay host and guests involve include eating together session, as well as any leisure activities with host families in order to produce key elements of a special relationship between foster parents and foster children (Osman et al., 2009). An ongoing relationship between tourists and host families has made homestay as a medium for the host families or homestay operators to expand its network of relationships.

In the context of tourism and anthropology, Carroll (2008) explains new family relationships or “new familial bonds” will be formed following the interaction between tourists and hosts. Cohen, Speier & Frohlick (2015) have identified that some of the fictional friendships in tourism are unpredictable and occur naturally by involving emotional aspects. According to their study, it has sparked a new global relationship in addition to the local cultural wisdom. The study of Leite (2017) also proves solidarity that forms fictitious friendship between the host and domestic and international tourists.

Within the homestay context, the relationship between hosts and guests moved to the next level of bonding, in a sense that strangers become friends, and becoming a part of family in a short period of time (Mura el at, 2015). As guests’ and hosts’
expectations, attitudes, and cultural backgrounds may diverge, homestay experiences can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts between tourists and locals (Lynch, 2000; Pearce, 1990). The act of hospitality in homestay programmes is therefore in close relation with the role of women as homestay operators. Hospitality is, thus deeply implicated in any analysis of patriarchy system, but a very limited literature in the context of gender and tourism.

**Malaysian Hospitality**

Malaysia offers a lot of tourism opportunities in line with the hospitality industry. The opportunities include culture diversity, multiracial society, and ethnic minority. Tourists can find the whole of Asia in one country as the tagline goes; ‘Malaysia Truly Asia’. Most of the time, tourists are inclined to find out the unique characteristics of the countries they visited (Majid et al, 2015). Hospitality business is created when the needs for certain services started to emerge for people who’s being away from home. The travel could be from one country to another, one state to another, or just nearby their house. By doing so, people need a place to eat and sleep. Therefore, in order to satisfy one’s need to eat and sleep while travelling, two main factors were considered under the big umbrella of hospitality services; namely lodging and food service (Jones, 2002).

So what hospitality services provide? It serves as a ‘shelter’ for people who are staying away from home, and food and beverages is provided for people eating away from home or not able to prepare their own meals. One of the characteristics of hospitality industry that is stated by Walker (2007) is the operation time of 24 hours a day and 365 days a year for hospitality businesses. Walker (2007) also pointed out that the personnel in hospitality industry must work longer time when compared to
the other industries due to its long hour's operation time. This characteristic is what made the hospitality industry is different from other services in the tourism industry, due to its needs to be readily available to customer’s request and need. Although there are many researches in hospitality, there is little research has been conducted on Malaysian hospitality. People always heard about French service, English service, American service, Thai Service and other services. Each service has its own characteristic. They have their own way to provide the service.

The basic homestay concept was established long before due to little or no such accommodation facilities were existing last time. According to Irwana Omar et al (2014) it has become a norm for a group of travellers who wanted to stay for a while in a certain new place to crash a stranger home for few nights. The only other option they have is to stay covered under big tree or just stay on their cruise ship. These travellers or traders are often advised to respect the culture and to adhere to the custom of living in new areas to ensure harmony. Traditional Malay hospitality practices are divided into two things, which are how host received the guest, and how guest behaving in host’s home. In addition to that, the arrival of Islam to the Nusantara region has shaped the Malay community which in return emphasised hospitality treatment for guests. Muslims are required for honouring guests and respecting the host. According to Muhammad (2009), guests are considered “special” to the host. According to Islamic teachings, a house that is frequent visited by guests will provide the host family a generous wealth or “rezeki” (Mohamed Taib, 2004). Accepting guests is also seen as a way for the host to practice honourable deeds.
Challenges of being hospitable

Apart from being hospitable and receiving hospitality, there are several challenges faced by the homestay operators in ensuring the sustainability of the industry. Hospitality industry services is in need to meet customer's satisfaction, other than making profit and generate customer’s loyalty (Lane and Dupre, 1997). In addition, good image of the hospitality industry would depend on the service business provide by the organizations under the hospitality system (Kozak & Rimmington, 1998). Thus, from the notion of being hospitable, the services provided must be treat as a function process where it will help the organization to generate profit, insure high quality, and make every moment count (Lane & Dupre, 1997).

Nevertheless, the essence of culture and identity in Malaysia or specifically the Malays is rapidly decreasing due to development and modernization. Developers and builders compete to build contemporary and so-called iconic building and paid less attention to the fundamental nature of Malay or vernacular architecture. Traditional Malay house is part of heritage value that attracts tourists to visit Malaysia and experience the culture. Since cultural tourism is a value that attracts tourists, it is important to acknowledge the influential attributes of Malay Muslim architecture (traditional Malay house) into the design of hospitality building.

Darke and Gurney's (2000) writing on the study of hospitality has confirms that a key forum for social learning about the subject in hospitality activities has indeed involves the domestic and private arena, essentially the nuclear family setting. The study shows that providing en suite and other room based facilities in hotels could be seen as a response to customers’ demands for their own personal 'domestic' space in the hotel. When staying in homestays, however, the presence of the nuclear family
introduces individuals to the rules, rituals, norms and customs which shape hospitality activities in a social setting. Darke and Gurney (2000) continues to argue that to have a better grasp on what hospitality is all about, the understanding of food, drink, and accommodation provision in a nuclear family is vital. This is due to the reason that the domestic setting in the provision of hospitality related activities can be the forum for the inter-relationship between the domestic and the social arenas. They further argue that the act of receiving guests into their domestic settings (namely their home) provide the opportunities for placing both individuals and families in a context of “civilizedness”.

Moreover, it is worth-mentioning that guests also perform a role in evaluating the social connectedness of individuals and families to some extent. Thus, from the host’s point of view, these events provide opportunities for developing social relationships among family members, hosting for social display, and meeting social and status needs. The receiving of guests therefore performs important social roles in binding individuals and groups together. Darke and Gurney (2000) show that these instances can also be the source of tension and stress, where different expectations of the rules and taboos may result in behaviour that causes offence to the other Party. The private setting also helps to consider some of the issues related to the meaning of hospitality, hosting and hospitableness’. The several definitions given above imply that hospitality involves supplying food, drink, and accommodation to people who are not members of the household.
2.3 Gender and Tourism

Scholars have argued that women all around the world have high involvement in tourism whether it is through being visitors, hosts or employees in the tourism destination sector (Sabina & Nicolae, 2013; Gibson, 2001; Butler, 1995). However, there is limited number of studies done on the topic of gender and tourism research. According to United Nation World Tourism Organization, studying gender and tourism is vital because it has the potential to contribute to a greater gender equality. Similarly, women empowerment could be achieved in line with the Third Millennium Development Goal. Women were represented in the tourism industry worldwide as majority, both in formal and informal jobs (UNWTO, 2017). Although tourism offers women with the opportunities for income-generation and entrepreneurship, women were mostly concentrated in the lowest paid or lowest skilled sectors of the industry. Women also were carrying out a large amount of unpaid work in family tourism businesses, therefore greater equality is an essential component of a sustainable tourism industry (UNWTO, 2016).

However, the sector has paid limited attention to the rights and status of women, especially to those in poorer countries, and to the impact that tourism has on their lives and livelihoods. Sabina and Nicolae (2013) in their studies also find out that women in tourism sector are frequently doing part-time work, and such work is not well remunerated and resulted in reduce access to more skilled jobs and management positions. A study was conducted in India to estimate the approximate monetary value of the work done by women without pay in India in 2009. The reports suggest that the value of unpaid work performed by women both from rural and urban areas of India amounts to approximately US$612 billion per year (Choudhary et al,
2009). Despite the magnitude of this figure, the financial value of the domestic work done by women without pay continues to go unnoticed, and women continue to be treated as if they contribute nothing of value to society or the nation. Women were keep getting excluded from fair inclusion in both the formal and informal sectors (Nazneen, 2015). Gender plays a role in the hospitality and tourism as women were working in the tourism industry on average paid of 25% less than male workers for comparable skills, and more importantly, women represent two thirds of the global tourism industry in labor force (Mitra, 2003).

According to Earth Summit 2002, a study has been done to compare women to men working hours. The proportion of women to men’s working hours is 89%, which means that women work 89 hours when men work 100 hours. The study comprises data from 39 countries, including many of the industrially developed countries. In addition, the proportion of women to men’s wages is 79%. The significance of this data shows that women are working fewer hours than men, at the same time receiving even less pay. In recent studies, feminist researcher has identified a clear segmentation of men’s and women’s work in tourism (Simpson, 2017). Majority of women’s work is concentrated in seasonal, part time or low paid activities such as retail, hospitality and cleaning.

Similar situation can be implied in the Malaysian Homestay Industry, in which women were given the task of cleaning and cooking for the guests, while men were in charge of entertaining and dealing directly with the guests (Ibrahim & Razzaq, 2009). Undoubtedly, combining work and caring responsibilities is the most significant factor preventing women from progressing to higher positions as cited by 70% of respondents in the study (Liu et al, 2015). According to Ateljevic (2008) tourism
enables women to break the social bubble that were keeping women in doors, as well as acknowledging that women can accomplish well outside the traditional home. This is fundamental, especially that tourism enables local community to have control over development in their surrounding areas. Thus, a lack of equal opportunities for women in decision-making processes lead to a negative impact not only on their personal and professional lives, it is detrimental to whole communities. The absence of women at the heart of decision-making in tourism continues to stall the advancement of women, men and their families, whether in rural Africa or urban Europe. Women will continue to be exploited without a rigorous gender analysis in the thinking, development, practice and evaluation of tourism (Nazneen, 2015).

2.4 Rural tourism in Pulau Aman

According to Hassan and Badarulzaman (2006), rural tourism comprises any form of tourism that showcases the rural lifestyles and visitors got to provide some benefits for the local community, gained through mutual exchange and interaction. Pulau Aman offers three main accommodation services to the visitors. They can choose to rent chalets or camp in designated campsites around the island. There is also a budget hotel that can be rented by visitors when they visited the island. Those who came with small children were most likely to opt for private chalet so that they will feel comfortable without the presence of any outsiders.

The accommodation offered in Pulau Aman was initially a result of visitors wanted to experience the daily life in a fishing village. There are not many accommodation opportunities like such elsewhere, thus the development of Pulau Aman homestay is very much innovative in terms of facilities and experience the
village had to offer. As mentioned in the opening speech by Law Choo Kiang, Penang State Assembly Speaker during Pulau Aman Environment Day at Pulau Aman’s Multipurpose Hall on 12 Dec 2015,

“The programme today is not only an initiative by the State Government to make Pulau Aman a beautiful island, but also to raise its standard as a world’s known tourist attraction for both local and foreign tourists. The State Government hopes that the residents in Pulau Aman will be able to treat the island like their own homes to have a better sense of belonging. The local residents need to be more responsible towards the island’s cleanliness because the island is your “home”. Instead of depending on others, we are the ones who should be responsible for our home cleanliness when it is dirty. Hence, “Halaman Rumah Tercantik” contest is being introduced in this programme to embolden the residents of Pulau Aman in maintaining the cleanliness and beauty of the home surrounding”

The contest as mentioned in above excerpt is an example of activities planned in developing Pulau Aman as a tourism location. In addition, according to Odyssey Media Group (1999), the island has become a major agro-tourism centre of Penang. With several boat services on the island, Pulau Aman is easily accessible by visitors. Tourism industry in Pulau Aman offers a variety of activities for the visitors. The type of activities includes arrival celebration, breakfast with local villagers, island tour and hiking, as well as traditional cooking demonstration. This is the basic tour that is offered to visitors when they visit the island. However, for a larger group such as university program or annual celebration of Pulau Aman’s Sea Festival, there are more elaborate program awaiting the visitors. These includes cultural performance and fashion show, traditional cooking competition, sea’s sport competition, decorate a boat, kayaking, and many other traditional games specially prepared by the members of the Homestay Programme committee. Apart from that, this project is also environmentally friendly as the island's natural charm and environmental heritage will not be forgotten but will be preserved. Not only will a visitor to the island be enriched
by such untouched and beautiful land, but the inhabitants of the island can expect a brighter future as tourists arrive to visit their village of Pulau Aman.

2.5 Homestay Programme in Malaysia

Several studies have shown that the homestay programme in Malaysia received an overwhelming response when it comes to access of the sustainability of the programme and economic impact of the business (Johan & Ahmad, 2009; Mapjabil & Ismail, 2012; Pusiran & Xiao, 2013). Operating homestay could be seen as an important incentive to the community, socially and economically. However, establishing and operating small businesses as such involve the possibility of success as well as risk too (Pusiran & Xiao, 2013; Nor Ashikin & Kalsom, 2010; Srirprasert et al, 2011). An article by Mapjabil and Ismail (2012) provides an overview of the various scenarios and dilemmas faced by multiple stakeholders in implementing the homestay programmes in the Malaysian context. There were internal and external challenges involves following the success of community-based Homestay programme, for example a change in leadership style has shown that rate of tourism at one of the villages studied has slowed down (Nor Ashikin & Kalsom, 2010). From the research in 2007, it was found out that these numerous challenges are embedded in the policy at the various ministerial levels, the system of the homestay organisations and the characteristics of the community members (Nor Ashikin & Kalsom, 2010). The results were gathered from a total of 90 interviews undertaken in three homestay villages, in addition to another 10 interviews with representatives from the government and the Malaysian Homestay Association. Although homestay programme has the potential to generate additional income for the villagers, as well
as creating an avenue for them to be a participant in advancing local tourism development, these outcomes may not be sustained if challenges are extensive. Understanding the challenges faced by the homestay programme is a crucial part in making sure the programme will turn out to be a sustainable community-based programme in the long run.

The tourism sector has been recognized by the government as a major revenue source and a catalyst for the revival of the economy. According to Ministry of Tourism and Culture (2013), in the year of 2012, tourist arrivals had an increase of 320,000 tourists, which is 25.03 million compared to 24.71 million tourist visitors in 2011. Apart from that, the number of receipts received from tourists had an increase of RM1.8 billion, which is RM60.6 billion compared to RM58.3 billion in the previous year. Among the top five tourist markets in 2012 were Singapore (13,014,268), Indonesia (2,382,606), China (1,558,785), Thailand (1,263,024) and Brunei (1,258,070). The increase in number of tourists visiting Malaysia every year has provided some implications of resources to support the industry, especially in terms of human resources in the service sector.

Homestay has been identified as a lifestyle tourism product that has a unique Malaysian appeal and packaged with local tradition and cultural elements as well as natural heritage (Osman et.al, 2009). The caretakers of the participating houses must make sure that the places are able to re-enact the traditional ambience. Some scholars argue that through tourism, the role of women becomes significant as they can break through from their stereotyped domestic role at home.

According to Ministry of Tourism and Culture, homestay programme gives tourists the opportunity to stay with a family, interact and experience the daily life of
their traditional life and learn the culture and lifestyle of the rural community in Malaysia (MOTAC, 2016). It cannot be classified as a lodging facility as it focuses more on lifestyle and experience, including cultural and economic activities. Staying in accommodations, like homestay with a village ambience as opposed to hotels in the cities offers more interactive experience. This is one of the most effective way in learning and experiencing culture through travel experience (Pusiran & Xiao, 2013).

The main objective of the Malaysia Homestay Experience Program is to meet the two target groups, which is the village community and for travelers in Malaysia. For villagers, they can be sharing benefits from the tourism sector by promoting the participation of rural people in the tourism industry; increasing the income and living standards of the villagers, where wealth from the tourism industry can be enjoyed by everyone; and generating entrepreneurship skills among villagers. For travelers, this programme can be providing unique experiences to tourists who are keen to experience the life and culture of the village community; and thus creating a hospitality tourism product with competitive price and international standard. This program is different from the concept of other simple accommodation facilities such as “bed & breakfast” where there is no family living together and the management system is just like the usual hotel management.

Homestay program was created to increase the participation of rural people in the tourism sector and at the same time to showcase the lifestyle of the rich cultural heritage of Malaysia in a unique and interesting way. Homestay program is said to have given a return in terms of household income which reach thousands of dollars (Yusnita et al, 2013). The success of homestay programs is often linked to increase numbers of both domestic and international tourists participating in this form of
tourism consumption (Pusiran & Xiao, 2013). Services provided include homestay accommodation described as “second-home” in which home does not only serve its role as a staying place, but it is also a platform for tourists to mingle with a host family while carrying on with their activities. This is where the role of women is greatly emphasized, in which female homestay operators treat the tourists similar to treating their own family when they come and stay at their house.

Normally, homestay program will produce a “tourist returned” because of the close bonds of friendship with their foster family, thus, enables them to return to Malaysia (Sjamsir, 2005). Homestay program does not only provide an opportunity for tourists to stay with the locals, to interact and gain experience but they also provide the opportunity to live a life with a Malaysian family and learn the culture of rural communities in Malaysia. Homestay program began informally since 1970s with some involvements from the local community who provides accommodation in their own homes to foreign tourists by charging a very minimal price compared to hotels or resorts (Hamzah, 2008; Kayat, 2010; Ibrahim & Razzaq, 2009). Organizers of the homestay program will showcase the local traditions to the tourists and this will help them to experience the “authentic” customs and traditions with the other villagers.

Homestay program in Malaysia was introduced by the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia in 1988 as an effort to diversify tourism products by offering alternative accommodation to tourists (Sjamsir, 2005). The tour program is seen as a potential alternative tourism product to gain support from the international tourists. The tour program has high demand among tourists because they want to learn the way of life of local residents at the destination they visited (Sham Sani & Samad, 1990). The complex dynamics of the homestay experience, in which politics of identity of hosts
and guests (sometimes researchers), setting of the premises, artefacts, sequences, social control and space play a pivotal role in constructing the experience (Mura et al, 2015).

Apart from shopping experience in Malaysia, tourists also want to learn about the way of life and culture of the people and this has triggered homestay tourism program, organized by the Malaysian Homestay Association in collaboration with the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board in 1995 (Sjamsir, 2005). Homestay refers to the experience of tourists staying with host families at the places they visited (Ibrahim & Razzaq, 2009). It may not only increase the income of homestay operator, but it can also promote the preservation of cultural heritage through the process of maintaining their traditional homes (Wang, 1999; Cole, 2005). Many tourists believe that homestay programs can provide the experience of living in a ‘traditional’ cultural life as experienced by the local communities. The process of searching for the authentic experience by tourists has indirectly improved the construction process of the cultural and heritage-based community. In Malaysia, homestay program is a form of tourism that puts emphasis on cultural aspects and natural environment.

In homestay program, the role of women is even more important as it involves all aspect of domestic work. Various forms of tourism have been introduced in Malaysia, including tourism program-based learning (educational tourism), eco-tourism, agro-tourism, sports tourism and health tourism. In Malaysia, tourism is the second largest contributor to the economy next to the manufacturing sector (Ibrahim & Razzaq, 2009). This is shown by Malaysia’s efforts in developing and promoting the tourism products to successfully produced impressive results. Through the diversity of tourism, there is also the introduction of new homestay tourism program,
such as "Malaysia as 2nd Home" and new homestay tourism campaign "Green Tourism 1Malaysia, 1Malaysia Clean" (MOTAC, 2016). Under the homestay program, there is also the implementation of the project "PAT" (Plant a Tree) in all homestays nationwide that have been registered with the Ministry of Tourism, which encourages every tourist to plant trees before they return to their origin country. Until March 2018, the Homestay’s registration status are as follows:

**Table 2.2 – Number of Homestay Registration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Total number of homestay cluster</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Total number of hosts</td>
<td>4025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Total number of rooms</td>
<td>5650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ministry of Tourism and Culture, 2018*

According to a recent statistic published by MOTAC, the total number of tourist’s arrival to Homestay during January to March 2018 are 82,339, which is a 7.9% decline compared with January to March 2017. For January to March 2018, the number of domestic tourists has a 12.2% decline, whereas the arrival of international tourist increased to 7.4% compared with January to March 2017. Lastly, the total amount of homestay’s income for January to March 2018 are RM 6163757.30, which is a decline of 16.0% compared with January to March 2017.
2.6 Tourism in Pulau Aman

Homestay programme does promote interactions with local community, including the opportunities to enjoy food delicacies, while experiencing local culture and tradition. In Penang, there are eleven homestays that are registered with Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC). Each homestay programme offers different types of activities, depending on the culture, food, economic activity as well as location. Every state in Malaysia has its own uniqueness in terms of culture, thus for the purpose of this study, Homestay in Penang Island is chosen as the research location. The chart below shows the homestay’s income in Penang Island from the year 2009 to 2016.

Table 2.3 – Homestay’s income in Penang Island from year 2009 to 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homestay’s income in Penang Island from year 2009 to 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Lahar Yooi, Tasek Gelugor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Kota Aur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Teluk Bahang, Balik Pulau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Pulau Aman, Simpang Ampat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Sg. Chenaam, Nibong Tebal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Sg. Duri, Seberang Prai Selatan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Sg. Setar, Nibong Tebal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Juru/Sg. Semilang, Balik Pulau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Pulau Betong, Balik Pulau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Jalan Bharu, Balik Pulau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Mengkuang Titi, Bukit Mertajam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC), 2017
In 2008, the Homestay program was established in Pulau Aman, whereby visitors of the island can stay with a host in his or her own home and experience village life. During the initial establishment of the homestay programme in Pulau Aman in 2008, there are about 40 houses which actively taking part in the programme. Currently, the number has gone down to less than half, in which 15 houses only participate, with 9 active houses. Most of the homestay operators have shifted to renovate their houses to be transformed into a chalet-based premise.

Pulau Aman is well-known for its uniqueness as Malay Fishing Village, and it receives the highest total income from the year 2009 – 2016. The statistic collected by MOTAC has shown that tourism industry in Pulau Aman is indeed growing and developing, given the promising number of visitors that visited the island each day. Pulau Aman is well-known with tourists coming in and out of the island, therefore the business of accommodation is highly requested in the peak season. Most of the families own either a chalet or running a homestay, and some owns both. The amount of motorized vehicle is very little; hence the quality of air is unpolluted with unnecessary chemicals. Hence, tourists find it soothing and calming to visit this village as their short getaway with families and friends. The type of tourism here is falling under ‘Rural Tourism’, as it relates to comfortable accommodation, uncontaminated landscapes, authentic Malay culture, preservation of historical and architectural sites were being done, as well as appropriate building preservation meet the expectations of visitors of Pulau Aman.
2.7 Conceptual Framework

The study is investigating the role of women in constructing authenticity and hospitality in Homestay Industry from gender perspectives. For this means, the concept of authenticity and hospitality is used to study the women’s role at the Homestay in Penang Island. The concepts will be employed in the discussions of level of similarity between roles of women performing domestic duties at their own home, while at the same time maintaining the cleanliness and care for Homestay premises. The elements of Malay hospitality are studied to understand hospitable relationship between the host and the guest, namely the food, lodging, and services. Simultaneously, the concept of authenticity as showcased to visitors of the island is employed to uncover the stages of authentic experienced constructed by these homestay hosts. Wang’s (1999) notion on existential authenticity, MacCannell’s (1973) staging authenticity, and Selwyn’s (2001) notes on ‘Anthropology of Hospitality’ will be extensively used to discuss on the construction of women’s role at the Homestay programme. The tourist’s perception on the construction of hospitality and authenticity is also going to be examined further in the study. Conceptual framework for this research is as follows.
2.8 Research Gap

Based on the literature review, the study on staging of authenticity and hospitality in homestay programme from gender perspective is significantly lacking. Thus, this study is an attempt to address this gap by looking at roles of women homestay operators in constructing authentic experience for the visitors, while at the same time performing multiple roles and duties as mothers, wives, and businesswomen. Even though the homestay operation is visibly women, but there aree
not enough research that studies the gender perspectives in a homestay. This is the central focus of the thesis, in which mostly the studies that have been done on homestay were focusing on economic perspectives. The thesis is however arguing that the perspectives from the operators, as well as experience from the tourists interacting with the operators are also important and vital to tourism studies. Homestay program is quite unique in the business of tourism, whereby in Malaysia, the women are the visible operators.

Based on the literature review, not much has been touched on authenticity and hospitality in Malaysia homestay especially from the gender perspective. This study attempts to address this gap by focusing on the role of women in constructing authenticity and performing hospitality services, and how tourists perceived the authenticity of the visited place and the type of hospitality they received from hosts. It seems that authenticity is constructed by interaction and interpretation of the social and physical environment. Seeking authentic experience becoming a valuable tourist product in the tourism industry. Thus, this thesis aimed to uncover the staging processes that happen in Pulau Aman while women homestay operators were juggling their daily routine between a mother and businesswomen.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined some theoretical discussion on the concept of authenticity and hospitality. Constructivist approaches was taken in order to understand the perception of tourist towards authenticity and hospitality services they received from the homestay hosts. Nevertheless, discussion on hospitality was mainly navigated around the concept of building relationship and bonding forms between host and
guest. Besides that, Malaysian Hospitality is also looked at to reflect the uniqueness of program offered at Homestay Program that is registered under Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC). In addition to the theories and concepts presented in this chapter, it also discusses the subject of gender and tourism as the main motivation to conduct a study using gender lens. Rural tourism in Malaysia and an overall overview of Homestay Programme in Malasia were also briefly presented, as well as some research gap found in the literatures, before the conceptual framework of the thesis is laid out as a main backbone of the thesis.
CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines an insight into the methodological settings and techniques used in this study. In addition, the methods that have been used for the data collection and analysis is explained, as well as justifying the specific research methods that were employed to meet the research objectives and research questions set in the Introduction chapter. The whole research design is built on theoretical viewpoints and qualitative research to assemble a set of research tools that are appropriate to investigate the authenticity and hospitality staged by women homestay operators at Pulau Aman.

3.2 Research location

The study was conducted at Homestay Pulau Aman, Pulau Pinang. The village is reachable by boats from Batu Kawan’s jetty, located about 45 minutes from Penang Island. A map showing the overview of the island is included below. According to statistic given by the Chief Villagers, the whole population of Pulau Aman consists of 254 people; 117 men and 134 women. It has around 56 households in total. Even though the population is considerably small; the village do have a strong community-based organisation. Many associations are actively running in the village, such as Persatuan Nelayan, Persatuan Qariah Masjid, Kumpulan Pengembangan Wanita (KPW) and some other associations that run the school organization including Parents-Teacher Associations of SK Pulau Aman. Therefore, for the purpose of this
study, the whole population of Kampung Aman were considered the target population due to the nature of the village.

Figure 3.1 Map of Pulau Aman
3.3 Research design

In order to study a social phenomenon such as the construction of authenticity and hospitality, qualitative methods are recommended because it can provide a deeper understanding compared to quantitative methods (Silverman, 2007). The aims of this study are to capture, describe, and interpret individual and group responses to the construction of social phenomenon in receiving guests, providing tour of the island, and sending them back to the main land, as a whole package in the stay. Therefore, qualitative study is deemed as the most appropriate research methodology. The study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data consisted of information gathered from respondents through 9 semi-structured interviews, two focus group discussions with 11 participants and non-participant observation, as well as photography and video recording during field work phase.

The interviews and focus group discussions with the homestay operators were conducted in Malay language, and then the selected narratives were translated to English language for the purpose of analyzing data. In addition, the interviews and focus group discussions with the tourists were conducted in English language. The questionnaire for interviewing homestay operators and tourists were prepared in two languages, one in Malay and one in English. This is to cater for foreign tourist who visited the island. For secondary data, some publications related to Pulau Aman Homestay in the newspaper and bulletins were analysed, alongside with information gathered from official’s website of Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC). The reality this study attempts to uncover is the role of women in the homestay business in constructing authentic experience for the tourists at the homestay, the meaning of Malay hospitality according to these homestay hosts, and how these women mediate
their role at domestic levels by providing hospitality services, as well as the staging authentic Malay culture and traditions to the guests at the island.

3.4 Qualitative research

Qualitative research provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts. From the analysis of strengths and limitations of qualitative research paradigm, human behavior is found out to be significantly influenced by the setting in which it happens, thus a qualitative researcher must study the behavior in situations (Atieno, 2009). The research process is concerned primarily with process, rather than outcomes or products, and it is interested in the meaning of how people make sense of their lives or experiences in an environment. Atieno (2009) adds that the primary instrument for data collection and analysis is indeed the qualitative researcher itself. Thus, the process of gathering data must be done primarily by the researcher in order to be able to produce a “thick” description of the analysis. The nuance of how the description of qualitative research should be conducted is described by Geertz (1973) to be in a contrast of thick versus thin description. Thick description includes such details of social interaction with the broader cultural patterns that portray specific actions with meaning (Geertz, 1973).

Gender perspectives entails by analysing differences between females, males, and people of other genders, gender analysis, by focusing on the nature of power relations, also considers differences among females, among males, and among people of other genders. By including gender into research, researchers can ensure that gender inequities are not perpetuated, collect higher quality and more accurate data, and actively engage in positively changing gender relations and reducing inequities. When something is not well defined, qualitative methods are helpful. While complicated
problems can be quantified, there is a need to describe the complexity and subtlety of a cultural element by using qualitative research (Hunt, 2004). Other than that, qualitative research is deemed to be important especially when the linkages or mechanisms that cause things needed to be explained. These are the measures that showcase qualitative research goes hand-to-hand with gender analysis.

Thus, data collected are mediated through the human instrument, and the researched physically goes to the people, setting, site, or institution to observe and record behaviours in its natural setting. Another characteristic that described qualitative study is that researcher’s understanding of the process and meanings of environment studied is aided through words or pictures too (Atieno, 2009). Therefore, the study on homestay operators of Pulau Aman is studied using qualitative research approach, as it is vital to understand their complex relation between performing a domesticated duty of housewife, while at the same time performing as homestay host in tourism industry.

3.5 Establishing Rapport

The study is initially done by having close connections with researcher’s foster family at Pulau Aman and with the additional help from village head. The presence of these gatekeepers is influential towards building rapport around the village. The initial contacts with Pulau Aman villagers started in March 2016. From the help of the gatekeepers, a list of 15 women operators of Homestay Pulau Aman was gathered. Multiple visits were done, and the researcher attempted to interview as many homestays hosts as possible. In addition, snowball sampling method was also adopted
to talk to several villagers of Pulau Aman during those visits. This method was adopted in order to gain more insights from villagers who were indirectly involved in the homestay programme at Pulau Aman. The information gathered from villagers were then collected and analysed as a part of triangulation process, to verify the narratives shared by the homestay operators. In an attempt to reduce bias, a diversified group of the women host (family, single mothers) who are involved in the homestay was approached. Definitely, having a contact person at the Pulau Aman’s Village, it is much more comfortable to approach villagers, thus make it easier for the research to be done in terms of logistic and accommodation.

3.6 Data collection

The qualitative study identifies the role of women beyond the scope of domesticated works in the homestay industry. This section will outline the way the study will be conducted using qualitative methodology, mainly identified using the lens of Anthropology and Gender. Main methods to be used are: i) in-depth interviews; ii) participant observation; and iii) focus group discussions.

3.6.1 In-depth Interviews

Interviews were carried out to gather extensive explanation of the social phenomenon that is happening during the course of field work. For the purpose of interviews, researcher spends several visits to get to know the villagers and after the third visit, the formal interview sessions were started. The respondents for the study
were chosen based from their involvement in the homestay programme, as registered under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. The participating houses were marked with a tourism plague that shows the operator’s name and address.

Figure 3.2(a) Tourism plague of participating homestays

Figure 3.2(b) Tourism plague of participating homestays
Based from the suggestions from informants, as well as the plague signboard, the researcher went through house by house to get the consent for them to be interviewed. Out of 20 participating houses, only 15 houses were found to have the plague at their premises. However, some of the operators were no longer considered themselves as active homestay operators, hence did not agree to be interviewed. The study finally managed to conduct in-depth interviews with 9 homestay operators. A set of guided questions were prepared for the purpose of interviewing homestay hosts (Appendix A). The interviews took from 30 minutes to 2 hours to complete, depending on the respondent’s ability to respond to the questions asked. For the focus group discussion, one session with the homestay operators were conducted after one of the organized tours has ended, in which five homestay operators were involved in the one-hour long discussion. Another focus group discussion was conducted with 11 tourists, of 7 Malaysian and 4 foreign tourists. The tourists were approached directly while they were in the organised tour and the session also took around one-hour to complete. The tourists were asked to share on their expectations before the tour start, and later
compare the experience that they get from the completed tour. Tables below show the list of interviewed respondents for this study.

**Table 3.1 – List of respondents (homestay operators and villagers)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rohana</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Homestay Programme Coordinator / single mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Faizah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Homestay operator / single mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rokiah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Homestay operator / single mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Aminah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Homestay operator / single mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Roslia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Homestay operator / single mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Zabedah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Homestay operator / single mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Halimah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Homestay operator / married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Homestay operator / married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ziana</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Homestay operator / married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ahmad</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Head of Village (JKKP) / married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pak Abu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Chalet operator / single father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pak Man</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Chalet operator / married</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.2 – List of respondents (tourists)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Origin / Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Penang, Malaysia / NGO Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Penang, Malaysia / Public Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nasuha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Kedah, Malaysia / Admin Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Syazalina</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Selangor, Malaysia / Book Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Farid</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Penang, Malaysia / Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wong</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Pahang Malaysia / Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Azmi</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Perak, Malaysia / Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lily</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Cambodia / Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Azad</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Kurdistan / Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Viyan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Turkey / Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Maximillan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Germany / Lecturer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6.2 Participant Observation

During the course of field work stage, participant observation was also carried out in order to observe situations that respondents have described in interviews as well as events that they may be unable or unwilling to share. This is important to make the researcher aware of distortions or inaccuracies in description provided by those informants (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). The observations were done from various standpoints, 1) as a day-trip visitor to the island, 2) as participant of the tour group visitors, 3) as visitors who stayed in a homestay for three nights. As a researcher, it was important to actively participated while observing the tours conducted by the women homestay operators. According to a study on a guide for fieldworker, the authors listed down some key elements of the method of participant observation by anthropologists usually involve living in the context for an extended period of time; learning and using local language and dialect; actively participating in a wide range of daily, routine, and extra-ordinary activities with people who are full participants in that context; using everyday conversation as an interview technique; informally observing during leisure activities (hanging out); recording observations in field notes (usually organized chronologically); and using both tacit and explicit information in analysis and writing (Musante & DeWalt, 2010).

Thus, as a researcher in Pulau Aman, I have been visiting the island for a duration of two years, conducted the conversation with locals in Northern Malay dialect, guiding several tours with the homestay operators, involved in the celebration of New Years’ Eve with local villagers, as well as using informal and semi-structured interview guide questions while interviewing the respondents. I have also been involved as an active observer that participated in the activities conducted with tourists
and at the same time actively recorded my observations using both fieldnotes and photographs. An extensive collection of photos and videos were gathered to document the observation, as well as detailed log book to note events and occurrence for the course of observation. These various roles were undertaken in order to get multiple views and perspectives, as well as various interaction with the homestay host and homestay guest.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussion

Two focus group discussions were carried out for the purpose of data collection. One group discussion was done with a group of tourists from different ethnicity and background. The group consisted of 7 males and 4 females’ tourists. The tourists were consisted of a group of organised tour from USM, and they have agreed to be interviewed in a focus group discussion for the purpose of research after their tour ended. The discussion were recorded using voice recorder, and they tourists were briefed on their involvement of the research before the session starts. The discussion revolved around their expectations before arriving at the island, and their description of the tourism programme that they undertake for the day. The discussion was conducted in English language and was organised in an open-ended discussion to enable the participants to discuss any topics from the trip that they wanted to bring forward. The location of this discussion was done at one of the floating chalet that was rented during the day for the purpose of discussion session, as well as for them to take a break from the tour.

Another group discussion was done with the homestay operators after the day trip with the visitors ended. The group consisted of 5 homestay operators that joined
the island tour with the rest of the visitors. The discussion which was conducted in Malay language, was centralised to understand their preparation to receive visitors, to the tasks they did while visitors arrived, up until the departure of visitors back to the mainland. The focus group discussions were carried out to add some other additional information regarding the whole hosts-guests’ interactions.

3.6.4 Data Collection

Field work phase for this study was conducted in several stages, over a two-years period. During this time, several group visits were planned and organised with the homestay’s coordinator. These group visits were observed and joined by the researcher in order to carry out the participant observation method. Table below demonstrates the schedule of this field work.

Table 3.3 – Schedule of the field work phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Initial contact with the coordinator of Homestay Pulau Aman – introduction to Pulau Aman and connection as key-informant</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>First group visit</strong> – USM undergraduate students (local tourists only)</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>One week stay in the island during low peak season of tourists’ visit</td>
<td>November 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Three days stay in the island during high peak season of tourists’ visit (Annual Sea Festival in Pulau Aman)</td>
<td>December 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Second group visit – USM postgraduate students (local and international tourists)</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Third group visit – participants from ASEAN leadership workshop (local and international tourists)</td>
<td>July 2017</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Follow-up visit – in depth interviews with coordinator and women operators of the homestay</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Final visit – finalising data collection</td>
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### 3.6.5 Data Analysis

The data from participant observation and interviews were analysed following the analytic framework commonly known as “grounded theory” (Charmaz 2000; Glaser 1978; Glaser & Strauss 1967). Qualitative data analysis was done, consisted of several iterative stages. The data were first fragmented through an open coding process, and then grouped into categories and subcategories that connected variously coded sentences, paragraphs, and incidents. The categories emerged from the open coding process were divided into authenticity and hospitality, and subcategories were formed under those two big categories. The subcategories were extracted from transcripts of in-depth interviews, as well as focus group discussions with the tourists and homestay operators. From the extractions of bigger sub-topics, new categories and refinements of existing sets occurred as interviews were gathered and coded.
Selective coding for specifically observed concepts and themes helped to further inform various categories and properties.

The process of refinements was also done by referring to the conceptual frameworks that has been developed in Chapter 2. Over time, further examination resulted in the development of key conceptual categories and further refining of core categories, subcategories, and properties. The emerging grounded theory identified theoretical relationships among these iteratively, with data collection and analysis occurring simultaneously. During this process, relevant literature was consulted in response to the emerged themes and concepts for a more theoretically informed examination.

3.7 Ethical consideration

In making the qualitative study complies with ethical guidelines, many important aspects of the research have to be taken care of. As a researcher, it is important to make research goals clear to the respondents that were being interviewed. The oral informed consent is gained beforehand from the respondents, and the procedure is done to make sure the women homestay operators understand that their identity will remain anonymous in the study, by given a pseudonym. A set of ethical form is given to the homestay operators to sign to signify their agreement to be included in the study (as attach in Appendix C). Next, to further confirm the significant of the study to the interviewees, the researcher had offered the results of the research to respondents if they would like to read it. And last but not least, the
researcher takes absolute measure to make sure that the research does not harm or exploit those respondents who is cited directly or indirectly in the study.
CHAPTER FOUR – PULAU AMAN – HISTORY AND ITS SOCIETY

4.1 Background

The section will start by introducing Pulau Aman’s history and its geographical location. The chapter will later expand into explanations on a journey throughout the attractions and notable places across Pulau Aman, including the activities that visitors can do while in the island. Following that, the chapter will continue to introduce the active homestay operators who have been interviewed for the study.

4.2 Introducing Pulau Aman

Pulau Aman, nestled around two and a half nautical miles off the coast, lie a tranquil island home to a small fishing community. It takes about 45 minutes by car from Penang towards the pier to Pulau Aman. As the morning mist disappears, view of the island from the mainland pier was breathtakingly beautiful. A sense of calm and peace surrounded the atmosphere, living up to the name as Island of Peace. A boat ride to the island takes about 10-15 minutes. Arriving at the pier and walking towards the small traditional Malay village, landscape of tall coconut trees lined up set against the sea and hues of green in a narrow green pathway. Signboards are placed strategically to give visitors clear direction around the village. Best explored on foot, it is impossible to get lost on this small island. Following the paved pathways, visitors
will be greeted by some of the islands cherished chattels – historic sites, the oldest *sukun* (breadfruit) tree, ancient pirates’ hideout, storefronts in front of homes selling souvenirs, locals picking cockle shells at the beach and smiling faces of the locals.

One may not be able to find the traditional Malay stilt houses as most homes and the facilities in the village have been refurbished. After being registered as a cluster village in the Homestay Programme by Ministry of Tourism and Culture, many of the homes were renovated to cater for homestay participants (MOTAC, 2009). Realising the potential that the village possesses in the tourism industry, through the Project on Integrated Agriculture Development Area Penang (IADP), Ministry of Tourism and Culture has spent almost RM1 million in building a new jetty in the hope of developing the island (Syed Ismail, 2009). The population of Pulau Aman is about 254 people, comprising of 117 men and 134 women. All the families who reside in Pulau Aman is of Malay ethnicity. A total of 56 families were currently living in this island. Besides that, Pulau Aman is equipped with an information centre, three restaurants, a souvenir shop and waiting room for outsider near the jetty.

Pulau Aman is accessible by boat at the Batu Musang Jetty near Bukit Tambun. In order to reach the jetty, one must drive to head to Simpang Ampat, and when approaching to the vicinity, a signboard showing “Jetty Pulau Aman” will be clearly visible. There are parking lots available to those who drive to the jetty, and it costs RM2 per day. For visitors, they have to buy the ticket ferry, which costs RM7 for two ways. It can be bought at the ticketing counter at the island, or on the boat with the boat driver and his/her assistant. Once visitors arrived at the jetty, they can board the ferry and make the payment at the ticketing counter on the island. The boats leave every hour and it started as early as 9 am in the morning.
Figure 4.1 – Location of Pulau Aman

Source: Google Maps
4.3 The History of Pulau Aman: Fishing Village

During the war between Kedah and Siam in 1783, Tunku Dhiauddin Sultan Zainal Rashid, or better known among the villagers as Tengku Kudin, who was the son of the Sultan of Kedah during that time has made Pulau Aman his hideout. This is due to the defeat experienced by Kedah in the war. The event has turned the island into a village until now. In addition to the history of the settlement, Pulau Aman has attracted the attention of tourists with the uniqueness of the Golden Well discovered in 1789. According to Ahmad, the current head of the village, British government has directed some excavations to be done, reaching almost 2.5 meter when they know that one of the villagers found a golden stone from the well. The excavation works had formed a well whereby the water remains freshwater even when it is mixed with sea water following its location by the sea. Thus, the place is named as the Golden Well since then. Fishing is a one of the largest industries in the island, as the fish hideouts is estimated to be around 100 meters from the second bridge of Penang (Sultan Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah). Pulau Aman offers special packages for fishing enthusiasts or better known as “anglers” who visited the island. For the package, the price charged starts from RM200 to RM400 for anglers of 10 to 14 people, and they will be taken to the waters of Pulau Aman including Pulau Gedung.

4.4 A trip to Pulau Aman: The Journey

Pulau Aman is mostly busy during the weekend, while weekdays are mostly empty when the children went to school, and husbands already went for fishing early in the morning. In the morning, housewives can be seen sweeping in front of their house yard, even when the sun is not fully rise. My first time staying in the island was
on a Friday, and my friend and I arrived around 9 am in the morning (the first boat available from Batu Musang Jetty to Pulau Aman Jetty). The homestay operator that I had initial contact with, Rohana was there to greet both of us. That day, she was pretty occupied as there were few guests who were also scheduled to arrive later in the evening. She booked a chalet for my accommodation for the weekend and brought me to that place. Rohana said that there is no available homestay for us, but Pak Abu’s chalet is a makeshift homestay that can turn to chalet. The room was situated nearby the beach and kayak hut. It has a connecting door to his living room. Pak Abu installed the door in order to give privacy to his guests. The door could be left open whenever his guests wanted assistance from the host. Pak Abu is a veteran who lives with his son and daughter in law, with many cats. When we arrived at the chalet, it was not yet ready because it was early in the morning, and the previous guest had just left. Pak Abu greet us in front of the lawn, while kept saying,

“Wait a minute, the house is not yet ready. My daughter is cleaning it up...”

So, it was his daughter who basically helped him in cleaning and making sure everything was clean in the chalet. It took about ten to fifteen minutes before the room was ready. The chalet is adjoining the house-owner’s place. The big room resembles Malay culture in terms of wall-colour choices, furniture arrangements, and necessities. The picture of the room is attached below as Figure 4.2.
From the picture, it is seen that the wall was painted with bright colours – green and red. There is a television, blue carpet, two unit of single sofa nearby the queen bed. There is also a private bathroom at the very end of the room. Apart from that, there is a kettle, with a bottle of mineral water prepared at the mini-pantry near the entrance door. The surrounding area is cleaned, swept through, and the location of the chalet is near to the beach. However, the main appearances of rusty metal are visible everywhere. The door shown in the picture is the door that leads to owner’s home, in which Pak Abu said is welcomed to be knocked if the guests need any favour from the hosts. However, during my stay, I did knock twice but the hosts did not answer. Afterwards, I found out that Pak Abu has left the island to attend his relatives house over the weekend. However, her daughter in law was around to assist me and my friend when needed. I talked to the homestay operators, she did mention that

Figure 4.2 – A regular guest’s room in Pulau Aman
maintenance issue is a problem to most of the hosts who is doing the homestay/chalet programme. I also met the Pak Man, another chalet operator who greeted me while we were having tea time with Rohana to chat on the matters of everyday live in Pulau Aman. He mentioned that nowadays there are only about ten houses which fully participate in the homestay programme. Many of the operators opted for their space to be rented as chalet of private room, instead of allowing guests to truly experience the homestay programme. The migration of young villagers to a bigger city has left the older generation to run the chalet, and they do not have the manpower anymore to maintain the premises. He joined this programme quite a long time ago, about ten years as far as he remembers. Rohana will be responsible to assign which homestay/chalet/room will they checked in. If there is a large group arriving, they will all be distributed among almost 40 houses around the village. Pak Man used to be a fisherman, in which he owns a boat to catch crabs and many other types of shellfish. He said that he prefers to work by himself, where he can have a flexible working hour. After finishes with the checking in process, it is time to taste the famous Prawn Noodle that visitors of Pulau Aman were raving about.

**The Floating Restaurant**

It was quite full that afternoon, with most of the customers were Chinese, eating affordable and fresh seafood. Most of them came in big group, and it was very packed with people. The uncle who took the order, Pak Man, he said that he owned a homestay too, and Rohana initially contacted him for my stay at the island. However, he had to reject the stay because his wife is not feeling well that week, thus they opted for not receiving guests. Being hospitable, he apologizes repeatedly to not being able to cater for our stay and promised to come and talk about my study.
Figure 4.3 – Catch of the day

Figure 4.4 – Floating Restaurant
Restoran Terapung or the Floating Restaurant is visible on the left side once the visitors arrived from the jetty. The restaurant has a modest selection of dishes that revolve around the latest catch of the day. Interestingly, literally every dish has prawns. This restaurant is known for its special prawn noodles, which is a dish content lush, large prawns accompanied by tofu, vegetables and noodles swim in a sweet-sour broth topped with the crunch of fried onions and the subtle zing of lime. For a large selection of seafood other than prawns, many visitors came to bring home the fresh catch that are laid out for sorting at the dock near the entrance of the restaurant. The price of the fresh seafood is considered reasonable for visitors. There are varieties of seafood from grouper to red snapper, mantis shrimp and oysters. At the wooden jetty leading to the restaurant is a small stall manned by fishermen selling fresh caught seafood, from flower crabs to fishes to large mantis prawns, all sold at reasonable prices. Visitors have the option of buying these sea creatures to bring home or they can take the bucket full of fresh seafood to the restaurant and have them clean and cook it for a small fee. The restaurant received a lot of customers, even during the weekdays.

Sukun Chips: Pride of Pulau Aman

Pulau Aman is an island famous for breadfruit tree (sukun). Pulau Aman has one of the oldest breadfruit trees in the country. According to the locals, this tree was planted in 1891 by a religious teacher, Tok Awang Akib. The tree was endorsed by the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) as the oldest sukun tree in Malaysia. The fruits are round and green in colour. It is then harvested, sliced and deep-fried to be served up as a snack.
Rohana also mentions that the residents of the island would not buy the *sukun* fruits from outside because the taste of the fruit planted there was very different from other places. She said the *sukun* fruits that were planted there were sweeter and fatter than the one planted outside. She added that the villagers believe this is due to the fact that the land on the island is mixed with shellfish that produce excellent fertilizer for the growth of *sukun* trees here and that is why the breadfruit here tastes better.
The majestic Golden Well

Telaga Emas or the Golden Well is one of the main attractions on the island and it has an enjoyable and interesting origin. As legend has it, around the year 1789, an unnamed villager found a fresh water spring that flowed out into the sea.

Figure 4.6 – Clear water inside the Golden Well

Figure 4.7 – The monument that described the history of the Golden Well
With the intention of using this fresh water for the village, he started to dig a well. While digging, he hit a hard object – a vase made of gold. Shocked and amazed, he ran into the village to inform the villagers of his discovery. Together with the villagers he returned to the site only to discover that the golden vase had disappeared and in its place were gold rocks. When the British heard of this discovery, they soon descended on the island to look for gold at the very same spot. Samples of the ‘gold rock’ were sent to England for verification – as it turned out, it was sadly not gold at all. As a result, the village still has a fresh water well that goes down to 2.5m and the site was crowned *Telaga Emas* or Golden Well. The locals believe that a dip in the well’s water will bring good luck.

**Adventure awaits: Kayaking and Hiking Trails**

Next, visitors will be guided through a more adventurous activity at the island. Kayak is available to be rented, and later they can go on an exploration around the island. This activity is definitely for a more physically inclined visitor. The hiking trail is equipped with a average-trail, which halfway of the journey it has been slightly damaged due to the soil condition. Usually, these activities were planned before visitors arrive and the homestay operators together with the local tour guide will prepare the necessary equipment to cater to the visitor’s request. In addition, the village is also occupied with a nice camping sites, suitable for a team-building activity. The visitors may have to hike up to the very end of the trail before they will arrive at the camping sites. Due to the hilly trail, the hiking journey may take up to 30 minutes from the settlement area, depending on one’s physical capabilities.
Figure 4.8 – Kayak beside the sea

Figure 4.9 – The Camping Area
For those who rented the chalet or homestays, the host will be more than happy to assist their guests to experience the life in Pulau Aman. Apart from that, it is interesting to note that, instead of sandy beaches, the ‘sand’ is made up of millions of little and large shells that have washed up on the shore. Besides that, there are also activities available for more adventurous visitors. The hiking trail entrances are situated behind the village cemetery and from Telaga Emas. To reach there, visitors will find some overgrown plants and they are hard to manoeuvre without cutting down branches. For an alternative, visitors have an alternative to follow the paved footpath after Telaga Emas around the island. The 4km walk around the island is scenic with a clearing that opens up to beautifully framed views of Penang Island and Jerejak Island in the distance. Filled with the sounds of soft crashing waves, coupled with lush green trees, this trail is sure to energise the spirits and help work up an appetite afterwards.

Night-time activities

During the night, after the Maghrib prayer, men were seen to be seating at the coffee shop nearby mosque, sipping coffee with their friends. Some men were also seen nearby the jetty, smoking cigarettes. Boys were seen to be around the village, bicycling around with fellow friends, while the girls were at the main hall playing badminton. Afterwards, the women of the village were also seen gathering at one house as they were required to attend an annual meeting. It was quite a busy night, because on the day after, the village will be receiving a large number of visitors. I was just everywhere to observe the night, and try to take part in any activities that I could join. We played a round or two of the badminton with the girls. One of the girls said that they played almost every day if there is no other event at the hall. Girls will play first, followed by boys who would usually booked the hall/court 9pm and above to
play “sepak takraw”. Later that night, we were invited to attend a New Year celebration with fellow villagers, which takes place at the main hall too.

Thus, this concludes the one whole day journey in Pulau Aman. To sum, there were several activities available for the visitors to enjoy while in the island. The most obvious reason for visitor’s arrival is definitely to try their famous Prawn Noodle, but apart from that, Pulau Aman villagers have successfully provided and enhanced their local products and cultures to be showcased to the visitors.

4.5 Type of lodging

Pulau Aman offers several type of lodging facilities, which are homestays, chalet, and budget hotel. These three distinct types of accommodation cater to specific needs of different type of visitors. Details of these several types of lodging is discussed further as follow.

Homestays

There is currently 15 registered homestays premise in the island. As mentioned by Rohana, the head of Homestay Programme in Pulau Aman, homestay accommodation is usually occupied by students who conducted university or school’s activities within a large number of participants. However, there is only a total of 9 active homestay operators who are still actively participated in receiving foster children, should there are any programmed being organised. Usually, per home will receive two to three children and it is depend on the size of their homestay premise. Homestay premise is occupied with one to two beds in a room, and is well-maintained with basic amenities such as kettle, ceiling or standing fan, en-suite bathroom, towels,
and water bottles. Apart from school or university activities, foreign tourists also occasionally booked the homestay to experience the culture and customs of Malay families. So far, the village had received tourists from Hong Kong, China, Japan, and European tourists.

**Chalet**

Chalet is mostly catered to families who visited Pulau Aman for the purpose of fishing or spending the school holidays with their children. The chalet space offers more privacy than the homestay premises. However, several homestay operators owned both chalet and homestay, or even a convertible chalet that has a separate door for the guests have some privacy when needed. The number of chalet unit in the island is increasing due to popular demand from visitors. Visitors who rented the chalet will have the privacy of living the entire home just for themselves. However, they can always reach out to chalet hosts as they also often live next to the unit or nearby. The chalet properties are occupied with medium to full range of amenities, including kitchen and some basic groceries such as onions, oils, salt, and gas for cooking. The chalet unit has one to three bedrooms, depending on the hosts’ own design.

**Budget Hotel**

The budget hotel is run and organised by the Pulau Aman’s Corporation (*Koperasi Pulau Aman*). However, it seldom got visitors as the maintenance is hardly done, and location of the budget hotel is also not too convenient for families with small children. According to Ahmad, the Head Village, the budget hotel is primarily reserved for government servant that conducted seminar or workshop in the island, as the premise is quite spacious for the setting up of audio-visual equipment. Other
visitors who came to Pulau Aman and planned for an overnight trip will usually contacted Rohana directly for the booking arrangements.

4.6 Homestay Operator’s Profile

This section will introduce the homestay operators interviewed for the purpose of the study. In order to comply with ethical consideration while conducting the study, the names of the operators were changed to make them anonymous for the reader. With regards of the selection of operators interviewed, initially, there were 20 registered participants with the homestay programme, however currently the number is decreasing to 15 participants. During the course of the fieldwork, only 9 homestay operators agreed to be interviewed. The following is the profiling of the homestay operators in Pulau Aman.

i. Rohana, the Homestay Programme’s Coordinator

Rohana bt Abdul, 69 years old is the leader and head of the homestay program in Pulau Aman. She is a single mother for almost 20 years. Her late husband was an army, and since her husband died, she had been working hard to raise her small family. She used to work as a nurse for almost 40 years, before she retired and focusing on the homestay business in Pulau Aman. Rohana was appointed by an USM lecturer to be the coordinator for homestay program back in the year 2000, because she had attended many courses and since then have actively involved in the activities organised by the ministry and university regarding tourism management and
hospitality. Rohana is the one who’s responsible for arranging the accommodation for visitors who would like to stay overnight in the island.

For visitors there are several ways for them to look for accommodation. First, they could contact the individual who owns a chalet or homestay. Secondly, they could contact the main office of Pulau Aman’s ticketing service and ask for room rental. However, to make things easier, Rohana is the one who oversees and arranging the accommodation of visitors to respective houses when they arrive at the island. As the coordinator, she has a connection with all the homestay operators, chalet owners, as well as management of the budget hotel on the island. She plays a vital role in ensuring the guest’s well-being is taken care of while at the island. In addition to that, as the coordinator, she is also responsible in arranging activities for tourists for the whole stay. This is especially in need to be done when there are a large number of participants per visit.

Apart from that, Rohana is the founder of Women’s Development Group (KPW) that was established in the late 2000s. She had joined one KPW branch when she was working as a nurse in Balik Pulau. Therefore, when she came back to the island to continue serving at the Klinik Desa, she decided that the island also needs one Women’s Association. This is when she approached the state officer and thus, begins her active involvement of the women’s well-being in the island. The membership of the group started with all of the women participated in the organization.
ii. **Halimah, wife of the Head Village**

Halimah bt Harun, 52 years old is the wife of the current Head of the Village and Head of JKKP of Pulau Aman. She has 6 children, of which 3 of them are still in school. Her husband was appointed as the Head Village 5 years ago, after the last Head died of old age. She is a housewife and to fill her time, she raised chickens and goats at her own barn near the Golden Well. She loves nature and always finds a way to contribute to nature by planting trees such as chilli plant, pandan leaves, as well as flowers pot. She first joined the homestay program when they offered her to take care of several foster children from a university for about a one-week programme. She delightfully accepted the offer, as well as several other hosts. Halimah is keen to join the program because she is interested to communicate with other people, as well as sharing their culture with outsiders. She also shares that the women in Pulau Aman wanted to break free from daily activities, therefore they might as well choose to join programs as such to add income to their families.

Halimah originated from Kedah, and only move to Pulau Aman after she married her husband. Since 1990, she lived in the island, and her family with her husband’s mother for 12 years. Only in 2003, she moved into her own home and 5 years later, homestay program slowly emerging in the village. Because her children were of young age back then, she often opted to only helping out with the program, as their home is not so big to accommodate more people. However, recently when some of the children has already move out, she is more than happy to receive guests to her home.

With regards to her ways to fill up her free times, she mentions that she decided to go to Veterinary Department and apply for funding to breed goats and chicken.
Interestingly, only 2 persons in the village went for the funding. Her loves to nature, plus her enthusiasts in business contribute to the moves she takes to maintaining the “mini-zoo” she has at the village.

iii. **Faizah, owner of Warung Mee Udang**

Faizah bt Din, 48 years old is a successful restaurateur in Pulau Aman. She has been opening her restaurant since 2012 and is often visited by both outsiders and villagers. Her two daughters help her in running the shop since her late husband died in 2016. She used to be an active member of KPW, under the leadership of Rohana. She also is one of the active homestay hosts who always join the program conducted under the Tourism Programme in the island. However, since her late husband fell sick few years back, she had to slow down her involvement in the homestay programme due to commitment issue. She has to take care of her husband, and at the same time become the sole breadwinner of the family. She then choose to focus on her catering and restaurant business, and slowly opted to no longer participated in the homestay program.

However, she did not just left her renovated home, thus she decided to turn her homestay into a chalet because she just had to redirected her focus into commitments to her families. According to Faizah, the management of a chalet is easier to handle, compared to homestay because she just need to hire other people to help cleaning up the room before and after her guests left. Apart from that, her restaurant is also doing so well, as she is occupied with selling Prawn Noodle that opens daily from 8 am until 10 pm. Her restaurant is located at a nearer proximity to the homestays and chalet.
She chooses to cater to villager’s need and also tourists who spend the nights in the island.

iv. Nora, homestay owner and housewife

Nora bt Ishak, 53 years old is a housewife, and a mother of 4 children. Her husband, like many of the men in Pulau Aman, is a fisherman and always go to the sea to support his family. Nora used to join homestay program as a host, and interestingly she always opted to host foreign guests. She has hosted visitors from Hong Kong, Japan, and also Denmark. She mentions that she loves to attend to this type of visitors because they love to learn about Malay culture. Nora is also an active member of KPW, in which she helped in the cooking preparation if there are any big delegations who came to the island.

However, she said that the programme did not receive too many guests in the last two or three years. She recalls that she only received 4 visitors when she was still an active member. She just recently pulls out from the program and turned her homestay into chalet property. She noticed that the pay they get to accommodate visitors in their homestay is not worth the money and energy they have put. Thus, she and her husband decided to renovate the homestay premise they owned into a chalet, by building a make-shift divider between the room and guest’s room. In this way, her guest gains more privacy, and she also are able to make more business by providing her guests privacy.
v. **Ziana, owner of the grocery store**

Ziana, 37 years old is a businesswoman who runs the prominent grocery store in Pulau Aman. She has been married for 12 years to Rohana’s nephew. Her mother in law is the older sister of Rohana. She originated from Penang, and moved to Pulau Aman after she got married. Her husband works as a fisherman, like majority of the male residents there. She has 3 children, of 1 male and 2 females. All of her children go to SK Pulau Aman, which is located in the island. Currently, her mother in law stays with her and the family as she is getting older and hard to move around by herself. The grocery store was passed down to her to be managed, as well as the homestay business. Besides from homestay, she also possesses few chalet premises near the bay, and she mentioned that the business is quite good especially during school holidays.

With regards to homestay programme, she is so happy to be a part of the association as she loves to share Malay culture and traditions to visitors. She said that the program is definitely good for the development of the village, as it can boost up the economy status of homestay operators, especially that majority of them are women. She happily mentioned that with the rise of social media like Facebook, it become much easier for visitors to book the accommodation in Pulau Aman (such as homestays and chalets). She is also quite positive that this programme will brings more income overall for the residents of Pulau Aman.
vi. **Rokiah, a veteran homestay host (Tok Wa)**

Rokiah bt Rashid, is 71 years old who currently lives alone in her home. Her late husband was a fisherman and both of them originated from Pulau Aman. After her husband died, Rokiah or better known as Tok Wa was active in the business of collecting seashells and sold them to local producer. She sometimes managed to sell kilos of seashells to the Floating Restaurant when she was young in age. Now, due to deteriorating health condition, she only stayed at home and joined Women’s Association Program that was conducted regularly.

She has 3 daughters, of which all now resides outside of Pulau Aman. One of her daughters is a primary school teacher who teaches near Batu Kawan. She joined the homestay programme during its initial establishment in the year 2009, and even though she did not have the full passion of being a homestay host, she simply joined in order to have additional income. Ever since then, she is one of the still active members of the association and she makes sure that she is updated with the activities happening in the island. As one of the village’s oldest generation, many people were looking up to her, seeking advices, as well as keeping her company. That is the reason that she manages to stay alone in her home.

However, since last heavy storms that hits Pulau Aman in the month of December 2017, her home is badly damaged by the thunderstorm. Her roofs were flown away, leaving holes on top of the home. Many of her furniture has damages, and she was forced to move in her homestay premise that is conveniently located beside her home. Due to some problems and misunderstanding, the repair process takes too long and since then she has no income from the homestay/chalet business. She takes the alternative to sell traditional *kuih* and her daughter who works as a
teacher helped her to take order. She is very frustrated with the current organisation of the homestay program, in which she views as “unfair”.

vii.  **Aminah, veteran in Pulau Aman (Tok Chik)**

Aminah bt Hamat, 78 years old is the oldest woman living in Pulau Aman. She is still healthy and energetic for her age. She is also a single mother, and her late husband works as an army before they move to Pulau Aman. Since retirement, her late husband works in the sea to catch fish with fellow fishermen. Aminah or well-known as Tok Chik has only 2 children, of which both live outside Penang. However, they often visited their mother, especially during school vacation and public holidays.

Tok Chik also joined the Women’s Association and Homestay Programme since their initial establishments. She becomes a Homestay Host because she likes to entertain guests, and she often feels lonely when her children are not around. According to other homestay hosts, Tok Chik’s home is one of the most beautiful homes in the village, because she is a very neat and tidy person. Because of that, she often gets chosen to host visitors for homestay programme. However, Tok Chik mentioned her disappointment because nowadays many visitors choose to rent chalet instead, and she noticed that her income becomes significantly decreasing in the last few years. Nonetheless, she admits that it is beyond their control because most people were looking for privacy when they booked the accommodation in Pulau Aman, especially those families with small children.
viii. Roslia, part time cleaner and homestay owner

Roslia bt Hassan, 59 years old is a devoted single mother, of 5 children. She lives with one of her daughters in law and 2 grandchildren. She works as a part-time cleaner for the village, and she was paid monthly by the allowance given from the state government. She runs a homestay and also takes job to do housekeeping of the rented chalet. Roslia becomes single mother not long ago, when her husband died of old age. She originated from the island, and as far as she remembers, she has been living in the village ever since she was born.

She joined homestay programmed under the influence of Tok Chik, who is her close neighbour. She thinks that it will be good to help increase her monthly income. She enjoys joining the programme for the first few years, but now she only participated because she wanted to help KPW when there is big event that needed the villagers help. She feels disappointed with the governance of the programme, as she repeatedly mentions that it is best if the current leader step down to give chances to younger generation to lead the association. From her opinion, too many unfairness is observed during the course of the programme, and she, being a single mother found it difficult to keep up with the activities plan in the programme. For example, she said that she only recalls being sent to tourism course only in the first two years, and then for the years later, only same person went to the course. The sole representative of Pulau Aman for the course gets all the advantages of attending the course, while the other homestay hosts did not get equal opportunities to join the organised workshop. Nevertheless, she said nothing can be done and as a small voice, she only can voice out her opinion and hopes that someday the change of leader is happening, and later
the equal distribution of knowledge and opportunities can be done among all homestay hosts.

ix. Zabedah, run family business (homestay, grocery store)

Zabedah binti Abdul, 70 years old is the elder sister of Rohana. She has stayed in Pulau Aman for as long as she can remembers. Born and raised in the island, Zabedah has always been living in a family of fishermen. Her late father was a fisherman and she was the one who helped her late mother back in the days. Unlike her other siblings who went out from the island to work, Zabedah stays and help her family out. She got married early, when she was 16 years old. She has 4 children, of all now married and working outside the island. Her husband used to be a fisherman too, but now he retired due to old age. She joined the homestay programme under the influence of Rohana, and also to earn extra income. She then stayed with her son and daughter in law, and together they opened the grocery store. She turned her home into a chalet and since then, she manages the homestay and chalet with the help of her daughter in law. Her homestay premise is a convertible chalet, in which if the guests needed privacy, she would be able to turn her homestay into a chalet, with a build-in door. She rarely stayed in her own home as her health condition is deteriorating, hence her daughter in law, Ziana took care most of her daily life, including the maintenance of her homestay/chalet premise.

4.7 Conclusion

Pulau Aman is a Malay fishing village that still observed a traditional way of living. Due to its small population, the residents of Pulau Aman experienced a lifestyle
that mimic the life of one big family. Every person knows everyone, and the young respects the old, while the old loves the young. Pollution is a significant issue on the island, given the fact that its geographical location that is so close to the second bridge to Penang Island. When bad weather hits the island, the whole village receive its impact and not everyone wanted to take responsibilities of cleaning them. Additionally, with the high numbers of outsiders who came to visit the island each day, it becomes harder to control the amount of garbage thrown away. With regards to the society of Pulau Aman, women homestay operators view the island’s recognition as one of the most successful tourism products to be sometimes misleading. Even though the homestay programme receives high numbers on their yearly income, but the real situation in the village did not depict that. There are problems with management of the program, as well as leadership issue, and to add to that weather condition can sometimes cause major impact to the tourism industry.
CHAPTER FIVE: “GIVING GOOD SERVICE” – STAGING HOSPITALITY AND BEING HOSPITABLE

5.1 Background

This chapter describes the roles of women in hospitality services, and how the homestay operators create hospitality at home, as well as the emergence of bonding between host and guests from eating together. The stages of hospitality are explored by examining the findings from interviews and observation of the island tour. The chapter continues by exploring the perception of tourists on the hospitality services they received from their visit in the island.

5.2 Staging Hospitality at Pulau Aman

Pulau Aman received a number of tourists everyday. The essence of culture and identity in Malaysia is arguably the main attractions that attract visitors to the island. This section will present the hospitality services provided by the homestay operators in the island, from their ways of making a hospitable home, to roles of women and men in hospitality services, as well as building the bond together with visitors.

5.2.1 Staging Traditional Malay House

Traditional Malay house in Pulau Aman is a perfect exemplar to showcase Malay Muslim oriented building as they were built to suit the weather condition and soil properties of a standing home in an island. The study finds that houses in Pulau
Aman were built to suit its weather and soil condition, making sure that it can withstand the salty water from the sea during the high tide season.

Thus, many homestays in Pulau Aman are taking into consideration of the privacy issue in order to provide comforts for their guests. The hosts of homestay are being strategic in locating the guest’s room, as well as following the rules and regulations provided by Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC) in qualifying their house to be a part of the program. The program of homestay in Malaysia required the host to provide a built-in bathroom in the room for their guests, as well as basic amenities in the room. Air-conditioning room is not compulsory, but homestay in Pulau Aman were mostly occupied with air-conditioner provided by MOTAC.

Besides a built-in bathroom, homestay operators in Pulau Aman also equipped their rental room with basic amenities. As mentioned in previous chapter, the basic amenities include electric kettle, bottled water, kain sarong or kain batik, towels and prayer robes, as well as a small television in some rooms. The wearing of kain sarong and/or kain batik symbolizes traditional way of living in the island. These amenities
helped making the guests to feel more comfortable when spending their night(s). Apart from that, homestay host usually will keep in touch with their guests to make sure they have everything that they need. With the makeshift door as in Pak Abu’s chalet, it enables the guests to have privacy when needed, but at the same time guests may contacted the host when necessary.

5.2.2 Women’s role in staging hospitality

Being a homestay host, woman in Pulau Aman has to perform a vital role in catering for guest’s need and giving good services. Guests who visited Pulau Aman consisted of various ethnic background, from different states in the country, as well as occasional visit from foreign tourists. Most of them observed the same ritual when they first arrive in the island, in which they will participate in the activities led by the tour guide, until the very end of their journey which is the departure to leave Pulau Aman. Being operated for almost 10 years (since 2008), homestay program in this village provides such memorable experience for the visitors to reminisce.

Hospitality is a two-way interaction, and it always involves hands that receiving the services. In order to provide good services to the visitors, there are a lot of preparation and organisation to be done. Rohana as the Homestay Program Coordinator takes the lead. She plays her leader role by organising activities in the island. She said,

“I am the leader of KPW. There were a lot of activities that I have tried to organise for the homestay program. All of the small businesses were established by our KPW member. We tried to include as many activities as possible so that when visitors come, there are activities for them”
In addition to organizing activities, the maintenance of the home is also important. When the visitors came, they wanted to see a nice, clean environment. Living in climate like the island, it requires a lot of maintenance. During flood season, some houses’ condition may deteriorate. Halimah was grateful that her husband is handy with construction works. She said,

“My husband is a good carpenter, he makes boat and also repair houses. If we were to hire outsiders, it will be so expensive, even a small toilet cost us RM10000”

Besides caring for the guests, roles of women include domestic duties such as cleaning and cooking at home. When they are tourists around, these women operators have to take extra burden and care for the needs of their guests. For Faizah, owning a restaurant makes her responsibilities even higher. She mentioned that,

“I am grateful that my children were able to help since my husband died. I don’t have enough time because I have to cook for guests, take care of my restaurant, and also cleaning and tidying up the house”

With the help from her children, Faizah is able to juggle her responsibilities and thus making sure all her roles are fulfilled as perfect as possible. On the other hand, for homestay operators who are married, they can have a shared responsibility. Ziana said in her interview,

“When there are guests either in my chalet or homestay, my husband will be in charge of entertaining the guests while I cooked in the kitchen. He usually was already exhausted from his work at sea, so I do not mind doing most of the works”

This shared responsibility is an evidence of roles men and women undertake while providing hospitality services to the visitors. Wives show their empathy towards their
working husbands, thus giving them a lesser responsibility when they received guests at their home.

5.2.3 Eating together: building the ‘bond’

During the course of organised tour or a visit, homestay hosts would invite the guests to have breakfast together either at their home, or at a prepared setting, which usually takes place at the hall. A matching set of dining table accessories were neatly presented on top of a table that has been lined with proper table cloth. For breakfast time, the usual menu would be local delicacies such as Nasi Lemak, Fried Noodle, in addition to a spread of Malay dessert and kuih-muih that includes Curppuff, Donuts, and Seri Muka.

Figure 5.2 – Example of table setting for visitors

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Halimah admits that she loves talking to them, and shares stories about their families and life. “We normally will talk during meals time,” said Halimah. This bonding moments made the visit special, as some of them still keeping in touch with the host’s family. For visitors who stayed in homestay, usually what they pay in the package includes meals with the host family. Depending on the prior agreement made, the preparation of food for foster children may take place at the communal hall, together with some of the committee members of Women’s Association. If the number of participants is not high, homestay operators will prepare home-cooked meals in their own home. Faizah who owns a restaurant said,

“When I was actively received ‘foster children’ last time, I like to invite them to cook together with me. While cooking we can share stories. When they see us cooking, then they will understand how Malay cooking is…”

It was during this cooking demonstration, the bonding between host and guest would be formed. This was the time when both party exchange stories. Another homestay operator, Ziana who liked to cook for their guest also said that she opted to cook same menu for her guests and her family. Not only it saves her energy cooking and cleaning, it also saves time. Ziana said, “I serve the guests the same food that I cooked for my family. Sometimes if my husband brings back prawn, I will cook them prawn too”.

This strategy is useful for homestay operators who have small children at home that require more attention. However, different strategies have been adopted by the more senior members of homestay operators. Aminah, Rokiah, and Zabedah shared that they depend on their children, or only prepare simple meals to entertain the guests. The homestay hosts seem very conscious about what their guests would say if they
serve “simple” food. In this context, simple means dried fish, fried anchovies, or egg dish. A more elaborate dish is consisted of fresh seafood such as fish, prawns or clams. Zabedah on the other hand, take it easy by asking help from her daughter who lived together with her son and daughter in law. She said,

“I normally ask help from my daughter in law to prepare the food. If there were guests in my homestay, she will prepare extra dishes for us. It does not matter as long as we are eating together, right?”

Zabedah is considered lucky because she has the help she needed. Not every homestay operator has this opportunity. She had the support system she needed, and she managed to maintain her homestay business from the involvement of her family members. From these narratives it is obvious that women in Pulau Aman tried their best to perform their hospitality in the best capacity possible.

On the other hand, for visitors of Pulau Aman who stayed in chalet, most of the premises already include a complete kitchen set so that the guests can cook while they stay in the island. They can buy the wet ingredients fresh from the Floating Restaurant, or some of them even brought raw cooking materials from mainland to be cooked in their chalet. Thus, visitors who stayed in the budget hotel will opted for catering services from two major restaurants available in the village. From these observations and interviews, it is well-noted that different lodging facilities demanded a different food service component from the hosts. The services of hospitality are therefore limited to these types of visitors, as they only need a part of the hospitality service, namely the lodging element.
5.3 Hospitality from the perspective of tourists

The study interviewed 11 tourists, of 7 Malaysian and 4 of them were foreign tourists. From visitor’s point of view, hospitality services provided by the homestay host in Pulau Aman are already more than enough for them. For visitors from Malaysia, majority of them said that they feel like visiting their own village while in Pulau Aman. The warmth feeling reminded them of home and the peaceful serenity making them feel welcome at the village. However, for non-Malaysian visitors, arriving in Pulau Aman excites them as it is a whole new experience for them. Starting from boarding the boat, until they reached the Jetty Pulau Aman, they were amazed of the environment and ambience that the village has.

A visitor from Germany described his experience as “interesting, but too much”. From where he came from, the hospitality service is very much different to what he received in Pulau Aman. Malay hospitality is characterized by close-relationship with host-guest, while in Europe they were offered more privacy. Therefore, he mentioned,

“It’s very interesting because there are far away, but the hospitality, the food is quite similar. Even in Johor Bharu I went to some villagers, the way they keep entertaining the guest is very much kind and inviting. But sometimes I feel this is…they feel some pressure also on them, you know. Because they always have to provide. They always have to serve the guest. I feel bad because I think I don’t deserve that kind of treatment. For me it’s kind of different from where I came from, because I don’t want to be treated like that. It is not easy to do and it takes lots of work. Like in Europe, it is all different, and that’s why sometimes I feel ashamed, it is sometimes too much, I am just normal person.”

(Maximillan, 31)
He perceived himself as “normal person”, while Malay hospitality always treat the guests as “special person”. These different shows how different is hospitality received versus being hospitable. During their visit to Pulau Aman, the tour guide invited the group of visitors to enter into one of the villager’s home. Foreign tourists were shocked, but at the same time full of excitement that a stranger let them inside her home. They find it unusual to simply going into someone’s house without any complaint from the owners. However, a Malaysian tourist has her own view on this occurrence. She said,

“I personally think it’s like Malaysian culture. I am not sure, whether it’s Chinese or Indian, or Malay, but basically in Malay culture it is like if guests come, you welcome them with open heart, and open hands, and everything, you welcome them. So basically, what the tour guide did just now was that she met with the lady first, and got her permission for us to just see her house and take a look at how the houses look like. Upon receiving the consent from the owner, then she lets us in so in a way the lady was welcoming us as her guest. For maybe the tourists or us might think, we are exploiting someone else’s privacy, but in Malay culture, particularly in Malaysia, that’s how guests are received.”

(Sally, 40)

She perceived the hospitality in Pulau Aman as something that is expected, in which a Malay household used to do whenever the situation like that arise. Receiving unannounced guests is an act of hospitality, whereby the hosts are readily opening their home and later, sharing more information where needed.

Similarly, a tourist from Turkey said that he enjoys the serenity that Pulau Aman offered. He said,

“…almost all villagers are approachable, the place is very convenient to have a rest, especially for those who got fed up with the noise from cities, here in the island they can easily be approached and asked question, engaged in conversation, so I think it gives them opportunity to work as well if they wanted to see more. Most of houses, unlike other place is not
very locked strictly, so it also gives the feeling of safety/security that makes you feel like you are in a safe zone, and the look of the people here is not threatening or intimidating, they make it comfortable here. Those who want to visit quite convenient. To sums, transportation easy, environment is safe, people are approachable.”

(Viyan, 34)

His experience in Pulau Aman is not as beautiful as a Penangites thought about the island. Farid, 29 who has been in Penang for half his life assumed that Pulau Aman is poorly maintained when he first step foot at the jetty. From his description of Pulau Aman, he will not recommend visiting this island if the surrounding stays unmaintained. He said,

“When I first arrived, I did not spare any expectation on this island, so when I first saw the place, it definitely reminds me of a fishing village. The view was quite nice actually. But in my opinion, there was not many people visit this island, it looks like an abandoned island. However, the food sold here is also quite pricey. I do not deny that they tasted very good, with the famous prawn noodle, resembles the homecooked experience. So, I also saw mostly older people who reside here, and there are not many activities can be done in this village. One may come and tour the whole island by walking, having lunch at the famous floating restaurant, and then just go home.”

Nevertheless, another visitor from neighbouring state, Kedah thought the experience she had while touring the island was good enough, with less expectation and reminded her of her own village. Nasuha said, “I didn’t expect too much from Pulau Aman, and in fact I’m quite impressed when I’m here because I now know some new things about Pulau Aman, the culture in Pulau Aman, and the activities here. In my opinion, the differences between my Malay cultures with Pulau Aman’s culture is that here is an island. So it is different.” Nasuha’s observation about the similarities of her own village with what Pulau Aman to offer is another finding that worth mentioning that hospitality is able to convert a strange place into a familiar one.
Hospitality is a very challenging concept as women always have to negotiate what the guests do expect and demand. For Sally, it was easier for her to understand the way the women act (inviting the guests spontaneously and let them go inside a house of another family). However, it was a different case for a European tourist like Maximillan, as it seems harder for him to understand and accept the hospitality act because he does not know how to deal with this form of hospitality, as he is not used to them. Thus, the women homestay operators have to be very sensitive regarding what they will offer to their guests in order to make them feel comfortable and do not overburden them with their hospitality. The act of hospitality thus needs a lot of sensitivity and even intercultural competences to feel what is right for their guests. If they overburden them the guests might feel uncomfortable and this would be bad for the whole programme when the guests are not satisfied with it.

For local tourists such as Nasuha and Farid, they both have different perception in experiencing the performance of hospitality by the women operators in Pulau Aman. Nasuha takes her experience as similar to what she remembers about her own village, and she was pleased with her whole encounter in the island as she puts little expectations on the complete experience. Unlike Farid, his disappointment with the under-maintained island shows that he anticipates a more elaborate experience of a homestay experience.

5.4 Discussion and Analysis

As noted by Tom Selwyn in his chapter Anthropology of Hospitality, “exchanges of goods and services between those who give hospitality (hosts) and those who receive it (guests)” demonstrate how principal functions of act of
hospitality recognise that hosts and guests already share the same moral universe. From the very beginning of guest’s arrival, homestay hosts in Pulau Aman has shown a great deal of hospitality services to visitors. The findings mentioned above has shown that throughout the pre-arrival, to during their touring in the island, up until the departure back to the mainland jetty, the women operators play major roles in facilitating the whole program.

From these observations, the relationship between hosts and guests has emerged in a sense that strangers become friends, and then becoming a part of family in short period of time. This bond is observed in a homestay context, especially when the visitors had spent some time together with their hosts. The act of hospitality in homestay programmes is therefore in close relation with the role of women as homestay operators. The term hospitality and homestay industry has been selectively appropriated to denote a large-scale service industry providing overnight accommodation and food services on a commercial basis. In turns, it represents the commodification of domestic labour. Services of hospitality includes food and lodging element elevate the gender roles that is long embedded in these women’s daily life. Gender stereotypes such as women belongs in the kitchen, while men go out for working is also a big element in shaping how hospitality and being hospitable is presented in the homestay programme. Hence, the concept of hospitality and authenticity seems to be a challenging aspect. The homestay operators wanted to be authentic in providing food for their guests, but they know that they cannot be authentic all the time as they must adopt to the foreigners’ taste or favours in one way or the other. The excerpts show for example that the women were reluctant to serving them dried fish although it was common to eat them at Pulau Aman. For summary,
table below summarised the act of hospitality and being hospitable in the two-way interactions of host-guests.

**Table 5.1 – Summary of Hospitable and Being Hospitable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOSPITABLE AND HOSPITALITY</th>
<th>Being hospitable (HOST)</th>
<th>Receiving hospitality (GUEST)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lodging</strong></td>
<td>• Decorating the room and ensuring basic amenities is provided</td>
<td>• Arriving in time to ease the check-in process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Being attentive to guest’s needs</td>
<td>• Taking care of the host’s belonging at the homestay premise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sharing information about places to visit in the village</td>
<td>• Sharing details about themselves for the host to know them better – making friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Service</strong></td>
<td>• Providing home-cooked meals</td>
<td>• Helped in preparation of meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Serving traditional Malay food</td>
<td>• Trying different kind of food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Source of food comes from local fisherman – locally caught</td>
<td>• Complimenting the host’s effort in preparing the meals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The narratives demonstrate that women are burdened by highly important responsibilities in bringing up the images of Pulau Aman as one of the top homestay in Penang Island. Women operators were put in a position as experiencing “double-burden”, a concept to describe women with workload of people who work to earn money, however at the same time is put with the responsibility for a significant amount of unpaid domestic labour (Nazneen, 2016). These observations imply that they have to run two house-holds when guests are visiting because they have to care for their own family and for the guests by doing multiple things at the same time such as cleaning, cooking, taking care of the family members/visitors, in which both takes a
lot of time and effort and energy. However, at the end they do only earn a little bit of money compared to the work they invest in caring almost 24 hours a day for the visitors.

From the impression that homestay hosts received from their guests and visitors, traditional Malay house is part of heritage value that attracts tourists to visit the island and experience the culture. This is in line with a study done by a group of Malaysian architects in designing building that is shariah compliance and has a Malay Muslim oriented architecture, that found out that neglecting this cultural value of one’s home will cause the country to lose its sense of place (Majid et al, 2015). Since cultural tourism is a value that attracts tourists, it is important to acknowledge the influential attributes of Malay Muslim architecture (for example the original traditional Malay house) into the design of hospitality building.

Apart from that, from a study on accommodation offered in the hospitality industry, the analyses suggested that the accommodation should provide privacy for the users, and proper considerations should be given to the spatial planning, layout, interior and exterior details (Majid et al, 2015). The spatial planning in the hospitality building design should divide the spaces into public, semi-public, semi-private and private zones. The public space in traditional Malay house received and entertained non-mahram guests namely neighbours, relative, and friends. On the other hand, the guestroom is a secluded area that is specially created for the guests needs and requirements. Some guestroom may have a living area that can be zoned as semi-public or semi-private area (Majid et al, 2015). According to Hoseini et al. (2009), Malay vernacular houses, are efficiently adapted not only to the local climate and environment but also to the local culture. The local culture reflects the identity and
way of life of Malays. The Malay Muslim occupied traditional Malay houses and practiced the local culture as their norms

5.5 Conclusion

Women play a major role in the hospitality service in Pulau Aman. Malay Muslim hospitality requires the host to be attentive to guest’s need, from privacy issue, to providing them with basic needs and amenities. Hosts in Pulau Aman never failed to receive tourists with open hands. Visitors are always welcome and are given the best services that the hosts can offer. From the discussion of women operators of Homestay Pulau Aman, the chapter tends to unpack the many roles that these women undertake while doing so. As mentioned above, they believe in giving the best services that they can offer, despite all of the challenges they faced while operating the homestay/chalet businesses.

Homestay Programme in Pulau Aman nevertheless has proven so that their program did empower and contribute in the growth of women’s business and leadership skills. Studying the hospitality services provided by women operators, it helps to understand how tourism and tourists have affected host communities and their lives. Services of hospitality includes food and lodging element elevate the gender roles that is long embedded in these women’s daily life. Gender stereotypes such as women belong in the kitchen, while men go out for working is also a big element in shaping how hospitality and being hospitable is presented in the homestay programme.
CHAPTER SIX: CONSTRUCTING AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE TO VISITORS

6.1 Background

In this chapter, it seeks to understand how homestay operators shapes the authentic experience, as well as how the tourists accept and perceive authenticity. The discussion on authentic experiences of Pulau Aman Homestay Program was derived from in-depth interviews, focus groups discussion, as well as the non-participant observation done during the field work duration. Previous chapter has discussed on the hospitality services provided by the villagers of Pulau Aman as hosts, thus this chapter seeks to understand the stages of authentic experience that takes place since pre-arrival, during, and departure of the tourists from the island.

6.2 Presenting authenticity in Pulau Aman

In order to truly understand the whole experience of Pulau Aman’s tourism industry, this section will establish a comprehensive detail of the process of receiving tourist during arrival, right to when they were about to depart from the island. The section is divided into three stages, namely the pre-arrival and arrival; during the visit; and lastly the departure. The discussion that follow will continue to explain in detail how homestay hosts in the island communicate with tourists who visited their village in daily basis.
6.2.1 Activities and tours in Pulau Aman

Pre-arrival and arrival

Tourism industry in Pulau Aman is growing in number despite its small geographical area. Outsiders visited this village almost everyday, especially to indulge in the seafood galore at the Floating Restaurant. However, for families with small children, a day visit never seems enough and worth the hassle of getting in and out by boat. Therefore, many of them opted to stay overnight. There are three different types of accommodation offered as discussed in previous chapters, and families were most likely to choose the private chalet to spend the night. Regular visitors would already have established relationship with chalet provider or homestay hosts during previous visits. For first-timers, usually they will make the booking arrangements through the Homestay Coordinator via phone call. According to Rohana, a website is also dedicated to arrange the booking, however when a trial search is made, the website seems not working. Nevertheless, the most convenient way to book accommodation in Pulau Aman seems to follow a more “traditional” ways which is phone-call booking.

After a booking is secure, visitors will drive-in to the Batu Musang Jetty, in which there is a dedicated car-park, with a guard post. It is deemed secure to leave cars overnight, given that the place is safely guarded by security guard and it is charged RM2.00 per car per night. Visitors will have to take a short walk from the carpark to the jetty area before embarking into the medium-size boat to take visitors to the island.
Figure 6.1 – Visitors getting out of the boat

During the tour of the island

Once arriving at the island, visitors will then proceed to the ticketing counter located near the jetty. Once they paid for their return boat-fees, they will be guided to walk through the pavement that leads to places that they want to visit. A clear signboard is also visible from this point. When the visitors walk through a set of attractions such as the drying fish process, collection of sea shells by villagers, the making of kuih kapit, as well as a picture with oldest sukun tree, they will feel obligated to benefit something from the visit. In return, they wanted to have a taste of that locally dried fish, buying sukun chips, as well as ordering the kuih kapit for friends and families back home.
For foreign tourists, they feel excited to observe these lovely looking flowers all over the place in the village. They never had the opportunity to observe this flower closely before, thus they did not leave the chance to even take a photo with them. According to Viyan, from where he came, there is no such flowers. He felt that this experience is considered authentic for them to experience what it’s like to be in a tropical country like Malaysia. The pathway brings back the visitors into the village, but the return-trail leads the visitors to see the oldest sukun tree planted by a notorious leader in the 1890’s. From this trail, various senses were used to stimulate the visitors’ attentiveness to authentic living of villagers in the island. They will have the opportunity to interact closely with nature, and it certainly giving them the ultimate experience of existential authenticity. The tourists hereby are able to enjoy the nature as much as the villagers do, by being present in the village.

The group of visitors were brought to observe the oldest sukun tree in the country. They were told the history of the tree, as well as being described the taste
that the fruit has. Neither one of them has seen the tree or the fruit before, thus it was a new experience for all of them.

Figure 6.3 – Visitors taking a picture with the oldest *sukun* tree

Figure 6.4 – Candid photo of visitors relaxing

The visitors were “taking-five” after touring the island. The small cottage was available in front of the grocery store, thus they were relaxing there for a while.
Rohana said that this is also normally done by the villagers, in which they will take a breath here for a while before they continue doing work around the island.

Figure 6.5 – Visitors in a traditional home

Upon visiting the village, Rohana also organise a tour to visit one of the traditional home in Pulau Aman. The owner is a woman who lived with her older sister. Her husband passed away 5 years ago and now her children had all moved out to the city. Visitors were admiring the essence of the home and at the same time they were also be careful to not being overstepping the boundaries of being in other’s home. However, the home owner is very much appreciative and she willingly answering many of the questions from her visitors.

There are small businesses available all around the village. Most of the businesses were of selling and producing food products. From these businesses, the
visitors have a chance to indulge in foods that they would not normally get other than Pulau Aman. The most well-known product in the island would be the Prawn Noodle, as it contributes the most to the number of tourist arrival every year. The villagers of Pulau Aman successfully market the noodle to be one of the most important attractions that makes the island busy with visitor each day. The Floating Restaurant that sells the noodle serve a very simple menu. Everything they sell have prawn element in it, ranging from selection of fried rice, fried noodles, to soupy options such as Prawn Noodle in various types. The price is also the main attraction, as it offers a quite cheaper range than other places in Penang Island. A normal dish would only cost RM 6.00, while the special plate costs only RM 10.00 (as of 2017).

Other than that, the villagers were seen making salted fish outside their houses, while some were frying fish crackers and sells them to the visitors. In addition, they were also selling bicarbonate water in various flavours such as Strawberry, Grapes, Pepsi, and 7-Up. The way they sell it here is they would pour them in a plastic bag, add some ice cubes and serves them together with straws for the visitors to indulge in the hot weather. It is sold from RM 2 – 3 per pack. These are some examples of snacks that is almost always available for the visitors to buy and try for themselves before they leave the island. The stalls that sells these items were also conveniently arranged by the villagers near the jetty, so that the visitors be more attracted to stop over and buy them on their way back.

**Kuih Kapit: Traditional Love Letters**

After a tiring journey up to the hiking trails, visitors of Pulau Aman may enjoy the homemade and traditional love letter or known as Kuih Kapit, produced daily by Rohana, the sole entrepreneurs of the cookies. She has been selling the cookies for
almost 20 years, by using the old recipe taught by her late mother, hence the product’s brand “Warisan Bonda” or Mom’s Heritage. Visitors of Pulau Aman do have the opportunity to experience the making of kuih kapit themselves, because Rohana always held a demonstration of the making of kuih kapit every weekend. One box of Kuih Kapit (50 pieces) is sold retail at RM11, and early reservation is needed if visitors are interested to order in a large quantity. Rohana made the cookies herself, and sometimes with the helped of her daughter in law. The tools used were also a traditional version, in which it is very difficult to get nowadays in normal market. She has been using these tools for as long as she can remembers using the recipe taught by her late mother. She always does the demonstration using the outside kitchen on weekends, and it is also the same place where she normally cooked her order on weekdays.

Figure 6.6 – Rohana preparing the demonstration of making Kuih Kapit for visitors
Departure

Then it is time to leave the island. At the end of the tour, visitors already feel full of the delicious homecooked meal that they just had, with hands full of souvenirs and collectibles bought from the stall. The souvenir booth and kuih kapit stall were both located nearby the jetty, thus most of the visitors feel tempted to bring something for their loved one back home. In addition, it helps boost the economy of local populations by showcasing their local products too.

6.2.2 Showcasing traditional living life

Meanwhile in Pulau Aman, the villagers are living the traditional Malay culture and following the customs of a Malay family. Being a full Malay community, the whole population is very much accustomed to traditional and simple living of day-to-day routine. The women were seen to wear baju kurung with kain sarong, meanwhile the men were seen wearing kopiah on their head, on top of normal top and

Figure 6.7 – The tools used to make Kuih Kapit
sometimes with *kain pelikat* (men’s skirt) when they were resting. The normal routine for the villagers would be waking up early in the morning, and arranging or organizing their day around the 5-6 meals per day. From breakfast till supper, women will take charge of preparing the meals for household, while the men will go out to the sea fishing. It was a normal view to see many villagers by the sea side catching the shells, and sometimes the contracted villagers will be around the designated places for the cleaning services. On top of that, weekly religious activities are also taken place and sometimes a Religious Teacher or *Ustaz* will be coming to conduct the talk for the villagers.

Through the homestay programme, guests will experience for themselves the whole ritual of the host-guest relation. Arriving guests will be served with food and drink while chatting and exchanging stories with the hosts. Meals will be served either on a table or on a floor covered with mats or carpets. The types of food served is consisted of Malay food such as rice, side dishes, cakes and desserts. If the hosts were entertaining international guests from abroad, the elements of Malay’s community hospitality will be further explained to them while indulging the meals. The aspects’ explained includes eating and drinking manners with right hand, reading prayers and washing before eating, types of food served, how to dress in the house and prayer times for the host. According to Rohana, most of the guests who came from overseas are excited to learn how to eat using their hands than they would usually use spoon and fork. Some were also easily accepting the tastes of the Malay food such as curry, coconut milk gravy, spicy sambal, and some other raw vegetables.
Figure 6.8 – Menu for lunch

Visitors who opted for traditional food may present their request to Rohana when they did their booking. The menu was usually suggested by the women who are the members of KPW. The menu also can be altered to suit foreign tourists who might have difficulties in tolerating spicy food. For example, the menu from Figure 6.8 as shown above include a fried egg’s dish which is a simple dish in traditional Malay home in Pulau Aman. It was paired with a spicy sambal which serves as an additional big flavour to the whole dish. The menu is usually accompanied by a vegetable dish, which normally is cooked very simple to retain the original taste of the vegetable. In the photo, there are two vegetable dishes, one is cooked, and one is raw. The raw vegetable or as Malay calls it ulam, is depending on the availability of the plant. Last but not least, the main star of the dish consisted of protein, usually of fish or chicken-based dish. In the photo above, the served dishes are Fish Curry and Fried Salted Fish. The salted fish is another dish that is menu that is very common in the home of Pulau
Aman’s resident. They usually dried the salted fish themselves, and it can be kept for a long time with proper preparation.

6.2.3 Host-guest interaction

In Pulau Aman, visitors and homestay operators freely exercised their quest for finding authentic experience while serving the best hospitality performance. They do not have to be constrained by age differences, higher status quo, or ethnicity tension that may pre-assumed. Host and guest interaction in Pulau Aman occur naturally, regardless of age, gender, ethnic group or occupation. When there is a festival going on in the village, everyone will be equally served and normally, the best hospitality performance is aimed by the homestay operators. As narrated by Halimah,

“Usually when they come here, they already planned an activity. Like, when they just woke up from in the morning, we will provide home-cooked breakfast for them. Then around 9 am will be their morning activity. Later, when their activities finished, they come back home. Almost noon time, they want to have a rest and quick lunch, and that is when we will have the sharing session about cultures and customs. To say that they stay with us the foster family for 24-hours is not possible, as they usually come here with a planned program”.

Usually, homestay host of younger age will be put in charge of accompanying the guests to have the activities planned such as barbeque by the beach, swimming or kayaking, and exploring the hiking trails. Veteran hosts normally would prefer to join activities that were not physical-demanding. Rokiah in her interviews stated that, “When I receive guests to my house, I like to have a conversation with them. I love talking and sharing stories. Treat them nicely and keep updating if they need anything. But if there were physical activities involved, I leave it to the younger one…”, meanwhile Aminah also admits that she does not mind the guests to share stories and
talking about life experiences, but she had to limit the physical activities due to her health condition.

Homestay in Pulau Aman is coordinated and managed by Rohana as the coordinator. She said that,

“In order to receive guests to our village, there were a lot of preparations that we made. KPW did send our committee member to go for courses for flower arrangements, to set up homestay rooms, as well as agriculture course to enhance women’s skills. The committee members frequently get the chances to go to these courses, just a matter of they wanted or not. From these knowledge sharing, then it is possible to prepare the village accordingly to receive guests.”

From the excerpt, Rohana shown that KPW member is committed to ensure that the village is always ready to receive guests. Nora, agree with the preparation to welcome visitors to the village, as she mentioned that “We will make sure our home was decorated beautifully. My husband did help to renovate the room, so that the facilities were complete for my guests. If they [guests] complaint, I won’t feel happy.” In order to make sure that their premises are ready, the homestay operators would take certain measures to do so, including renovating the home and preparing good food to serve to the guests.

6.3 Authenticity from the perspective of tourists

Tourists who were interviewed in expresses their perception on the overall experience they take while spending a day or two in the island. A tourist from Perak who often visited several other homestays in other state shared his experience to encounter local children who found a small snake and play around with them. It
definitely triggers a bodily feeling experience by interacting with natural habitat around the island. He said,

“This is my first time being in close contacts with animals in my life time. Not like other city boys, the locals here treat this as their hobbies. To play with animals like chickens, goose...they seems relaxed, while us will feel unease even to see them [the animals]...”

(Azmi, 27)

Another tourist from Penang who regularly comes to enjoy the seafood were asked on the specialness of the food serve at the restaurant, and she said;

“We normally would have the fresh prawns purchase at 1 kg and you can ask the restaurant to do the cooking and it is free of charge. We had the steam version of the prawns which comes from the freshness of the prawns itself. I came here because it is an addictive dish and I just don’t bother about the cholesterol level…”

(Stephanie, 26)

Stephanie’s comments illustrate the enthusiastic feelings she had on the seafood restaurant that she frequently visited. She expresses her willingness to indulge in the guilty pleasure of eating seafood even though she is conscious about her health being. A foreign tourist was interviewed to shed some lights on his food experience in Pulau Aman. Azad from Kurdistan said,

“My food experience is quite amazing here, because I love the food. It was a little bit spicy, but I try to enjoy. The nasi lemak is quite special I think. Even though it is spicy, but the taste was nice, it was very delicious. The food serve is special, different colors, prepared in different ways too”

(Azad, 33).
Syazalina, who commented on her food experience also stated that the food served tasted like meals she used to have when she visited her parents in the village. She said that “For me the kind of food that they serve us today is really similar to my mom’s cooking too. Simple vegetable, fried chicken, fish curry. So to say that it is ‘authentic’ Malay culture. It was nice experience.”

Apart from food experience, most respondents in the focus group discussion indicated that their visits to Pulau Aman made them realised that the women’s role is significant in daily life. Sally mentioned that,

“I feel that even though their domestic role is still there, basically they were cooking for us today, they were serving us, but despite being confine with their domestic role, they also are taking the fore front. Like they are doing the management, for instance Rohana. She is like the mediator between so many agencies, so she practically like getting funding, so she plays a very vital role. So I see that besides most of the women there are single mothers, I can see that they are very empowered. They break away from all the stereotype, and even though some of their husbands are fishermen, they still told us that they are taking the role, like managing everything, like homestays”

Another tourist shared his opinion on the expectation of the trip and he finds it surprising that the whole experience gave him another view of the authenticity of activities portrayed by the homestay operators. Maximillan said,

“I think I do not have any expectation from this trip, but still I am quite surprise because it really is beautiful here and I really enjoyed it. I also think it is quite authentic in a way, I thought we were going through a programme, everything was like prepare/plan and it was more like acting or something like that, but here we were quite free to explore ourselves. And Rohana was there so we could approach her, but she wasn’t put herself in the focus of telling the stories to us. So we really have the chance to make our own impression, which was really nice. And I really enjoy the day.”

(Maximillan, 31)
Wong from Pahang, on the other hand was not in agreement with Maximillan’s opinion. He admits that the surrounding of Pulau Aman is peaceful, as peace as the name suggested, but he thought that his whole experience in Pulau Aman was somehow “gaze” to only see the good side of the island. He said,

“The scenery is something that you cannot get from a city. So its kind of like soothing. A journey to relax yourself, and overall I’m quite comfortable with this journey. Unexpectedly, I have experienced a ‘normal day’ or daily life that they provided here, but I do believe when you go to any journey or vacation, even if it’s a homestay, you actually have a little expectation. So I think that the providers show us the good side of the village. It might not be fully authentic, and that is because tourist doesn’t always want the authentic, they might fond to the good memories.”

(Wong, 29).

With regards to experiencing activities in the island, a tourist from Cambodia shared her expectations,

“Before coming here, when you said its Pulau Aman where we were on the boat, I had different expectation. I did not expect they have a lot of things here, for example the library at the school, clinic, and restaurant, camping sites, kayaking gears, so it was actually quite surprising for me. Many activities that we tourist could do with these facilities. I mean, it’s nice to see on a small area that you have these facilities. Regarding the food, it was delicious actually, the area was nice, a bit hot but yeah it is supposed to be hot.”

(Lily, 25)

Lily’s description shows her feeling of admiration that the island actually provides many facilities for its residents. The next time she will be back with a proper plan so that she can make used of the facilities available there.
6.4 Discussion and Analysis

From the described tours above, the construction of authentic experiences in Pulau Aman are related extremely well to Wang’s notion of “existential authenticity”, which he drew from existentialism (Berger, 1973; Heidegger, 1962). Described as “an intensified and concentrated experience of an alternative Being-in-the-world” (Wang, 1999), this is an experience-based authenticity whereas object-related authenticity is associated with the quality of the toured objects (Cohen, 1988; MacCannell, 1976). The discussion below will shed some lights on the staging of authenticity portrayed by the villagers of Pulau Aman, especially being facilitated by women homestay operators. The process of staging authenticity in the above findings were similar with MacCannell’s distinguished continuum of six stage of staging.

From the analysis, it is difficult to differentiate which stage that the homestay operators of Pulau Aman has opened up to the visitors. It all depends on situations and who are the visitors. Stage one and two was obviously the kind of island tour that the day-trip visitors undergoing. They only see some part of the daily routine of the villagers, “cosmetically decorated” to look like everyday life in the island (MacCannell, 1973). Another part of activities such as the showcasing of Kuih Kapit making and also the way a homestay room is presented to guests were arguably considered to be either stage three or four continuum. However, the visitors encounter into one of the villager’s home is definitely fall under stage five or six, due to the fact that they were spontaneous act and the owner of the home might be not ready to “cosmetically decorated” anything in her home during their short visit. These instances of activities and tours is an authentic experience that were showcased to the visitors by the homestay operators with the intention to share about Malay culture. In
return, the visitors were able to have a glimpse of what Malay culture looks like up-close, even though it might not be the most accurate depiction of Malay culture as promoted in brochures or tourism flyers.

What matters the most is the bodily concern, and it is thought as an important aspect of tourism (Veijola & Jokinen, 1994). As Graburn (1983) mentions, search for bodily pleasure such as relaxation, rehabilitation and sensual pleasures exhibits the features of a ritual and the re-creation ritual. A release of bodily feelings, thus, can be conceived as an act of regaining authentic self and is not controlled by social norms and regulations. The experiences created by tourists in Pulau Aman illustrates how bodily intensive feelings are actively created and fulfilled among tourists in a culturally unique than their home society. Nevertheless, the staging of gaze is often described as a destructive process, in which it is argued to be reducing the important local culture to become a commodity (Woodside & Martin, 2015).

As discussed by Darke and Gurney (2000), simulation of a visit to the home is being done by being attentive to the guests’ need. Thus, this act is visible during the preparation stage, up to the arrival of guests, and later when they depart. This might be also part of the authenticity thing: normally they would welcome the visitors to live with them, but the visitors nowadays want privacy, so they change their services/offers, which seems not be authentic but the need/wish of the visitors. Also, the chances are even more challenging/problematic for them because they don’t get support from the leader/ministry and don’t have money to re-build their homes according to the wishes of the visitors.
Pulau Aman’s villagers were great in making sure the visitors do not get lost in the village, even though it was a small island. The pavement is a unique concept in which the tourist gaze is directed to certain sets of idea that the villagers want them to “see”. The idea of tourist gaze as introduced by John Urry (1996) is exemplified in heritage tourism, whereby the set of expectations that tourists place on local populations when they are searching for that “authentic” experience. In this case, the tourists were indirectly being showcased with the attractions in the island, even without the presence of a tour guide. This is agreeable upon the ways of villagers were responding to tourist expectations, by reflecting back the gaze in order for them to benefit financially (Stronza, 2001).

Tourists who visited the island was offered an experience to play with natural habitat such as animals farm, kayaking at the sea, and also collecting seashells by the seaside. For some, these activities were the first time in their lifetime as many visitors came from cities that certainly lacking the natural offerings. The experience of navigating through the hiking trail was also being exemplified as one of the ways the villagers offer authentic life for visitors to indulge. The provided trail is designed for the visitors to see all of the attractions “staged” to them. This includes the view of the floating chalet, to goat farms, gorgeous seaside, and it ends up right to the Golden Well.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter provides an understanding of activities and tours that takes place in Pulau Aman with the presence of visitors. From observation and analysis, many of the showcased activities were done in order for visitors to catch a glimpse of what
residents in Pulau Aman normally do. The interaction between homestay operators and the visiting tourist is an example that helped validate the emerging self. As many of the homestay operators were performing their daily life wearing normal clothes to them, the whole experiencing “village” style of living is further enhanced by this act. Tourists who came from cities may not be customs to wear traditional, or even normal clothes when they were outside of the home. However, due to the nature of village ambience in Pulau Aman, they can freely move around in the surroundings in their normal “house” clothes such as t-shirt, *kain sarong* for women, or *kain pelikat* for the men. Even in the homestay room, some operators provide *kain batik* to their guests as part of the basic amenities in the room. The visitors who spend the night in Pulau Aman were seen comfortably wandering around at night with attire that is similar like the villagers would normally wear. These incidents portray the construction of authenticity is being made by both visitors and hosts, in order to make the whole staycation in the island to be like living in their own village.
CHAPTER SEVEN: SUSTAINING HOMESTAY BUSINESS – THE CHALLENGES

7.1 Introduction

In Pulau Aman, the majority of the villagers are dependent on the fishing industry and also small business such as lodging facilities, and food production. According to Kabir et al. (2012), a livelihood is referring to the set of capabilities, assets and activities that furnish the means for people to meet their basic needs and support their wellbeing. The businesses were mostly run by the women, especially when the husbands went fishing at the sea. To sustain the livelihood, villagers in Pulau Aman must work hard to make end-meet every month. This chapter will discuss the challenges these women homestay operators faced while sustaining their business. In Pulau Aman, the study manages to outline six challenges faced by the operators while maintaining their homestay business. The issues and problems women homestay operators faced were described as follows.

7.2 Challenges in Running Homestay Programme

7.2.1 Homestay maintenance

The high running costs faced by the homestay operators proof to be a challenge to homestay operators. Rohana described in her interviews that she cares about her guests’ well-being by not raising the price of her homestay even during the peak period.
“I dare not to increase the price, because visitors came to Pulau Aman to rest, enjoy a relaxing moment. There is not much activity to do, unlike Langkawi. We have to give good service to them. So, if we offer accommodation with higher price, it does not seem right”

Apart from that, Halimah agrees and she said that Pulau Aman is small, and therefore when there is any program that involved foster family of several “adopted children” per family, the activities with their visitors are quite limited. Another homestay operator, Nora, however shared her experience in receiving foreign visitors. She said she finds it difficult to have to cook for the guests, given the current price that they offered per night. Nora mentioned,

“Let say if I give them to eat dried fish, imagine a man from Europe to eat that? Once I put the fish in oil, they might run away from the harsh smells”.

Nowadays, price of raw materials to cook keep increasing. The homestay operators have to carefully budgeting themselves to prepare meals for their visitors. Thus, among the hosts, there might be some disagreement with the price point for a one-night accommodation plus meals, therefore some homestay operators facing difficulties in operating their business.

In addition to high running costs of homestay business, the competition between homestay, chalet and budget hotel is clearly an issue to the villagers in order to maintain the Homestay Program. During the initial establishment of the homestay programme in Pulau Aman, there are about 40 houses which actively taking part in the programme. Currently, the number has gone down to 15 houses that participated, with only 9 active hosts. Most of the homestay operators have shifted to renovate their houses to be transformed into a chalet-based. There is also a budget hotel that can be rented by visitors when they visited the island. It is much more convenient for those
who longing for private accommodation. Therefore, only university students and school children who came for any motivational program, or team-building activities will rent the homestays (living with the hosts). These occurrences made the whole organization of tourism activity in the island to be shifted to chalet-base business.

7.2.2 Lack of leadership

Pulau Aman homestay programme has been up and running for almost 10 years, and since then the Head of the Homestay Programme has always been the same person. The excerpts below demonstrated the frustration felt by the other homestay operators. Roslia is considered as a devoted homestay operator in which she always makes herself available to help out whenever the program needed her contribution.

“We have one leader, when she attends any tourism-based events, we do not really know what is happening”

(Roslia, 59)

However, for the past two years she realised that the committee members were often left in the dark when it comes to Ministry’s program for Tourism Industry. She mentioned in her interview that she also would like to participate for new courses or workshop to empower her roles as homestay operator too, however most of the women in the committee were not given equal chances to participate. On the other hand, Rokiah and Aminah were both veterans in the island and they also been actively participated in the activities conducted through homestay programme. Rokiah felt frustrated that she already requested for the Women’s Association to help her with
getting the money to renovate her damaged home due to bad storm, but her request kept being delay.

“My home never gets the help from Ministry as promised…only she gets whatever she requested, while us have to dig for own money to refurbished home after the storm incident”

(Rokiah, 71)

She puts the blame to the leader because she senses an unfair distribution of helps. In returns, she felt reluctant to be actively involved in the activities in the future. Similarly, Aminah agrees and she said that “I also am not sure why many operators stop joining. Perhaps if we get ‘new-leader’, then maybe more younger hosts join’. She adds that maybe the change in leadership is needed in order to get more people to join and actively participated in programme organise by Women’s Association.

7.2.3 Lacking resources

Homestay operators in Pulau Aman were also facing difficulties in sustaining their business due to lack of resources to improve the quality of services that they can offered. From the interviews, five out of nine operators admit that they find it troubling to attract more tourists to spend the night at their respective homestays and chalet. As mention by Nora, she renovated her homestay room to cater to guest’s need. She says,

“They do not want to stay (in a homestay), if possible they want to stay at the private home, so we build a separate door like that one. Nowadays they do not want to stay with family-host. The visitors prefer privacy. If we renovated the room and install separate entrance, it seems like they stay with us too, and they just came in during meals. That would do.”

(Nora, 53)
A different case happened to Roslia. She wanted to renovate her homestay into a make-shift chalet too, however she does not have the extra income to do that. Being a single mother, she has to work extra hard in earning enough income for every month. She said,

“My homestay is not bad, just no ‘make-up’ to beautify them. Nowadays the economy is difficult. Everything needs money. Where to find money? Of course my children give me each every month, but not too big amount as they have families too…”

(Roslia, 59)

Every family facing a different type of difficulties to sustain their business. In order to attract more visitors, they have to do something innovative to differentiate them from everyone else. For families with extra income, they might be able to do so. But, for families that struggles to make end-meet each month, they need extra support from the programme or from the Ministry.

### 7.2.4 Aging/old age

Majority of homestay operators in Pulau Aman is of the age of 50 years and above. Majority of them also were single mothers, with their children residing outside of the island. These factors contribute to a decrease in efficiency when running a homestay business. Rokiah or better known as Tok Wa said that “I was not as energetic as before, to clean up and decorate my place for visitors to rent”. She turns 71 years old early 2018, thus making her one of the oldest residents in Pulau Aman. However, in order to survive daily, she still needs money and income to sustain her life. Even though her children helped by giving some money monthly, but higher costs of living that they faced nowadays makes her worried about finding her own income.
Homestay business is also slowly decreasing because visitors wanted a more private accommodation, and she was unable to offer that.

Another senior homestay host, Aminah said that even though she enjoyed doing all the activities with visitors and tourists, she has to slow down doing all the physical activities. During one of the cooking demonstrations, Aminah mentioned that “Last time I was the one busy gathering all the ingredients and do the cooking part. Now I can only offer my recipe to them, even the written one got lost in one of the floods recently”. Aminah is seen to be enthusiastic about the program planned for homestay programme, including the island tour and cooking demonstration, but she has to limit her involvement nowadays. These senior citizen of Pulau Aman still plays major roles in showcasing hospitality and authenticity of Malay traditional activities, but they have to admit that old age limit them in certain activities.

7.2.5 Lack of raw material

Even though Pulau Aman should be able to produce and export a high quality of Sukun fruit to the outsiders, they were not able to do so because of lacking in raw material. The entrepreneurs of Sukun’s chip face difficulties in commercializing the products. According to Rohana, head of the Pulau Aman Women Development Group, the lack of raw material supply has resulted in the commercialization problem of the product. She said,

“Outside demand is huge, but we are having trouble getting raw materials. Sukun fruits are only seasonal, they come out only twice a year in January to February and June to July. When it comes to the season we can produce the chips, otherwise we all have to do other works”
Thus, even though they received a high demand for the chip, they can only produce little every season in order to sustain their stocks. Besides Sukun chips, Pulau Aman residents also engage in Small and Medium Industries (SMIs) such as “belacan” or shrimp paste manufacturing. The production of this food products is based on shrimps’ season. Unfortunately, the lack of shrimp caught by fishermen causes the entrepreneurs to cut down the sale’s size.

Although residents around Batu Maung generally benefit from the construction of Penang's second bridge (Sultan Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah), however, the residents of Pulau Aman receive the opposite impact of sea water pollution (Syed Ismail, 2009). The quality of the water affected by the construction has caused the water to be covered with many sediments. Ahmad, as the head village reiterate that fishermen’s catching has lowered since the commencement of the construction of the second Penang bridge. This was due to the loud noise during the construction which led to a lot of marine life, especially the fish to be migrated to other areas. According to him,

“The current that brought the deposits from the construction also resulted in many dead shells. There are villagers who catch shellfish as a living, had to divert their cages to other areas, but the activities of the livestock still cannot be done as almost the entire coastline around Pulau Aman has been polluted”

(Ahmad, 55)

This situation has shown that the destruction of marine ecosystems has an impact on the island’s economic activities, especially fishermen. Many of them rely heavily on marine capture, thus the pollution had affected them financially in order to cover expenses such as purchasing essentials, children's education financing, home’s maintenance and so forth.
7.2.6 Women’s double burden

Women in Pulau Aman plays vital role in the construction of hospitality for the tourists who visited the island. They were viewed as the key player in hosting visitors at the homestays or chalet, they provided foods, accommodation, and hospitality services towards the visitors. In the meantime, the women are still performing their ultimate roles as housewives, in which they do not neglect their responsibilities towards their families while doing all of the required activities during the day. Ziana, the grocery store owner described her daily routine during a programme that requires her to participate as a homestay operator,

“…we have to cook, after that we have to clean up the kitchen, and later we will eat together with foster children, and afterwards do the dishes. Usually my children would have to wait for a while if there is a whole-day programme. We will be busy helping the committee cooking in the KPW hall.”

(Ziana, 37)

Apart from providing food services to the guests, women play their role as hosting the accommodation to those who stayed overnight at the island. As homestay coordinator, Rohana will be busy arranging the accommodation when they are guests booking through her. She will arrange for cleaning services done by one or two women from homestay committee. They will receive some payment, depending on the number of houses they cleaned. Later, when the guests arrived, she will be there to explain about the facilities on the island, and then introduced the hosts to the guests. She will leave the guests to settle in and get to know their hosts for the night. When the guest wanted to check out, they can simply leave the key with hosts, or with Rohana.
In addition, women homestay operators were also deeply rooted in performing their roles as housewives. Everyday, they carried out domestic duties as mother and as wife. According to Nazneen (2016), domestic duties consists of cooking, cleaning, and care for works around the household. For example, according to Faizah,

“Usually we do, prepare the vegetables and all. My husband or my son do sometimes help, but not frequent. If I were to do the cooking, we the women take charge, and my daughter will help too.”

The women take charge of the household and they played vital role as caregiver at home too. At the same time, they also contributed to the house income too from the sales they made from the businesses such as selling chips or organising the homestay premises. Apart from that, the women were actively joining the activities carried out by the Women Association. Not only that, they spend quite some time working part-time as cleaner at designated location in the island. Another housewife, Halimah who lived in the island for almost 28 years said that:

“When there is work we will do it. We don’t like to just sit around. Some people when they sent their children to school, they then like to watch television. When times come, feels sleepy and then fell asleep. Our body will get sickened with that routine. For me I like to do so many things. In the morning time, I take cleaning contract from the MPSP. Mostly us women who takes the job. Almost 11 of us from this village take this job, 9 women and 2 men. At least we get the RM400.00 per month as the salary, it is helpful too.”

Thus, from the excerpts above we can see that women in Pulau Aman, especially the housewives undertake many roles in order to fulfil their domestic roles as mother and wife, while at the same time helping the family for extra income by working as part-time contract worker to clean around the island.
7.3 Discussion and Analysis

There were many issues that proves to be challenge in running Homestay Pulau Aman. Homestay needs a high maintenance fees that needed to be bear by the homestay operators. This is also due to the fact that it is situated very closely to the sea, and thus, when a storm or high-tides hit the village, homestay operations could be affected. According to Nor Ashikin & Kalsom (2010), these challenges are one of the factors that lead to the decrease of participations from homestay operators, as well as decline in tourist coming to visit. Apart from that, leadership was categorised as an internal factor by Nor Ashikin and Kalsom (2010), and it is a challenge affecting the success of community development in running the Homestay programme.

According to the study, a good leader with a good leadership style is seen to be very important to help mobilise the community into the right direction and lead the path to the success of community development. Without good leadership and strong community participation, resistance and hostility would be detrimental to the cost of business and could also destroy the industry’s potential. The women are facing a lot of challenges within the programme, which includes the issue on double-burden they expected the support of the other women to deal properly with the challenges.

Unfortunately, it was not always the case and the leadership of the programme is not shared equally. From a gender lens perspective, women have to support women and make sure that can grow, develop leadership skills and stick together to tackle challenges and help each other to “reduce” the double burden. This is in line with a speech given by Helen Clark in her speech at National Assembly of Wales Lectures as a UNDP Administrator, in which she said “A huge focus for me as a leader is to
contribute to building a more equitable and sustainable world. Gender equality at every level must feature in that world.” The development of women leader must be done to ensure gender equity at all level, including Women Association in Pulau Aman.

The maintenance of Pulau Aman is also a vital problem. And it affected the number of tourist arrival to the island. When the facility is not well-maintained, in addition with the contaminated environment of Pulau Aman, it has a negative perception of the arrivals. Homestay operator’s aging community also significantly contribute to this problem of maintaining the program. Among the attractions that needs significant maintenance includes the golden well, war camps, and ancient graves. According to Head Village, Ahmad, the cleaning of the place was voluntary. Furthermore, problems arise when young people migrate to the cities where they no longer interested in doing fishermen's work. This left the elderly to keep doing the maintenance work. The elderly is not able to do cleaning and caring of the place that requires strength because of their deteriorating health.

The distance from the settlement area to the historical sites requires them to walk about 15 minutes, with the hilly condition. This situation has a huge impact on the tourism and economic sectors of the surrounding population. Talib and Sulieman (2017) also mentioned in their study of Homestay Kampung Aur that a good homestay organization must be able to get the homestay participants and the village steering development committee working together to ensure the homestay having the best infrastructure with well organized homestay activities. This is deemly important to ensure the challenges faced by the homestay operators could be overcame.
7.4 Conclusion

The chapter seeks to understand the challenges faced by Pulau Aman in maintaining and sustaining the Homestay programme, as they were established back in 2008. Many issues and challenges were visible when ones visit the island. From in-depth interviews and further observation during the course of fieldwork, it can be seen that running costs of the homestay business is definitely increasing. Not many of the homestay operators manage to keep up with the increase in the goods’ price, especially for single mothers who do not have their husbands to depend on. In addition, lack of leadership capabilities in the homestay programme also contributes to lower interest of operators to maintain their business. Leadership skills and a right leader definitely vital in ensuring the programme to be successful.

In addition, lacking resources and limited raw materials make the programme to having a difficulty in expanding their income. Even though the island is well known with its sukun tree, improper organisation and slow fruit production makes the chips not widely produced when the season’s come. Last but not least, women homestay operators faced many challenges in their everyday life, especially in juggling their roles as mothers, wives, and businesswomen. This becomes worsen when the women were of old age and single mothers. These factors contribute to the difficulties that these women homestay operators faced while sustaining their homestay business.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the research by summarising the research findings, analysis and discussion. In addition, the chapter provides the significance of this research in the immediate context of gender and tourism industry. The implication of research findings is later presented at the end of the chapter.

8.2 Summary of research findings

From the study, it was found that the women operators in Pulau Aman need more support from other institutions or the ministry. This is due to the reason that they have to perform multiple roles (caring for their children, family, business) and are willing to do everything. However, the study finds that the support structure is indeed lacking because the women homestay operators need more guidance and constant help to tackle all problems regarding their business. With regards to challenges in doing homestay, the women faced issues with leadership skills, especially when the Women’s Association was unable to provide help and some women do not have the chance to do what they want with their business.

In order to keep the “traditional life” at the island (away from the stressful city life) they have to change and emancipate themselves in different spheres of life. Regarding the hospitality performances, the women have to find a balance between authenticity and hospitality in which they did experience in their everyday life and at the same time providing the needs of their guests. Thus, the women operators have to
be sensitive to feel what their guests want and feel in order to make their stay a very good experience. The interactions were always a negotiation and a back and forth to anticipate the wishes and expectations of their guests. From the perspective of tourists, they did find that the construction of authenticity and services of hospitality showcased by the women homestay operators were enough to provide them with an authentic living of traditional life. The great hospitality services they received for the duration they stayed at the island portrays how Malay hospitality is staged to outsiders, by presenting the tourists with warmth welcome, great food experience, and comfortable accommodation facilities.

Chapter 4 presented a comprehensive introduction of Pulau Aman details, include the location, demography population, as well as notable attractions present in the island as a tourism destination. The chapter continues by showcasing some background of the interviewed women homestay operators. Each and everyone of them has a sole, unique story to identify themselves as the main characters and key players in constructing authenticity and hospitality in the homestay program. The profiling of homestay women operators shows that these women is especially notorious for their great responsibilities of doing both housework and working as homestay operators. Their skills in bargaining patriarchy is definitely a strategy to tackle an “entrenched gender norms” and stereotypes in redistributing responsibilities for care and housework between women and men.

Chapter 5 is vital in the discussion of hospitality services and the ways women operators performing Malay hospitality in the homestay programme. The data collected shows that the whole experience in Pulau Aman consisted of three major components; namely 1) accommodation, 2) food, and 3) attractions. Among these
three components, women were playing the leading role in the construction of hospitality services, while being a mother, wife, and homestay operator. These elements further elevate gender roles that is long embedded in these women’s daily life. Thus, the analysis of hospitality services also indicated that it is a two-way interaction, thus exchanges of interactions between host and guest demonstrated how the principal function of hospitality act, in line with Selwyn’s (2001) chapter of Anthropology of Hospitality.

Next, Chapter 6 tied up the discussion of presenting authentic experience to visitors by the women operators specifically, and the villagers of Pulau Aman generally. The findings show that the duality of authentic experience happens from staging traditional life to be showcased to visitors, and how the visitors accept the experience to be trustworthy and as original as they can be. Wang’s (1999) notion on existential authenticity is closely examined in relation to the experience they encounter while being at the island, living through the routine of villagers in Pulau Aman. Hence, the staging of “pseudo-events” in Pulau Aman can be identified as an expression of host authenticity in deciding how to present themselves to others.

Chapter 7 provides some critical insights of how the villagers in Pulau Aman, especially the women homestay operators were dealing with issues and challenges while maintaining their homestay business. Many problems were identified as a factor which lead to a decrease in homestay programme efficiency, and thus homestay operators were working hard to make end meets each and every month. The challenges ranged from issues of maintaining the running costs of homestay programme, lack of leadership capabilities, lacking resources in renovating their homestay premises, aging residents which made the sustainability of the programme problematic, lacking
of raw materials to be showcased as tourism products, as well as women’s double burden in running multiple roles as mothers, wives, and entrepreneurs.

Hence, this research has met its objectives, which includes to explore the ways of women homestay operators construct authenticity and creating hospitality services in the context of Pulau Aman. Secondly, the research wanted to study the roles of women and their challenges in constructing authentic experience and performing hospitality while mediating the domestic level’s roles and responsibilities. Data collected using three major methods made the examination of authenticity portrayal and hospitality services in Pulau Aman possible. Last but not least, the exploration of tourist’s perception on the construction of authenticity and hospitality were successfully presented in the finding and analysis chapters as mentioned in the research summary above.

8.3 Limitations of study

This section will shade some lights on the challenges while conducting the interview process and the measures taken in order to tackle them. The interviews were done in a span of two years, in which many of the respondents have shifted their homestay business into chalet-based, and this has proven in the limited number of respondent’s interviewed (for homestay operators). During the course of in-depth-interviews, the researcher had to gain oral consent by getting permission from the head village to conduct the interviews at the island. Later, the researcher had to go door-by-door in order to search for appropriate interviewee to gather information for the study. The process of gaining access to interviews were challenging as many of the homestay operators claimed that they no longer active in homestay programme, thus did not want to be interviewed. Some of the respondents who agreed to be interviewed
however feel reluctant to share information because of their status of committee member in the Women Development Association of the island. After being thoroughly explained on the study procedures and how the data will be processed for analysis, then they slowly gather more confidents with the researcher and becoming more open in sharing information. Lastly, the interviews also were conducted in Malay language, thus the translating process of Malay to English language may resulted in essence of the narratives to be lost in translation. Even that, some expressions that were presence in the women’s narrative were difficult to express in other language. However, the data presented in the thesis were carefully presented in order to portray the narratives as closely as possible to the intended meaning by the respondents.

Apart from that, homestay women operators and other villagers may likely reveal biased responses in order to maintain a positive impression. This refers to what Robson (2002) calls “social desirability response bias”. Thus, the researcher has to be attentive and careful when phrasing questions and analyzing responses as there is a concern of power relations. Nevertheless, researcher’s position was able to be negotiated by using the advantage of native language and being a woman. The limitations were also combated by combining the interviews with observations in order to get more information and later, to find out if the observations were in line with the information that the interviewees gave. All of these factors contributed to an “alliance formation” and establishing rapport with the local villagers, drawing upon shared experiences and attributes (Harvey, 1996).
8.4 Implication of research findings

i. Implication on theoretical/conceptual of study

This thesis has presented a study that reflect the concept of construction of authenticity and services of hospitality in Homestay Pulau Aman. This study has added to the body of literature in tourism studies through the themes that has emerged from data. Most of the studies on homestay program in tourism literature have been conducted using a quantitative method and from the perspective of tourism management. However, the current study is one of the very few studies that applies a qualitative, constructivist grounded theory methodology to study gender roles and tourist perceptions of authenticity and hospitality. This study illuminates interpretations and meanings tourists attach to the authenticity of their experience in Pulau Aman; and specifically, the relationship that formed between the host and the guest, and between the staging authenticity and production of the attractions and activities of the local tourism destination. There is still much to learn about host-guest relations and their complexities within tourism from both business and social science perspectives. The body of literature specifically concerning perception of authenticity in the context of tourism is limited. Future research on concept of authenticity and how gender influences the production of authentic and great hospitality services to the tourists could also focus on using different authenticity approaches such as existential authenticity and postmodern authenticity to explore tourists’ experiences further.
ii. Implication on practical

Recognizing the importance of qualifying for the hospitality of the Malay community especially in Penang, the number of employers in the country's homestay program is increasing from year to year. With the support of financial, promotional and operating courses from various quarters such as the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, the homestay program is expected to continue survive long and evolve to other villages to ensure the continuity of the program in the future. This directly gives a good indication of the development of local wisdom in this country. Thus, this research shows the importance of acknowledging the role of women in advancing the tourism industry in general. In light of significance of the study presented earlier, by exploring and understanding the issue of double burden of women in the homestay industry, particularly when looking at how authenticity is constructed, together with the service of hospitality offered by the women operators at the homestay, the findings could be potent in the development of tourism industry.

8.5 Conclusion

For final remarks, it is crucial to note that studying Homestay from gender perspective made the researcher realized that homestay business is indeed perpetuating gender stereotypes, and it does not close the gender gap. Some findings from the interviews and observation surprises the researcher. For instance, men really did not take part in the homestay program. Women mostly makes the key decision, as they play a key role in ensuring the homestay programme is successful. While doing that, these women did not neglect the domestic roles that are still embedded in the
daily routine. For single mothers, the homestay business contributes the most to their household incomes, whereas for married operators, their husband’s earning from fishing in the sea is their main income. Homestay is a main source of income for the single mothers. Therefore, for single mothers they are also doing multiple jobs in addition to their homestay business, they sell *kuih*, as well as taking orders from customers, and this contributed to issue of multiple burden. For women who are married, they are having multiple burden of taking care of the homestay, and at the same time they have to care for own family and husband. For single mothers, the multiple burdens come from different ways, including on how to maximise their income on daily basis. These observations and implication in embarking onto homestay business is therefore a crucial issue to be further investigate in ensuring women homestay operators voices were being heard and take into actions.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

SOALAN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI) UNTUK RESPONDEN
Gender Roles in Constructing Authenticity & Hospitality: A Study of Homestay in Penang Island

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kategori</th>
<th>Soalan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pengenalan</td>
<td>Sejarah kampung Pulau Aman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Boleh anda ceritakan sejarah penglibatan anda dalam bidang homestay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Berapa lama dah serta program ini?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Apakah/Siapakah yang mendorong anda menglibatkan diri dalam bidang ini?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latar-belakang keluarga</td>
<td>a. Status perkahwinan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Bilangan anak/cucu/adik-beradik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Punca pendapatan utama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latar-belakang homestay</td>
<td>a. Pendaftaran – Lesen dll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Bilangan pekerja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Kursus yang diikuti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Ceritakan dari mula proses menerima tetamu daripada ketua Homestay – tetamu sampai – aktiviti yang dijalankan – pembahagian tugas – tetamu bertolak balik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Berapakah anggaran pendapatan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operasi program homestay</td>
<td>a. Masa tetamu datang, apa makcik buat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Siapa buat apa? Siapa yang menerima tetamu masa sampai kat jeti?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Kemas rumah, masak lauk, siapa buat? Anak anak, menantu, ada terlibat tak masa tetamu sampai?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Apakah maksud “layanan” kepada tetamu?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Pada pendapat makcik, apakah makna layanan hospitaliti dalam budaya Melayu?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g. Tetamu kalau datang, dia selalunya selesa nak mintak apa apa dekat makcik ke pakcik?</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Tetamu duduk sini, selalunya mereka makan macam mana?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Dalam pakej homestay, tetamu makan dengan tuan rumah, atau arrange sendiri?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Bab jamuan, siapa yang uruskan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>Hal bayaran homestay – siapa yang terima? Berapa percentage dibahagi? Tentukan macam mana?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td>Apakah pendapat mengenai adab sebagai tetamu?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR RESPONDENTS

*Gender Roles in Constructing Authenticity & Hospitality: A Study of Homestay in Penang Island*

**Tourists**

a) Briefly described yourself.
b) Overall experience on the today’s program.
c) What are your expectations from your visit to Pulau Aman? What did you find surprising?
d) What is the hospitality act that you expect from hosts? Did you find the Pulau Aman homestay operators being hospitable to you? How’s so?
e) Pulau Aman is well-known for it’s food delicacy. Please describe your food experience while in Pulau Aman.
f) Overall, what do you think about women’s role in Pulau Aman and as homestay hosts?
g) Is the overall experience in Pulau Aman feels authentic to you?

**Homestay Operators**

a) Pada pendapat anda, apa itu budaya melayu?
b) Dekat kampung ni, apa budaya melayu yang ada? Makanannya, rumahnya, tariannya?
c) Aktiviti yang ditunjukkan semasa tetamu datang menunjukkan budaya melayu tak?
d) Pada pendapat anda, apakah makna pengalaman tradisional?
e) Apakah produk tradisional yang dipamerkan/disediakan untuk pelawat? Apakah antara alat/produk yang melambangkan keaslian budaya melayu?
f) Bagaimanakah anda membina pengalaman autentik/asli atau “authentic” mengikut tradisi Melayu?
g) Pada pendapat anda, pentingkah untuk menunjukkan budaya melayu kepada tetamu bukan melayu/antarabangsa?
h) Bagaimanakah anda meyakinkan tetamu yang ingin mempelajari budaya melayu, bahawa ini adalah cara hidup Melayu Tradisional?
Appendix C

Borang Keizinan Responden  
(Halaman Tandatangan)

**Tajuk Kajian:** GENDER DAN PEMBINAAN KEASLIAN DAN HOSPITALITI: SATU KAJIAN TERHADAP HOMESTAY PULAU AMAN, PULAU PINANG

**Nama Penyelidik:** Farah Syazwani Hayrol Aziz

Untuk menyertai kajian ini, anda atau wakil sah anda mesti menandatangani mukasurat ini. Dengan menandatangani mukasurat ini, saya mengesahkan yang berikut:

- Saya telah membaca semua maklumat dalam Borang Maklumat dan Keizinan Responden ini dan saya telah pun diberi masa yang mencukupi untuk mempertimbangkan maklumat tersebut.
- Semua soalan-soalan saya telah dijawab dengan memuaskan.
- Saya, secara sukarela, bersetuju menyertai kajian penyelidikan ini, mematuhi segala prosedur kajian dan memberi maklumat yang diperlukan kepada para penyelidik apabila diminta.
- Saya boleh menamatkan penyertaan saya dalam kajian ini pada bila-bila masa.
- Saya telah pun menerima satu salinan Borang Maklumat dan Keizinan Responden untuk simpanan peribadi saya.

**Nama Responden**

**No. Kad Pengenalan Responden**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tandatangan Responden atau Wakil Sah</th>
<th>Tarikh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Nama & Tandatangan Individu yang Mengendalikan Perbincangan Keizinan (Dicetak atau Ditarik)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tarikh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
SAMPLE IDI TRANSCRIPT

31/12/2016 (6.00pm) – Pulau Aman (near Kuih Kapit cooking area)

Farah: Ok, Makcik buat homestay dengan beraniaga?
Rohana: Berniaga makanan ringan.
Farah: Ooo makanan ringan, yang ni, bubuh ni saja ye?
Rohana: Buat stock.
Farah: Kata ada orang duduk rumah Makcik semalam?
Rohana: Ada.
Farah: Balik dah?
Farah: Sejak rumah tu sendiri la?
Rohana: Janji masuk saja.
Farah: Kira makcik ni macam bagi-bagi tempat?
Rohana: Hah, bagi-bagi.
Farah: Kira macam orang bayar dekat Puan Rohana RM80.00, bayar dekat Tuan Rumah pun RM80.00?
Rohana: Dia bagi la sikit.
Farah: Ooo, dia akan bagi sikit.
Farah: Tu la.
Farah: Macam Puan Rohana dulu daripada homestay? Sekarang ni dah chalet?
Rohana: Chalet ada, homestay ada la ni.
Farah: Puan Rohana ada chalet?
Rohana: Ada, tu.
Farah: Ooo. Kira buat atas tanah sendiri la?
Rohana: Tanah kerajaan.
Farah: Homestay rumah?
Rohana: Homestay dok dengan Tuan Rumah.
Farah: Chalet?
Rohana: Chalet dok sendiri satu rumah. Rumah macam ni la.
Farah: Ada chalet kecil dengan chalet yang boleh masak tu.
Rohana: Hah. Chalet yang boleh masak, dia ada dapur, ada siap la kelengkapan masak. Kalau chalet kecil yang macam teres ada sana tu, dok saja.
Farah: Yang colourful-colorful tu chalet kecil la kan?
Rohana: Hah. Tu chalet kecil.
Farah: Puan Rohana umur berapa ye?
Rohana: Hah, agak-agak umur berapa?
Farah: 60?
Rohana: Oiii, 68.
Farah: Hah? Tapi gagah 68 pun. Tu anak la, yang dok tolong tu?
Rohana: Yang dok bakar tu menantu.
Farah: Ooo, menantu. Anak lelaki?
Rohana: Anak, yang dok goreng keropok tu anak.
Farah: Ooo. Berapa orang anak?
Rohana: Anak 3.
Farah: Duduk sini semua la?
Rohana: Dak dak. Satu dok kat KL.
Farah: Kerja?
Rohana: Dia kerja ni, PTPTN.
Farah: Hah, sapa tak bayar?
Rohana: Sapa tak bayar? Yang sorang sulong cikgu.
Farah: Tak mengajar dekat sini la?
Rohana: Dak, kat luar.
Farah: Kahwin dah la tiga-tiga?
Rohana: Tiga-tiga dah kahwin. And then yang tu anak 2. Yang Elisa tu anak dia la.
Farah: Kiranya tolong berniaga anak lelaki dan menantu la?
Farah: Tapi kalau macam orang menyewa rumah Puan Rohana, kemas-kemas rumah?
Rohana: Ada orang kadang.
Farah: Puan Rohana yang buat sendiri ka, anak menantu?
Rohana: Kalau depa ada, depa la. Kalau dia orang tak ada, panggil orang mai tolong.
Farah: Ye la. Puan Rohana: dah tak larat dah la.
Rohana: Hah la. Nak buat semua teruk la.
Farah: Memang tiap minggu ada je la aktiviti?
Rohana: Tadi p tengok dak?
Farah: Tengok tadi. Sat saja la.
Rohana: Yang ni bukan aktiviti kita.
Farah: Dia orang yang rancang? Depa yang mai la?
Rohana: Datuk Kadar buat.
Farah: Kiranya keropok ni ambil daripada luar la?
Farah: Kat sini sapa yang pegang? Pembangkang ka?
Rohana: Pembangkang la sini.
Farah: Pembangkang.
Rohana: Di sini Parlimen DAP. DUN aaa...PKR.
Farah: DUN PKR. Sejak depa pegang ni, Pulau Aman ni macam mana? Makin ok ka?
Rohana: Tak bagi apa pun.
Farah: Tak bagi apa pun?
Rohana: Dak.
Farah: Teruknya. Ada minta tak?
Rohana: Minta, minta tak dapat. Depa kata tak ada peruntukkan untuk sini. Sebab saya punya bengkelkan, JKKW tu, belakang tu dah minta. Dia

Farah: Bukan duit depa.
Rohana: Duit zakat. Lepas tu yang mai bagi sumbangan hari raya pun, duit zakat. Dak, yang heran tu pasal apa zakat bagi dekat depa? Pasal apa depa uruskan?

Farah: Depa apa?
Rohana: Sepatutnya bagi la
Farah: Majlis.

Farah: Ermmm. Susah.
Rohana: Tu macam mana kita nak
Farah: Ke depan.
Rohana: Nak ke depan.
Farah: Puan Rohana dah start memang dah lama?
Rohana: Saya dari tahun 90an.
Farah: Ni buat homestay ni?
Rohana: Buat homestay lama. Tapi yang kita berdaftar dengan
Farah: Tourism.
Farah: Maksud tu memang dah buat dah? Tapi tak berdaftar?
Farah: Sapa yang, macam mana yang tourism boleh datang dekat sini? Lepas tu boleh...
Rohana: Sebab aaa...USM la buat kursus.
Farah: Ooo.
Rohana: USM buat kursus untuk aaa...peserta-peserta yang kena homestay la. P la kursus dekat USM.
Farah: Tahun bila tu mula-mula?
Rohana: Tahun 2000 lebih la.
Farah: Tahun 2013?
Farah: 2005?
Rohana: Hah, lama dah.
Farah: Tapi masa tu memang ramai la?
Rohana: Hah. Kita daripada dulu, USM urus. La ni dah pindah ke UiTM.
Farah: Pasal apa?
Rohana: Tak tau la pula. La ni UiTM la kita punya fokus group. Dulu USM.
Farah: Nampak bannerkan.
Rohana: Sebab kita apa, tu yang Prof. Madya apa tu,
Farah: Prof. Madya yang HBP tu ka? Dia HBP?
Rohana: Sebab baru ni, dia orang ada USM mai buat program dengan apa, yang depa bagi sumbangan-sumbangan tu.
Farah: Hah.
Farah: Lepas tu kenapa yang orang buat jadi chalet tu?
Rohana: Chalet memang kita ada dari dulu.
Farah: Depa memang ada la.
Farah: Minta tu dekat sapa?
Rohana: Dekat Pejabat Tanah la. Tu la kata, Pejabat Tanah sebelum pembangkang
Farah: Ambil.
Rohana: Dia kena bagi dekat orang pulau ni. Minta bagi ja. La ni susah nak minta. Tak dapat.
Farah: Tapi minta masa zaman yang BN dulu tak dapat juga?
Farah: Tak boleh?
Farah: Tak boleh.
Rohana: Tak boleh nak ke belakang dah. Nak ke depan, kita jangan harap dah Penang nak dapat dekat kita.
Farah: Ye?
Farah: Tak boleh eik?
Farah: Ye?
Farah: Kira income Puan Rohana daripada homestay, chalet, dengan berniaga makanan ringan?
Rohana: Pencen.
Farah: Pencen apa
Rohana: Saya Jururawat Masyarakat.
Farah: Hah. Kat sini?
Rohana: Saya last di sini, klinik ni. Klinik Desa tu saya last.
Farah: Maksudnya?
Rohana: Saya dulu kerja dekat Balik Pulau. Balik Pulau dekat Klinik Pondok Upih dengan Klinik apa....
Farah: Kalau cakap pasal Pondok Upih, tahu la sangat.
Rohana: Klinik Kesihatan Air Puteh.
Farah: Kira macam
Rohana: Ooo, Pondok Upih tau?
Farah: Kira orang beranak tu.
Farah: Diruma la.
Rohana: Kan orang kampung. Kadang-kadang dia dah tau kita tak bagikan.
Farah: Hah.
Rohana: Dia buat siap-siap.
Farah: Berapa tahun jururawat?
Rohana: 35 tahun, daripada saya tingkatan 2
Farah: Tapi macam mana nak jadi jururawat?
Farah: Sebab budak la ni tak reti. Malas nak belajar.
Rohana: Hah. La ni dia ajar dalam Bahasa Malaysia. P kursus jururawat, dia ajar dalam Bahasa Malaysia. Kita dulu tak ada.
Farah: English.
Rohana: Semua, hah.
Farah: Tapi masa tu mungkin import cikgu luar kot? Tak?
Rohana: Dak.
Farah: Dak?
Rohana: Tapikan kita aaa...kalau jawab Bahasa Inggeris tu, kita kena usaha la sikitkan. Kita ni apa la sangatkan.
Farah: Tahun bila masa mula-mula jadi jururawat.
Rohana: Saya jadi jururawat, tahun 69.
Farah: Tu dia (ketawa).
Rohana: 69
Farah: Sampai?
Farah: Pencen 2005?
Farah: Tapi jadi jururawat tu, sekitar Penang saja ka?
Rohana: Sekitar Penang ja.
Farah: Penang saja.
Rohana: Saya besa dulu, kahwin dengan askar. Arwah suami askar.
Farah: Orang Pulau Aman?
Farah: Puan Rohana orang Pulau Aman?
Farah: Pencen duduk sini la?
Rohana: Hah. Pencen duduk sini.
Farah: Pencen duduk sini.
Rohana: Ada.
Farah: Lepas tu.
Rohana: Business ni chalet ada.
Farah: Tapi ada elaun? Macam jadi penyelaras?
Rohana: Tak ada.
Farah: JKK?
Rohana: Tak ada. JKK pun saya besa jadi, tak ada elaun juga. Apa saja semua sukarela.
Farah: Memang minat?
Rohana: Hah. Saya dulu JKK pernah jadi. JKK ni, apa Kumpulan Pulau Aman Wanita.
Farah: Tapi Puan Rohana ada pencen, tapi still lagi buat business. Sebab apa? Minat?
Rohana: Kita kena ni la. Selagi kita ni, kita kena usaha. Kalau pencen setakat RM1000.00 lebih la ni, apa la sangatkan. Nak bayar duit kereta la.
Farah: Kereta semua ada la.
Rohana: Kereta ada.
Farah: Letak dekat seberang la?
Farah: Maksudnya ada hasil la?
Rohana: Saya p umrah.
Farah: Ooo.
Rohana: Saya dah p umrah dengan hasil saya beraniaga ni apa. 2 kali dah saya p umrah.
Farah: Alhamdulillah.
Rohana: Saya p haji, duit yang pencen.
Farah: Duit yang pencen?
Rohana: Hah. Duit umrah duit yang usaha-usaha ni.
Farah: Puan Rohana daripada jururawat, tiba-tiba beraniaga. Maksudnya apa yang menyebabkan...
Rohana: Dia dari saya belum pencen. Saya duduk sini, saya memang minat beraniaga.
Farah: Memang minat beraniaga? Sebab parents dulu beraniaga ka apa?
Farah: Hah, Puan Rohana la pengasas.
Rohana: Saya pengasas PKW.
Farah: Tahun bila masa tu?
Rohana: 92 macam tu la. 94.
Farah: Puan Rohana kahwin umur berapa?
Rohana: Saya kahwin umur 23.
Farah: 23?
Rohana: Ermmm.
Farah: Hah, umur 23. Tahun...tak tahu. Tak boleh kira (ketawa).
Farah: Tapi Puan Rohana kahwin. Suami dengan askar. Maksudnya Puan Rohana kena round Penang pula. Macam mana tu? Kena dok jauh dengan suami la?
Rohana: Dia ni. Dia apa ni, dekat Butterworth.
Farah: Ooo. Dia dekat Butterworth. Kira duduk serumah juga la?
Rohana: Hah. Duduk la kadang-kadang. Tapi bila saya transfers mai sini, tak boleh la.
Rohana: Mak saya ada. Arwah mak saya.
Farah: Ooo, mak jaga tak apala.
Rohana: Arwah mak saya jaga.
Farah: Duduk sini la?
Farah: Aaa...belajar kuih kapit ni, dari mana?
Rohana: Dari mak saya.
Farah: Daripada mak?
Rohana: Hah. Sebab tu kita bubuh Warisan Bonda.
Farah: Hah betul. So daripada mak la. Buat Kuih Kapit?
Rohana: Hah.
Farah: Maksudnya lama juga. Kuih Kapit tu.
Rohana: Lama. Kira mak saya buat Kuit Kapit dari saya sekolah rendah.
Farah: Puan Rohana ada berapa orang adik beradik?
Rohana: 3.
Farah: 3 juga?
Rohana: Saya, satu lelaki,
Farah: 2 perempuan.
Rohana: 2 perempuan.
Farah: Semua berniaga?
Farah: Abang? Buka kedai makan.
Rohana: Kedai kopi la.
Farah: Tapi dekat luar la?
Rohana: Sini.
Farah: Mana?
Farah: Apa ni income...
Rohana: Rumah abang saya belakang ni.
Farah: Income chalet dengan homestay ni dia tak menentu la maksudnya?
Rohana: Ha.
Farah: Tapi bila time cuti sekolah, banyak?
Rohana: Macam ni. Banyak.
Farah: Tapi kenapa tak naikkan harga masa musim cuti?
Farah: Langkawi tak payah cakap la.
Rohana: Dia mai Pulau Aman ni hanya untuk berehat. Dia nak beli apa-apa pun, kalau kita letak harga mahal, dia kira bot dah RM7.00 sorang.
Farah: Naikkan harga?
Farah: Apa ni, wakil rakyat tak ada ka perancangan nak menaikkan Pulau Aman ni bagi ada tarikan?
Rohana: Tak ada. Tak dengar pun.
Farah: Orang Pulau Aman sendiri tak ada apa-apa?
Farah: Tak sepakat? Tapi parti politik sama semua?
Farah: Sendiri?
Rohana: Kawan ni hujung ni, kawan ni hujung ni.
Farah: Kecil kampung ni.
Farah: Macam peranan Kumpulan Pembangunan Wanita ni sebagai apa di sini?
Farah: Maksudnya?
Farah: Dalam tu la?
Rohana: Hah, dalam tu.
Farah: Puan Rohana yang mula-mula buat?
Rohana: Hah. Wanita.
Farah: Macam mana idea tu datang?
Rohana: Tu la.
Farah: Balik Pulau.
Rohana: P kerja dekat Balik Pulau.
Farah: Hah, sebab...
Rohana: Kita dapat idea daripada sana. Masuk ahli UMNO di sana.
Farah: Tu balik sini, memang ada orang yang nak join?
Farah: Sini sanakan.
Farah: I see.
Farah: Cakapkan.
Rohana: Orang yang bercakap. Ni nak minta melalui JKK,
Farah: Tak straight direct.
Farah: Boleh.
Rohana: Dia kata saya buat.
Farah: Dia bagi?
Farah: Kiria dia bengkel.
Rohana: Tak ada kata Penghulu, Pejabat DO tolong ka, tak ada.
Farah: Sendiri.
Rohana: Sendiri.
Farah: Tapi Penghulu tak kata apala?
Rohana: Dak.
Farah: Masa tu sama, Encik Sanusi ka sapa?
Farah: Kira masa tu wanita dekat Pulau Aman ni memang terlibat semua la?
Rohana: Hah. Semua kita ambil, ahli.
Farah: Kira buat perniagaan?
Rohana: Hah.
Farah: Buat makanan ringan?
Rohana: Ada yang buat makanan ringan, ada yang buat...
Farah: Apa lagi? perniagaan?
Rohana: Depa ada yang buat Kuih Bakar. Ada buat Bahulu.
Farah: Yang jual dekat luar ka dalam?
Rohana: Dulu kita jual dekat luar. Dulu Kerepek Sukun pun, kita jual dekat luar. La ni Kerepek Sukun di sini pun tak dan.
Farah: Ye la.
Farah: Income dia? Dia buat macam mana? Maksudnya...
Farah: Bagi upah?
Rohana: Hah.
Farah: Masa tu masuk koperasi ka duit tu, macam mana?
Farah: Dulu tu sejak bila yang tak p?
Rohana: Saya ingat 3 tahun yang lepas saya buat p Melaka. Saya buat p Melaka, saya kutip sorang RM20.00 saja. Semua orang heran. Macam mana 3 hari 2 malam, RM20.00 sorang.
Farah: Boleh?
Rohana: Boleh lepas.
Farah: Budget.
Rohana: Saya cari, saya cari sponsor.
Farah: Wow. Betul?
Rohana: Hah. Saya cari sponsor.
Farah: Kira inisiatif la.
Rohana: Hah. Saya cari sponsor.
Farah: Cari sponsor? Daripada YB apa semua?
Rohana: YB. Cari sponsor dekat Ketua Cawangan.
Farah: Kiranya nak kertas kerja ka? Ka kita kena cakap?
Rohana: Tak ada. Saya telefon saja.
Farah: Call?
Farah: Minta?
Rohana: Ada yang bagi RM500.00.
Farah: Ooo, minta orang ni sikit.
Rohana: Ketua Bahagian bagi RM500.00. Lepas tu had yang masa tu apa, yang dulu dia masuk calon tapi dia kalah. Tapi dia bagi juga. Dia bagi RM500.00 walaupun dia kalah. Hah. Lepas tu Datuk ni, Datuk Kadar
sikit. Saya himpun-himpun dapat dalam RM2K lebih. RM2K lebih cukup untuk bas. Lepas tu di sana,

Farah: Sana pula.
Rohana: Tempat tidur di sana, saya telefon dekat Datuk Ali Rostam.
Rohana: Ali Rostam walaupun dia
Farah: Dia bagi la?
Rohana: Tak jadi ni
Farah: MB.
Rohana: Tak jadi MB, tapi dia masih Ketua Bahagian. Dia kata tak apa, dia bagi Laksamana Homestay.
Farah: Laksamana Homestay?
Rohana: Cantik rumah. Dia bukan rumah macam ni,
Farah: Chalet la.
Rohana: Rumah ni elok la. Rumah macam kos sederhana la yang tu. Sebab 2 tingkat, dia bagi 2 biji.
Farah: Berapa orang?
Rohana: 1 bas.
Farah: 1 bas. Sapa yang terpilih p tu? Maksudnya kategori tu?
Rohana: Saya pilih orang sini. 1 bas orang sini saja.
Farah: Perempuan la?
Farah: Tapi yang masak-masak tu, dah tak buat dah sekarang?
Rohana: Catering buat juga la.
Farah: Kalau macam time raya? Ada dak buat kuih raya, lepas tu jual?
Farah: Sekarang ni buat juga la?
Farah: Tak larat dah dia pun.
Rohana: Yang buka kedai depan nu pun, KPW. Had yang Restoran Mee Udang tu pun, KPW. Dulu depa semua, dulu tak ada buka apa.
Farah: Baru la.
Farah: Kata dulu tu, 3 tahun lepas sejak tu memang tak ada apa sangat buat aktiviti ka?
Rohana: Kita buat, aktiviti kita buat. Tapi tak ada lawatan la. Tak boleh ni la nak buat lawatan selalu.
Farah: Kos tinggi la ni.
Rohana: Hah, kos tinggi la ni. Bas saja RM4K.
Farah: Huiii, bas saja RM4K.
Rohana: Hah. RM4K kalau 3 hari 2 malam.
Farah: Ye la. Nak bayar dekat driver.
Farah: RM4K.
Rohana: Tapi saya tanya, Datuk Kadar dia kata dia boleh bagi RM3K. Hah, kurang RM1K la.
Farah: Tak apala. Dia mai tu layan elok-elok.
Rohana: Yang ni?
Farah: Semua aktiviti.
Rohana: Yang ni? Yang had hari ni?
Farah: Hah.
Rohana: Datuk Kadar tu la. Dia yang bawa keluar duit semua.
Farah: Geng-geng dia la.
Farah: Kira Puan Rohana memang tak penat daripada dulu.
Rohana: Hah, tak tau la.
Farah: Tapi nak tanya. Ada tak pengganti macam Puan Rohana dekat sini?
Rohana: So far tak ada.
Farah: Puan Rohana tak nampak?
Rohana: So far tak ada.
Farah: Makcik Faizah tak ada?
Farah: Ambil yang tu?
Rohana: Hah. Kadang-kadang ada seminar ka KPW buat, saya ambil cuti join, bawa orang sini p.
Rohana: Generasi baru, tak tau nak kata.
Farah: Ramai keluar ke?
Farah: Macam mana?
Rohana: Macam kita main sukan-suakan. Hah, macam tu saja.
Farah: Seronok-seronok.
Rohana: Kata untuk kita nak cari pendapatan,
Farah: Tak ada.
Rohana: Tak ada satu perancangan yang nak buat untuk cari pendapatan.
Farah: Sebab pendapatan tu penting untuk ekonomi.
Farah: Bersuka ria.
Rohana: Bersuka ria.
Farah: Sebab depa ada kerja lain ka? Macam mana?
Farah: Tapi kalau macam generasi ni, ada tak yang jadi Doktor, Lawyer, Cikgu?
Farah: Ketawa.
Farah: Sebab kalau depa dok luar,
Rohana: Sebab la ni kan, bukan la kita nak kata. Penagih pun koi ramai.
Farah: Kat sini ramai juga?
Rohana: Hah.
Farah: Ada?
Farah: Sebab kecilkan kampung ni.
Rohana: Seriuskan tu pun tak. Penagih pun ramai.
Farah: Ketum pun ramai.
Rohana: Ketua Kampung dipilih ke?
Farah: Ketua Kampung ni, automatik dilantik. Pasal tu jadi macam tu.
Rohana: Dia tak ada leadership.
Farah: Dia tak ada leadership.
Rohana: Tapi la ni kan, saya macam kata kerajaankan, dia tak boleh lantik Pengerusi yang terlalu muda macam Sanusi.
Farah: Muda ke Sanusi tu?
Rohana: Dia bukan la muda sangat. Dia 50.
Farah: 50.
Rohana: 50 tak la muda sangat. Tapi cara depa tu
Farah: Lain?
Farah: Hah, balance.
Farah: Maksudnya sini, kelas-kelas agama tak adala?
Farah: Encik Sanusi tu memang asal orang sini?
Rohana: Orang sini.
Farah: Orang sini.
Rohana: Sanusi tu la rumah depan tu. Sarimah tu bini dia la.
Farah: Laaa, kami tak tahu.
Rohana: Hah.
Farah: Sungguh?
Rohana: Ya. Rumah yang depan tu.
Farah: Sebab saya tak pernah tengok Encik Sanusi tu. Tapi saya pun tak pernah kenal dia. Tak tau la.
Rohana: Dia la Pengerusi JKK.
Farah: Dengar la?
Rohana: Walaupun kerajaan tak bayar elaun, dia bayar sendiri. Mesyuarat sekali mesyuarat RM50.00 saja. Dia kira kalau kalai sebulan sekali mesyuarat, kalau 4 orang baru RM200.00. Dia bagi ja.
Farah: Dia bagi ja.
Rohana: Jadi bila macam tu kan, saya tengok, macam Nibung Tebal JKK, depa maintance. Sebab apa? Dia ada penasihat yang umur ni sikit.
Farah: Dia berusia. Dia banyak pengalaman.
Farah: Tengok la, dia punya apa ni. Dia punya niat dia sendiri.
Farah: Sebab membazir?
Farah: Menang.
Rohana: Nak dapat nombor 1 atau nombor 2. Kalau dok macam ni, macam ni dok ada, nak dapat nombor berapa? Tengok kampung sudah la.
Farah: Kampung ni pernah masuk pertandingan apa-apa tak?
Rohana: Besa.
Farah: Besa? Kampung apa?
Rohana: Saya besa masuk KPW Jaya. Nombor 1 dapat, nombor 2 besa dapat, nombor 3 besa dapat.
Farah: Pertandingan apa tu?
Rohana: KPW Jaya la. Seluruh Malaysia.
Farah: Dia tengok kumpulan tu?
Rohana: Hah. Dan kita maju.
Farah: Maksudnya dia tengok income.
Rohana: Hah. Income kita semua dapat.
Farah: Tapi la? Masuk macam mana?
Rohana: La ni masuk, saya pun malas nak masuk.
Farah: Hah.
Rohana: Sebab apa, bila kita masuk tengok keadaan kampung pun, tak...
Farah: Tu la. Kena ada pelapis Puan Rohana: sendiri.
Farah: Semua dah ada dekat sini.
Rohana: Semua ada.
Farah: Cuma nak maintenance.
Rohana: Kira
Farah: Cuma saya takut macam ni. Bila mai,
Farah: Ya.
Rohana: Sebab kita p, p promosi di Singapore. Kita bawa kita punya
Farah: Produk-produk?
Farah: Seafood.
Farah: Nak mai.
Farah: Tu la. Kalau orang just mai nak makan dekat sini, ekonomi yang tu saja la yang membantu.
Farah: Dia tak ada ka? Kan dia sangat maju. Tuan kedai tu, dia tak pula sumbangkan dekat kampung ke?
Farah: Apa kriteria nak ada kedai tu? Sebab dia sorang monopoli situ? Orang lain tak ada rasa nak buka?
Rohana: Tu depan tu buka.
Farah: Tapi orang mai yang tu juga.
Farah: Dapat dekat dia?
Rohana: Tapi orang sini semua tak tau. Saya sebab saya kawan orang UMNO.
Farah: Kalau orang tau, agak-agak?
Rohana: Tak tau la dekat depa.
Farah: Ambil tauk kot (ketawa).
Rohana: Saya rajin p
Farah: Tanya?
Farah: Puan Rohana tau la sebenarnya. Dekat situ duit macam mana.
Rohana: Tu yang budget hotel tu,
Farah: Hah. Yang sana yang hujung tu.
Farah: Dan untuk?
Farah: Tempat bot?
Rohana: Jeti.
Farah: Nampak macam...
Rohana: Jeti.
Farah: Jetikan?
Rohana: Hah. Tapi mana orang tau.
Farah: Tapi jadi hotel.
Rohana: Bila depa nak buat tu. Tu yang Tourism Malaysia kata. Pasal apa orang Pulau Aman dah bagi tempat bot, tak siap?
Farah: Payah la.
Farah: Kenapa tak bagi pada awalkan?
Rohana: Homestay nak ambil pun boleh.
Farah: Tu sekarang ni, income daripada hotel dapat dekat sapa?
Farah: Kayu tu ka?
Farah: Tak maintain?
Rohana: Ketua Pengerusi tak maintain. Laku tu kalau ni.
Farah: Memang orang nak duduk tu.
Farah: Ok.

Farah: Ego.

Farah: Bukan tak boleh.
Farah: Dia pun tak buat apa.

Farah: Tak bagi tau.
Rohana: Tak cerita. Kalau depa p, depa kena bancuh la. SKM kata kalau ambil tindakan, 3 orang kena masuk penjara. Tak buat Mesyuarat Agung satu.

Farah: Tak ikut dia punya prosedur dia.
Rohana: Ni income tak ada duit. Tak ada
Farah: Saluran?
Rohana: Mana p.
Rohana: Yang orang keluar masuk, saham mana p duit?
Farah: Ha’ah.

Farah: Habis?
Rohana: Ke dalam.
Farah: Pengerusi JKK ka?
Rohana: Orang sini juga, dia Bendahari.
Farah: Sanusi.
Rohana: Sanusi tu Bendahari. Bendahari pun
Farah: Masuk la?
Rohana: Mana ada duit.
Farah: Duit tu p mana?

Farah: Tak baca.
Rohana: Tulis diambil tindakan mahkamah.
Farah: Tapi depa tak ambil la?

Farah: Tu je la tindakan.
Farah: Tapi boleh jadi Ketua Kampung? Tu la masalahnya.
Rohana: Kalau depa tu ambil tindakan Mahkamah habis la. Tapi depa tolong lagi.

Farah: Depa ingat.
Farah: Tapi kalau ikutkan, tak boleh. Pecah amanah.

Farah: Kena.
Rohana: La ni.
Farah: RM50.00 Polis Trafik pun kena. Tapi dia berkira macam tu. Maksudnya depa tutup mata.

Farah: Ye la. Tak lepas.
Rohana: Tertangguh, tertangguh dengan depa.
Farah: Tapi kira depa dok pegang lagi jawatan tu?
Farah: Oleh Koperasi la.
Rohana: Gantung la Koperasi. Tak ada dah Pulau Aman.
Farah: Hah?
Rohana: Tak ada la Koperasi Pulau Aman.
Farah: Kira bubar?
Farah: So Puan Rohana plan nak buat balik?
Rohana: Hah.
Farah: Buat balik.

Farah: Ok la. In Shaa Allah.
Rohana: Saya asal selagi saya ada ni orang kata,
Farah: Ada kudrat.
Rohana: Ada kudrat,
Farah: Satukan balikkan.
Rohana: Hah, satukan balik.
Farah: Ye la.
Rohana: Kalau sapa yang nak masuk, masuk.
Farah: Bagi tau.
Rohana: Dia boleh masuk. orang-orang yang ada chalet pun boleh masuk. ni tengok. Dia duduk diluar. Dia cerdik.

Farah: Ni? Tapi dia ada chalet?

Farah: Tadi dah edar borang.
Rohana: Tadi sapa yang edar borang?
Farah: Ada pakcik tu tadi.
Rohana: Ooo, tu ni yang tu borang Khairat Kematian.
Farah: Mesyuarat semalam.
Rohana: Semalam mesyuarat?
Farah: Entah. Kami dekat luar rumah tu. Dengar Makcik Sarimah dengan Cik Timah la kan?
Farah: Ooo, AJK.
Rohana: 3 orang saja. AJK tak banyak perempuan. Lagi pun dia kira AJK saja.
Farah: Kutip duit la kan?
Farah: Ooo. Baru letak?
Rohana: Sampai bila saya nak pegang saya kata?
Farah: Tak ada orang nak offer diri?
Rohana: Perempuan tak mau langsung.
Farah: Pasal pa?
Rohana: Kelmarin yang nak ganti, mana p semua tak mau. Last-last ganti aha...ganti tu, had dok jual wafer tu. Bagi dia ganti. Tu pun dia bukan mai mesyuarat pun.
Farah: Tak mai?
Farah: Lepas tu macam mana?
Rohana: Saya habaq terus terang memang saya tak mau dah.
Farah: Penatkan?
Rohana: Sebab saya cucu dah tak ada dah tabika ni.
Farah: Dah pindah habis dah. Elisa dah Darjah 1 dah.
Rohana: Elisa dia Taman .... dia memang tak ada dah.
Farah: Dia tak sekolah ni?
Rohana: Saja nak bagi ni ya. Tabika pun saya pengasas. Orang sini tok sah dok cakap besaq.
Farah: Ooo. Puan Rohana: Pengasas Tabika sini?
Rohana: Tabika KEMAS. Saya pengasas, saya cikgu, saya yang tolong kira Cikgu KEMAS. Saya yang hantar resume, saya yang hantar nama. Saya yang interview.
Farah: Dapat?
Rohana: Dapat interview. Pengerusi JKK kata, kena interview 3 orang.
Farah: Dah ada dah?
Farah: Tapi ambil tu sapa?
Rohana: KEMAS ambil la.
Farah: Maksudnya Cikgu KEMAS ambil daripada orang KEMAS tu sendiri?
Rohana: Dak aih. Cikgu KEMAS tu dia duduk sini.
Farah: Penduduk sini.
Farah: Maksudnya dia ada SPM?
Rohana: Dia ada SPM. Nak nak ambil KEMAS. Nak tubuh. Kita tak mau la orang luar.
Farah: Biar orang dekat sini.
Rohana: Biar orang sini.
Farah: Budak tu setuju?
Farah: Bagi?
Farah: Pengerusi...
Rohana: Yang dah meninggal tu.
Farah: Eh. Meninggal tu la.
Rohana: Dia nak suruh interview 3 orang. Tak payah la.
Farah: Dah ada dah.
Rohana: Tak payah. Bagi la.
Farah: Tabika budak SPM boleh mengajar.
Farah: Hantar?
Rohana: Hantar saja. Tu saya kata, tok sah la nak cakap besar. Saya yang tolong. Tabika pun saya...
Farah: Pulau Aman (ketawa).
Rohana: Pengasas (ketawa). Kita lagi.
Farah: Semalam dah habis dah. Last.
Rohana: Last dah. Tak mau dah. Dulu Pengerusi PIBG pun saya jadi.
Farah: PIBG sekolah ni (ketawa).
Rohana: Hah. AJK PIBG Nasional pun saya jadi.
Farah: Puan Rohana saja kot yang ada leadership. So orang tengok macam takut. So apa yang menyebabkan Puan Rohana, selalu ke depan?
Farah: Ha’ah.
Rohana: Saya ni orang kata pasal saya berkawan dengan orang.
Farah: Tahu dunia luar.
Rohana: Saya berkawan dengan ramai orang.
Farah: Tapi masa Puan Rohana dok aktif tu, kira suami macam mana?
Rohana: Suami tak kisah.
Farah: Tak kisah?
Rohana: Hah.
Farah: Dia support la?
Rohana: Hah.
Farah: Contoh support dia tu? Macam mana?
Rohana: Support dia kira aaa...
Farah: Maksudnya, dia p hantar la.
Farah: Maksudnya dia p hantar, dia p ambil?
Farah: Dia macam kalau Puan Rohana p meeting, rumah dia la kemas?
Masak?
Rohana: Tak la. Saya jenis saya, saya kemas sendiri.
Farah: Hah, ok.
Rohana: Masak saya masak.
Farah: Jaga anak boleh la dia?
Rohana: Tapi boleh la dia. Jaga anak ada orang jaga.
Farah: Yang penting sokongan tu.
Rohana: Hah, sokongan yang penting.
Farah: Kat sini tak ada anak anak. Tak ada perempuan nak ke depan, sebab suami dia tak bagi ke?
Rohana: Ada juga.
Farah: Ada kes yang macam tu.
Rohana: Makcik Leha tu, dia ke depan juga tu. Bila kami p kursus, mengutuk orang sini.
Farah: Sebab apa?
Farah: Kata.
Rohana: Depa ni bukan dok ada dekat Penang. Ni ada di Langkawi ni.
Farah: Apa benda?
Farah: La, jadi macam tu. Payah la.
Rohana: Sekali tu kan, saya kena marah pasal apa,
Farah: Kena marah dengan laki dia?
Farah: Nak buat lain?
Farah: Ramai la.
Farah: Dapat nama Pulau Aman juga.
Rohana: Dapat nama Pulau Aman. Bila mesyuarat JKK,
Farah: Tak mau mai?
Farah: Jadi.
Rohana: Jadi. Pengerusi JKK kata memang jadi. Pengarah pun puji. Tu nak katala,
Farah: Apa lagi.
Rohana: Tu jadi masalah.
Farah: Complain banyak.
Rohana: Bukan senang nak jadi senang.
Farah: Betul la.
Rohana: La tak ada dah. Dia tak mau la macam tu.
Farah: Tak ada. Kalau ada pun, organisasi yang elokkan. Yang tolong Puan Rohana. Memang...
Farah: Tapi yang nak jadi leader tu.
Farah: Tak. Depa tak ada confident untuk bagi arahan ka?
Rohana: Depa kalau nak buat apa-apa. Macam yang nak buat ni kan. P rumah orang. ‘Sat g p la, kita ada program’. Hah, yang tu saja.
Farah: Tukang panggil.
Farah: Dia tak bagi tahu lengkap?
Farah: Takkan dia mai kita buat tak tahu?
Rohana: Saya pun tak tau kata dia dok ada. Nak p yang tadikan. Yang saya lalu bawa beg nak p bayar duit chalet orang. Lepas tu kebetulan dia dok makan tang tu. Dia panggil ‘Kak Rohana!’.
Farah: Dia panggil.
Farah: Bukan tak terjumpa.
Rohana: Hah.
Farah: Kecilnya kampugnya.
Rohana: Tu la cerita Pulau Aman.
Farah: Eh, nama Pulau Aman tu dapat dari mana?
Rohana: Sebab dia aman.
Farah: Eh?
Farah: Sebab dia aman. Betul. Tak, dia memang betul senyap, sunyi, sedap.
Rohana: Aman.
Rohana: Shopping.
Farah: Apa...
Rohana: Ni tak rasa Kuit Sepit pun.
Farah: Tak merasa lagi. Dah tengok tak ada.
Rohana: Ni kacang ada.
Farah: Buat sendiri? Favourite ni.
Rohana: Ni dia la juga ni. Ni dia la buat.
Farah: Menantu?
Rohana: Tu menantu dok goreng kerepek tu.
Farah: Kira dia memang
Rohana: Kuih Loyang pun ada.
Farah: Dia warisi la tu.
Farah: Ada waris.
Farah: Depa nak depa buat.
Farah: Memang dekat dia la.
Farah: Sampai bila pun kan?
Rohana: Setakat kata nak buat wanita cergas, nak main tu, nak main ni, tak jadi.
Farah: Sampai bila?
Rohana: Sampai bila hang nak cergas dok main sukan? Seronok, huha huha main.
Farah: Nak seronok sajak. Tak fikir untuk apa, ke depan.
Rohana: Untuk ke depan.
Farah: Sebab boleh nak impower.
Rohana: Sebab kita la ni kan kehidupan kita sebab kita orang islam. Orang islamkan Pulau Aman ni. Kita tau apa jadi
Farah: Hujung kita.
Farah: Ya betul.
Rohana: Kita hanya boleh sambut Maal Hijrah.
Farah: 1 Muharram.
Rohana: Tahun Baru
Farah: Tahun Baru Islam la.
Rohana: Kalau kita buat bunga api memang tak boleh. Kita ikut
Farah: Budaya.
Rohana: Budaya depa.
Rohana: Kalau orang ni, jangan kita organize benda tu. Ikut-ikut kita buat birthday pun tak boleh ada lilin.

Farah: Hah betul.
Rohana: Tak bolehkan?
Rohana: Tak payah la buh lilin. Potong kek tu tak apa.
Farah: La ni orang berdoa depan kek.
Rohana: Berdoa. Tak payah bubuh lilin, tiup tu tak payah. Betul? Kita kalau dah, saya dah umur 50-an, kita apa pun
Farah: Patutnya slow down.
Rohana: Kita p kursuskan. Bila Pertanian buat, ada kuliah subuh.
Farah: Ermmm, betul. Pagi.
Rohana: Kita ada kuliah subuh dan kuliah maghrib. Jadi disamping kita p tu
Farah: Seimbang.
Rohana: Betul.
Farah: Seimbang.
Rohana: Betul.
Farah: Akhlak dan ilmu. Sebab nak berniaga ni bukan senang.
Rohana: Bukan senang.
Farah: Sebab dia melibatkan amanah.
Rohana: Betul.
Farah: Kalau diri tak kuat ni.

Farah: Ada?

Farah: Lama-lama.
Rohana: Orang mai Pulau Aman, budak-budak kilang. Kitakan usaha telefon dekat kilang. Suruh
Farah: Hantar?
Rohana: Buat events dekat sini.
Farah: Supaya boleh rakam.

Farah: Video lama?
Rohana: Yang tu la depa tak menang.
Farah: Hah. Payah la.
Rohana: Tipu, ciplak.
Farah: Depa ingat orang tak tau.
Rohana: Bila depa ciplak tu
Farah: Depa tak memang la.
Rohana: Walaupun Pulau Aman memang video pulau yang tercantik.
Farah: Kena cari tengok tu.
Rohana: Sapa buat? ICU buat.
Farah: Ye la.
Farah: Hah.
Rohana: Saya tak kisah. Kalau kita nak masuk pertandingan.
Nak guna la. Had homestay buat ni kita nak guna. Tapi kita ni sikit la.
Kita jangan salin penuh.
Rohana: Kita potong yang bawah tu ka.
Farah: Ambil terus.
Farah: Tunjuk kat sana.
Rohana: Hah, tunjuk.
Rohana: Hah.
Farah: Jadi Duta Pulau Aman?
Farah: Bawa nama Pulau Aman?
Rohana: Hah.
Farah: Kira Puan Rohana Duta Pulau Aman la?
Rohana: Sapa nak kata macam tu dekat saya?
Farah: Kita kata.
Rohana: Sapalah saya?
Farah: Ya la. Tak ada Puan Rohana, tak adala naik.
Rohana: Tapi kalau kenal. Saya akur dengan Prof. Badaruddin.
Farah: Badaruddin.
Farah: Nasib baik dia.
Farah: Dia nak juga?
Rohana: Nak.
Farah: Dah maghrib. Terima kasih Puan Rohana.
Viyan – almost all villagers are approachable, the place is very convenient to have a rest, especially for those who got fed up with the noise from cities, here they can easily be approached and asked question, engaged in conversation, so I think it gives them opportunity to work as well if they wanted to see more. Most of houses, unlike other place is not very locked strictly, so it also gives the feeling of safety/security that makes you feels like you are in a safe zone, and the look of the people here is not threatening or intimidating, they make it comfortable here. Those who wants to visit quite convenient. To sums, transportation easy, environment is safe, people are approachable.

Sally – even though I am Penangite, I never been in Pulau Aman, so when we took the ride from USM to Pulau Aman, it’s been my first time. Because we had the sceneries, very good, we have beaches, we have greens... and beside that, Puan Mahani is very welcoming and very friendly. Many of the information that I got from her, I feels very authentic, I got to experience authentic Malay food, such as ulam peria served just now I never eaten anywhere else, and even though I know what is homestay, I never go into the house or anything like that. So being a local I know it is hot in Malaysia, but for westerners they might enjoy this new lifestyle. Staying with
local people, looking at chicken, goats around their house. So my personal experience, I enjoy the trip and I would suggest this place to my friends.

**Stephanie** – for overall experience, we walked a lot, but it is enjoyable. The residents here quite friendly. For Malaysian I think ok la, but for foreigners I think it is difficult especially because language barrier. The place is convenient, residents friendly…Foodwise, we normally would have the fresh prawns purchase at 1 kg and you can ask the restaurant to do the cooking and it is free of charge. We had the steam version of the prawns which comes from the freshness of the prawns itself. I came here because it is an addictive dish and I just don’t bother about the cholesterol level…”

**Nasuha** – I didn’t expect too much about pulau aman, and im quite impressed when im here because I now know some new things about Pulau Aman, the culture in Pulau Aman, and the activities here. In my opinion, the differences between my Malay cultures with Pulau Aman’s culture is that here is an island. So it’s different.

**Farid** – masa first datang memang takde harapan apa apa tentang pulau aman, jadi bila dah sampai nampak macam perkampungan nelayan. View sini cantik. Tapi pendapat saya bila mai tengok tu macam tak ramai orang sini, macam pulau tinggal pun ada. Waktu first masuk masuk tu tak ramai orang, tapi makanan dijual agak mahal jugak kat sini, mungkin sebab dalam pulau. Tapi sini makanan sedap, mee udang yang
terkenal, dan masakan yang dimasak dekat kampong pun sangat sedap. Jadi kita nampak kebanyakannya orang orang tua yang banyak kat kampong ni, dan aktiviti pun takde banyak yang boleh buat kat sini, mai tengok pulau keliling pastu makan mee udang pastu balik. Masalah kat sini, boleh nampak orang tua-tua pun tak berapa nak aktif sangat, so keupayaan yang terhad dan sebagainya, kekurangan tenaga kerja juga. Kebanyakan infrastruktur saya lihat banyak yang terbiar, tak digunakan dengan sebaiknya, chalet chalet banyak yang rosak, bumbung bocor, lantai berlubang, so macam mencacatkan pemandangan. Mungkin next time nak cadang kat orang pun tak cadang la sebab keadaan yang agak teruk ni. Sebab kita nak orang merasai pengalaman yang menarik, tapi kalau datang tengok keadaan yang teruk teruk ni mungkin akan memberi persepsi yang buruk.

**AUTHENTICITY**

Maximillan – I think I do not have any expectation from this trip, but still I am quite surprise because it really is beautiful here and I really enjoyed it. I also think it is quite authentic in a way, I thought we were going through a programme, everything was like prepare/plan and it was more like acting or something like that, but here we were quite free to explore ourselves. And Mahani was there so we could approach her, but she wasn’t put herself in the focus of telling the stories to us. So we really have the chance to make our own impression, which was really nice. And I really enjoy the day.

Azmi – overall I think this trip is ok, nice, and I enjoy the trip with new friends, new experience. This is my first time being in close contacts with animals in my life time.
Not like other city boys, the locals here treat this as their hobbies. To play with animals like chickens, goose, it is interesting, the villagers seems relaxed, while us feel unease even to see them. That’s my experience today.

**Wong** – I do not bring any expectation to here, but I do believe in expect the unexpected. Everything here is simple, everyone here is friendly. And the food is nice. The scenery is something that you can’t get from a city. So, its kind of like soothing. A journey to relax yourself, and overall im quite comfortable with this journey. Unexpectedly, I have experienced a ‘normal day’ or daily life that they provided here, but I do believe when you go to any journey or vacation, even if it’s a homestay, you actually have a little expectation. So, I think it is good that the providers show us the good side of the village. It might not be fully authentic, but I do believe there are certain degree of authenticity and I think this is good because tourist doesn’t always want the authentic, they might fond to the good memories. For me I agree with the statement.

**Azad** – before coming here, when you said its Pulau Aman where we were on the boat, I had different expectation. I did not expect they have a lot of things here, for example the library at the school, clinic, and restaurant, it was actually quite surprising for me. They have names for the streets here, that was very nice. I mean, it’s nice to see on a small area that you have these facilities. Regarding the food, it was delicious actually, the area was nice, a bit hot but yeah it is supposed to be hot.

Tourists often have an expectation of what will they see and they expect the locals to come forward and act in certain ways. Local residents also refused to project the image of the true self and wanted to have the best display for visitors to see. What is your opinion on this statement?
Maximillan – I would have agreed on the statement. Of course you don’t want to share with foreigners what you are, you don’t want to share everything, you just wanted to show the best side of yourself. But I think here it’s because they left us a little bit ‘alone’, I think it was quite authentic, it was quite nice. I expected someone comes here, and makes a big show. And tell us ‘our life is like this…and this is going like this…’ and all of these kind of thing. But they didn’t do, so we can make our own ideas and thoughts about that, so for me this was very positive. Because I really expected someone in a way give us some “performance”, and basically I expected that, when I do homestay I would expect that they don’t share their true inner feeling with us.

Wong – I agree what Maximillan says just now. Unexpectedly, I have experienced a ‘normal day’ or daily life that they provided here, but I do believe when you go to any journey or vacation, even if it’s a homestay, you actually have a little expectation. So I think it is good that the providers show us the good side of the village. It might not be fully authentic, but I do believe there are certain degree of authenticity and I think this is good because tourist doesn’t always want the authentic, they might fond to the good memories. For me I agree with the statement.

Farid – what today I have experienced is, this is the nature of this village. It looks like nobody lives here, macam kampong tinggal, ramai orang lalu lalang tak sibuk, I think this is the nature of this village. But if the homestay programme is run in the big scale,
I think they will pretend to be something they are not. So like doing show, sports, or
dance or something. So their nature or daily routine like collecting shell, fishing at the
sea side. For example when I asked the women who were collecting the shell, they are
not doing that everyday, because the shell cannot be found everyday.

The acts of sharing their own sustenance with the guests were done by the givers
(or hosts) by providing things in their own home. The central idea of act of
hospitality is that the concept of sharing one’s home and provision with others.
What do you think? Have you ever experience that before?

Viyan – actually we experienced this before, me and two other lecturers from Turkey,
they come for a conference here, it was their idea to do it casually, to just enter the
house in Batu Ferringhi. So we just casually enter the houses, as the door is open, so
they welcome us, so their tolerance towards tourists is very positive, so I think it is
great if it happens casually. I think if they increase the awareness of some rural areas,
like if their inviting guest, it is best. Like there is a website called ‘couch surfing’, the
same thing they can apply for rural tourism.

Maximillan – basically I know that this is a part of homestay, to open their doors for
people to see, but I always feel uncomfortable with that. I think there were being really
nice, so welcoming, but today we just went into this house of this woman, sitting on
the bed, walking everywhere, take pictures, and then we left. She wasn’t really a part
of this programme right. She’s just being friendly. I thought oh my god we are going
to disturb her. 10 people from somewhere just step inside your house, I felt…I don’t
know….we disturbing her privacy in a way. Isn’t it felt like exploiting, someone whos
observing everything, judging maybe, but its like I always feels like I shouldn’t be there.

**Sally** – I personally think its like Malaysian culture. I am not sure, whether it’s Chinese or indian, or malay, but basically in malay culture is like if guests come, you welcome them with open heart, and open hands, and everything, you welcome them. So basically what kak mahani did just now was that she met with the lady first, and got her permission for us to just see her house and take a look at how the houses look like. Upon receiving the consent from the owner, then she lets us in so in a way the lady was welcoming us as her guest. For maybe the tourists or us students might think, we are exploiting someone else’s privacy, but in malay culture, particularly in Malaysia, that’s how guests are received.

**Hospitality converts strangers into familiars, enemies into friends, friends into better friends, outsiders into insiders, non-kin into kin.** Do you think you’ve been given enough hospitality services while in Pulau Aman?

**Farid** – I don’t feel so much of that, because today is just a short time. It’s just little to build up the relationship. You need sometimes to build up the relationship and make it stronger. But in my previous visit to a homestay, i had a programme where you got to live with a family. The programme is for 3 – 4 days, and they also have more time to get to know each other.
Wong – before you asked that question, but what I believe is that it really depends on who is the visitor…because for me this is not the place for me to change into insider. About hospitality, yes they did welcome us, I did feel they welcome us very much. As you say, this has changed into tourist site, so it feels to me like this is a service, it is a business.

Maximillan – I think its different. I think we… I felt a lot of hospitality, sure they could be more but I don’t want more. I don’t want to be so close. I am here as the visitor, I don’t want to be that close. I need time for myself, I don’t want to be so so near. I could be very uncomfortable in such situation because I don’t know the people and they should treat me like a ‘guest’, they give what they want to give and that’s all. Im very satisfied with the programme today. Im not expecting to get the inside of the culture by doing homestay. Im doing homestay just for the experience, to have small insights of their daily routine and daily life. But still I know it’s limited and not supposed to feel too close. I’m from a culture that’s emphasize individual, and for me this is very different.

Azad – I quite agree when you said that the level of hospitality is up to “why do we bother them” and stuff, but when we went into the house of the woman, so you truly feel uncomfortable about that, the fact that you did not give something in return to her. On the other hand, that’s the nature side of the people here. They are welcoming, for them it rather is something natural, the level of hospitality here and the welcoming
nature. I think we are disturbing in a way, yes, but it’s not to the extent that we just say hi and stay there for a while.

Villagers showcase their local food specialties when tourists are in the village, so that they too, can experience villagers’ traditional culture and tradition. Please describe your food experience while in Pulau Aman.

Syazalina – for me the kind of food that they serve us today is really similar to my mom’s cooking too. Simple vegetable, fried chicken, fish curry. So to say that it is ‘authentic’ malay culture and from what I can see, you guys European also enjoys the food right? It was nice experience.

Azad – my food experience is quite amazing here, because I love the food. It was a little bit spicy, but I try to enjoy. The nasi lemak is quite special I think. Even though it is spicy, but the taste was nice, it was very delicious. The food serve is special, different colors, prepared in different ways too. For example, goreng, cooked, soup. For me honesty is the best policy, so I truly being honest here the food was amazing. I am recommending this place to other people.

What are your perception of women’s role at the homestay premises, and is the overall experience that you undertake feels authentic enough?

Maximillan – we didn’t see that much, but I think the women run this business. Of course they have to talk to their husbands or whatever, the man has to provide
something or when there’s problem they’ll help, but I think the women that we saw and the one we talked to they – the worked is theirs, they have to cook, care for the guests, they are the one standing in front. They come, they welcome, and they say goodbyes. They cook the food, serve the food, they do most of the things. And I think its authentic because in Malaysia I think its like that – women are in front and the do so much.

Sally – I feels that eventhough their domestic role is still there, basically they were cooking for us today, they were serving us, but despite being confine with their domestic role, they also are taking the fore front. Like they are doing the management, for instance Mahani. She is like the mediator between so many agencies, so she practically like getting funding, so she plays a very vital role. So I see that besides most of the women there are single mothers, I can see that they are very empowered. They break away from all the stereotype, and even though some of their husbands are fishermen, they still told us that they are taking the role, like managing everything, like homestays.

Farid – I disagree, because what we see is most of them are housewives, and this is still a male dominated culture. When I talked to Puan Mahani, they said that we were just accepting the program run by Dr Shahran.
Maximillan – but the thing is they run the programme! Even though if the patriarchal value is high here, but I still think that the women here do their job in individual way, and they find ways to do their thing. This is also something that they can say… “ok, im not doing anything I can just carry the children and care of the household” but they run it as a business actually. Its entrepreneurship in a way.

Wong – i think what they trying to say is the women have not been appreciated enough, but still they still under the influence of patriarchy. For example the head chief village is a male, streets name are males name, although women seems to be more empowered. One more to add, I thought women in the city are more empowered or independent, more willing to involve in the workforce or entrepreneurship than the rural women. But in pulau aman, what I can see is that they take the initiatives to be independent, to be the breadwinner, so I think this is something that is quite new. I didn’t expect women in rural area quite willing to empower themselves.
LIST OF PUBLICATION


