

**POTENTIAL OF SECOND HOME TOURISM
AS A STRATEGY TO REVIVE FRASER'S HILL
AS A TOURISM DESTINATION**

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DEDICATION

To My Beloved Family

&

To Those Who Care

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ABSTRACT

Second home tourism has become an emerging sector especially in the western world and it is increasingly importance in certain region due to its positive impacts to the economic sector and tourism industry. Study conducted in Spain revealed that 70% of the second home ownerships are locals. Second home tourism will be having great potential growth especially in the global level due to the increasing aged population by 2050. In Malaysia, second home tourism is still young and mainly targeting the foreigners through the MM2H programme.

Fraser's Hill, it is truly an idyllic place for anyone to rest and to escape from not only the heat and humidity but also the hustle and bustle of city life. It is one of the prettiest Malaysian Hill resorts with cool climate and proximity to the Klang Valley, which is an ideal retreat for city dwellers. However, it seems not been well perceived either by the locals and foreign visitors in recent years. Seasonality and lack of activities as well as amenities/facilities in Fraser's Hill had makes it less attractive to visitors during the low season periods due to the shortcoming of its attractions. Tourist arrivals and average occupancy rates of hotels/resorts have declined and tourism industry players have lamented this problem to the federal government.

The problems faced by Fraser's Hill has then tested through the study to implement second home tourism as a potential strategy to enhance the occupancy rate and length of stay by the long-stay guests or second homers especially during the low season periods which will not only stimulate the accommodation sector to operate at economical and sustainable level but also creates another opportunity on the demand growth on local services and facilities which would bring to the better improved facilities and infrastructure and development. This study also investigated the concept/variant of second home and reviewed the success/failure of second home tourism practices in Malaysia.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Second Home Tourism is increasingly in demand and has been regarded as an important sector in global level. It has become an emerging tourism sector in a number of countries and is increasingly importance in several regions (Pedro, 2006), and has been attracted renewed interest all over the Western world (e.g. Buller & Horggart, 1994; Kaltenborn, 1997a, 1997b, 1998; Halseth, 1998; Muller, 1999,2002a, 2002b; Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999; Flognfeldt, 2002; Williams & Hall, 2002).

USA is considered one of the countries in the world with largest proportion of second home tourism (Varela *et al.*, 2003). Second home ownership has also become famous in UK which regarded may give positive impacts to the tourism industry. Holloway (1998) in his study revealed increasing disposal income of dwellers in London and South-east Britain has lead to the growth of second home ownership, both within Britain and overseas countries such as Spain, France and Greece.

In Spain, foreign investment in second homes has reached 5.7 billion Euros in 2002 or equivalent to about 90,000 houses with the growth rate of 10 percent annually. Great Britain represented the country that dominated most investors for second home

which counted at 35 per cent, followed by Germany (31 per cent), thence France (7 per cent). Italy encountered to 5 per cent whilst The Netherlands registered at 3.1 per cent (Pedro, 2006).

For Malaysia, Second Home Tourism has been initiated through the introduction of Silver Hair Programme in 1996 with the aim to attract foreigners over 65 years to stay in Malaysia. However, this programme was not well perceived by foreigners as it had many restrictions. As an effort to encourage and enhance further second home tourism in Malaysia, the Malaysian government has then introduced the Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) Programme in March 2002 to replace the Silver Hair Programme to make Malaysia an attractive settlement place for foreign citizens. It is open to foreigners of 18 years old and above together with their dependents from countries politically recognized (except citizens of Israel, Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro) by Malaysia. This programme managed to sign-in 10,226 participants over the last seven years.

Researchers such as Muller (2006) has identified the mixture of environmental aspects such as the rural landscape, existing settlements, lake or river view as well as the distance between the primary residence and the second home will influence the take up rate of the second home in a destination; which could bring to the significant contribution to the local accommodation sector (Nilsson, 2001). The establishment of second homes in the hill areas as described by Muller (2006) is a democratization of hill tourism by allowing a larger number of people to participate in tourism due to growing of leisure time, tele-working and increasing number of retired households.

Fraser's Hill is one of the Malaysia's hill stations sited about 4,000-foot above sea-level on the Titiwangsa mountain range of Peninsula Malaysia. It comprises seven hills and was developed during the colonial days. It is named after a solitary Scottish pioneer, James Fraser who set up a tin-ore trading post in the 1890s. Fraser's Hill is truly an idyllic place for anyone to rest and to escape from not only the heat and humidity but also the hustle and bustle of city life. It is one of the prettiest Malaysian Hill resorts with

cool climate and proximity to the Klang Valley (about 100-kilometre), which is an ideal retreat for city dwellers.

Fraser's Hill is popular with its greenery, forest walks, fresh air and exotic flower landscape within the clock tower area, not to mention the golfing facilities. Bird watching is a very popular event and Fraser's Hill is the venue of the annual International Bird Race which attracts many foreign visitors here. The quaint bungalow-type development initiated by the colonial administration created an image of “*Little England*” but all this have been changed since 1990s with the development of high rise hotels and apartments as well as golf course.

However, Fraser’s Hill seems not been well perceived either by the locals and foreign visitors in recent years. Tourist arrivals and average occupancy rates of hotels/resorts have declined and tourism industry players have lamented this problem to the federal government. The industry players here agree second home tourism could be an alternative solution to resolve the declined tourists arrivals and low occupancy rates of the hotels/resorts in Fraser’s Hill (Goh, 2008).

Therefore, this study will tempt to find out whether second home tourism could be potentially use as a strategy to revitalize the tourists arrivals and the occupancy rates of the hotels/resorts in Fraser’s Hill thence develop Fraser’s Hill as a premier hill resort second home destination in the country.

1.2 Problem Statement

Fraser’s Hill has been suffered from declined in tourist arrivals and low occupancy rates of the resorts/hotels accommodation over the last few years. This can be evident through the tourist arrival statistics tabulated in Table 1.1 below compared to other hill stations in the state of Pahang.

Table 1.1 Tourists Arrival Statistics

<i>Destination/ Year</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>
Fraser's Hill (<i>Nature-based</i>)	55,339	81,476	89,068	60,232	50,128
Cameron Highlands (<i>Agriculture-based</i>)	227,148	280,547	298,284	401,177	300,938 (<i>Jan - Sept</i>)
Genting Highlands (<i>Theme-based</i>)	2,327,440	3,003,506	3,191,774	5,622,154	4,216,613 (<i>Jan - Sept</i>)

Source: Fraser's Hill Development Corporation (FHDC) & Tourism Malaysia (2008)

Tourist arrivals to Fraser's Hill has been declined about 17% in 2007 compared to the previous year, whilst the year of 2006 slumped about 32% compared to 2005. These shown that the tourist arrivals to Fraser's Hill are on the downward trend.

Subsequently, the accommodation sector in Fraser's Hill has been running at low occupancy rate over the last few years compared to other hill resorts in the state of Pahang. The average occupancy rates of the resorts in Fraser's Hill over the last five (5) years are shown in the Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2 Average Occupancy Rates of Resorts/Hotels in Fraser's Hill

<i>Destination/ Year</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>
Fraser's Hill (<i>Nature-based</i>)	25%	38.6%	42%	34.5%	N/A
Cameron Highlands (<i>Agriculture-based</i>)	45%	45.6%	45.8%	52.3%	N/A
Genting Highlands (<i>Casino & Theme-based</i>)	45%	45.6%	70%	85.5%	N/A

Source: Tourism Malaysia (2008)

In addition, the occupancy rates of the residency premises over the past three (3) years in Fraser's Hill are tabulated in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 Occupancy Rate for Hotel/Resort and Bungalow Residency

<i>Project / Year</i>	<i>No. of Room</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>
Shahzan Inn	93	35.3%	34.9%	29.9%
Pine Resort	132	31.9%	45.2%	41.4%
Puncak Inn	27	n/a	n/a	n/a
Jelai Resort	40	n/a	n/a	9.1%
Ye' Olde Smokehouse	16	n/a	65.8%	71.8%
<u>Silver Park Resort</u> <i>Tenancy Management Scheme</i> <i>Sold - private use (256 units)</i>	92 units	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Gap Resthouse <i>(under refurbishment)</i>	8	n/a	n/a	n/a

(Source: Goh, 2008)

It is vital to note that the 3-bedroom apartment unit at Silver Park Resort which was initially sold at RM250,000 in 1990 has been re-transacted at about RM180,000 in recent years and thus far only three transactions of the unit recorded (Sofia - Silver Park Resort, 2008). This shows that there is no property gain in the property investment here mainly due to low occupancy rate of the accommodation sector in Fraser's Hill as a result from the declined tourist arrival and length of stay. The site survey conducted by Goh (2008) shows that about 70% of the respondents stay 1 or 2 night(s) in Fraser's Hill and the rest is excursionist.

The low occupancy rate of the accommodation sector and declined in tourists arrivals and length of stay in Fraser's Hill are mainly due to lack of critical mass for Fraser's Hill, which has caused the tourism industry players such as the hotel/resort operators here unable to operate at economical or sustainable level (Amran, 2008).

The development of nature based tourism in Fraser's Hill due to its rich biodiversity has brought this destination famous especially for the bird watching activity and its annual event in June, known as the International Bird Race. Its cool and cozy climate is also well perceived by the city dwellers for weekends and holidays' retreats. Also, there are few foreigners i.e. from Japan, Australia and Europe whom are staying here for a period of about couple of weeks to two months as the long-stay guest in

Fraser's Hill. Nevertheless, some of the institutions or corporate companies conducted their students/staff training and workshops/seminars here.

However, these activities are mainly taken place over the weekends and school or public holidays. These can be evident from the interviews with selected hotel and resort operators at Fraser's Hill, the results of which are stipulated in Table 1.4 below:-

Table 1.4 Interview Results with Selected Hotel/Resort Operators

<i>Percentage of Tourists</i>	<i>Shahzan Inn</i>	<i>Pine Resort</i>	<i>Silver Park</i>	<i>Smokehouse</i>	<i>Jelai Resort</i>
Weekends, school & public holidays	60-70%	70%	70%	80%	95%

(Source: Goh, 2008)

From the above, almost three-quarter of the tourists visited Fraser's Hill during the weekends and public and school holidays have caused the occupancy rate of the accommodation sector here registered at low level during low season periods i.e. weekdays.

As a result, some of the restaurant and hawker operators in Fraser's Hill operate their businesses on weekends and school/public holidays only as it is not economical and profitable to sustain the businesses during weekdays or low season periods. Furthermore, site enquiries also revealed that most of them run the businesses on part-time basis. This has caused limited supply and variety of fine dining offer at Fraser's Hill.

Notably, the effort to fill up the accommodation sector during the low season periods will not only stimulate the sector to operate at economical and sustainable level but also creates another opportunity on the demand growth on local services and facilities thus bring to the increase of local incomes as well as facilities and infrastructure improvement and development. Hence, the study to exanimate to what extend second home tourism can be adopted here to revitalize the declined in Fraser's Hill as a tourism destination is vital for its sustainability growth.

1.3 Objectives of Study

1. To investigate the concept/variant of second home,
2. To review the success/failure of second home tourism practices, and
3. To study how can second home tourism can be applied in Fraser's Hill to enhance the occupancy rates of its hotels/resorts.

1.4 Importance of The Study

It is vital to investigate the concept/variant of second home in order to examine the ability of Fraser's Hill to accommodate the needs of the second homers. It aims to fill up the vacancy of accommodation sector in Fraser's Hill so as to allow the tourism industry here to operate at economical or sustainable manner.

The review of success/failure of second home tourism practices will enable us to cross-check whether it could be possibly implemented in Fraser's Hill to utilize its low season periods.

For second home concepts, it can either involve the purchase, renting or even having a timeshare ownership in property which could enhance the tourism services and property demand in Fraser's Hill.

Second home tourism in Malaysia still in the infant stage, it requires serious attention of the industry players and government to explore and study the concept of second home tourism on how to implement it in order to overcome the low occupancy of the accommodation sector in hill resorts.

1.5 Scope of Study

This study focused on the followings:-

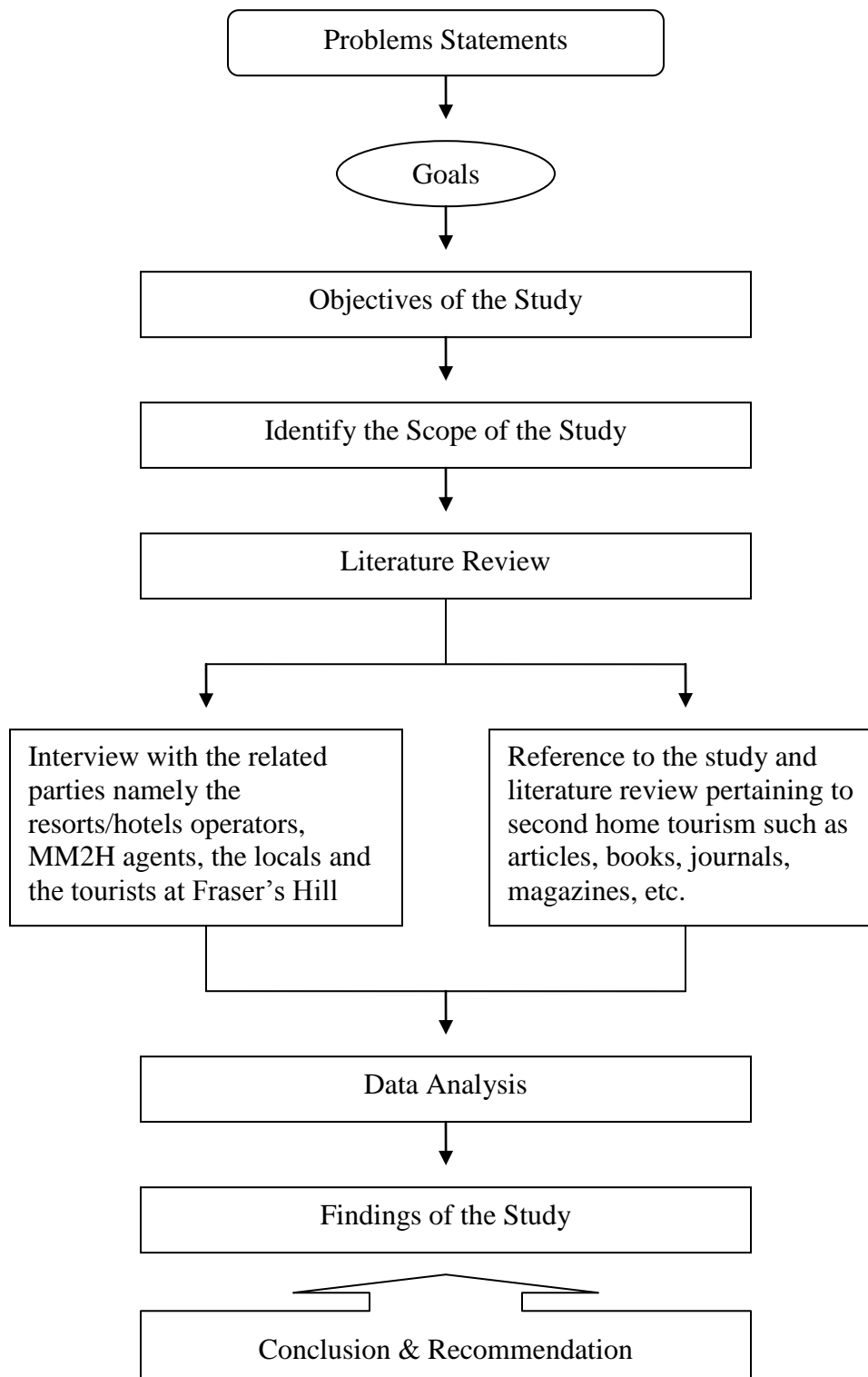
- i) Survey findings done by the researchers related to second home tourism in the oversea countries, and
- ii) Feedback obtained from the stakeholders of the accommodation sectors in Fraser's Hill i.e. apartment, hotel and resort to analyze their problems, causes and the potentiality of the proposed idea for the accommodation sector in Fraser's Hill in combating the low occupancy problem.
- iii) Feedback from the locals are also gathered to gauge their opinion on the implementation of second home tourism in Fraser's Hill.

1.6 Methodology of Study

This study examined on the possibility of implementing second home tourism with the aim to enhance and fill up the low occupancy rate of the accommodation sector in Fraser's Hill especially during low season periods. Interviews to the stakeholders of the accommodation sectors, the locals, tourists, the MM2H agents will be carried out for the purpose of this study. The primary data of the study will be formed from relevant information and observations related to the study.

The secondary data will be gathered from the literature contained in the related and appropriate articles, books, journals, magazines, etc.

The Research Methodology of this study is shown as Chart 1.1:

Chart 1.1 Research Methodology

1.7 Chapter Layout

Brief outline of the contents in each Chapter will be elaborated as below:-

Chapter 1 : Introduction

Chapter I will discuss the issues in the study through the support of literature and observation of the second home tourism and low occupancy problem in Fraser's Hill. It follows by creating the problem statement, determination of the objectives and the importance and scope of the study and described the general idea of the study.

Chapter 2 : Literature Review

This chapter discusses the main issue in the study through the support of the literature as well as other destination situation on the related subject as contained in this study. The theories, idea and concept as well as findings of the experts in the related field pertaining to the study will be explained in this chapter.

Chapter 3 : Research Methodology

This chapter described the research approach applied in the study. This included the methods used to gather the data and to analyze the information to address and report the problems in the study.

Chapter 4 : Findings and Analysis

Chapter 4 presented the findings of this study. Ideas, opinion and comments from all parties involved in the research will be gathered to match the basis in the literature referred to highlight and achieve the objectives of the study.

Chapter 5 : Conclusion

This final chapter summarized the outcome of the research analysis to conclude the study. Recommendations will be made to all parties involved in solving the problems as mentioned in the problem statement in this study.

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