

ENTREPRENEURS' SUCCESS IN THE SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE HOMESTAY TOURISM BUSINESS IN SRI LANKA

Devadas, U.M., University of Kelaniya Sri Lanka
Jayasooriya S. S. W., University of Kelaniya Sri Lanka

ABSTRACT

Home stay tourism is popular, specially, in the ASEAN region, and Sri Lanka is also benefiting a lot from this industry. In the literature, the importance given to homestay tourism is skeletal within the study context of Sri Lanka. On this premise, the researchers intended to: explore the nature of homestay entrepreneurs, factors affecting the homestay entrepreneurs' success, and the current challenges, faced by the homestay entrepreneurs that are affecting the continuation of homestay businesses in the southern coastal area in Sri Lanka. Researchers designed this study as a qualitative grounded theory study, valuing constructionist research paradigm. Researchers defined homestay entrepreneurs after identifying their nature and a set of personal and impersonal factor that have been critical in determining homestay entrepreneurs' success. The researchers further identified a set of challenges in the areas of government involvement, financial challenges, human resource development, destination development and competition. The researchers concluded the study by defining homestay entrepreneurs and developing a conceptual framework that explain the phenomenon of home stay tourism entrepreneurs' success that can be used for educational and policy making purposes. Researchers identified a set of implications and recommendations in the development of entrepreneurs, homestay business process and its context, and collaborations.

Keywords: *Entrepreneur, Homestay tourism, Rural community, Stakeholders, Tourism destination*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the foremost stimulators for economic growth and development in many countries as it provides many business and employment opportunities. It is the business of attracting and serving the needs of people travelling and staying outside their home communities for business or pleasure (SLTDA, 2018). Sri Lanka, being a third world and developing country has shown potentials to realize lots of opportunities to benefit the country from the homestay tourism industry. Homestay is now becoming widespread among tourists as a novel tourism product. Homestays are outstanding attractions that develop communities by increasing their income while maintaining the culture and environment of the local area.

The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Board (SLTDA) has reported that Sri Lanka has focused on increasing the number of tourists coming into the country. Lonely Planet listed Sri Lanka as the number one tourist destination for the year 2019 whilst Sri Lanka simultaneously boasted 2.2 million tourists at the closure of 2018. Meanwhile, with the gradual development of the tourism sector, people showed their willingness to engage in niche tourism such as homestays as a new tourism experience and a concept (Fernando, 2014). Simple lifestyles of