**An Examination of Rural Homestay Operations through the Lens of
the Sustainable Livelihood Framework: A Case Study of Phou Khao
Khouay National Park Community-Based Tourism (PKK NP CBT),
Lao PDR**

By

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ABSTRACT

In many developing countries, Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is regarded as a sustainable tourism development tool as well as a catalyst for rural community development through the involvement of local people and the improvement of the standard of living. To extend the involvement of the local community in CBT, homestay tourism is a form of operation unit and its concept aims to facilitate individual household social-cultural and economic benefit from CBT directly. Although homestays are widely regarded as providing better livelihoods directly to the homestay operators, it is not clear to what extent homestay operations actually contribute to the sustainable livelihood of homestay operators when considering the wider livelihood implications. This research seeks to explore this gap by analysing homestay operators through the lens of Sustainable Livelihood theory (Scoones, 1998). This research adopts a post-positivist paradigm with qualitative methodology. Taking a case study approach, semi-structured interviews and observations were employed to collect primary data from community leaders, heads and deputy heads of the tourist guides, and homestay operators themselves.

Results of the study found that although homestay tourism was initially established by the government. The study also found the main characteristics of the homestay operation are in a small size with a limitation of bedrooms, and a few family members involved in hosting tourists, which are husband, wife, and an adult child. All of these people are unpaid labour but receive benefits from the sharing of food and shelter. The study also uncovered that cash-based income, gender empowerment enhancement, and environmental enhancement were the positive impacts of homestay tourism on the livelihoods of the homestay operators, and these positive livelihood outcomes were in line with the original sustainable livelihood framework. In addition, cultural revitalisation was found as an emerged indicator of the sustainable livelihood outcomes, which was used to extend the revised framework. However, the study discovered that opportunity costs, culture shock, and conflict with villagers were negative implications affecting sustainable livelihood outcomes of the homestay operators. The revised Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) suggests that if these negative implications are mitigated, the overall livelihood outcomes will be even greater. The results of this study are expected to provide a deeper understanding of how the impacts of homestay tourism on the sustainable livelihood of the homestay operators.

Keywords: Homestay Tourism, Sustainable Livelihood, Community-Based Tourism

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND USED TERMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BDAF	Bolikhamxay Department of Agriculture and Forest
BDICT	Bolikhamxay Department of Information, Culture and Tourism
CBT	Community-Based Tourism
DED	Germany Development Services
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEC	Human Ethics Committee
HOs	Homestay Operators
HT	Homestay Tourism
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LNTA	Lao National Tourism Administration
MICT	Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
NGOs	Non-government Organisations
NHEP	Nam Ha Ecotourism Project
NZAID	New Zealand Aid
PKK NP	Phou Khao Khouay National Park
PKK NP CBT	Phou Khao Khouay National Park Community-Based Tourism
SLF	Sustainable Livelihood Framework
TDICT	Thaphabath Department of Information, Culture and Tourism
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This study is focused on investigating the impacts of homestay tourism (HT) on the livelihood of homestay operators (HOs) by examining the structure and characteristics, livelihood activities, and livelihood capitals that influence the homestay operation and livelihood outcomes in order to enable a sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) to be revised in respect to rural HT.

The homestays are distinct from other forms of community-based tourism (CBT) products by offering the tourists a unique experience that combines basic needs such as food and shelter with the host's culture (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Therefore, HT is believed to be able to enable sustainable rural tourism development. According to Oranratmanee (2009), homestay is important given that it helps enable local communities including individuals and households to participate in the development process of CBT which benefits them economically. Ibrahim and Razzaq (2010) also suggested that the main objective of community homestay is to fulfil sustainable CBT development. According to Sharpley and Telfer (2002, as cited in Hussin and Kunjuran (2014), sustainable tourism development emphasises the balance between management and community's involvement in three components: economic, social, and environmental.

HT can be a vital mechanism for sustainable CBT for two reasons. Firstly, HT is focused more on rural tourist activities offered by the community (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Rural HT can help increase the importance of economic, social, and cultural activities; and make them well known to stakeholders, particularly CBT development supporters, partners, tourists, and community members (Ibrahim & Razzaq, 2010). HT normally takes place in remote areas where the community lacks economic activities (Yasami, Awang, & Teoh, 2017). Therefore, HT helps bring economic benefits to the community via homestay activities.

Secondly, homestay is important for rural sustainable development given that it helps encourage CBT and rural development by enabling people to diversify their livelihood activities. Livelihood diversification can increase the family's wellbeing and development. From the perspective of the rural community, sustainable livelihood is

desirable given that homestay can be an alternative mechanism to help sustain rural livelihood (Lama, 2013). It is argued by Lapeyre (2010) that in order to sustain rural livelihood, CBT is a priority. Since homestay became a crucial component of CBT, homestay operation has become critical for sustainable rural tourism development.

1.2. Research Gap

It is believed that CBT, particularly HT, plays an important role in diversifying livelihood opportunities. According to Scoones (2009), livelihoods refers to the holistic activities that poor communities do to gain their means of living, not only for survival but also for upgrading a living standard. Livelihood involves complexities of survival struggles in low-income countries as it considers not only subsistence, income, and employment, but also direct attention to the link between assets and the options people retain to supplement alternative activities that enable them to generate the income level for survival (Ellis, 2000). It is claimed by Anand, Chandan, and Singh (2012) that the sustainability of livelihoods is the fundamental part of rural tourism development.

For the developing world, sustainability of local livelihoods is a central part of the rural development because it indicates a positive living environment (Scoones, 2009), but this crucial area is mostly neglected by tourism. While most studies on homestays focus on one or a few dimensions of livelihood such as employment and economic benefits (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013; Anand, Chandan, & Singh, 2012; Lama, 2013; Salleh, Idris, Othman, & Suliza, 2013) only a few studies take the rural sustainable livelihood into account. Most of the studies pay attention merely to the economic aspect (Budhathoki, 2013). This makes the impacts of HT on the livelihood of local communities unclear. Also, Laos has not received much research attention despite its status as a newly emerging destination; therefore, this study explores this unclear aspect of HT. It is focused on exploring how HT has an impact on the livelihood of HOs by adopting Scoones' SLF as the theoretical framing.

1.3. Background and Problem Statement

Tourism is a new industry but has become the second most important economic sector following the agricultural sector, particularly the livestock industry in Laos. Due to its importance in boosting the economy, the investment in various sectors of tourism was promoted by the government (Harrison & Schipani, 2009). According to the WTTC

(2018), the investment in tourism in Laos has increased from 1,500 billion kip in 2008 to 4,900 billion kip in 2018. It is estimated that the investment can contribute to the growth of the Gross Domestic Products (GDP) of Laos by about 3.8% in 2018. This percentage of contribution is similar to those of many Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries such as Malaysia and Singapore.

The number of tourists increased annually between 1990 and 2015, from 14,400 to 4,684,429 visitors (Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism, 2017). The increase in the number of visitors in the last 25 years has influenced the development of tourism of Laos in various aspects ranging from transportation and restaurants to accommodation. The development is to meet the needs of visitors as well as the needs of local people in terms of job opportunities. The growth of tourism has helped promote and diversify tourist attractions, many natural, cultural, and historical places throughout the country.

There have been initiatives taken in Laos to promote tourism. Lao National Tourism Administration (LNTA) established CBT initiatives and introduced them to the international market in 2005. The CBT programme has a presence in several communities to promote rural development. The aim of these initiatives was to promote economic growth and reduce poverty (Ounmany, 2014). Lao PDR has, therefore, been known as a place for ecotourism. More than half of Laos' income generated from tourism is attributed to CBT activities (Khanal & Babar, 2007).

The active implementation of CBT can enable rural livelihood improvement (Harrison & Schipani, 2009). However, to what extent the initiative has an impact on the net benefit of communities is understated. While the majority of studies conducted in Laos are focused on the impacts of tourism development on land and forest management, the implication of CBT on rural livelihoods has not been explored yet, particularly in the context of HT. Governmental tourism agencies tend to emphasise on tourism development policy but the impact of HT on rural livelihoods received the least attention. Thus, this research looks at the role of HT in supporting the sustainable rural livelihood by examining the impacts of HT on the livelihood of local communities.

1.4 Research Aim

The overarching aim of this research is to examine how HT has impacted the livelihood of HOs. In order to do that, this research focuses on three aspects as follows:

1. Explore the structure and characteristics of homestay tourism;
2. Critically examine the impacts of homestay tourism on the livelihoods of homestay operators through the lens of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework;
3. Revise the Sustainable Livelihood Framework for homestay tourism.

1.5. Outline of the Thesis

The thesis consists of eight chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces a broad overview of the study, including the problem statement, and research aims.

Chapter 2 provides a broad overview of the literature review related to the concept of CBT, its principles, and potential benefits of CBT and homestay programs. The chapter also reviews the concept of livelihood and the SLF approach. The chapter ends by exploring the factors that influence and contribute to the improvement of sustainable livelihoods.

Chapter 3 provides an insight into the research context with background information on Lao PDR, tourism development, and the research site of CBT.

Chapter 4 is focused on providing details of the research methods employed in this research: qualitative methodology, semi-structured in-depth interview, a single-case study, purposive sampling technique, and thematic data analysis.

Chapter 5 provides an answer to the first aim of this research. It describes the structure of HT from the government, international government and NGOs, and community levels. This chapter also describes the characteristics of homestay operations including the development of homestay and size of operations.

Chapter 6 is focused on providing an answer to the second aim of this research. It critically examines how HT impacts the HOs' livelihood. This chapter includes the examination of livelihood activities and livelihood capitals: human, physical, financial, natural, and social capitals of HOs. Finally, the chapter critically examines how HT affects the livelihood of the HOs based on the collected data through the lens of the SLF.

Chapter 7 provides an answer to the third aim of this research. All findings are integrated and condensed to revise the SLF for rural HT.

Chapter 8 provides a conclusion to the thesis. It also identifies some implications, recommendations, limitations of the research, and areas that can be further investigated.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This study aims to examine the impacts of HT on the sustainable livelihood of HOs. The first section of this chapter reviews CBT and homestay whereas the second section is focused on the sustainable livelihood framework (SLF). The first section is a broad overview of the literature reviewed that related to the concept of CBT, its principles, potential benefits, and component parts. It is followed by concept HT; the benefits and the challenges of CBT and homestay are discussed. Finally, discussion dealing with the issues of CBT and homestay in developing countries. The second part of this chapter critically discusses the body of literature on the SLF approach. Review of the literature details the components of SLF and its functions in the research domain. The applications of the SLF in the tourism context is discussed in this chapter.

2.2 Overview of CBT

CBT is acknowledged as an alternative form tourism for combatting mass tourism in the developing world and aiding rural communities in the global south through grassroots development, local participation, empowerment and capacity building (Dangi & Jamal, 2016; Erskine & Meyer, 2012; Isaac, 2010). There is no agreement among experts on a definition of CBT given its context-dependent nature. Although the definitions are broad, the distinguishing features of CBT are local ownership of development projects, strong participation of local communities in all stages of project development including decision-making and accountable benefit-sharing among community members, and meaningful host-guest interaction (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; Jamal, Othman, & Muhammad, 2011; Lynch, 1999) The range of CBT definitions is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptions and definitions of CBT

Author	CBT descriptions and definitions
Dangi and Jamal (2016)	CBT applies the objectives of sustainable tourism which aims to combat mass tourism, and emphasizes community engagement and development.
Blackstock (2005)	CBT is an approach that engages the host community in the development process from idea formulation to monitoring and evaluation
Goodwin and Santilli (2009)	CBT is generally small scale and involves interactions between visitors and the host community, taking place in rural and regional areas. CBT is commonly recognised as a micro-business which is to be managed and owned by the community, for the community.
Tuffin (2005)	CBT aims to involve local residents in the running and management of small tourism projects as a means of alleviating poverty and providing an alternative income source for community members.
Lucchetti and Font (2013)	CBT refers to tourism that involves community participation and aims to generate benefits for local communities in the developing world by allowing tourists to visit these communities and learn about their culture and the local environment.
Jugmohan, Spencer, and Steyn (2016)	CBT offers a range of activities and facilities involving local communities, and will 'include home-stay families, community tour guides, craftsmen, performers, community leaders, local restaurants, farmers, and other interesting roles'.

Due to the uniqueness of the project, CBT has become an alternative form of tourism development with the recognition of the local community-oriented project (Nhem, 2016; Okazaki, 2008; Scheyvens, 2002). Particularly, CBT as an alternative form of tourism development that concentrates on community participation in the whole process starting from idea formulation to planning, implementing the activities,

management, monitoring, evaluation, and sharing benefits among stakeholders (Blackstock, 2005; Moscardo, 2008; Schott & Nhem, 2018). Although this involvement builds a strong livelihood foundation or capacity for the local communities, especially, capacities in relation to social-cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions (Anand, Chandan, & Singh, 2012; Dangi & Jamal, 2016), circumstances of the local community in terms of sustainable livelihood is still critical to CBT, the research focusing on the impacts of CBT on community livelihood has garnered less attention from researchers specialising in CBT.

As CBT involves many stakeholders ranging from locals to government agencies, and NGOs, these stakeholders gain either direct or indirect benefits depending on the parameter of participation (Tosun, 2000). At the local level, CBT seeks to improve the local people's lives through the creation of employment opportunities and income generation. These benefits are created through the use of locally available goods and services (Sebele, 2010; Walpole & Goodwin, 2000). Stakeholder participation in the process depends on the stages of CBT development (Walpole & Goodwin, 2000). The planning stage of development involves all stakeholders, ranging from local government officials, local citizens, architects, developers, business people, and planners, in a way that decision-making is shared (Sebele, 2010).

2.2.1 The potential benefits of CBT

The potential benefits of CBT, to the community, observed by a number of tourism scholars are largely sorted into categories. These include economic advantages, and strengthening local cultural traditions (Kayat, 2009; Lenao, 2015), empowering rural communities (Akunaay, Nelson, & Singleton, 2003; Salazar, 2012), preserving environmental beauty (Newsome, Moore, & Dowling, 2012), and contributing to rural development and poverty eradication (Goh & Space, 2017; Salazar, 2012). To support these notions of CBT advantage, Tuffin (2005) illustrates potential benefits of CBT in concrete details as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Potential benefits of CBT

Benefits of Community-Based Tourism	
<i>Development area</i>	<i>Potential development benefits</i>
Economic	Sustainable and independent source of funds for community development Creates employment in tourism Increases household income Embeds development in local culture
Educational	Promotes the acquisition of new job skills Creates new professions in the village Imparts and encourages the use of new knowledge in the village Cross-fertilisation of ideas with other cultures - promotes respect Fosters and promotes respect for local knowledge and skills
Social	Raises the quality of life Promotes gender and age equality Builds capacity for community management organisations Foster cultural exchange
Health	Promotes good hygiene Increase in and diversification of food production for tourists will improve nutritional status
Environmental	Promotes environmental responsibility Raises awareness of the need for conservation for tourists and villagers Promotes management of waste disposal

Source: Tuffin (2005)

The role of the CBT approach has long been advocated as an integral part of sustainable tourism development (Okazaki, 2008). The initiative seeks to achieve economic, social-cultural, and environmentally sustainable development. This approach strives to increase a community's carrying capacity by lessening the negative impacts of tourism while enhancing its positive effects (Kunjuraman & Hussin, 2017).

While facilities play a role in serving the tourist, accessibility such as infrastructure, attractions, and services serve as CBT products which tourists can enjoy. According to, Benur and Bramwell (2015) CBT products include touristic activities and accommodation services. There is a wide range of activities offered by CBT both indoor and outdoor. While outdoor activities include trekking, camping, walking, and so on, indoor activities tend to focus on village activities including village excursions, participating in local activities such as cooking, weaving, etc (Jugmohan, Spencer, & Steyn, 2016). However, considered from a sustainable rural tourism perspective, Goodwin and Santilli (2009) assert that accommodation services through community homestay are regarded as the major component part of CBT products given the fact that homestay represents the authentic locally owned and managed CBT where tourists reside and enjoy the local traditional activities and cultural performances.

2.2.2 The concept of homestay

According to Ibrahim and Razzaq (2010), the main concept of homestay is to provide tourists with the opportunity to interact and understand the local culture through their way of daily living. Principally, the host family is the one who prepares rooms and food for tourists with reasonable pay. As expressed by Boonratana (2010) the interaction between host families and tourists acts as a development tool to raise awareness through cultural exchange and respect for the host's culture. Homestay is a private home where the primary aim is residence and the secondary purpose is to provide accommodation to a few tourists who pay to stay in the home (Yasami et al., 2017). It is a fundamental part of visiting the site and it is an affordable experience. Homestay is generally different from other modes of accommodation such as hotel, resort, motel, and bed and breakfast which are usually located in the city. In contrast, homestay established as a CBT product is normally located in a remote area where the whole community is still practicing local traditional life (Yasami et al., 2017).

2.2.3 The contributions of homestay

As discussed in Section 2.2.2, homestay offers benefits to both HOs and the community. The economic, social-cultural, and environmental benefits are largely discussed by tourism scholars. While HOs directly gain the benefit from homestay, the community indirectly receive the benefit from HT.

From an economic perspective, participation in HT enhances homestay members access to economic activities (Lama, 2013). As a consequence, homestay not only creates family income but also improves other livelihood opportunities (Shukor, Salleh, Othman, & Idris, 2014). This means that the opportunities to access small businesses and a combination of activities. Besides this, homestay was one of the top activities promoted in a rural community to help lessen poverty given the fact that the homestay operations directly boost the local economy through sharing the natural and cultural heritage of the location with the tourists (Leksakundilok, 2004). The effects of HT on the main household needs are identified by Ashley (2000), and he strongly asserts that the most direct contribution to household needs is cash. Cash income helps families with food security. This is a critical issue given that some communities are more dependent on collecting food from the forest. Especially in the dry season or years when products are not sufficient to collect, earnings from tourism can be used to purchase food (Mbaiwa (2011a).

From a social-cultural perspective, Leh and Hamzah (2012) address that homestay attracts tourists to villages, and this offers tourists opportunities to be aware of and understand local lifestyles. This is because tourists experience the culture and village lifestyles by themselves. In addition, homestay promotes gender empowerment. The community homestay programs provide women with better chances to participate in tourism activities, and they are respected by other family members (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013). In addition, homestay enables operators to gain a reputation and respect from other villagers and other communities for having ability to host tourists, and this reputation strengthens the social network both inside and outside the community (Razzaq et al., 2011; Shukor et al., 2014).

From an environmental perspective, homestay helps preserve natural resources because almost all homestay investment and activities are based on locally available resources (Anand, Chandan, & Singh, 2012). As a homestay is a major product of the CBT within the local community, benefits from the homestay program mostly encompass the achievement of CBT development. In addition, homestays empower and benefit the same community members with the interest in preserving their surrounding environment through raising awareness of waste management (Kayat, 2009; Shukor et al., 2014). Although homestay seems to offer many benefits to the

host family and well as the host community, the challenges of HT should not be ignored.

2.2.4 The challenges of CBT and homestay

The overarching challenges of CBT include limitations in financial resource to compete in the tourism market, infrastructure maintenance, and social-cultural practices of the community. These issues have caused difficulties for CBT to achieve long-term success and sustainability in developing countries (Wong, 2014; Sebele, 2010; Okazaki, 2008; Murphy, 2013).

The challenges of HT were found in the literature. A study done by Kunjuraman and Hussin (2017) found that the big challenge for setting up a homestay operation was a lack of financial resources and capital. Homestay participants face insufficient basic homestay facilities such as not enough bedrooms, lack of clean toilets. Due to having limited financial resources and capital, coupled with not having any assistance from the homestay development agencies, operators could not afford to buy additional facilities and to refurbish their homes.

Another challenge of HT found by Kunjuraman and Hussin (2017) was a lack of basic infrastructure development, which could undermine the sustainability of a homestay operation. The lack of infrastructure includes lack of 24-hour electricity supply, clean water supply, healthcare centres, poor communication facilities, low standard of accommodation, gravel roads, and the community does not have secondary schools. The lack of this infrastructure becomes a barrier to the success of a homestay operation, and it degrades expectations of visitors.

Similarly, it is asserted by Sebele (2010) that some community members feel that the cost incurred by participating in community homestay is far outweighed the benefits. The cost that participants must incur is caused by the term and condition which has been set by the tourism organisation to involve in the homestay initiative. Tosun (2000) also raises similar challenges, that it is time consuming given the fact that participants require considerable time, money, and skills to organise and sustain participation. This may cause conflict amongst the other livelihood activities. This suggests that participating in community homestay consumes a lot of energy which sometimes the community cannot afford. Furthermore, homestay reputation and competitiveness are

based on the assets of the local community including not only the local residents but also the natural environment, infrastructure, facilities, and special events, but these can be degraded due to insufficient budget to maintain them (Murphy, 2013). These tourism resources and economic growth are the core dimensions of community homestay operation.

Some scholars are also concerned with the loss of authentic culture resulting from homestay activities. Based on the concept that HT emphasises cultural experience-based activities for tourists, the use of traditional activities as a form of homestay product creates cultural commercialisation, and could eventually lead to cultural commodification (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen, & Duangsaeng, 2015; Macleod, 2006; Mbaiwa, 2011b). One of the negative effects of HT on rural communities asserted by Ashley (2000) is the potential to exacerbate conflict. The conflicts can be raised within and among communities given that these people share the same resources and use these resources to gain individual benefits or to make a living. When these resources are not equally used and shared, this leads to conflict among residents and communities. In addition, Ashley (2000) asserted that tourism can conflict with existing activities reducing access to natural resources for other activities. The demand on time for working agriculture and homestay is another conflict faced by the operators, mainly community leaders and tourism committee members within the communities. Agyeiwaah, Akyeampong, Boakye, and Adu-Gyamfi (2014) did a study on the pros and cons of hosting international tourists conducted in Ghana from the host perspective, they found that culture shock was experienced by the host family, and these shocks included having different perspectives on behaving and living habits.

2.2.5 The issues of CBT and homestay in developing countries

As economic benefit is the push factor coercing participation in CBT, natural and cultural resources are largely used as a source of CBT products for touristic purposes (MacCannell, 1992). This can conflict with other livelihoods that may rely on natural and cultural resources needed by local people to use as a means of livelihood. This puts pressure on local communities in terms of dealing with allocating the local resources sufficiently.

Moreover, based on the structure of the CBT management process, which is a bottom-up approach, CBT shares a list of challenges for micro or small enterprises (Zapata,

Hall, Lindo, & Vanderschaeghe, 2011). This includes diversification, quality, seasonality, profitability, carrying capacity, the limit on resources, access to credits, and labour standards, among others. At the same time, there is a high expectation in relation to the creation of new jobs, income growth, productive specialisation, infrastructure development, and cultural heritage preservation.

Based on the concept of CBT all activities within the community have to be owned and managed by the community (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). This notion causes difficulties for communities. Due to the fact that CBT members have a lack of knowledge and skills in managing tourism activities and coping with tourism trends as well as controlling the impacts; therefore, the management and control tends to be governed by outsiders who have more power than the locals (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

Another issue found is that there is inequality among those who have differences in financial status. Those who have sufficient finance to participate in CBT activities have more opportunities to access tourism activities than those of economic disadvantage (Tao & Wall, 2009; Wong, 2014). It is clearly seen from homestay in which households with enough facilities have more chance of participating in HT. Additional to individual financial status, the community has to deal with expectations of donors, aid organisations, and government who invest in CBT who want to see the positive outcomes immediately while the community is still taking actions and need time to develop and manage (Zapata et al., 2011).

Indeed, homestay offers benefits to operators as well as the community as discussed in Section 2.2.3, but Jugmohan et al. (2016) assert that HT development relies on local natural and cultural heritage assets, and these two assets connect to local living-capacity. While, for developing countries maintaining and preserving natural and cultural heritage is important, prolonging sustainable livelihood is more important for HT success. Despite the importance generally accorded to homestay as a major agent of CBT development, there is still widespread uncertainty about the impacts on operators' livelihoods in terms of livelihood sustainability. In developing countries, livelihood sustainability is regarded as a poverty reduction priority to achieve (Ibrahim, Razzaq, & Humanities, 2010). However, to what extent HT contributes to

this priority is in doubt given that there is a lack of research focused on the insightful implications of HT to HOs' sustainable livelihood.

2.3 Overview of the concept of sustainable livelihoods

According to Ellis (1999), livelihood denotes the means, the activities, and the assets by which an individual or household make a living. In addition, a livelihood is not just about income and employment, but it involves more complexities and diverse strategies for living (Chambers & Conway, 1992). Moreover, the concept of a livelihood describes direct attention to the link between assets and the options people retain to supplement alternative activities that enable them to generate an income level for survival (Ellis, 2000). A livelihood is about a matter of individuals, households, and communities who try to gain economic necessities, handling unstable situations, and responding to new opportunities (De Haan & Zoomers, 2003). Similarly, Morse, Acholo, and McNamara (2009) acknowledge that livelihood is not just about survival, but it is also about providing resources which people can use to enhance and enjoy their lives. According to Chambers and Conway (1992) who coined sustainable livelihood theory state that:

“A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base”

In brief, it is suggested that livelihood consists of capabilities, assets, and activities. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) approach, suggested by Scoones (1998) discusses multiple activities that poor communities do to gain their livelihood rather than a single job. SLF puts people at the centre of development activities in which its paradigm focuses on capacities, knowledge, and skills that communities already have (Scoones, 1998). SLF works with people who own the livelihoods and build upon their strengths to realise their potential. Their potential being what the individuals can achieve in what they are doing based on their economic, social, and personal characteristics. It seeks to identify what livelihood activities that people prioritise to gain desirable outcomes (Ellis, 1999). Scoones (1998) suggests that the SLF consists

of five elements including context, livelihood resources, transforming processes, livelihood strategies, and sustainable livelihood outcomes.

Figure 1: Sustainable Livelihood Framework

Sourced: Scoones (1998)

The overarching framework shows how sustainable livelihoods are achieved by accessing livelihood resources. The resources (capitals) are combined in the pursuit of different livelihood strategies. In the central part, the framework shows a range of institutional and organisational factors that influence sustainable livelihood outcomes. The important components of the framework include conditions or trends, livelihood resources, institutions, livelihood strategies, and livelihood outcomes. Despite the diverse components of this framework, this thesis is incapable of covering all these components. Therefore, this research is only focused on livelihood resources, livelihood strategies, and sustainable livelihood outcomes. These three components are explained in detail as follows.

2.3.1 Livelihood resources

It refers to stocks of capitals. Livelihood capitals are comprised of five capitals: natural capital, economic or financial capital, human capital, social capital, and physical capital. These livelihood capitals are interconnected and influence each other. These capitals are transformed or processed by institutions and organisations to generate the livelihood strategies. Eventually, all these components combined to construct the livelihood outcomes.

- Natural capital

It refers to natural resource stocks such as soil, water, air, genetic resources, and so on, and it also includes environmental services such as hydrological cycle, pollution sinks and so on from which resource flows and services useful for livelihood are derived (Scoones, 1998). Within the SLF, the relationship between natural capital and the context or conditions is very close because many shocks that cause undesirable livelihoods for the poor are caused by natural capital such as earthquakes that destroy agricultural land (DfID, 1999). Natural capital is important for people who mainly derive their livelihood from natural-resource based activities (farming, gathering forest products, etc.). In addition, people's health will suffer from a reduction in air quality caused by industrial activities or natural disasters such as forest fires.

- Economic or financial capital

It refers to the capital base. This includes cash, saving, and other economic assets. It also includes basic infrastructure and production equipment and technologies which are essential for the pursuit of any livelihood strategy (Scoones, 1998). Accordingly, DfID (1999) shows that having financial capital is the most important factor for the poor as it can be easily converted into other capitals, and used for direct achievement of livelihood outcomes.

- Human capital

While the SLF puts people as a central aspect of the framework, many studies tend to look more at the natural and physical capital for means of living. Human capital generally provides labour for various enterprises, such as income generation, subsistence farming, water collection, and so on, which are engaged by the household. While human capital is partly related to household size, it also depends upon levels of

education, experience, age and gender profiles, occupations, and so on (Morse et al., 2009). In the sustainable livelihood approach, people are the centre of the development activities, and the approach builds upon their own strengths to realise their potential (Chambers & Conway, 1992). Thus, the view of human capabilities becomes important in the study of livelihoods. Human capabilities referred to as being able to perform basic functioning, to what a person is capable of doing and being (Chambers & Conway, 1992).

- Social capital

Social capital refers to the connection among community members. This connection is important for tourism development given that people living together in the community can cope with stress that might occur in the community (Scoones, 1998). The connection shows in various ways; social organisations such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate cooperation and coordination for mutual benefits (Tavakoli, Mura, & Rajaratnam, 2017). In relation to tourism, Ashley (2000) suggests that the changes in social capital are shown in three levels as follows. The first level is to increase the number of households in joining with tourism activities within the communities. This can enhance social cohesion for all members. Furthermore, those members may gain a sense of belonging to the community through their participation in tourism. This sense of belonging might be through community leaders and tourism entrepreneurs. The second level is to enhance the management capability of the community so as to become a community organisation. The support from the outsiders such as NGOs and government can enhance leadership skills, build decision-making empowerment, and develop new management mechanism. The third level is to increase and link the reputation of the community to the external world. Communities who participate in tourism have opportunities to communicate with tour operators, wholesalers, NGOs, and government officials. This experience boosts their confidence to pro-actively engage with outsiders.

- Physical capital

Scoones (1998) includes physical capital with financial capital by referring to the basic infrastructure and production equipment. DfID (1999) treats physical capital as one component of SLF, and clearly detailed: infrastructure consists of changes to the

physical environment in order to meet the needs of individuals and to be more productive; production equipment as a tool that people use to function more productively. Infrastructure commonly refers to public facilities such as transport, shelter and buildings, water supply, and information or communications. These are essential for sustainable livelihood. It is found by livelihood scholars Carney (1999); (DfID, 1999); Ellis (1999) that in the rural context, a lack of particular types of infrastructure is considered to be a core dimension of poverty. Similarly, insufficient production equipment also constrains the productive capacity of the poor. Therefore, more time and energy are spent on meeting basic needs, production, and gaining access to the market. The summary of these capitals shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of livelihood capitals and elements

Livelihood Capitals	Elements
Natural capital	Natural resource stocks (soil, water, air, genetic resources, etc.) and environmental services (hydrological cycle, pollution sink, etc.)
Human capital	Skills, knowledge, ability to labour (includes good health and physical capital)
Economic or financial capital	Financial base (cash, saving, and other economic assets)
Physical capital	Infrastructure (buildings, roads), production equipment and technologies
Social capital	Social resources (networks, social claims, social relations, affiliations, and associations)

Source: Scoones (1998)

2.3.2 Livelihood strategies

Livelihood strategies are the activities employed to generate the means of household survival. Scoones (1998) states that livelihood strategies are activities people do and prioritise to gain a living. To detail these livelihood strategies, Ellis (2000) divides livelihood strategies into two categories, described as:

- natural resource-based activities including collection or gathering products from woodlands and forest, food cultivation, non-food keeping and

pastoralism, and non-farm activities such as brick making, weaving, thatching, and so on;

- non-natural resource-based activities including rural cultivation, livestock trade (marketing of farm outputs, inputs, and consumer goods), other services (vehicle repair), rural manufacture, and remittance (urban and international).

2.3.3 Sustainable livelihood outcomes

The outcomes are the reflections of success that livelihood strategies aim to achieve. To what extent the sustainable livelihood outcomes will achieve depends on the livelihood strategies (Scoones, 1998). Tourism scholar, Tao and Wall (2009) also adds that livelihood outcomes also include employment, and sustainability includes adaptation and resilience enhancement. Five indicators assessing the livelihood achievement proposed by Scoones (1998) include creating of working days, poverty reduction, well-being and capacities, livelihood adaptation, vulnerability and resilience, and natural resource base sustainability.

- Increased numbers of working days created

This is associated with the ability to combine the livelihood strategies to create employment for a certain time of the year. The creation of employment could be through working on or off-farm, part of a wage labour system, or subsistence production. It is noted by Sen (1975) that three characteristics of employment include income from being employed, production from being able to provide consumable output, and recognition from being able to engage in something worthwhile (as cited in Scoones, 1998). Working for 200 days a year is widely accepted as a minimum level of employment. Scoones (1998) asserts that livelihoods created will be dependent on the population available for work.

- Poverty reduction

This relates to the criterion in the assessment of livelihoods. The tools used to measure whether the livelihoods of the people are above the “poverty line” or not is through income and consumption levels. This means that the households below an income poverty line are counted as poor (Mayer & Jencks, 1989). This is supported by DfID’s (1999) notion that poverty is measured through the net income produced from certain

combinations of livelihood activities and the overall increased income going to the households.

- Well-being and capabilities enhanced

These notions are not just about material concerns of food intake or income that individuals, households, or community have, but this idea represents more than the human capital related to allowing people to do things, but also the important elements of capacity or well-being (Scoones, 1998). Chambers and Conway (1992) view that the approach or criteria used to analyse sustainability livelihood outcomes in the notions of capacity and well-being are diverse factors such as self-esteem, security, happiness, stress, vulnerability, power, and exclusion.

- Livelihood adaptation, vulnerability, and resilience

This is associated with the ability to cope with and recover from stresses and shocks (Scoones, 1998). Adaptation is a central livelihood sustainability aspect. Resilience to the stress and shocks is a crucial part of livelihood adaptation and coping (Davies, 1996, as cited in Scoones, 1998). This means that people who are unable to adjust or adapt in the face of change in a short or long term are not able to achieve sustainable livelihoods. Evaluating historical experiences of people is used to assess the resilience and the ability to adapt or cope responses, and these responses include avoidance, repartitioning, resistance, or tolerance mechanisms.

- Natural resources base sustainability ensured

It refers to the ability of system to maintain productivity when subject to disturbing forces, whether a stress or shock (Scoones, 1998). This means that avoiding destroying stocks of natural resources for a certain level in order to yield useful products or services for livelihoods. Measuring natural resource sustainability is possible through assisting the natural resource depletion (such as soil fertility levels, and vegetable cover), and livelihood needs (such as whether natural resource changes result in effectively permanent declines in useful product or services) (Scoones, 1998).

Table 4: Summary of sustainable livelihood outcomes indicators

Indicators	Descriptions
<i>Livelihood</i>	
Creation of working days	Employment, on or off-farm, which are parts of the labour system or subsistence production
Poverty reduction	Income and consumption levels are above the 'poverty line'
Well-being and capabilities	Diverse factors such as self-esteem, security, happiness, and power
<i>Sustainability</i>	
Livelihood adaptation, and resilience	Be able to cope with stresses and shocks
Natural resources use sustainability	Avoiding depleting stocks of natural resources to yield the effective levels of products and services

Source: Scoones (1998)

By using the SLF, I will be able to analyse sustainable livelihoods (Scoones, 1998). The framework provides not only a checklist of indicators for measuring sustainable livelihood but also several factors essential for critically examining the achievement of sustainable livelihood (Scoones, 1998). The analytical structure of the framework allows me to analyse the livelihood of poor people, particularly HOs (DfID (1999). This framework helps integrate the contributions of different skills and sectors to poverty eradication (Krantz & Analysis, 2001). Rather than looking at certain aspects such as low income or economic marginalisation, the SLF pays more attention to the livelihood resources and processes which either constrain or enable poor people to make a sustainable living economically, environmentally, and socially. With this framework, the inter-relationships between the key indicators governing people's livelihood can be explored (Scoones, 1998).

In addition, it draws attention to the number of capitals that people make use of when constructing their livelihood (DfID, 1999). The framework illustrates a more holistic view of what resources are necessary and crucial to the poor (Ellis, 1999). It also facilitates an understanding of the underlying cause of poverty by emphasising various

factors that indirectly or directly constrain people's access to resources or capitals for constructing their livelihood outcomes (DfID, 1999; Scoones, 1998). Importantly, it is stated by Shen, Hughey, Simmons, and Management (2008) that SLF seeks to analyse the micro scale of the enterprise with household livelihood sustainability at individual or household level scales. Thus, this framework fits this research context in terms of that homestay is on a micro scale of tourism enterprise. Furthermore, this study focuses on households as a unit of sustainable livelihood analysis, which is a major aim of SLF.

2.4 The applications of SLF in the tourism context

Although the SLF is widely used in other sectors such as development and poverty reduction, the SLF has been adopted by few tourism studies. Lee (2008) employs the SLF as a tool to provide an understanding of the effects of pick-your-own farms, agricultural tourism, on farmers' livelihoods in Taiwan. Similarly, Tao and Wall (2009) employed the SLF approach to find the links between tourism and other livelihood strategies conducted in Taiwan. Several studies done by Mbaiwa and Stronza (2010) provide an example by using the SLF to analyse the implications of natural and historical-based resources to rural livelihoods in several places in Africa. Similarly, Ahebwa (2013) applies the SLF as a guide to examine the implications of rural tourism on the livelihood of farmers who live near Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda, East Africa. Recently, Huang, Xi, and Ge (2017) adopted the SLF and used it in a comparative study to analyse the livelihoods of farmers' who settled in two villages in the vicinity of Yesanpo National Park in China. In the most recent study conducted in China, the SLF was restructured by Su, Wall, Wang, and Jin (2019) to analyse tourism and rural subsistence.

It is clearly seen that the existing studies adopted and adapted the SLF in order to make it fit the particular contexts. Based on searching through the university library database and Google Scholar, not only is the use of the SLF in the tourism domain limited, the SLF has not yet been employed in the HT context. Therefore, to what extent HT as a new livelihood can construct desirable livelihood outcomes is still questioned. Furthermore, the use of the SLF by existing literature to analyse livelihood outcomes emphasises only the achievement of sustainable livelihood but ignore the negative implications of sustainable livelihoods. Therefore, the SLF was used in this thesis to

analyse both the positive impacts on the sustainable livelihoods and negative implications of sustainable livelihood outcomes.

2.5 Research conceptual framework

From the literature and a sustainable livelihood approach mentioned above, the research conceptual framework of how HT impacts the livelihoods of HOs is created, and this conceptual framework is based on the SLF proposed by Scoones (1998). The relation between capitals and homestay and livelihood outcomes is whether activities are diversified, and livelihood outcomes are better or worse depends on the capitals used effectively. In the case that the livelihood outcomes of the HOs are positive, it, in turn, helps to enhance all aspects of the livelihood capitals of the operators as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework

The process of the explanation of this conceptual framework begins with livelihood strategy, institutions and organisations, and livelihood resources, and context or conditions and trends. Livelihood strategy refers to HT, which is regarded as a tourism operation. This type of operation results from the CBT initiative in the community, and it is considered a livelihood diversification as expressed by Tao and Wall (2009).

This is due to the fact that it shares an existing livelihood portfolio. What tourism institutions and organisations refer to in this context are national tourism organisations right down to the local tourism organisations that have power in putting HT initiative in place in the primary phase of the CBT development. These organisations can be interpreted as the external actors of the homestay businesses in a certain sphere. However, as was mentioned this research focuses on livelihood outcomes, capitals are discussed as they play a role in constraining and supporting the outcomes. The context, or conditions refer to the country which Laos where the PKK NP CBT is in.

2.6 Summary

CBT plays an important role in supporting and contributing sustainable livelihoods in developing countries. Homestay as an agency of sustainable CBT development aims to preserve natural resources and cultural traditions through the participation of the local community while providing an economic benefit to the operators and the community. However, the challenges of HT are manifested and most relate to the financial resources used on maintaining CBT and homestay development, these challenges may impact on livelihood outcomes of the HOs. Therefore, the SLF approach is used as a guide to the analysis of the study given that it focuses on the household level scale, and it also allows the researcher to take comprehensive livelihood components into the analysis.

Chapter 3: Case Study Context

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research context. The significance of a detailed description of the research context in case research has been asserted by Yin (2009). In addition to this, from the post-positivist philosophical stance, in order to assess credibility and determine generalisability, it is important to provide a detail of the research context (Dubé & Paré, 2003). Thus, the overview of the research context is described divided into three main sections: Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Bolikhamxay province, and Phou Khao Khouay National Park Community-Based Tourism (PKK NP CBT) characteristics.

3.2 Lao People's Democratic Republic

Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is the full name (used in writing), but Laos is acceptable as a short form (used in writing and speaking). The language officially used is Lao, and English is used for international communication. The characteristics of the geography and tourism of Laos are detailed in this section.

3.2.1 Geographic and demographic context

Laos is a landlocked country in South East Asia with a territory of approximately 236,800 square kilometres. The population of Laos is about 7,064,242, of which about 55% are rural residents (Worldmeters, 2019). Laos borders five countries – Vietnam to the east, China to the north, Myanmar to the north-west, Thailand to the west, and Cambodia to the south as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Laos map with a location of Bolikhamxay province and the research site

The economic status of the Lao people varies across the country and particularly depends on locations of residents. The households living closest to the Mekong River or residing in irrigated or partially-irrigated villages have more opportunities to make a better living than those who have limited access to agriculture facilities because water supply enables them to grow rice and other types of crops all year round (Manivong, 2014). In contrast, the less prosperous areas are located off the Mekong River, where those communities mainly survive by cultivating seasonally. This situation may cause difficulties in making a better life. Despite economic status in the

rural areas, the statistics from the Lao Statistics Bureau 2017 shows that the average GDP per capita is USD 2,468 per year (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2018).

The majority of households in Laos, especially in remote areas, are highly reliant on natural resources for their food and livelihood, and particularly on agricultural land, rivers, and forests (Fenton & Lindelow, 2010). They make a living through sources such as cultivation, animal feeding, and heavy reliance on collecting wild products (Martin & Lorenzen, 2016). For some areas, slash-and-burn agriculture is still practised for their family's subsistence, particularly in the upland rural areas. As household members engage in a variety of livelihood activities including agriculture, on-farm, and wage migration, their main cash income comes from agriculture activities (cropping and livestock), salaries and wages, and remittances (Manivong, 2014).

Gaining one's livelihood from only farming or agriculture is not sufficient for household consumption, so most rural households depend on some combination of agricultural and non-agricultural activities to make a living (Manivong, Cramb, & Newby, 2014). Many rural communities tend to shift their traditional ways of gaining a living such as collecting wild products and hunting wild animals to non-farm activities such as small trading in the villages, vehicle repairing, handicraft producing, and tourism (Martin & Lorenzen, 2016). Indeed, tourism is an alternative form of improving one's livelihood.

3.2.1 Tourism development

The mood of tourism has emerged since the 1970s and it has been regarded as a tool for rural development and poverty alleviation since 1990. Initially, tourism was introduced as a small tightly-controlled group of tourists and in 1995 tourism became a priority for economic development (Harrison & Schipani, 2007). By actively opening tourism to international tourists in 1999, there was further recognition of tourism's potential for rural development and poverty reduction. Tourism was not only concentrated in the cities, but it was also introduced to the rural remote communities where tourism resources were outstanding.

The method to move tourism to the rural community employed by government tourism related organisations such as the Laos National Tourism Administration (LNTA) was implementing CBT programs, and it is included in the *Lao PDR Tourism Strategy: 2006-2020*. In addition, the CBT program is recorded as a prioritised project for rural

sustainable development (Ounmany, 2014). It is inevitable that CBT was implemented based on the potential tourism resources of the community.

3.3.2 CBT and tourism development

As is mentioned above, CBT was developed based around the potential of tourism resources already existing in the peripheral destination. These include natural, cultural, and historical based resources. Laos is rich in natural and cultural diversity. Evergreen forests and river networks are located throughout the country. Together with the national protected areas where the green forest and wild animals are conserved, Mekong River is a main river flowing from the north to the south and connecting to thirteen tributaries which serve locals with food sources. In terms of cultural diversity, Lao consists of 49 main ethnic groups with more than a hundred dialects. Due to these resources, a number of places have been developed to be tourist sites. Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism (2017) reported that in 2017 the total number of tourist sites was 2,094, consisting of 1,184 natural sites, 632 cultural sites, and 278 historical sites. These tourist sites highlight the attraction of each part of Laos.

While the two parts (north and south) are featured by the UNESCO World Heritage characteristics, the highlight of the natural tourist attractions is PKK NP in the middle part due to its richness of dry evergreen forests, and wildlife (Tsechalicha, Pangxang, Phoyduangsy, & Kyophilavong, 2014). These mentioned natural, cultural, and historical attractions are connected to the local community and they are used in CBT programs for the benefit of the community.

3.2.3 Homestay and CBT development

The CBT program came along with the homestay program, and homestay acts as a main component of CBT. The homestay initiative was also included in the *Lao PDR Tourism Strategy: 2006-2020* for the purpose of developing CBT sustainable. It is clearly presented that where CBT takes place, homestay is attached. According to the report from Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism (2017), there are nine villages within five provinces: Bolikhamxay, Laung Prabang, Vientiane, Savannakhet, and Champake, which initially and actively implemented the homestay program under the umbrella of CBT. It is noticed that amongst the five, three provinces are in the central part of Laos. This significantly presents that these provinces have rich tourism resources. Interestingly, among the three provinces, Bolikhamxay has a high profile

for operating homestay and has a long history of homestay operation compared to the other two provinces.

3.3 Bolikhamxay Province

3.3.1 Landscape and livelihoods

Bolikhamxay is the 10th largest province with an area of 14,863 square kilometres. According to the statistics presented in 2015, the total population is 273,700 (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2017). The population is made up of three linguistic families namely Lao-Tai constituting 76%, Hmong-Mein constituting 14%, and Mon-Khmer sharing 10% of the total population. The province is one of the four provinces located in the middle part of Laos and it shares borders with Vietnam to the east, Thailand to the west, and four provinces Vientiane Capital, Vientiane, Xiengkhuang, and Khammuan as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Map showing the location of Bolikhamxay province

Source: https://www.tourismloos.org/show.php?Cont_ID=1032

The landscape of the whole province is comprised of rugged terrain and rivers. Mekong River is the main river with a catchment area around 92% of the landmass of the province. Other rivers such as Nam Muan, Nam Sat, and Nam Thurn are also important for the local inhabitants. Agriculture is predominantly practised by the local

inhabitants and it is a major contribution to the economy of the province. Some of the agricultural commodities include sugar cane, oranges, and tobacco. These commodities are mostly grown by the communities settled along the Mekong River.

3.3.2 Tourism of the province

Mainly, the province comprises of three categories of tourism resources. While cultural and historical tourism sites only comprise 12% and 3% respectively, there were 89 natural tourism sites (Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism 2017). Among 89 tourism sites, biodiversity protected areas such as Nam Kadding and PKK NP are popular as the richest natural attractions. Comparing the two protected areas, PKK NP is the largest area with natural uniqueness which offers development of a number of natural-based tourism activities. Since tourism was introduced, Bolikhamxay has received tourists from domestic and international markets in an increasing trend as shown in Table 5. This can be clearly seen from the statistical report showing the number of tourists visiting Bolikhamxay.

Table 5: Number of tourists to Bolikhamxay from 2005 to 2017

Years	Number of tourists	
	Domestic tourists	International tourists
2005	N/A	63,579
2006	N/A	71,394
2007	N/A	69,773
2008	N/A	84,401
2009	N/A	140,736
2010	N/A	138,513
2011	N/A	140,517
2012	N/A	140,517
2013	54,102	139,031
2014	55,885	184,658
2015	58,957	279,605
2016	60,875	231,920
2017	60,950	181,710

Source: Synthesised from Tourist Arrival Statistics Report from 2010-2018, (Noted: N/A non-available recorded data)

Domestic tourists from 2005-2012 were not recorded and it is expected that the number of tourists increased following the upward trend of international tourists from 2005-2017. However, it is seen that the number of tourists from 2013 to 2017 slightly fluctuated. Another point is that although while the number of domestic tourists slightly increased, international tourists marginally dropped from 2016 to 2017.

3.4 Characteristics of the PKK NP CBT

The PKK NP is a national park where natural resources are reserved, so the park used in this research refers to the PKK NP. The overview of this section describes the attributes of the PKK NP CBT including the location of the park, the location of the Nakhaopha and Hathkai communities, the park and livelihoods of the communities, CBT products and services, and the flow of tourists to CBT.

3.4.1 Location of the park

The park is located in the west of the Bolikhamxay province of Laos. This area is surrounded by four provinces namely Bolikhamxay, Vientiane, Xaisomboun, and Vientiane Capital. The park covers an area of six districts namely Home, Keoudom, Longxan, Pakngum, Thaphabath, and Thulakhom as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Map showing an area of the PKK NP including Nakhaopha (Ban Na) and Hathkai (Ban Hathkai)

Sources:

www.stdplaos.com/...laos/Phou%20Khao%20Khouay%20NPA%20leaflet.pdf

The park covers about 2,000 square kilometres, stretching over about 88 kilometres from west to east and up to 40 kilometres from north to south. It was officially established in 1993 with the declaration to protect the indigenous forests and animals (Sirivongs, & Tsuchiya, 2012). The park is a vital source of biodiversity. It is comprised of several types of natural resource, which includes about 38% of mixed deciduous forests, 35% of semi-green forest, 15% deciduous dipterocarp forest, and 6% of stone mountains, waterfalls, and rivers (Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism 2016). The park is rich in fauna and flora. Some endangered wild animals are found in the park such as Asian elephants, white-cheeked gibbons, and green peafowls (Vongkhamheng, 2015). Some endangered plants species such as orchids are also found with more than 500 species identified. In addition, the park is the home of over 70 bird species and many butterflies and insects indigenous to the area (Sirivongs, Tsuchiya, & economics, 2012). As the PKK NP is surrounded by rich natural resources, CBT based in the PKK NP was developed in 2003 and the Nakhaopha and Hathkai communities have directly participated in this development.

3.4.2 Nakhaopha and Hathkai communities

The Nakhaopha was named after Ban Na was merged into two other villages in 2014. The community is situated in the east and on the edge of the PKK NP. It is approximately 90 kilometres through the south 13rd road from Vientiane Capital to the Thaphabath district, and it is one and a half kilometres, by unpaved road, from the main road to the community. It is accessible in every season by all types of vehicles. However, to get to this zone private vehicles are recommended due to the fact that there is no public transport service from the south 13rd road to the community.

The community is comprised of 130 families with a population of 668 people, 368 females. The total area is 2,183 hectares, divided into several sections which are used for different purposes including 492 hectares of re-planted forest, 473 hectares of protected forest, and 143 hectares of unprotected forest. Besides this, 733 hectares is farming land, comprised of 115 hectares of rice fields, eight hectares of rubber plantation, and 15 hectares of residential settlements. The remaining 227 hectares consist of a road, a temple, a school, and a stream.

Hathkai is located 20 kilometres to the north of Nakhaopha, bordered with the PKK NP for five kilometres in the north. Hathkai has 106 households, 125 families, and a

total population of 590 people, consisting of 290 females and 300 males. The total area of Hathkai is 1,500 hectares, of which 12 hectares are used for the settlement and 269 hectares is used for agriculture and other purposes.

For both communities, farming and growing crops are the main ways of making a living for the residents. Wet rice cultivation is a main agricultural activity of the residents. Growing rubber trees and agar wood trees (*Kadsana*) as commercial agriculture is another practice of the residents, particularly those who have large plots of lands. This commercial agriculture includes growing rubber trees and some cash crops such as pineapples and tomatoes. Other activities such as making handicraft products, small trading, and tourism are supplemental living activities. Around 99% of households make handicraft products such as sticky rice boxes and basketry and the communities are known as “One District One Product (ODOP)”.

3.4.4 CBT products and services

Basically, there are two main products offered by Nakhaopha and Hathkai for tourists, namely nature-based products and culture-based products. The nature-based products offered by the PKK NP include various activities including trekking, camping, boating, kayaking, wildlife observing, visiting waterfalls, and appreciating indigenous natural plants. These activities are conducted at the park. The culture-based product in the communities is the homestay opportunities. Homestay opportunities offer tourists an experience of local lifestyle through making a close observation of the way people make handicraft products, cook, and raise chickens and ducks at the homestay. Also, the homestay guests can take a walk around the community to observe the daily life of the local residents and visit a temple. The communities also offer some tourist activities which showcase local traditions and practices such as sticky rice box weaving, traditional music and dance, the *baci* ceremony, and sessions cooking local food. In terms of services, there are several services offered such as a pickup from the main road to and from the community, boating service from the village to the park, the homestay, and meals services.

3.4.5 The flow of tourists to PKK NP CBT

The number of domestic tourists was not recorded given the fact that it is rare to have domestic tourists stay at homestays, domestic tourists come by their private cars, they can access the park directly and return in a day. Only international tourists were

recorded. According to Bolikhamxay Department of Information, Culture, and Tourism (BDICT) (2017)'s report, in the last six years, the PKK NP CBT received tourists as shown in the Table 6.

Table 6: Numbers of international visitors to the PKK NP CBT

Year	Nakhaopha		Hathkai	
	Total visitors *	Doing homestay	Total visitors *	Doing homestay
2012	610	150	863	374
2013	689	200	691	328
2014	612	180	494	125
2015	525	170	467	122
2016	467	165	455	115
2017	460	158	396	101

Source: BDICT (2017); *(include both visiting the park and village tour)

The tourism trend of both communities has been downward since 2012. The visitors to the park and doing homestay in both communities has steadily decreased each year. The statistics show that the number of tourists to the park via Nakhaopha decreased from 610 to 460, and from Hathkai dropped from 863 to 396 between 2013 and 2017. Another notice related to communities, there is a slightly decrease in the number of tourists going to the park and doing homestay at Nakhaopha from 200 to 158 people, and at Hathkai from 328 to 101 between 2013 and 2017. It is clearly shown that this trend is like the number of tourists visiting Bolikhamxay where international tourist numbers dropped from 2015 to 2017. The factors influencing the downward trend may include an increase in competition between the tourist markets among provinces, and due to the drop of international tourists visiting Laos in the last three years (Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism 2017). It is interesting to note that although tourists visit the park via two communities or do village tours, less than half of tourists do HT. Thus, whether HT contributes to HOs' livelihood is in doubt.

3.5 Summary

This chapter has detailed the research context in order to fulfil the philosophical stance behind the research. First, it provided a general overview of the country by introducing geographical and tourism development of Laos in order to provide a better

understanding of the research context. Then, the province where the research was conducted was described in brief. Finally, the characteristics of the research site, which included the park and community entities, was presented in order to provide a clear picture of the current situation of the community and tourism around the park.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a discussion on the research paradigm research strategies and case study selection. Followed are sections explaining the data collection, data analysis techniques, and the analytical framework, which helps structure the analysis of the data to communicate the findings clearly. The last four sections focus on research positionality and voice, validity and reliability, ethical considerations, and strengths and limitations.

4.2 Research Paradigm

In philosophy and models of scientific inquiry, post-positivism is a theoretical stance that critiques and extends positivism. Post-positivism provides an alternative to the traditions and foundations of positivism for conducting a disciplined inquiry. Post-positivists increasingly accept that although a real world driven by natural causes exists, it is impossible for humans to truly perceive it with their imperfect sensory and mental capacity. Post-positivists believe that there is a reality independent of our thinking that can be studied through the scientific method (Ponterotto, 2005), and that social realities need to be understood from the perspective of the participant, rather than that of the researcher (Fox, 2008). Post-positivists pursue objectivity by recognising the possible effects of biases and argue that reality can never be fully apprehended, only approximated (Ponterotto, 2005; Crotty, 2008 & De Vos Stryom, Schulze, & Patel, 2011). Truth is a socially constructed phenomenon. Its composition is influenced by its context, therefore, many constructions of reality are possible (Hughes, 1994).

Post-positivist researchers consider both quantitative and qualitative methods to be valid approaches. This allows for the development of alternative research strategies to find information in unlikely and creative ways. Post-positivists undertaking intensive case-study-based investigations typically draw on qualitative information to illustrate processes, exceptions, and barriers (Sharp et al., 2011). Objectivity can be achieved by using multiple measures and observations and triangulating the data to gain a clearer understanding of what is happening in reality.

Most of the research approaches and practices in social science today fit better into the post-positivist category. Thus, this qualitative inquiry uses the post-positivist

perspective for interpreting qualitative data. The post-positivism perspective is most suitable for this research for two main reasons. One reason is that post-positivism enables a researcher to take all elements of HT and livelihood activities into consideration. The other reason is that to understand the living conditions of locals deeply, post-positivism takes into account individuals' perceptions. The HT providers may experience the impacts of the homestay service differently depending on how they perceive the world around them.

4.3 Research Strategies

Several research strategies can be applied in a research study depending on what the research is about and what type of research questions will be asked (Yin, 2009). There are five research strategies identified by Yin (2009), including experiment, survey, archival analysis, history, and case study. She classified them based on three significant conditions, namely the form of the research question, the degree of control required over behavioural events, and the focus on contemporary events. Yin (2009) asserts that 'how' and 'why' questions are more likely to require experiment, history, and case study methods. The case study method is, therefore, the suitable method for this study due to the fact that the researcher is in favour of examining the situations that involve no control over behavioural events and focusing on the contemporary events within a real-life context.

A case study design can be based on single or multiple cases (Gillham, 2000; Kothari, 2004; Yin, 2009; Zainal, 2007). Multiple case study design is more likely to offer a replication purpose and used in order to provide a greater number of more powerful, convincing insights than a single case design (Yin, 2009). However, multiple case studies have been criticised for an inappropriate methodology when time is limited (Zainal, 2007). In contrast, a single case study enables the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the exploring subject (Zainal, 2007). According to Yin (2009), a single case study is used when the case represents a critical test of existing theory, a unique circumstance, a representative or typical case, or when the case serves a longitudinal purpose. Yin (1994) suggested that if research focuses on building a high-quality theory, a single case study is important. As my research objective is to explore how tourism impacts on the livelihood of HOs and revise the existing SLF towards the HT, a single case study provides a better understanding of the impacts of tourism on a specific group of people participating in tourism programs. Therefore, a single case

design was chosen for this research to facilitate the deeper understanding and gaining rich data for developing and revising the theoretical framework.

The CBT involves community, a project, and households. Community in this research refers to a group of people living in the same geographical location. The community may include households that directly operate homestays and those who may be indirectly affected by CBT which includes community leaders and the village committee. Thus, this study emphasised all of those who were actively involved in a CBT arrangement at the community level and those who operate homestays. Owing to a wide range of key informants and limited time for conducting the research, this study focused on a single case study of CBT, the PKK NP CBT, in Laos. This is to get insightful information about how CBT can enhance HOs' livelihood based on their capabilities to pursue livelihood strategies. Van Thiel (2014) asserts that either multiple or single case studies are chosen depending on the purpose of a study, and any group, organisation, or community can be a case study. A case study can be used for qualitative research or a mix of both qualitative and quantitative research (Gillham, 2000). To examine peoples' opinions of the world around them and to understand others' behaviours deeper, the qualitative method is the best technique to apply for the research because it allows a researcher to get deeper data from the interviews and also from self-observations (Gillham, 2000). This research, therefore, applied a single case study method with a qualitative technique.

The aim is to gain insights into how livelihoods of rural homestay families in Bolikhamxay province in Laos might be impacted by the HT program. To achieve this goal, the concept of the SLF, proposed by Scoones (1998), was used to analyse families' livelihoods. The best research action is to listen to the families' voices. Therefore, the qualitative research method is used for data collection. In the qualitative method, three main sources of data collection are incorporated, namely interviews, observation, and consultation of secondary sources.

4.4 Participations and Locations

4.4.1 Participations

To achieve the aims and the research question, purposive sampling was employed. The purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling and the most effective tool when a researcher needs to study a certain group of people (Tongco, 2007). The key

informants in this research are consciously considered and purposefully selected based on the characteristics of their geographical location and their field of involvement in the project (Tongco, 2007). Thus, community leaders, heads and deputy heads of the tourist guides, and representatives of each homestay operator were invited to participate in the project as shown in Table 7. The households' representatives are regardless of age, gender, level of education, ethnicity, and professional experiences. Although community leaders may not directly operate homestays, they were involved in tourism initiative development and have power over the management of the community. Heads and deputy heads of the tourist guides are directly involved in tourism probably as the visitors' guides. The data provided by these people contributed to the first research aim related to the structure and characteristics of HT. Homestay households were the main sample and used as a research analysis unit, who contributed data to the second research aim in relation to the impacts of tourism on their livelihoods.

Table 7: Key informants with their role in homestay tourism

Participation	Types of key informant	No.	Description
Nakhaopha	Community leader	1	Their roles are to oversee the development and management of homestay tourism in the community
	Head of the tourist guides	1	
	Deputy head of the tourist guides	2	
	Homestay operators	9	Their roles are to accommodate or host tourists.
Hathkai	Community leader	1	Their roles are to oversee the development and management of homestay tourism in the community
	Head of the tourist guides	1	
	Deputy head of the tourist guides.	2	
	Homestay operators	9	Their roles are to accommodate or host tourists.
Total		26	

4.4.2 Case selection

In Bolikhamxay province, there is only one available CBT project, the PKK NP CBT. As was discussed in Chapter 3 only two communities, Nakhapha and Hathkai,

implemented CBT because they are located in the boundary of the PKK NP. Although there are two communities, in terms of data analysis they were counted as one case study due to the fact that one community offers a relatively small number of HOs. Therefore, combining the two communities can extend the number of participants who can offer sufficient data for analysis.

4.5 Data Collection Techniques

Semi-structured interviews and observations were employed in this study. Interviews and observations are the fundamental techniques used in qualitative research (Yin, 2009). Therefore, these two techniques were the most appropriate method used to collect data in this qualitative research.

4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008), the purpose of using the interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs, and motivations of individuals on specific circumstances. It gives a researcher a deeper understanding of social phenomena than questionnaires. Qualitative interviews can be categorised in various ways such as unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

The semi-structured interview method is used in this research because it suits my research methodologies and my time constraints in the fieldwork. The method suits the chosen methodologies because it allows open-ended questions, and in turn, it allows participants to interpret the questions being asked in broader respects. Using this method helps the researcher to complete the plan effectively as the interview can be ended once the questions are answered (Fylan, 2005). Thus, interviews help me to complete the fieldwork as scheduled.

In terms of data collection operationalisation, the researcher met with informants in person. With the community leaders and heads and deputy heads of the tourist guides, the interviews were conducted at their office located in the village. Homestay providers were interviewed at the individual's home. Gill et al. (2008) suggested that the more productive interviews should be conducted at the own home of the participants, particularly in the evenings because at their own homes people feel familiar with the environment, and this can help the respondent to relax and leads to productive results. If the interviews are interrupted by household members, I kindly

told them about what we are doing and requested them to be quiet as much as possible. In addition, the interviews took place outside of the house to avoid disturbance and be visible to the public.

Initially, 32 key informants were targeted to be interviewed. However, some of them were not available. Therefore, 26 key informants participated in the interviews as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Key informants with the purpose of interviews

Key informant types	No.	Purpose of interview
Community leaders, and heads and deputy heads of the tourist guides	8	To explore the structure and the characteristics of the homestay tourism.
Homestay operators	18	To examine the impacts of homestay tourism on their livelihoods
Total	26	Interviewed

The research fieldwork was visited in July and August 2018 when it is the rainy and farming season in Laos. Although the key participants were local residents who might not adhere to working hours, they might be busy working on their farm during the daytime. Therefore, the setup of the interviews was varied depending on the availability of individual participants.

Based on the nature of the farming in rural Laos, many people were on their farm at daytime and return home in the evening. Thus, the schedule of interviews was flexible. To ensure that all key informants are available, according to Creswell and Creswell (2017), the arrangements before a meeting are essential for research. I prepared official letters of request, attached information sheets and research questions, and sent them to the tourism office in the province. The request letter was sent to each level of authorities before the meetings were arranged. Gill et al. (2008) state that although the time spent for interviews might be varied depending on the topic, the length of the interviews should be between 20 and 50 minutes for the individual interviews.

4.5.2 Observations

Observations were employed in order to enrich the data collection. According to Yin (2009), in qualitative research and particularly in case studies, despite interviews, an observation is a fundamental and highly important instrument employed for data collection. The observation allows the researcher to gain information through observing the body language and facial expression of interviewees.

Household observations are on the plan and data gained from the interviews and secondary data sources is used as complementary information. As I stayed with HOs, I observed the way they manage and operate the hosting, how homeowners deal with guests during their stay, and what resources they have and use for hosting tourists. This helped me as a researcher understand the household circumstances deeply and identify cultural and natural resources available in the community. Private walks in the villages were as a part of the observations. I thus had an opportunity to ask some villagers about the history of the tourism programs, what activities they did, why they did such activities, what resources were needed to complete such activities, and why some were not involved in homestay services.

The two-month data-collection plan included preparing letters of request for permission to conduct the research in the two communities. Prior to the data collection, a letter issued by Victoria University of Wellington (VUW), consent forms, and information sheets (Lao version) were sent to the province, district, and the community to request for their permission and cooperation. After permission letters were granted by the province and district, the letters were brought to the headmen of Nakhaopha and Hathkai communities. Finally, the data collection commenced.

4.5.3 Secondary data sources

Secondary data are sources of information which already exist. These sources of data assisted in the formulation of research and facilitation of the identification of any gaps in understanding. Secondary data sources include published government statistics, local and regional government reports, local government maps, company reports, university research, local magazine archives, and reports from NGOs and other organisations (Marcus, 2005). The secondary data used in this research project was gathered from different sources including local and regional government reports, government statistics, official documents (both published and unpublished), planning

policy documents, brochures, village and tourist sites maps, and university research. These official documents were collected from various organisations including the LNTA; BDICT; the Thaphabath Department of Information, Culture, and Tourism (TDICT); the community leaders; and the head of tourist guides in the Nakhaopha and Hathkai communities. These documents were critically examined because they are important for crosschecking the interview data. Yin (2009) explained that documents can offer specific details that can support information from other sources. It is clearly seen that the investigation and review of documents provided a burgeoning source of information, and it complements and supplements data collected from the interviews.

4.5.4 Fieldwork in practice

This section discusses advantages and challenges that became apparent during the fieldwork, and how these challenges were handled by the researcher. I have realised that asking for permission for conducting research takes a few steps involving several different levels of the government authorities from the province down to the district. To handle the issue of the slow process, I submitted my request and applied for permission documents and official letters from the BDICT a month before the fieldwork. After submitting my request to the province, I kept in touch with the officials to follow up on the progress of the processes. The weather condition was also a challenge for my fieldwork. In the rainy season, continual heavy rain restricted accessibility to the research site. A further difficulty was that the road was full of mud and flooding at some points. In addition, there is no public transport from the main road to the community, so I had to rent a car to go there.

Another challenge was related to the HOs' responses to my questions. Whether open-ended or closed-ended questions were asked, their responses to them were so brief. Therefore, I asked several sub-questions. Some participants were noticed to lack confidence to express their opinions in response to open-ended questions. However, most participants seemed to be happy to answer my closed-ended questions. Also, most of them seemed happy to mention about the positive impacts of tourism and positive changes but appeared embarrassed to discuss negative aspects of tourism and change in their lives. As some HOs were less educated, they found it difficult to understand some of my questions. Another challenge was related to local culture in which the Lao local people are quiet and shy when talking with a stranger who they have never seen before.

To handle this matter, I built close relationships by chatting with them to create friendly and comfortable environments prior to the actual interviews. I then slowly moved into asking questions related to my research purposes in combination with irrelevant ones in order to maintain conversations with them. I sometimes told them my schooling stories and studying in New Zealand. I also tried to encourage them to keep speaking out by asking them a series of questions.

4.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

In research analysis, the two main approaches to analysing the data are inductive and deductive. Thomas (2006) explained that inductive analysis is defined as deriving themes and understanding from collected data whereas deductive analysis uses pre-defined codes. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) detailed that the inductive approach consists of three phases namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The use of inductive analysis is to construct meanings from the data while the meaning construction does not increase the limitation of a particular methodology. In contrast, deductive analysis allows the researcher to begin with a coding scheme prepared in advance based on the conceptual framework and research question. This analysis approach aligns with the post-positive stance which begins with the research with an originated theory but allows new themes to emerge (Creswell, 2013). As this research adopts the SLF to guide the research, the deductive approach was used to analyse data. Following the advice from Creswell (2013) the data was analysed through six steps as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Data analysis process

Sources: Adapted from Creswell (2013)

Raw data was gained from the interviews with audio recordings, field-notes, and observations. After the interviews, (1) I began with organising and preparing the data. The interview audio records were transcribed into written texts and translated into English in order to maintain the meaning of the interviews. I divided the interviews into two main groups, namely, data from the community leaders and the heads and deputy heads of the tourist guides, and the HOs. I arranged the data from the community leaders, and heads and deputy heads of the tourist guides to the HOs respectively. (2) Then I read through the corpus of the data carefully in order to generate concepts as well as looking for the feature and patterns of the data. (3) I coded the features by using a computer program NVivo 12. (4) Data coding and identifying themes were done side by side, with themes categorised based on the research questions. Together with data from the interviews, observation field-notes were also coded and analysed using NVivo 12. The NVivo program allows the researcher to manage data more efficiently and to explore new ideas (Jennings, 2001). (5) The data were partially analysed based on the predetermined set of categories as it is shown in the analytical framework while some categories of the livelihood outcomes were explored. (6) The final step of the data analysis process was the interpretation. My interpretation emphasised what actually happened at ground level. The interpretation was also influenced by the analytical framework.

4.7 Analytical Framework

This framework was developed following the basic concept of HT characteristic concepts and sustainable livelihood framework. As suggested by Pearce (2012), an analytical framework helps to structure the analysis of the data and to communicate the findings clearly. He also asserts that without a clear and concise analytical framework, the analysis task can be difficult and more complicated than it should be, and the communication of the findings becomes rather problematic. The analysis consists of three phases as shown in Figure 7, which firstly explores the structure of HT management and analyses characteristics of a homestay operation. The second part of the framework critically highlights the impacts of HT on HOs' livelihoods including both the positive and negative impacts. The analysis in these first two steps are sequential as shown in the framework, and these analyses are discussed in the final step of the framework.

Figure 7: The analytical framework with the sequential steps research aims

The first part aims to analyse the structure and characteristics of homestay businesses. It is expected that two levels of management such as government, and community

levels may make up the structure. The information of these three levels is taken from secondary information, interviews, and observations, and this information is used to develop and confirm the structure of the HT arrangement. I also added some categories of HT characteristics, and these categories include the development of homestay, and size of homestay. Most of these are from the interviews with village committees, heads of the tourist guides, HOs, and secondary sources.

The second part of the framework shows the number of categories taken from SLF. While livelihood activities are partially discussed in this framework, the main focus of the analysis is livelihood capitals and the livelihood outcomes that are expected from the impacts of HT. Livelihood capitals include human, social, physical, financial, and natural which are influenced by tourism institutions. The information was gathered from the interviews with community leaders, heads and deputy heads of the tourist guides, HOs, and observations. The livelihood outcomes discussed in existing literature includes gaining more working days, poverty reduction, resilience and capacities enhancement, and sustainable use of natural resources. However, these categories are built on a broad context, but as my research is about rural homestays, which is in the small tourism operation unit, these categories may be different from the categories mentioned above. Therefore, there might have more categories this research explored. Data related to livelihood outcomes are generated from the interviews with the HOs.

The third part of the framework shows the last aim of the research. This aim is to develop the SLF under the context of rural HT. To achieve this aim, all findings from aim one and aim two, a case study context, and also a critical review of positive impacts of HT and the negative implications of sustainable livelihood are taken into the critical discussion, and they are synthesised to revise the SLF that reflects the HT context.

4.8 Researcher Positionality and Voice

This section introduced in this study is to help the audience understand how and why this study is organised, presented, and interpreted in a particular way. According to Creswell (2013), a researcher needs to show a standpoint given the fact that a researcher's attributes such as gender, personal background, experience, education,

and social-economic status can influence the way of interpretation to a certain level. Thus, it is important to address the researcher's positionality and voice in this study.

The researcher grew up in a farming family in the central part of Laos, but not in the case study province. After graduating from university, majoring in administration management in 2006, the author worked for the National University of Laos, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Tourism and Hotel Management as a lecturer teaching the basic business management for Year 1 students. Tourism knowledge was mostly gained from participating in workshops and training programs.

The interest in the topic of HT sparked based on the author's experience because the author used to stay with local homestay when taking part in a tourism workshop in Thailand in 2007. That experience gave a starting point of creating an understanding of HT. In addition, the author has never been to these two communities selected as a case study before the fieldwork of this study. Therefore, there is no personal relationship involved in the study.

4.9 Research Validity and Reliability

Qualitative research requires ensured validity. Validity is the perceived accuracy of the findings, and to what extent the accuracy of the findings was perceived by the author, the participants, and the audience (Creswell, 2013). When data is collected from multiple sources, triangulation is a helpful method for the author in checking and confirming the result (Golafshani, 2003). As this study uses secondary data, interviews, and observation, triangulation is employed to ensure the quality of the research.

Before analysis, the author checked the raw data such as interview scripts and the field-notes constantly to ensure whether the participants requested to check the summary of their interview. Where requested through the consent form, a summary of the interview transcript was sent to the participants for reviewing before quoting them.

As the interview was conducted in the Lao language, in order to keep the meaning of the questions, the interview questions were translated into Lao and checked by a tourism expert in Laos. The author also employed this strategy for dealing with transcription. Some important points in the transcription were checked by development experts to verify the data before processing the analysis.

4.10 Ethical Consideration

Ethical concern is a crucial part of research. For this study, ethical approval was granted by the Human Ethics Committee of the Victoria University of Wellington. Examining the impacts of HT on the livelihood of the HOs may involve a certain degree of sensitive information related to their livelihood outcomes, which may be risky for the participants and tourism-related organisations' reputation. The ethical requirements are thus necessary to protect research participants and the researcher.

The most important part of the ethical requirements is a degree of confidentiality. Confidentiality refers to the researcher's assurance that the connection between participants and given information is obscured to others, with the exception of the researcher and supervisor (Kaiser, 2009). The role of the participants was applied as a pseudonym rather than their real name in this report. For example, the HOs were referred to as HOA, HOB, and so on. Because there are a small number of people participating in CBT, there is a possibility of identification for these participants by the other community members and CBT stakeholders. The participants, in addition, may be identified through contextual clues when a quote is used in the report.

The 'Participant Consent Form' and 'Information Sheet' for the interviews make it explicit that the confidentiality of the information provided by the participants is very highly treated. Any pieces of personal information that might lead to the identification of the individuals were concealed and even deleted from the interview transcripts and written reports.

Each participant was given time to read the 'Participant Consent Form' and 'Information Sheet' before the interview was conducted. In addition to the hard copies of these forms, verbal explanations of key messages in the forms were given to ensure that the participants completely understood the ethical issues. The author also asked for permission to audio-record the interviews. Real names, phone numbers, addresses, and signatures of approval were required on the consent forms. The audio records and consent forms were confidential. Secondary resources as hard copies were kept in a safe place to prevent the leakage of information without permission. Any file related to interviews or field-notes stored on the computer was password protected.

4.11 Strengths and Limitations

The strength of this study lies in the contribution of the study to the current research community. Exploring sustainable rural livelihood through HT is the strength of this research to build a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of CBT. The literature review suggests that the current study is a very much under-researched area by tourism scholars. Therefore, the results of this study will contribute to the body of literature in CBT and sustainable livelihood research communities.

HT as a CBT unit is regarded as a tourism tool to sustain rural development by offering economic opportunities and employment to the people involved. However, the extent the sustainable livelihood of HOs is contributed to by HT is not known thoroughly because HT initiatives are influenced by external supports, especially government and international aids. Therefore, without support from these donors, the positive benefits of HT may be doubtful. Given this issue, this study is expected to provide insightful information which may help tourism organisations in improving HT management. Furthermore, it is expected to contribute to SLF as HT research is a new context for the theory.

Alongside the strengths, several limitations must be acknowledged. One limitation is related to the relatively limited data given by the participants. This may be because they had a limited time for the interview. As the interview took place at the individual participant's home, while the interview was conducted, some participants were busy with weaving handicraft products, and some were busy with their little nephews and/or nieces. Therefore, some of the interviews were rushed. Another reason may relate to the educational limitation of interviewees, in that the ability to elaborate their thoughts was limited. Also, the rainy season plays a role, meaning interviewees were rushed in allocating time spent for participating in the interview because usually in the rainy season they spend time at their rice field. Furthermore, the rainy season also became a limitation for the researcher in terms of staying at the community due to the concern of flooding and other natural disasters that may come along with heavy rain.

4.12 Summary

The description of the holistic components of the research methodology and tools used to collect data and ethical consideration was covered in this chapter. The components of the methodology include research paradigm, strategies or qualitative method, the

key informants, data collection, and the analysis method. Post-positivism is employed to help with construction of data interpretation in a way that effectively reflects a real situation. Indeed, the qualitative method is often the component of the post-positivist philosophy, so it was used in this research. The tools used to collect data were semi-structured interviews and observations. These tools allow a researcher to gain insightful information that can effectively lead to achieving the research aims

Chapter 5: Structure and Characteristics of Homestay Tourism

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, according to the analytical framework discussed in Chapter 4, which findings address the first research aim to explore the structure of HT management and the characteristics of HT under CBT context. The chapter begins by introducing the structure of HT management including two informative sections namely the main actors in the initial development phase and management in the later stage. The second section addresses the characteristics of homestay operation including the development of homestay operation, and size of the homestay operation.

5.2 Structure of homestay tourism Management

In order to understand a comprehensive structure of HT management, this section discusses the roles of stakeholders or actors who were involved in HT management in the initial phase of HT development. These actors refer to organisations in the Lao Government, international governments and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), and communities, and these actors have collaborated on tourism development. Then, the section discusses the structure of management in the later stage of HT.

5.2.1 Actors involved in the development

5.2.1.1 Lao Government

On the national level, the LNTA, as a government agency, is the main actor in developing policy and planning CBT project development, while BDICT, as a tourism organisation in the regional area, is directly responsible for the CBT and HT planning and development at the provincial level. Both the LNTA and BDICT have cooperated in enacting regulations and promoting tourism activities to tourists by creating leaflets. Besides these organisations, TDICT at the district level takes responsibility for working closely with the Nakhaopha and Hathkai communities. However, the involvement of the district has limitations in the operation and management of tourism. The district level retains a supporting role which includes the provision of technical information and the monitoring and ongoing assessment of tourism in the communities.

5.2.1.2 International governments and NGOs

Although the LNTA and BDICT in the Lao Government domain took the main role in putting the initiative in place, HT development was mostly financed by international

actors. The LNTA collaborated with the German Development Service (DED) to establish the initiative. DED provided financial, technical, and advisory supports to the communities related to the development of the tourist sites at the PKK NP. There is also a collaboration between the LNTA and DED to develop the website and produce brochures and maps of the PKK NP CBT, and the Nakhaopha and Hathkai communities. In addition, the provision of tourism skills and knowledge related to hospitality and foreign languages was supported by the DED. In late December 2005, the support from DED was officially ended and the project was officially handed over to the community to manage. Subsequently, in 2006 the communities were financially supported by New Zealand Aid (NZ Aid). This financial support was to develop infrastructure such as building a community hall, toilets, staircases, a bridge, and a community lodge. The community hall was used as multiple functions such as a tourism office, a visitor reception and centre, a basketry demonstration place, and venues for meetings and welcoming activities.

5.2.1.3 The communities

Together with government agencies, and NGOs, the communities also play a role in homestay development. The involvement was through providing local knowledge to the DED experts and participating in the infrastructure development process. The residents acted as labourers for building tourist infrastructure. In Nakhaopha, the local people participated in building the Elephant Observation Tower, a bridge, and a community hall. Similarly, the residents in Hathkai participated in building a staircase and a community lodge. In the primary phase, there was no exception for anyone to be involved in tourism activities. That is, everyone was obliged to help in developing community infrastructure and tourist facilities and participate in nature protection in the exploration phase of the development. The local residents guided the experts to explore the PKK NP to assess the prospective tourist sites. All actors were involved in homestay development, and their roles were illustrated in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Actors involved in homestay tourism development

5.2.2 The management of homestay operation

After the development phase, in 2005, the tourism project was handed over to the communities, and HT was managed by the community tourism group. In this stage, the private sector which includes tour operators take part in the management as a trade partner, while the tourism committee act as owners of the homestay operations.

5.2.2.1 The private sector

Tour operators including Diethelm, Vientiane Orchid Travel, Green Discovery, Exotissimo, Lao World, Tiger Trial, and Vieng Champa Travel included CBT activities in their tour programs and market these activities to the international tourists through their websites and brochures. However, amongst these tour operators, Vientiane Orchid Travel, and Vieng Champa Travel had close engagement and cooperation with the communities to set pricing of the activities and services. These tour operators act as trade partners referring to tour operators involved in sharing decision-making towards economic benefits (Getz & Carlsen, 2005). Tour operators have influence towards pricing and bringing tourists to the communities. The tour operators and communities share responsibilities in economic benefit and failure of HT. It is clearly understood that currently tour operators play a crucial role in sustaining HT.

5.2.2.2 *Tourism committee*

Principally, there are three people working as the leaders of the tourism committee, as shown in Figure 9. The head of the tourist guides overlooks all works related to tourism such as organising the tours and administrative works. The head is also responsible for coordinating with outsiders such as tourism organisations, the provincial forest department, and tour operators. Receptions and welcoming tourists are also responsibilities of the head of the tourist guides. The first deputy head was in charge of organising the tours. When tourists arrive at the village, tourists are welcomed by the head of the group. Then the deputy head takes the tourists on tours and checks bills with tourist after the end of the tours. Another deputy head works as an accountant and treasurer keeping money and managing incomes of the community. Tour guides are responsible for guiding tourists to visit different sites. The guiding services include guiding tourists to the PKK NP and for trekking. If tourists request village tours, guides also take this job to walk with tourists around the village. HOs have a responsibility to provide accommodation to tourists. Complementary activities including the handicraft making, Baci ceremony and cooking, and traditional dancing performance are organised on request.

Figure 9: Structure of homestay management

Nakhaopha tourism has 26 tour guides, 10 HOs, 20 people in the handicraft group, and 16 people in the Baci ceremony and cooking group (“Baci ceremony” means a unique traditional activity of Lao culture held to welcome or farewell tourists with the

meaning of having good luck and staying healthy). In Hathkai, there are 23 tour guides, 10 homestays, 15 boat services, and 10 handicrafts. It is observed that more than half of all HOs are involved in complementary groups, and this implies that they have more responsibilities, and gain more economic benefit than those who are only operating homestay.

5.2.2.3 Income distribution

Incomes are divided into several accounts including tour guides, HOs, village, district, and province as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10: The income distribution

For example, the sum of homestay operation (food and drink) without including other homestay-related groups and services was US\$35 per tourist for per visit. This money is then divided into six proportions. Around US\$8 goes directly to the homestay provider, US\$13 goes to the tour guide, US\$1.50 goes to the provincial tourism office, US\$1.50 goes to the district tourism office, US\$4 goes to the PKK NP permit, and US\$7 goes to the village fund. However, in the case complementary groups were requested from the tourists, the charge was another rate which depended on the numbers of people involved and the income was distributed to each group.

5.2.2.4 Codes of conduct

The process of decision-making related to the creation and setting of rules for selecting households to participate in tourism activities is under the supervision of the village

committee. As part of this process, rules are applied to different actors including community residents, HOs, and tourists.

Community residents are not allowed to cut down trees and hunt wild animals in the tourism area in order to conserve the natural scenery. If any villagers break the rules, fines and punishments are applied to them. While tourists are in the village as visitors, the tourists are required to act in an appropriate manner in compliance with locally accepted norms. For example, tourist would be informed to follow some dos and don'ts in Laos. Tour guides or HOs disseminated these rules to tourists, and also provided services to tourists.

5.2.2.5 Management in the household

Hosting guests is their main responsibility. This task includes providing bedrooms and food and drink services. There is no standard management structure related to providing services within the homestay. This means that each family member is not assigned to do the same task every time a guest is staying with homestay. However, only the main person tends to do repeated jobs associated with the head of the tourist guides or communication with guests over their needs and wants.

Figure 11: Structure of management in the household

The head of the family acts as the main person in welcoming tourists, and other family members do homestay related work such as bedroom preparation and cooking food. Family members did not get any payment for their contributions in hosting guests. Money earned from hosting guests is considered a collective economic benefit of the family, and it is controlled by the head of the family. This benefit is shared through buying food and household appliances. This implies that all homestay related works

are done as family collectively. Each family member has responsibilities to create a positive environment and good atmosphere while having guests. The head of the family or the main person has the power in decision-making about the process of providing services. This person has power to assign each family member to work for a particular area. While one person was assigned to do the cleaning, another was assigned to preparing food, or alternatively, they may be assigned to work together if that particular task required more people.

5.3 Characteristics of Homestay Operation

The characteristics were identified in this study mostly related the development of homestay operation, and size of the operations.

5.3.1 Development of homestay tourism

In the initial phase of running homestay, during 2003-2004, there were only five households participating in a homestay initiative in Nakhaopha, and five homestays in Hathkai, and mainly these were the houses of the tour guides. This is because the villagers were reluctant to allow tourists to stay at their houses for several reasons. One of the reasons was that they were afraid of approaching foreigners due to the different cultures. They reasoned that they had a lack of abilities in hosting tourists because they did not have adequate household facilities, English competency, and hospitality skills. This is because, in the initial phase of HT, wooden houses built in rural Lao traditional style, and poor families were targeted to run homestay in order to get these households out of poverty. In addition, a few training sessions were held for those who have wooden houses. However, some of the households targeted decided to not operate homestays. There were only five households involved in tourism as HOs.

However, in the later stage, the criteria used to select households to operate homestay was changed to focus on two main areas namely condition of the house, and the characteristics of the operator and family members. The quality of household infrastructure including the houses, bedrooms, toilet, kitchen, and dining area was assessed by the tourism committee before operating homestay. The aim of the assessment was to ensure that it provides comforts for tourists at a certain level. In addition, the behaviour of operators and their family members had to be free of a criminal record and have a high potential in hosting and providing services to tourists.

5.3.2 Size of homestay operation

5.3.2.1 Number of bedrooms

This study found that all homestays are two-storied houses. Based on interviews, it is standard that one bedroom is used to accommodate two guests. In other words, each bedroom includes a double bed. Fifteen homestays out of 18 homestays have two bedrooms for guests. According to Ahmad, Jabeen, and Khan (2014), in the context of rural homestays that were enforced by community-based tourism policy, four bedrooms per homestay is a maximum, and this is considered as a large size of homestay operation. From this number, it implies that two bedrooms are considered a medium size for a homestay operation. It was noted that only one homestay out of 18 have four bedrooms to offer to guests, while two out of 18 homestays have three bedrooms for accommodating guests.

5.3.3.2 Number of family members involved

In the household level, people involved in hosting guests are family members. While Lim (1997) said that staff in the homestay operation are paid by the homestay owners, my research shows something slightly different; staff include those who get paid and those unpaid given the fact that staff are family members who stay at the same house and get benefits in informal manners such as sharing meals together. These family members may be involved full-time and part-time, which depends on their time and availability.

Figure 12: Number of family members involved in hosting guests

Although there are a large number of people living in the family, only a few people are considered homestay employees. It was found that 42 out of 75 people play a main role in hosting guests. They are considered full-time staff in the homestays. Those who were involved by chance in this research refer to family members who work in the homestay on an “ad hoc basis”. Thirty-three out of 75 people are “by chance” involved. If this number is broken down to each homestay, on average each homestay has 2-3 people that are involved full-time, while only 1-2 people are “by chance” involved. Therefore, it can be concluded that each homestay operation is a small size.

5.4 Summary

While tourism related organisations on the governmental, international and NGOs level had supported the establishment of the homestay initiative in the first phase of the development through finances, advice, and training to the community, the tour operators have worked with the community as trade partners in the later stage of homestay management. The unique characteristics of homestay operations were developed with the specific purpose of facilitating tourists, and at the same time offering benefits to the host community. The operation in the household is small in scale as there are a limited number of bedrooms and few family members fully involved in the homestay operation.

Chapter 6: Impacts of Homestay Tourism on Operators' Livelihoods

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses research aim 2 and explains the impacts of HT on HOs' livelihood from the operators' perspective. The findings are presented following the structure of the analytical framework. To understand the comprehensive impact of HT, the chapter begins by investigating the livelihood activities that the operators have been practicing. As the operators sustain themselves by multiple livelihood activities rather than a single job, and tourism is just a supplement to these existing activities, investigating the existing activities helped to understand the links between HT and other livelihood activities (Tao & Wall, 2009).

The following section analyses livelihood capitals to identify what capitals available for homestay operation; natural, financial, human, physical, social capitals. Based on the analytical framework, livelihood capitals were proposed to analyse in order to examine the links between the capitals and the impacts of HT on the HOs. This significant point was discussed in the last section by identifying positives and challenges of HT.

6.2 Livelihood Strategies

This section specifies the livelihood activities of the HOs. As a household, the livelihood activities were diverse including farm and non-farm-based activities, and additionally HT.

6.2.1 Farm-based activities

Farm-based activities were the main jobs of many operators; the farming related activities included wet rice cultivation, raising animals such as buffalos, cattle, poultry, ducks, and fish. Among these activities wet rice cultivation was the major activity practiced, 16 operators out of the 18, which is common in Laos where rice is the main food for rural Lao people (Douangsavanh, Polthanee, & Katawatin, 2006). Raising animals such as buffalos, cattle, poultry, and fish are also practiced by operators, 15 operators raised one or two types of these animals. Besides these activities, 14 operators also grew commercial agriculture trees such as rubber trees and agar wood trees, while 5 of them also grew cash crops such as small tomatoes, pineapples, banana, and other types of garden vegetables. While wet rice cultivation starts from June to July to plant and grow, and October to November to harvest, cash crops such as small

tomatoes, pineapples, bananas, and other types of garden vegetables were grown after the rainy season which is from September to March. These activities work well together throughout the year.

Table 9: A summary of farm-based activities

Livelihood strategies	Activities	Number of respondents (Out of 18)
Farm-based activities	Wet rice cultivation	16
	Animal husbandry	15
	Cultivation of commercial trees	14
	Cash crops	5

6.2.2 Non-farm-based activities

Although these operators still did farm as their main livelihood activity, non-farming activities were also widely practiced. The study found that 18 operators gain their living by making handicraft products while a small number of operators did small trading. Although weaving handicraft products was a traditional skill of the operators, and viewed by the operators as their supplement job, this activity offered income as much as farming activities. The products made included sticky rice boxes and basketry. Together with weaving handicraft, three operators were employed and worked as school teachers. Two operators did small trading such as having grocery shops located at their own homes and sell a variety of stuff such as dry food, food seasoning, drinks, etc. and selling the kind of wood that can make charcoals.

Table 10: A summary of non-farm-based activities

Livelihood strategies	Activities	Number of respondents (Out of 18)
Non-farm-based activities	Making handicraft	18
	Being employed (teacher)	3
	Small trading	2

6.2.3 Homestay tourism-based activities

What has been found in this research is that all HOs viewed homestay as a supplemental livelihood opportunity that offers supplemental income for the family

which was consistent with the findings of (Tao & Wall, 2009). As discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2.1, providing accommodation, and food and drinks to guests were the main tasks of the HOs. However, many operators did not confine themselves to only hosting and providing food and drinks to guests, but they also participate in other CBT related activities. Fourteen operators out of the 18 were involved in the handicraft performance group, 12 operators were involved in the Baci ceremony and cooking group, 9 operators have worked as tour guides, 5 operators also provided boat renting services, and 3 operators offered a car renting service to tourists. These groups were part of the HT structure as discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 11: A summary of homestay Tourism-based activities

Livelihood strategies	Activities	Number of respondents (Out of 18)
Homestay-based activities	Handicraft performance	14
	Baci ceremony and cooking	12
	Tour guides	9
	Boat renting service	5
	Car renting service	3

It was clearly shown that the livelihoods of HOs were not limited only to HT, but their livelihoods were gained through diverse activities which were from farm and non-farm-based activities. This finding supported by recent literature that claims that all of these activities were combined in practice (Ellis, 2000; Scoones, 1998). These livelihood activities also acted as livelihood capitals analysed in the following sections.

6.3 Livelihood Capitals

As mentioned in the introductory section of the chapter, the findings are presented based on the structure of the analytical framework developed for this study. The analysis of these capitals looked for the available resources being accessed by the HOs. As it was asserted by Scoones (1998), livelihood capitals are critical to the improvement of livelihoods as they enable the environment that underpins the peoples' efforts to improve their livelihoods. The capitals discussed in the following sections included natural, financial, human, physical, and social.

6.3.1 Natural capital

In a general context, natural capital refers to natural resource stocks and environmental services (Scoones, 1998). A wide range of resources could be classified as natural capital from intangible aspects such as atmosphere and biodiversity to divisible capitals used for goods production such as trees and land (DfID, 1999). With respect to HT, natural capital is fundamental to tourist activities that are reliant on natural resources (Newsome et al., 2012). In the case of this research, natural resources emphasised by the HOs were forest, rivers, waterfalls, fauna and flora, in the PKK NP. These resources were used as tourist attractions and also activities. It was explained that:

“We have a plenty of natural resources such as native flora and fauna in the PKK NP, and we think that these resources attract tourists to their communities. Some of the highlighted flora are wild orchids, and fauna such as elephants, red cheek gibbons, native butterflies. Together with this, there are rivers, waterfalls, cliffs, and fresh air are among the natural attractions” (HOJ)

All these resources offered camping and trekking activities to watch some of the endangered wild animals such as elephants and appreciate the native flora. A certain area in the PKK NP was allocated for watching elephants, so the trees were not allowed to cut in this area. Using wild animal watching based activity as a main tourist activity was found in a study of Newsome et al. (2012) who found that a unique activity offering in Rwanda and Uganda was to watch gorillas. This showed that the wild animals were able to be used as tourism resources. Although these natural resources were used by the operators for tourist activities, they were owned by communities, and it was used by the communities for other livelihood activities such as raising large animals like buffalos and cattle as discussed in Section 6.2. It is clearly seen that natural capital used for HT basically refers to communal natural resources that were not only used for tourism purposes, but also used by the communities, and this finding corresponded to a study of Chen, Qiu, Usio, and Nakamura (2018) who asserted that tourism mostly relied on the communal natural resources.

Table 12: A summary of natural capital

Communal natural capital
The PKK NP with a plenty of flora: wild orchids; fauna: wild animals; forest; fresh air; wild forest products; rivers; waterfalls.

6.3.2 Financial capital

This research analysed a financial resource that the homestays accessed for the homestay operation. Based on Scoones (1998), financial capital referred to cash, savings, and other economic assets that enable people to achieve sustainable livelihood.

In the case of the Nakhaopha and Hathkai communities, the financial capital used for homestay operations was accessed through three main sources, from the government and NGOs' assistance, and their own saving. As discussed in Chapter 5, the establishment of CBT was through the support from the government collaborated with the NGOs in building some infrastructure (a tourism office, toilets, and a bridge), developing tourist sites, providing training to the communities, and improving the household's facilities. This finding was similar to a study of Schott and Nhem (2018) who pointed out that without financial support from the government and the NGOs, the establishment of CBT would not be possible.

However, the data showed that although the majority amount of financial resources were from those mentioned organisations, the household's savings were also used for adding some household facilities. As it was expressed by the operators:

"In the first phase of tourism development. I received 1,000,000 kip (US\$120) from the government to build toilets. They gave and supported to each homestays the same as me. However, there was not enough. I spent my savings. Around 1,500, 000 kip (US\$160) spent for building a toilet"
(HOL)

This implied that the household's savings played a part in the establishment of the homestay. Indeed, savings mostly from traditional economic activities, as discussed in Section 6.2, such as weaving handicraft products, the available livestock, and agriculture products. The findings were in agreement with Hussin and Kunjuraman

(2014)'s study into who funds what in the rural community, the major savings of the households were from farm and non-farm-based activities. In combination with these economic activities, a few, three, households made savings from a salary, where HOs were being employed as a teacher by the public sector. This finding was also supported by a study of DfID (1999) who strongly pointed out that the financial capital is the most important for the poor as it can support other capitals. It is clearly seen that without having financial assistance and household saving, the HOs could not have the community infrastructure as well as the household facilities improvement.

Table 13: A summary of financial capital

Financial capital	Where	When
Cash	Government and NGOs	Primary phase of CBT development
Saving	Individual household	

6.3.2 Human capital

Human capital plays a crucial role in HT given that all the important work was done through human labourers (Razzaq et al., 2011). Based on Scoones (1998), human capital is analysed through the categories of the available labourers in the family with the available formal education, skills, and knowledge. In relation to tourism, Shen, Hughey, and Simmons (2008) defined labourers as people who have the ability to work on farming and tourism related livelihood activities. As my research analysed human capital on the household level, both the operators and their family members are taken into discussions as they are a part of the labourers contributing to the homestay operation.

- Homestay operators

The education level of the operators was diverse. The study finds that 11 operators have completed Grade 5 of primary school, four operators have completed secondary school, and three operators have a college certificate. It is noticed from the interviews that operators with a college certificate and secondary school completion were men while women completed only primary school. This finding about level of education was not inconsistent with a study of (Salleh et al., 2014) conducted in Malaysia who

found that the majority of the operators had completed secondary school, and the second most was a primary school.

In addition, many operators had tourism related skills and knowledge through the training provided by the tourism development related organisations at the primary phase of operating homestay, while those who had just joined the HT were gained these skills through being trained by the head of the tourist guides. The operators were trained about preparing food, communicating with guests in English, and dealing with the safety of guests. The training provided by the tourism organisation was found in a study by Hussin and Kunjuraman (2014), and they added that their skills were extended through their working experience.

The operators who had leadership skills had been head, or deputy head in the community. Half of the operators have worked for the community committee as head or deputy heads of these following groups: the village head, the security, the women, community clusters or zones, and also the tourist guides. About half of them were mostly the women group's members. This finding implied that all operators tended to be in the elites in the community.

Table 14: A summary of the human capital of the homestay operators

Human capital	Level of education	Number of respondents (Out of 18)	Skills and knowledge	Number of respondents (Out of 18)
	Primary school	11	Hospitality	18
	Secondary school	4	Foreign language	18
	College	3	Cooking	18
	University	0	Making handicraft	18
	Total	18	Farming	18
			Housekeeping	15
			Leadership skill	9

- Family members

Family members taken into discussions were the family members who were involved in hosting guests on a fulltime involvement basis. As discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.5, within the 18 homestays, there were a total of 24 people involved fulltime with an average of two to three people for each household. This suggested that only one operator and two adults in the family, which could be a husband or wife, and one adult child worked together. As the 18 operators were already analysed earlier in this section, 24 people were analysed. Their education levels were varied, but it was clearly seen that while only one person had a university degree, the majority of them completed primary school. In addition, while the skills and knowledge of these people tended to be more farming, handicraft products making, cooking, and housekeeping, none of them had hospitality in hosting guests and foreign language skills.

Table 15: A summary of the human capital of the family members

Human capital	Level of education	Number of adults (Out of 24)	Skills and knowledge	Number of adults (Out of 24)
	Primary school	13	Farming	24
	Secondary school	8	Making handicraft	24
	College	2	Cooking	20
	University	1	Housekeeping	18
	Total	24	Leadership skill	5
			Hospitality	0
			Foreign language	0

In comparison with the homestay operator's skills and knowledge, the findings showed the similarity and difference between these two groups. It was clearly shown that the majority from both groups have completed a primary school level. However, the finding of this revealed that all the operators have hospitality and foreign language skills while none of their full-time family members has these skills.

6.3.4 Physical capital

Physical capital refers to buildings and infrastructure (Scoones, 1998). Buildings in this research refer to households and infrastructure refers to community entities. Household entity refers to household properties that can be used for homestay operation to enhance income including house construction, household facilities such as bedrooms, toilets and bathrooms, cooking utilities, piped water, electricity, internet access, and transportation vehicles (Solesbury, 2003). Community entities referred to infrastructure such as roads, tourism office, electricity system, and water system that facilitate convenience for homestays (Flora, 2018).

- Household entities

The study finds that all households running homestays are two-story homes. While some homestays that have operated from the initial phase of tourism in 2005 their houses were restored from a one-story to a two-story home to meet the requirement of current community-based homestay criteria, those have just operated homestay seem to have a two-story home before operating homestay.

House facilities available at home are different among homestays. As discussed in Chapter 4, the majority of homestays have two bedrooms for guests, while only a few had 3 bedrooms. A study by Razzaq et al. (2011) showed a similarity to this finding in that the majority of homestays in the rural context in Malaysia offered two bedrooms. This was also supported by a study of Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen, and Duangsaeng (2014) who revealed that in Thailand a homestay was not allowed to offer guests more than 4 bedrooms. All homestays have basic household supplies such as a fridge, table fans, and a hot and cold table top water cooler dispenser.

Toilets and bathrooms are one room, so in this study, toilet refers to both the toilet and bathroom. This study found that the majority of homestays had only one toilet. Those homestays operating with one toilet covers 72.22% of total homestays, while less than 50% have two toilets, and one is inside while another one is outside the house. While the majority of toilets were inside the house, amenities were limited; no shower system. It was expressed by the operators:

“If I compare my household facilities such as a toilet, before a toilet was located far from my house, which was difficult to get to in the night time.

Due to HT, the village authority helped me to build a toilet inside the house” (HOF)

More than half of the operators still have limited kitchen equipment. The traditional ways of cooking such as charcoals and woods are still widely used for cooking. Only a few homestays use gas for cooking. The popular transportation used by most of the homestay is a motorbike, while just a few homestays have a car. Although all homestays have accesses to electricity, but water supply used for households was digging from the ground by electric power because there was no water pipe system in the communities. Due to not having a system for drinkable water, the households drinking water was bought from the market in a form of a big bottle.

Table 16: A summary of household entities

Household entities	Properties	Number of respondents (out of 18)
House types	A two-story type of home	18
Bedrooms	2	15
	3	2
	4	1
Toilets/bathrooms	1 (inside the house)	11
	1 (outside the house)	5
	2 (inside and outside the house)	4
Dining, and kitchen	1 kitchen with limited equipment	18
Water supply	Digging from the ground	18
Telecommunication	A cell phone	18
Transportation vehicle	A motorbike	18
	A car	3

- Community entities

Infrastructure plays a key role in HT (Ibrahim et al., 2010). It was observed that there is still a limit of community facilities to support tourism development. There are no recreational parks, water system, hospital, and a telephone post or box within the community, but there is a primary school, a temple, and an electricity system. The

transportation from the community to the city and to the PKK NP was through one unpaved road, which was originally developed before tourism was introduced.

The community was supported to build a tourism office in order to facilitate tourism related meetings and activities. The facilities in the office area were supported including toilets and a meeting hall with a few chairs and desks. Besides the tourism office, a bridge across the river was built by support from the NGOs.

Table 17: A summary of community entities

Community entities	Properties
Infrastructure	Unpaved road
Primary school	1
Temple	1
Electricity system	Sufficiently used
Tourism office	3 toilets, 1 hall, a few desks and chairs
A bridge	1
Recreational park	0
Water system	0
Hospital	0
Telephone post	0

6.3.5 Social capital

Social capital refers to social resources such as networks, social claim, and affiliation (Scoones, 1998). Two broader contexts of social networks were identified: network in the community boundary and network out of the community contexts. In the community setting, HOs have strong networks with the head of the community committee and the head and deputy heads of each group given that many of them were one of the heads or deputy heads of, or members of the sub-committee groups mentioned in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.4. Therefore, they are in regular contact with each other about community matters. Furthermore, the operators also have networks with villagers through being friends, cousins, and neighbours and they also have regular contact with these people mostly associated with daily matters. The regular contact with community committees and villagers has increased a sense of connection, which

is basic for an informal safety net (DfID, 1999). As a result, this enables the operators to access each other support.

In addition to this, the findings showed that the operators have strong networks with government staff who have worked for the tourism organisation in the national and regional levels, NGOs, and also with the tour operators. According to Schott and Nhem (2018), a social network is very important as mature trust and reciprocation could enhance the other capitals. For example, by regular sharing of knowledge and issues of tourism management with the government staff, natural capital could be better managed and human capital would be better enhanced. Similarly, by sharing tasks with the tour operators, financial capital could be improved through attracting tourists to the community.

Table 18: A summary of social capital

Social capital	Insiders	Outsiders
Network	Community committee members	Government staff (national, regional levels) and NGOs related staff
	Villagers: friends, cousins, and neighbours	Private sector: tour operators

6.4 Impacts of Homestay Tourism on Livelihoods

As discussed in Section 6.1, the last part of aim 2 was to critically analyse the impacts of HT on the livelihood outcomes of the HOs. The impacts presented in this section were discovered from the interviews of the HOs. Then these findings were compared with the five sustainable livelihood outcomes indicators suggested by Scoones (1998) as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Five indicators of sustainable livelihood outcomes

Sustainable Livelihood Outcomes	Increases numbers of working days created
	Poverty reduction
	Well-being and capacities improved
	Livelihood adaptation, vulnerability, and resilience enhanced
	Natural resource base sustainability enhanced

In this study, it was found that while HT positively impacted on a number of livelihood outcomes, some livelihood challenges appeared. These impacts are discussed in the following sections.

6.4.1 Positive impacts on livelihood

There were a number of positive impacts of HT on operators' livelihoods discovered by this research. These included diversifying income streams, promoting better waste management, promoting gender empowerment, building skill capacities, enhancing social networks, building cultural value, maintaining hospitality, and accessing the village fund.

6.4.1.1 Promoting better waste management

The study showed that HT brings positive environmental impacts to the households as well as the community. On the household level, prior to operating a homestay, the household had a lack of understanding of the importance of waste management. The rubbish produced daily was thrown everywhere around the vicinity of the house. There were no rubbish bins in the living area, toilet, and kitchen, or even outside the house. However, since the homestay has been operating, the households pay more attention to waste management. Rubbish bins were placed in the common areas inside and outside the house. It was expressed by the homestay operator:

“I found that homestay brings good behaviour to us starting from managing waste in order to keeping clean environment. I got this idea from tourists. For example, tourists looked for a rubbish bin after using tissue or cigarettes. They did not throw them everywhere. I think that it is a good practice, so I apply in my real life. Now my house was surrounded by pleasure environment both inside and outside of the house” (HOL)

This implied that HT offered a big change to their livelihood, and these changes, in turn, offered benefits for the homestay in terms of attracting tourists. As discussed in Section 6.3.1, tourist attractions mostly relied on the beauty of the natural capital offered by the PKK NP and the environment surrounding the community. According to studies conducted in Malaysia (Razzaq et al., 2011; Salleh et al., 2014; Shukor et al., 2014), and in India (Anand, Chandan, & Singh, 2012) waste management was also perceived by the HOs as a positive benefit for the community.

Not only were the homestay families now aware of waste management, but all villagers were also encouraged by the committee to manage waste. Before tourism, rubbish was thrown on the ground in nearby bushes, or on the riverbank. Now, the rubbish produced by the households was brought to the rubbish disposal area. As one of the respondents explained

“Since the practice of waste management was encouraged, our community looks clean and pleasure environment with no stinky. In the past our village was full of rubbish spreading everywhere, at the house, at the temple, etc.” (HOH)

It is clearly shown that HT did not only create environmental beauty surrounding the homestay, but it also upgraded the level of cleanliness and created a pleasant environment for the whole community. As a consequence, it did not only improve health conditions for the residents, but it also enhanced the image of the community which could attract tourists to come back and enjoy the beauty of the community.

6.4.1.2 Diversifying income streams

Homestay operation offers a supplemental income to HOs’ families. As discussed in Section 6.2, the household had a diverse income source including income from farm and non-farm-based activities. However, when comparing household income sources, all of the operators agreed that homestay operation still generated a small income, while farm-based activities offered a bigger income portfolio to the family from selling cattle and commercial agricultural products such as agar wood trees and rubber trees products. In addition to this, the families earn income from selling handicraft as much as from the farm-based activities.

It was revealed by many operators who have operated homestay since 2005 that they received guests often at the first stage of homestay development, but currently, tourists do not come often. On average, the operators received guests two times per year, and the lengths of stay each time were one to two nights. One respondent has operating homestay since 2013 stated:

“Although tourists come, but they do not stay overnight at the village instead they like camping. If tourists come in a group tour, they like to

camp at forest where is near to waterfalls. It is rarely to have tourists stay overnight at the homestay” (HOD)

This suggested that having a small number of tourists doing a homestay led to a small amount of income compared to the other livelihood activities. The amount of income homestay earned depended on how often they receive guests. One operator expressed that:

“In average, he can make US\$ 40 from each staying after dividing to the village fund, district, and provincial admission” (HOI)

US\$40 was purely from accommodating and providing meals and drinks. It is not comparable to handicraft, in which on average, handicraft can make income for family US\$ 60 per month given that the handicraft products were highly in demand, so they received the order with a huge number of products from the wholesalers each month. However, the selling was mostly in the form of credit while income from homestay was in cash.

Although farming and handicraft products could offer more income to the family, the findings showed that income from the homestay operation could cover some of the important family expenditure. This study has shown alignment with a study done by Salleh et al. (2014) who asserted that the homestay activities were able to supplement the family’s income, therefore allowing improvement in their purchasing power. The only income over the year could enough for daily expenditure such as for food. Also, spending on necessary household facilities such as table fans, and bedroom amenities such as new mattresses, blankets was mentioned by the operators. Followed by spending on children who were in school or university sometimes. If it was saved for a few years or was combined with income from other activities, it was enough for house maintenance, and restoration. How income from homestay was spent is shown in Figure 14: The classification was based on the frequency of items mentioned by the respondents.

Figure 14: An income distribution in the household

6.4.1.3 Promoting gender empowerment

Women received a great change resulting from HT. Prior to the homestay initiative, men used to be the master in a family and decided on important affairs in the family. Previously men usually were the main people in decision-making towards important activities such as how and what to spend given that men earned more income to support the family while women played the role of housewives and took care of children in a family.

As a result of HT, women tended to be recognised by the community. The best example of this being that 10 of the operators were women. In addition to this, women had more chance to participate and give their voice in a committee meeting. They shared their thoughts towards homestay matters as one female respondent stated:

“When I attend a meeting, I am not afraid in sharing my thought. I share what I found from operating homestay” (HOC)

It was clearly understood that women have taken a step from being housewives to the operational environment and social development. In this case, all decision-making related to hosting guests in the family is under women. Men played a role in assisting women in this case. The gender empowerment caused by HT was not only found by this study, it was also found in several studies conducted in Nepal (Acharya, &

Halpenny, 2013), Malaysia (Osman et al., 2009), and in Thailand (Dunn, 2007). This implies that women were widely accepted by the society in participating in HT.

6.4.1.4 Building skill capacities

The positive impacts of homestay operation offer a chance for operators to grow in skills and knowledge. Operators' skills and knowledge in providing services were improved and expanded through training and experiencing hosting guests. The areas of increase in skills identified include increased language skills and growth in hospitality competence among hosts with previous experience as tour guides and other professions. Particularly, for the people who have never had work related to tourism, it seems that their experience has grown with regards to hospitality competences as a result of hosting through homestay. Likewise, those who have worked in tourism before running homestay were able to identify the language competence and leadership skill of this growth. The capacity building was a fundamental part of services because these skills helped to boost service productivity (Dangi & Jamal, 2016). In the case of this study the operators are required to have hospitality and foreign language skills. Therefore, the operators were trained by the tourism organisation as discussed in 6.3.2.

However, a few operators, particularly those who have just operated homestays in the last few years, still wanted tourism organisations to support them in a form of providing more training related to foreign language and hospitality skills. It is expressed by all operators that using foreign languages was challenging, particularly in the primary stage of operating homestay, but now some of them can speak English fluently at a certain level.

6.4.1.5 Enhancing social network

As a result of homestay, the social network of operators has positively impacted. Prior to homestay, operators only had a lot of contact with their closest relatives. When operating homestay, operators have often communicated with other operators in relation to the tourism situation or to exchange information. It was also found that a network between the HOs and tour operators was strengthened. As it is expressed by HOs towards the benefit of having contact with tour companies, tour companies bring them tourists. Building a strong network with the tourists was also found by this study. A few operators who have been operated homestay since 2005 expressed that:

“Some tourists when they go back to their countries, they still keep in touch with me. Some of them sent me a notebook. This is maybe because they saw my poorness or maybe because of their satisfying with what I did for them when they stayed at my house” (HOL)

This shows that the operators’ network is not limited to a national sphere, but their network is bridging across the globe through HT. Having a strong social network with the tour operators, tourists, and also communities played a crucial role for the operators in order to maintain sustainable tourism (Leh & Hamzah, 2012).

6.4.1.6 Building cultural value

Several cultural aspects had been revitalised since HT developed in the communities. One of these was making of handicraft products. Prior to HT, handicraft was produced by almost all adults with a purpose of selling them to the general market, and for household utilisation. When tourism was introduced, this activity was included as a highlight activity for homestay and it was compatible with the other homestay related traditional activities such as the Baci ceremony and traditional performances. Besides these activities, these handicraft products were sold to tourists as souvenirs. Because of its importance to HT, young children in the family were encouraged to make handicraft products in order to pursue this traditional skill. It is expressed by one respondent:

"All of my family can make handicraft products, even my young daughter. I encourage her to weave handicraft products when she does not study schedule. She can get how to make handicraft products from other family members very fast” (HOD)

In addition, traditional dance was also a homestay highlight. Prior to tourism, this traditional dance was not actively practiced by the young people, only the elderly people performed at the festival events. When tourism came, the community authority encouraged young people to practice it in order to perform to tourists. Therefore, it was trained by teachers who are the HOs to their students who have talents in dancing. As well as dance, the Baci ceremony is held for tourists when it is requested. Sometimes other villagers were invited to join the Baci, and this can increase the feeling of importance of the Baci to the whole community. This finding was similar to a study on cultural value of Jamal, Othman, and Muhammad (2011) which has shown

that in Malaysia the traditional activities were fundamental parts of the homestay programs given that these activities were performed to entertain tourists, and to strengthen cultural identity.

6.4.1.7 Accessing the village fund

HOs did not only receive income from providing accommodation, food, and drinks to tourists, they also have access to the village fund. This fund was built from the contribution of tourism activities. As discussed in Chapter 5 Section 5.2.2.1, US\$ 7 income from individual tourists goes to the village fund account. Although all villagers can access this fund with a low-interest rate, HOs tended to have more privileges than other villagers in terms of receiving special help in case of emergency. Specifically, HOs can access this fund when they are having an emergency. For instance, in case one of their family members is in hospital with serious circumstances, the fund assists about 300,000 kip (US\$40). Furthermore, in case of death, the fund assists for funeral costs about 500,000 kip (US\$60), which other villagers do not receive. A study on sustainable tourism through homestay in Malaysia (Hussin & Kunjuran, 2014) has shown that accessing financial resources helps operators to recover from family economic concerns quicker.

Besides individual homestay receiving this benefit, the whole community also receives assistance from the fund through investing to improve road access to the community. Every year the road was being maintained and money from the village fund was spent for this maintenance. This is in agreement with the findings of Ibrahim and Razzaq (2010) who suggested that better infrastructure facilities lead to livelihood betterment.

Overall, the findings of this study clearly showed that several positive impacts were discovered as shown in Figure 15. The overarching finding was that the outcomes discovered by this study, precise to the context of HT, broadly matched the indicators suggested by Scoones's framework. However, while diversifying income streams, waste management, enhancing social networks, capacity building, gender empowerment, and accessing the village fund seemed in line with the original framework, cultural value building was not in alignment with it. All of these impacts will be discussed in chapter 7.

Figure 15: A summary of the positive impacts of HT

Together with positive outcomes, this research also conducted a critical examination of the negative implications of sustainable livelihood outcomes.

6.4.2 The negative implications of homestay tourism

While HT positively impacts on several aspects of the HOs' livelihood, HT negative impacts were also found. As this research conducted a critical examination. The major negative implications were discovered by this study including creating an opportunity cost, experiencing cultural shock, and rising conflict,

6.4.2.1 Creating an opportunity cost

The opportunity cost was the largest challenge faced by the HOs. The two forms of costs included competition for time and competition for domestic livestock for homestay activities.

- Competition for time

Competition for time was found to have negative implications on the livelihood outcomes. As was expressed by many operators there was a clash between time allocated for other livelihood activities and the time allocated for hosting guests. As discussed in Chapter 5, hosting tourists involves a number of tasks to go through started from preparing bedrooms before arrivals and during the guests stay, and while guests arriving and staying with homestay, preparing food and cleaning the common areas were frequently done. Therefore, it negatively impacted on other livelihood activities given that these activities were put aside in order to handle hosting guests. The opportunity cost found by this study was competition for time allocated for farm-based activities and hosting guests. Based on the nature of these two activities, they

were incompatible in many aspects. For example, while hosting had been done at home, farm-based activities takes place at the farm areas. This is expressed by one of the operators:

“I used to experience that I were working in the farm, and then tourist came to the village. I had to come to meet tourists with wearing dirty and smelling clothes. Even I was working the important activities at the farm, I has to go back to the village receive tourists” (HOL)

This suggested that the operators paid more attention to hosting tourists. The positive aspect was good for the homestay operation, but it delayed the completion of farming activities. If farming did not depend on seasonality it would not be an issue, but some types of farming such as growing wet rice must be completed with the right season otherwise it offers less productivity. This issue was also found in a study of Ashley (2000) who found that the competition for time for hosting tourists and farming activities was the one among the challenges caused by tourism projects development in Namibia. It, therefore, negatively impacted the sustainable livelihood contribution.

- Competition for utilising domestic livestock

In terms of food sources, homestay garden vegetables, and livestock were mostly used by homestays for preparing food for their guests. This was due to the fact that fresh and traditional food ingredients were highlighted by the homestay program. It was addressed by operators that:

“I mostly get a food source from my home garden and livestock. If guests want to have fish as their meals, I can catch fish from my ponds” (HOC)

It seemed better in terms of not spending much income from hosting to buy food sources, but if the price of this livestock offered by the market was higher than homestay operation offering, they lose their economic value. Indeed, in a study on the impacts of tourism on livelihood in Namibia Ashley (2000) has shown that due to the fact the rural community had difficulty accessing the market, domestic livestock was used by the household for tourists to enjoy traditional cuisines as a way for making economic benefit, but this reduced a flock size for offering to the middleman who may give higher value than tourism. Therefore, it could lower the economic benefit offering by the market.

6.4.2.3 Experiencing culture shock

Alongside costs of opportunity and conflict, culture shock was also experienced by the operators. As discussed in Chapter 3, the majority of tourists visiting the PKK NP who did homestay were international tourists, the operators were likely to encounter cultural shock. According to Oberg (2006), culture shock was experienced by an individual occurring when encounters a different culture resulting from an individual having difficulty in adapting or adjusting to the new culture. A few families experienced culture shock, but they faced different circumstances. Some operators expressed their feeling on the matter of cultural etiquettes that international guests did homestay. It was expressed as:

“Some international guests did not take their shoes off before entering my house. And walked around upstairs and around with their shoes on. I told them to take them off and leave them in front of door house. Some said sorry to me, but some asked me why. I had to explain to them” (HOA)

Another operator experienced different culture shock with sharing the feeling:

“I used experience one when tourists asked me about bathtub. I told them that there did not have bathtub in the bathroom, and they had to take a bath by using a small bowl to lift water to the body. However, unexpected happening, I went to the bathroom after finishing their bath and I found that guests used a water basin as bathtub to soak themselves. I had to clean it up. I was angry but I tried to calm down” (HOC)

These expressions showed that the cultural shock faced by host families mostly occurred when guests have a lack of understanding of cultural etiquette. If cultural etiquette was well informed by the hosts, it would not happen. As it was asserted by Agyeiwaah et al. (2014) in a study on pros and cons of hosting international tourists that the culture shock was created by the do's and don'ts of etiquette practiced by the local community, and this caused the host to encounter with cultural challenges and irritation of culture clash.

6.4.2.4 Raising conflict

A conflict with villagers was experienced by the operators on a certain level. Conflict among operators with neighbours appeared in relation to the noise created by tourists, and the use of economic benefit resources. According to Nor and Kayat (2010),

conflict was a common phenomenon of society, particularly in the areas where the communal resource pool was shared among communities. In this study, the operators shared the atmosphere with other households living in the same community. It was expressed by some operators that they received complaints from neighbours about noise. This finding was supported by a study of Kayat (2002) who pointed out that as homestay was operated in the community, and the communal resources were shared with other villagers, activities offered to tourists could cause an unpleasant environment for the neighbours. This could lead to an unpleasant environment for guests as well in the long term. Some operators also experienced jealousy from other villagers. The villagers who wanted to operate homestay but were not selected by the community committees were not satisfied with those who operate homestays. They showed jealousy through unfavourable behaviour while communicating with them.

In summary, the findings clearly showed that an opportunity cost, culture shocks, and conflict with the villagers were the negative implications of HT as shown in Figure 16, and these implications were not outlined in the SLF.

Figure 16: A summary of the negative implications

6.5 Summary

It is clearly seen that HOs depended on diverse activities for their living. While their traditional livelihood activities both farming and non-farming based were still practiced, homestay operation acts as an alternative livelihood. Both livelihood activities and capitals directly influenced the livelihood outcomes of the HOs. While several positive impacts were discovered, a few negative implications were found to challenge the sustainable livelihood, which need to be mitigated. Therefore, these positive outcomes and negative implications will be included in the revised framework, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from Chapters 5 and 6 and synthesises them into a revised framework for HT in the context of the newly emerging tourism destination of Laos as part of research aim 3. These findings were based on the first two research aims, which were to explore the structure and characteristics of HT and to critically examine HT's impacts on the livelihoods of HOs. The discussion of the key findings will be structured according to the analytical framework. To revise the framework, the key findings are compared to previous research studies, and the existing SLF.

7.2 Addressing the Research Question and Aims

The central research question of this study was:

How does homestay tourism impact the livelihood of rural homestay operators?

To answer this question, the following three main research aims were set:

Aim 1 Explore the structure and characteristics of homestay tourism;

Aim 2 Critically examine the impacts of homestay tourism on livelihoods of homestay operators through the lens of Sustainable Livelihood Framework;

Aim 3 Revise the Sustainable Livelihood Framework for homestay tourism.

The following sections discuss the findings related to the research aims and then address the primary research question and present the revised framework of the SLF for HT in Laos.

7.3 Aim 1: The Structure and Characteristics of Homestay Tourism

The exploration of the structure and characteristics of HT in the PKK NP CBT reveals that there are a few main stakeholders involved in homestay development and each has their own role, but all have worked collaboratively. As well as the characteristics of HT, the findings of this study identified several key characteristics. The key findings on the structure and characteristics of HT are discussed as follows.

7.3.1 The role of stakeholders

- The role of the public sector

The findings of this research show that HT was established under the CBT initiative introduced to the community by the Lao tourism organisation, and the establishment was supported by NGOs working collaboratively with the national government providing financial support and advisory assistance. This finding was consistent with works of literature in claiming that although the government has been playing a key role in tourism development, NGOs also played a significant role in the development particularly in the least economically developed countries (Schott & Nhem, 2018; Walpole & Goodwin, 2000). In addition, the structure of the management is in alignment with several studies done in Malaysia (Hussin & Kunjuraman, 2014; Ibrahim et al., 2010; Razzaq et al., 2011) and other developing countries (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013; Cruz, 2003) in terms of gaining support from government, and related international organisations through finances and advice in the beginning of the establishment.

- The role of the private sector

Outside the public sector, the private sector, particularly tour operators, also play a crucial role in HT. The tour operators' roles emphasised creating tour programs for HT and selling them to the international market. This finding was supported by a study on CBT marketing channels done by Schott and Nhem (2018) who found that HT needed tour operators given that tour operators could offer HT related activities to market, and could particularly enhance international market channels. This implies that accessing the international market brings economic benefit for communities and tour operators, and it is beneficial for both parties in terms of stimulating economic productivity.

The findings on the importance of private sector involvement in CBT were also found in several studies in Malaysia, Razzaq et al. (2011), in Nepal, Acharya and Halpenny (2013). These findings strongly supported the findings of (Schott & Nhem, 2018) conducted in Cambodia that without the tour operators, HT could not continue. Particularly, it is asserted by Harrison and Schipani (2007) that Laos still needs support from the private sectors in order to pursue local tourism activities as local people have limited channels to access international markets by themselves.

7.3.1.4 CBT management structure

CBT is governed by the tourism committee set by the community committee. There are many groups such as tour guides, homestay, handicraft, traditional dance, and baci and cooking that make up the tourism committee structure of CBT. This finding is similar to a study of Razzaq et al. (2011) who asserted that the success of CBT development is attributable to the participation of the local people. This implies that local involvement plays a significant role in CBT sustainability. Although local people are involved in a particular group, the findings show that the decision-making about tourism operations is under the head of the tourism committee, called tourist guides in this research. The head of the community committee has influence in selecting the households to operate homestay, for example. This was found in a study conducted in Cambodia by Schott and Nhem (2018) in which the decision of the management was from the top down. This implies that the households had to meet the criteria in order to be selected by the committee to operate a homestay.

7.3.2 The main characteristics of homestay tourism

- The purpose of homestay tourism

It was identified in the findings that the development of HT involved many parties in planning and financial support as discussed in Section 7.3.1. Indeed, the development aimed to produce a long-term benefit for natural, cultural, and environmental preservations while offering an economic benefit to the HOs and community (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). The findings of this study show that HT contributes to these aims in several ways. Homestay tourist activities are ecotourism which aims to not harm the environment such as trekking for appreciation of the natural resources. Cultural activities are restored to entertain tourists as discussed in Chapter 6. Importantly, the economic benefits also contribute to the local community given that all homestay are owned by local residents who were originally born in and have been living in the community. This finding was supported by a study of Goodwin and Santilli (2009) who claimed that homestay operated under the context of CBT were always owned by the local community.

- Homestay operation

The findings clearly show that in the context of CBT homestay in Laos, a private home was used as a homestay. As discussed in Chapter 5, all operators have only one house

which was originally built for residing in, but now some spare areas of the house are used for accommodating tourists. This finding is in alignment with literature that states that in the context of CBT homestays, the private home was utilised to accommodate guests (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). This finding was also supported by a study conducted in Thailand by Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2015) that found rural homes owned by locals were commercialised as a form of the homestay initiative to gain the family economic benefits. Besides using spare areas of the private home to accommodate guests, the number of bedrooms offered to guests was also limited. This offering was limited due to several factors. While being limited in household facilities was one factor, the CBT rules were also a factor. In Thailand, it is a rule that homestay cannot offer more than four bedrooms (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015). This is the opposite of the findings of this study, although a homestay has many rooms, only two tourists are allowed in each homestay. This allocation uses a management principle for the community to achieve fair income distribution to all HOs. This results from, particularly in the lower season, fewer tourists visiting the communities and the PKK NP than in the initial stage of the homestay development. Although the method is accepted by all operators, it leads to some drawbacks that may not be recognised by the operators such as the opportunity costs as discussed in Chapter 6.

7.4 Aim 2: Impacts of Homestay Tourism on Sustainable Livelihood

The second research aim of this study was to critically examine the impacts of HT on the sustainable livelihood of operators. As discussed in Chapter 6, this study does not only analyse the positive impacts, but also critically analyses some of the negative implications of sustainable livelihood of the HOs. As it is acknowledged that HT is an additional activity to other livelihood activities (Tao & Wall, 2009), the links between homestay activities and other activities need to be discussed. In addition, the use of livelihood capitals that operators use for homestay operation is also discussed.

7.4.1 Roles of livelihood activities in homestay tourism

As discussed in Chapter 6, the livelihood activities of HOs are diverse. The findings of this study show that while farming activities seem not to support the homestay operation for a certain reason, the making of handicraft product works well together with homestay operations. These findings have shown the difference between developed countries such as New Zealand (Hall, 2004), and England (Dernoi, 1983), where farm-based activities were used as the main homestay activities and this type of

homestay was widely promoted. It could be argued that it depends on the purpose of the homestay operation, and farming activities in Laos could be used as HT activities. Yes, ideally, farm-based activities should come along with HT as it is one way to showcase local culture. However, the findings suggested that the operators have experiences of a clash in time allocation for farming activities and homestay operations as discussed in Chapter 6. Thus, farming activity was not viewed as the homestay activity by the operators.

In contrast, non-farm-based activities such as weaving handicrafts were rated as a major culturally based activity for homestay. It is viewed that making handicraft products represents the uniqueness of the traditional local culture, and it is made at home while hosting guests is taking place. This finding was aligned with a study conducted in Malaysia by Kayat (2002) who pointed out that the handmade activities are the main attractions offered by the homestay program to tourists. It also was in agreement with the study by Ibrahim and Razzaq (2010) who observed that local products were used as a form of souvenir which could be sold directly to tourists. This implies that some of the traditional livelihood activities act as cultural capital used for diversifying homestay products in order to gain competitiveness in cultural authenticity.

7.4.2 Roles of livelihood capitals in homestay tourism

It is expressed in the SLF that livelihood capitals play a role in contributing to sustainable livelihood (Scoones, 1998). The discussion is over the relationship between livelihood capitals and homestay operation. It is recognised by Scoones (1998) that people require a range of livelihood capitals to achieve positive livelihood outcomes. This is particularly important when livelihood capitals are shared and used by a large number of people inside the community, and additionally to outsiders such as tourists. In this case, the HOs must carefully utilise them to ensure the sustainability of the homestay operation and also the livelihood outcomes. The implications of livelihood capitals discussed in Chapter 6 were identified starting from natural capital.

- Natural capital

The findings indicate that natural capital plays a significant role in the homestay operations in the context of the PKK PN CBT, given that almost all HT products were based on natural capital. The main natural capital such as forests, rivers, waterfalls,

flora, and fauna were found for communities to be used as tourist activities. The tourist activities mainly based in the forest were trekking to appreciating natural endangered animal and insect species in the forest, and also to visit waterfalls. Rivers were used for boat transportation to the natural sites, and it was also used for river-based activities such as kayaking and rafting. This finding is in alignment with literature that claims that HT heavily depends on natural capital, particularly where the HT has a lack of cultural and historical based activities (Anand, Chandan, & Singh, 2012). This assertion was supported by my observation that there was a lack of historical attractions in the communities, except for the temples that could be used as a historical attraction. Due to this limitation of the place, homestay products offered by the natural capital are more diverse and more attractive for international tourists. This implies that the natural capital is highly needed, particularly in the context of Laos, to pursue sustainable HT which leads to positive impacts on sustainable livelihood outcomes.

- Human capital

The findings of this study have shown that not only do individual operators play a key role in the homestay operations, but family members also act as important people in hosting tourists. As one person cannot handle multiple tasks at the same time, family members were needed to help with housekeeping, cooking, and cleaning. This implies that available labourers were required by homestay operations in order to provide service effectively and meet the needs of guests. As discussed in Chapter 6, the findings of this study clearly show that while the head of the family acts as the main person in hosting guests by welcoming and communicating with guests, other family members act as assistants. Interestingly, these family members are not paid but they involved in the services according to tasks sharing among family members (Price, 1975).

While a high level of formal education is viewed as important criteria for the hospitality and tourism industry discussed in a study of (Flora, 2018), the finding of this study indicates that a high level of formal education may not be the main criteria comparing to hospitality skills given that the majority of main operators and family members completed primary school. Specifically, none of the operators has a university degree. This finding also reflects the discussion in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1 about criteria used to select households to operate homestay.

However, the findings of this study strongly indicate that skills and knowledge related to hospitality and foreign languages are the most important. As discussed in Chapter 6, all operators have these skills and knowledge, but not equally among them, from training provided by tourism organisations such as LNTA at the initial stage of development. It is clearly seen that English skill is still a priority for being operators given that almost all visitors to the PKK NP and doing homestay were international tourists as discussed in Chapter 3. Consistent with the findings is a more recent study conducted by Murray et al. (2017) that found that although it is challenging for the host community to acquire sufficient skills and knowledge in foreign language, it is important for the operators to have them in order to produce an effective service.

However, one of the most interesting findings was the difference between the main person and family members in relation to hospitality and foreign language. While the main person had skills in these mentioned areas to a certain level, the family members had no available skills in foreign languages as discussed in Chapter 6. In contrast, the family members tended to have a lot of skills in housekeeping and cooking, which fit the certain areas of homestay services. Thus, the involvement of the family members can help in hosting guests to a certain level. This implies that without the operators, the family members would face difficulty in hosting guests, particularly the international tourists.

- Financial capital

The findings show that financial capital is regarded as the most important resource for the establishment of HT in the context of Laos. As discussed in Chapter 6, the two main financial sources that the HOs have access to are their own savings and support from external organisations. However, the findings indicate that while their own savings were a small part of the establishment, the financial assistance given by the government and NGOs are the major component of development funding. The findings of this study are similar to a study conducted in Cambodia by Schott and Nhem (2018) who pointed out that without financial aid from the NGOs and support from the government, CBT could not have developed given that local communities have a lack of financial and human capacities which can be effectively used for tourism development. In the context of Laos, the government and NGOs provided both cash and materials for building infrastructure as mentioned in Chapter 6. This implies that

the NGOs and the government play a significant role in sustainable tourism development in the context of Laos.

However, the concern for HOs may relate to accessing long-term financial capital given that financial support was only in the initial stage of tourism establishment by the external parties (Tosun, 2000). This implies that it is critical for the HOs to operate HT without long-term assistance from these organisations. Although their own savings can be used for further development, it affects other livelihood activities that may also be needed by financial capital to invest in such activities as raising animals or commercial agriculture. Therefore, the operators need to find ways to gain further assistance from these organisations mentioned earlier.

- Physical capital

The key findings indicate that the use of infrastructure for the convenience of tourists and household entities for accommodating tourists were found in the communities. Infrastructure such as road access to the community is a fundamental part of tourism and it was expressed by all operators that the improvement of road conditions needed to be better for the tourism image and convenience of tourists. As was claimed by Ibrahim et al. (2010), because sustainability livelihood is measured by the quality of infrastructure that is owned by the community, the improvement of the infrastructure can lead to the improvement of livelihood. Although bedrooms and toilets are considered main areas for guests because they are frequently used while they are doing homestay, almost all parts of the house contribute to HT. It can be argued that infrastructure does not directly affect the homestay operation compared to the household entities where tourists are staying. However, it directly affects the homestay operation given that infrastructure is used by tourists as well as the operators, so the improvement of physical infrastructure facilities positive enhancements to the atmosphere of the homestay area (Salleh et al., 2014).

However, the findings revealed that both infrastructure and household facilities still needed to be developed and renovated. Road access to the community was the priority for improvement in order to boost tourism. This implies that HT did not get much benefit from the infrastructure facilities. Similarly, the facilities in the homestay also needed to be added as it is suggested by Razzaq et al. (2011) that the household facilities were necessary for making service more productive. Therefore, if these types

of physical capital are improved, the homestay operation will be able to access more economic benefit from services enhanced.

- Social capital

In terms of the homestay operation, the use of social networks was for perpetuating a good relationship with the villagers, for securing status as friends and cousins, and to promote homestay related activities with outsiders. The findings of this study show that the HOs have strong networks with both insiders and outsiders. The HOs have regular contact with insiders such as friends, cousins, and neighbours about daily life matters. The contact with the outsiders such as government staff is less frequent and about management issues.

Most importantly, one of the key findings associated with networks with outsiders is that operators have a top network with government staff, particularly at the regional level, the NGO related staff, and tour operators. According to Schott and Nhem (2018), building strong networks with government and NGO staff can enhance further financial assistance which in turn benefits the homestay operation as discussed in Chapter 6. In addition to this, building a strong network with tour operators can diversify distribution channels. Distribution channels act as a critical business mechanism by connecting HT to the market, and as a result, it enhances the financial capital. Besides this, the finding is also in line with a study of Mbaiwa and Stronza (2010) also add that having strong networks with private sectors through joint venture partnerships are important to improve operation reputation and the livelihood of operators.

7.4.3 Homestay tourism impacts on livelihoods

As discussed in Chapter 6, a number of positive impacts on the sustainability of the HOs' livelihoods, but these positive impacts have negative implications for sustainable livelihood outcomes. The positive impacts are discussed under four main categories of impacts namely economic, social, cultural, and environmental.

- Economic impact

The key positive economic impact drawn from the findings in Chapter 6, was that the homestay operation provided a supplemental source of income to other livelihood

activities of the family, and also the HOs have accessing the village with special privileges.

Although income earned from the homestay operation is not much and not as regular as income earned from commercial trees, larger animals, and handicraft products sold directly to the wholesalers and regional markets as discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.2, these transactions are mostly in the form of credit, while income earned from the homestay operation was in a form of cash. Available cash is considered the fundamental financial capital for the households in rural areas in Laos given that it is spent for household needs and priorities. This finding was in alignment with a study by Ashley (2000) who pointed out that cash income gained by the homestay operations provided a cash-based livelihood opportunity, which it is necessary for households to have in order to spend for household supplies, and also to enable the household to reinvest in other livelihood activities. It is evident from the finding discussed in Chapter 6 that aside from the spending for daily supplies a certain amount of income was spent on their children's education. This implies that income can enhance human capital in terms of formal education for the next homestay generations. This was also aligned with the assertion of Scoones (1998) that people are the centre of the sustainable livelihood. Therefore, investment in children's education enables the household for long-term homestay operation.

One of the key findings of this study is that the HOs have received special terms and conditions in accessing the village fund. The village fund was founded from the CBT development and a certain proportion of income from tourism is put in the village fund. As discussed in Chapter 6, the purpose of the establishment of this fund is for the whole community's benefit. However, the operator and their family members are privileged in terms of being able to gain some support in form of cash when in an emergency such as in the hospital as discussed in Chapter 6. Accessing this fund provided a positive impact to the operators given that individuals', as well as family members' livelihood, are more secure. The homestay operation did not only positively impact economic outcomes, but it also positively impacted the social-cultural aspect, which is discussed in the following section.

- Social impact

Promoting gender equality in terms of the empowerment of women in social participation and decision-making in family entities was identified by this study. The findings of this study showed that gender status has greatly changed since the HT was introduced. One of the key findings was that homestay operations contribute to promoting women as the main people who own the homestay operations. The operating or ownership of the homestay by women may not be the case in developed countries or even in large cities as mentioned in a study by (Duflo, 2012) who asserted that women in developed countries were given opportunities in social participation as much as men were. Thus, as a result of the HT, women in the rural communities in the developing countries seem to be received a greater benefit from homestay operation.

However, women in the rural community in developing countries like Laos where, generally, women tended to work at home caring for their children, were encouraged to be involved in the homestay operations by the community committee. As shown by the findings of this study about half of the HOs were women as discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1. This finding was consolidated with a study by Acharya and Halpenny (2013) who pointed out that women had more chance to participate in tourism activities through homestay operations and this participation did not only upgrade the social status of the women but also women were given respect by their family members. In the context of rural Laos, female empowerment shakes a status quo of the rural society, but this changes the worth of rural women. Acharya and Halpenny (2013) asserted that gender empowerment is not only beneficial for women' livelihoods but also the livelihoods of the whole family given that in the case of an accident in life, one can take care of family members.

- Cultural impact

The key cultural benefit drawn from the findings was cultural preservation in terms of revitalising the traditional skills and activities. As discussed in Section 7.4.2, besides natural based activities, HT relies on cultural-based activities. Due to its benefits to tourism, weaving handicraft products such as "*Tip Khao*" a sticky rice box and traditional dance such as "*Mure folk dance*" and "*Khummu folk dance*" were imparted to the next generations through informal training. Young people in the family were taught how to make handicraft products by the parents. In addition, traditional dance

was taught by teachers at school to students as one of the school activities. These trained students were jointed the tourism to perform for tourists when requested. The finding is supported by Leksakundilok (2004) who found out that the homestays used local cultural activities not only for economic benefit but also to maintain these important cultural aspects for the long run. Because of the importance of cultural activities to HT, it is found from a study by Salleh et al. (2014) that in Malaysia a cultural group was established including Malay dancers (*Zapin*) and folk singers (*ghazal*). The establishment of these groups was for the young people to practice in order to maintain their cultural heritage which is the symbol of a community and its culture. In summary, cultural revitalisation is clearly seen as a culturally positive impact of the HOs' livelihood.

- Environmental impact

The environmentally positive impacts offered by HT were found in various manners, but one of the key findings was better waste management. It was expressed by the operators that previously the villagers, as well as the operators, ignored waste management given that the villagers focused on more economic activities such as farm-based activities in order to make a living rather than focusing on environmental issues. Thus, this issue caused a negative image in terms of unpleasant environment.

However, as a result of HT, currently the community is more attractive in terms of fresh air with a pleasant environment both in the communal areas and surrounding areas. It was expressed by the operators that the encouragement of the community leaders in managing waste has been actively implemented since the CBT initiative was introduced to the community. The importance of better waste management was recognised by the literature in both developing countries (Anand, Chandan, & Singh, 2012; Kayat, 2009; Lama, 2013; Yahaya, 2004) and developed countries (Hall, Mitchell, & Keelan, 1993; van Broeck, 2001) where it was pointed out that the positive consequences of waste management boosted the well-being of the locals and operators by being in the fresh air. Also building a good image of the community to outsiders, particularly tourists. It is suggested by Lama (2013) that a pleasant environment can boost tourists' satisfaction. The satisfaction of tourists contributes to sustainable livelihood in terms of attracting tourists to the communities and this leads to boost economic benefit through frequency of services.

It could be summarised that cash-based income, gender empowerment, cultural revitalisation, and better waste management were the key benefits offered by the homestay operations to the sustainable livelihoods of the HOs. However, as discussed in Chapter 6, these positive outcomes come with the negative implications of sustainable livelihoods identified in this study. These implications are discussed in the following section.

7.4.4 Negative implications of livelihood outcomes

The findings of this study indicate a number of negative implications of the sustainable livelihood outcomes including the opportunity costs, culture shock, and conflict with villagers.

- Opportunity costs

The opportunity costs faced by the HOs can be seen in two main aspects such as competition for time spent on agricultural activities, and competition for resources with domestic livestock used for food. The most negative implication of the sustainable livelihood identified is that HOs face a critical challenge over time management related to the time allocated for agricultural activities and homestay operation. Particularly, when tourists come in the growing wet rice season, the operators may break from growing wet rice for a day or two days to host tourists. If the wet rice could grow any time throughout the year, it would not matter, but this type of crop can only grow in the early rainy season. If it does not grow in the right season, it can lead to lower productivity which causes them to not have enough staple food all year round. In addition, the operators may end the economic disadvantage as benefit offerings by the homestay may not override the benefit offered by agricultural activities, as discussed in Section 7.4.3.1., particularly if there was only one tourist. This finding was supported by a study by Ashley (2000) who asserted that competition for time led to a greater risk for the operators in terms of gaining economic benefit from these two activities. The further implication of the competition for time may create tension for the family, and it may also lead to conflict among family members, which directly influences the homestay services, and the achievement of sustainable livelihood outcomes.

Similarly, competition for domestic livestock was found in this study. The perceptions of HOs on where they get food sources from showed that the operators relied heavily

on the ducks, chickens, and fish that resided by their family to serve food for guests. It was expressed that since the homestay began operating a certain number of ducks, chickens, and fish were not sold as they were kept for the homestay operation. Yes, food service with the use of the available local food sources was the highlight of the cultural homestay services found in several studies conducted in Malaysia (Kayat, 2009; Razzaq et al., 2011), India (Peaty, 2009) and Thailand (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015), but the economic value of these food sources were not taken into consideration. Indeed, from the economic perspective, generally in the rural context, domestic livestock such as ducks, chickens, and fish were raised for selling at the market. When these types of economic resources were used as a part of food service for the homestay operations, this puts the operators in a dilemma when the value of these products was in higher demand by the market. It is clearly seen that competition for time and domestic livestock negatively links to economic outcomes. If these opportunity costs are not mitigated, it will weaken the sustainable livelihood outcomes.

- Culture shock

The findings also show that culture shock is also identified. Culture shock is considered a big issue for the HOs given that they can discourage the operators from continuing to provide services to the guests, and can build a negative perception of the operators to international tourists (Agyeiwaah et al., 2014). As discussed in Chapter 3, the majority of visitors to the communities were international tourists who hold a different culture. When tourists visit the community, they have their own expectation of the host community services, and the host communities also expect the tourists to respect the local norms and culture. From host perspective, culture shock put the operators in the stress environment which cause a difficulty in provide productive services to tourists.

- Conflict with villagers

As discussed in Chapter 6, HT shares a communal resource such as natural capital both intangible (atmosphere and biodiversity), tangible (tree, land, and river), physical capital (road and electricity), and also financial capital (the village fund), the conflict over these resources is not avoidable. One of the key findings shows that the conflict that HOs experience is about intangible features such as noise created by tourists, and jealousy over the economic benefit. In relation to noise, this finding was supported by

a study from Kayat (2002) who found that noise produced by the tourists or guests while staying at the homestay or walking around the village can disturb the villagers. Generally, in rural communities, their life is quiet, but HT makes their life not quiet. Jealousy is the most challenging for the homestay operator as it undermines the social network with the communities which may result in unhealthy society. Negative social environment is not for not only the HOs but also for the tourists, and the whole tourism development in the communities.

After considering these positive impacts and its negative implications which emerged from this study, the initial conceptual framework was revised to reflect the findings. The refined framework is described in the next section.

7.5 Aim 3: Revising Sustainable Livelihood Framework

This research used the SLF suggested by Scoones (1998) as the conceptual basis. Under the conceptual lens of the SLF, the core components of the framework consist of contexts, livelihood resources (capitals), institutions, livelihood strategies, and sustainable livelihood outcomes. While indicators for the livelihood capitals were applicable, the indicators for the measure of the sustainable livelihood outcomes were broadly scopes. As this research focuses on HT, the initial conceptual framework has been revised to introduce the new concepts which emerged from the research (Figure 17).

The initial framework focuses on sustainable livelihood outcomes in general, and the indicators of the sustainable livelihood outcomes described under two main entities of livelihood outcomes and sustainability as shown in Scoones' (1998) framework were used to achieve sustainability of livelihood. The purpose of this study was to extend the framework components and revise these general indicators to the tourism context with a focus on homestay operation. Thus, the livelihood strategies in this study were homestay operations represented by 18 HOs in Laos. As the HOs in this research were all farmers who also based their livelihoods on agricultural related activities, the livelihood capitals and traditional livelihood activities were analysed to find out how these activities and capitals contribute to homestay outcomes as discussed in Section 7.4. The revised framework is presented in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Revised framework of sustainable livelihood to homestay tourism

The answer to the research question and addresses to the research aims are summarised in the revised framework. Laos acts the context in this revised framework. The structure of HT involved several main actors as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1 who established the HT in the first phase including government organisations such as LNTA collaborated with NGOs to help the communities to access financial and advisory supports. Both livelihood capitals and other livelihood activities act as factors that constrain and contribute to the homestay operations, and also to the outcomes of the livelihoods. Although a number of positive impacts such as cash-based income, gender empowerment, cultural revitalisation, and better waste management are identified as sustainable livelihood outcomes, these sustainable livelihood outcomes come with costs which are the livelihood costs shown in the framework. These

livelihood costs have negative implications for achieving a greater sustainable livelihood. Therefore, these livelihood costs need to be mitigated otherwise it will block the achievement of sustainable livelihood.

In order to clearly show to what extent of the revised framework, the following table is used to illustrate the comparison between the initial framework's components and indicators and extended the revised components and also indicators to the HT context.

Table 19: Components of the initial conceptual framework and the revised framework

Component of the framework	Initial indicators	Revised framework
Contexts, conditions and trends	Refers to policy, history, politics, macroeconomic conditions, terms of trade, climate, agro-ecology, demography, social differentiation	Refers to the context of the research where the PKK NP CBT is. <i>- Laos</i>
Institutional processes & organisational structures:	Refers to institutions and organisations in general	Refers to: <i>- Government</i> <i>- NGOs</i>
Livelihood capitals	Refers to five capitals: natural, financial, human, physical, and social	Refers to five capitals as the initial framework, but each capital is accessed as strong, medium, and weak. Natural (strong) Human (strong) Financial (weak) Physical (weak) Social (strong) <i>Cultural capital(strong)</i> is added to the revised framework

Livelihood strategies	Refers to agricultural intensification, livelihood diversification, and migration	Refers to agricultural intensification: - <i>Commercial trees</i> - <i>Vegetable crops</i> - <i>Wet rice cultivation</i> Livelihood diversification: - <i>Homestay tourism</i>
Additions in the revised framework		
<i>Livelihood costs</i>	Refers to negative implications of sustainable livelihood that are faced by the HOs. These implications include: - <i>Opportunity costs</i> - <i>Culture shock</i> - <i>Conflict with villagers</i>	
Sustainable livelihood outcomes	Livelihood refers to:	Livelihood refers to:
	Increased numbers of working days, at least 200 days per years.	
	Poverty reduced by an increase in income and consumption level above the poverty line.	Specific type of income which is a cash-based income enhanced
	Well-being and capacities improved in a broader context	Specific to the women empowerment
	Livelihood adaptation, vulnerability, and resilience enhanced	
	Natural resource base sustainability ensured	Specific to a waste management
	<i>Addition in the sustainable livelihood indicators</i>	<i>Culture revitalised</i>
		<i>Mitigating livelihood costs</i>

The revised framework is developed specifically for HT in the context of Laos. While many of the initial components of the framework are adopted, “*livelihood cost*” has been added to the revised framework, followed by its indicators “*opportunity cost, culture shock, and conflict with villagers*”. As it was acknowledged in this study that

HT is an additional livelihood activity to the other livelihood activities of the operators, other livelihood activities such as commercial trees, vegetable garden, wet rice cultivation, and animal raising are discussed to identify the alignment and conflict of these activities to the homestay operation. Also, five original livelihood capitals were adopted to analyse HT capital in this research, but this revised framework goes beyond the initial framework by assessing the '*strong, medium, and weak*' access by the HOs and '*cultural capital*' as an emerged capital is added to the livelihood capital.

While other components of the revised framework were not described in detail, the following sections discuss additional components and indicators discovered by the research. The discussion started from an emerged indicator of livelihood capital: '*cultural capital*', and its assessment of strong, medium, and weak accesses.

7.5.1 Livelihood capital

While the initial framework included natural, human, financial, physical, and social capital and these capitals are used to analyse the capitals that operators can access for HT, a '*cultural capital*' is an extension to the revised framework. The repeated findings strongly indicate that it plays an important role in HT and the operators have fully accessed it thoroughly (Jamal et al., 2011). In the context of this study, the tangible culture including handicraft making, traditional dance, and the Baci ceremony, as discussed in Section 7.4.3, are the cultural activities that operators access and employ for tourist activities. The intangible culture including a living lifestyle such as eating, dressing, and believing are composed of the homestay attractions (Craik, 2002). It is clearly seen that a cultural capital strong links to the HT, so it is included in the revised framework. Importantly, while the initial framework does not make a change in the operator's access to capitals resulting from the CBT initiative, this revised framework takes this access into account and adds to the framework. This is because it can clearly show to what extent the operators can access these capitals.

7.5.2 Livelihood costs

In order to achieve a greater sustainable livelihood in the HT context, the livelihood costs need to be taken into consideration and added to the revised framework in order to understand the negative implications of HT deeper.

- The opportunity costs

The opportunity costs faced by the operators directly influenced the livelihood outcomes given that they were faced by individual operators during the course of homestay services. The operators have faced these challenges again and again to achieve the betterment of their livelihoods. This is because, in the rural context, the homestay operation is not enough to make livelihood better on its own, other livelihoods have to be combined. It was unavoidable for the operators unless other traditional livelihood activities are sacrificed.

- Culture shock

As HT represents a social interaction type of tourism, when people who have different cultures stay at the same house, a clash in culture tends to emerge (Oberg, 2006). Indeed, the findings indicated, in the context of HT in Laos, some operators faced culture shock. This results from a lack of understanding of each party's norms and expectations. It may not be mitigated unless each party understands the other's expectation.

- Conflict with villagers

Conflict emerges when communal resources are shared for individual benefit. In the case of HT, operators share the atmosphere and communal space with other villagers who are non-HOs (Kayat, 2002). Therefore, it is unavoidable to have conflict with villagers over the use of the atmosphere. The findings show that the most obvious conflict caused by tourist activities is loud noise.

7.5.3 Sustainable livelihood outcomes

The livelihood was the final outcomes from the homestay operation that the HOs gain. While a few were similar to the indicators suggested by the initial framework, cultural revitalisation has extended the livelihood indicator.

- Income and consumption

In the initial framework, income and consumption were used to measure the living standard of the people. The measurement was based on the poverty line. The literature claimed that, indeed, if the income and consumption level were above the poverty line, this means that their livelihood condition was guaranteed. However, the literature

failed to address what kind of income i.e. whether it was credit or debit or cash in hand. Thus, the revised framework is specific to income in the form of cash-based income. As discussed in Section 7.4.3, cash income was needed by the rural people as it was spent for daily consumption, and this is in line with the original framework.

- Well-being and capacities enhanced

Although various factors suggested by the initial framework to measure the level of well-being and capacities enhanced, the indicators did not specifically describe a specific context. For example, it was questioned in relation to power. It did not clearly address what kind of power and power to whom. The revised framework specifies the power of women in the community. As repeatedly highlighted in the findings, the status of women in the society and family spheres was improved through receiving trust from the community to operate homestay and to have power in decision-making towards the livelihood activities of the family.

- Cultural revitalised

This addition of a livelihood outcome showed that in HT, the cultural aspect was important to preserve given that the culture was the crucial part of the HT livelihood (Jamal et al., 2011). As the findings suggested, the culture revitalisation sustained when it was imparted to the next generations. According to Craik (2002), culture included tangible and intangible aspects, but all of them included authentic culture and used it for HT.

- Environmental enhanced

The findings were in agreement with the initial framework that to achieve sustainable livelihood the natural resource needed to be used effectively. Although the initial concept mostly referred to the use of the natural resource to produce intangible products, the benefit of sustainable natural resource offered the use as both tangible products and services. Indeed, waste management was a part of preserving the beauty of the natural resource.

- Mitigate the livelihood costs

The repeated findings justified the extended indicators for sustainability in the context of HT, and it justified that whether these livelihoods were greatly sustainable or not was mostly dependent on the ability to mitigate the livelihood costs.

While the initial framework asserted that the ability to adapt to and cope with stress and shock were the indicators of sustainability, the findings clearly illustrated that the ability to mitigate the opportunity costs, culture shock, and conflict with villagers extended the framework. In the case of HT, the operators were not in the stress and shock conditions or trends but dealing with the homestay services and at the same time dealing with the traditional livelihood activities which were conflicting with the homestay services. In addition, tourists doing homestay do not only serve domestic tourists but also international tourists who hold an individual culture, so the HOs' have experienced cultural differences in behaviour towards them. Together with these, conflict with other villagers over natural capital, and tourist behaviour is also a concern for the operators.

However, if these livelihood costs are handled appropriately, the livelihood outcomes will be sustainable. In order to handle the competition for time, allocating suitable numbers of labourers to work at the farm and host guests. Similarly, competition for domestic livestock can be mitigated through balancing buying food from the market or other villagers and using some proportion of their own food ingredients when market demand for domestic livestock is high. In relation to mitigating culture shock, the HOs should clearly assimilate information about local norms to the tourists at the first chance. It is also more beneficial to put up rule and cultural norms on the wall of the house or tourist office to inform tourists to be aware of the local expectations and norms. In terms of mitigating conflict, a third party such as a community committee could help by organising a formal meeting for both HOs and other villagers. In the meeting encourage both parties to share their thoughts and expectations towards each party. This could increase understanding for both HOs and the villagers.

7.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the findings presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 with reference to the literature in order to address the research aims and answer the main research question “*How does homestay tourism impact on the livelihood of rural*

homestay operators?". This was answered along with the discussion of how the role of stakeholders, characteristics, and livelihood activities and capitals contribute to HT. In conclusion, based on the key findings of this research, the initial framework, particularly the indicators of sustainable livelihood outcomes, were revised to be more appropriate for rural HT context in Laos. The revised framework included the livelihood costs with three indicators namely opportunity costs, culture shock, and conflict with villagers. The next chapter presents the concluding remarks of this research including the implications, contributions, and recommendations for future research in this context.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how HT impacts on livelihoods of HOs in the context of Laos. Single case study research under the post-positivist paradigm was conducted in order to address the research question. In answering the overarching research question this study follows the sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) as a framework that guided the research by exploring the structure, the characteristics of HT, and the livelihood capitals that may constrain or support HT, which eventually contributes to sustainable livelihood outcomes.

This chapter is presented based on the presentation of key findings as discussed in previous chapters through comparison with a literature review of community-based tourism (CBT), homestay, and SLF. The sections that follow include the structure and characteristics of HT and the impacts of HT on the livelihoods of HOs. Next, the contributions to the knowledge of sustainable livelihoods, the practical implications for policymakers, and HT development organisations are identified. Finally, directions for future research are outlined.

8.2 Structure and Characteristics of Homestay Tourism

The whole structure of HT management is presented in Chapter 5, Section 5.2. As identified in that section, the structure of HT involved a few main actors ranging from the Lao Government, international government and NGOs, and communities. Each actor has their own role in the initiative. While the LNTA, BDICT, TDICT as Lao Government agencies put the CBT and homestay initiative in place, the financial support is granted by international governments and NGOs to develop community facilities and to build human capital through the provision of training. The participation of local residents is to provide labourers and local expertise to the initiative.

While these government agencies and NGOs mostly gave support in the initial phase of the initiative, parts of the private sector such as tour operators were also involved in the later stage of homestay management. After the homestay was handed on to the communities, only the tourism committee and tour operators worked as trade partners and their role was to include homestays in the tour program and promote them to international markets. Tour operators have been involved in setting the pricing of the

tours to tourists. The management is under the community committee, and there are several groups make up the tourism committees namely tour guides, HOs, and complementary groups (handicraft, Baci and cooking, and traditional dances). The responsibilities and income are shared among groups members depending on the tasks and involvement.

The findings confirmed that HT in the context of the PKK NP CBT was managed by a tourism group in the community and the purpose of homestay development is to facilitate tourists and at the same time to bring economic benefit to the communities. In addition, this research also confirmed that the homestay operations were operated on a small scale of enterprise given that the numbers of HOs were limited as there were not more than ten operators in each community. Alongside this, in each homestay, only a few family members were not fully employed because there is no money for all of them involved. In terms of bedrooms, the findings also revealed that two bedrooms were offered to the tourists.

Overall, the exploration of the structure of HT reveals that the establishment of HT relies heavily on financial support from international aids and without supporting international stakeholders, the HT initiative would not be developed, but the financial support is granted only in the primary phase of the development. After the support ended, the communities manage HT by themselves. However, the findings confirmed that without tour operators the homestay operation cannot be sustainable due to the fact that the tour operators play a key role as a distribution channel for CBT, and without these tour operators, communities cannot reach international markets (Schott & Nhem, 2018). In addition, the main characteristic of homestay operation is that it involves a few family members who are not paid, but benefits earned from the homestay operation are shared in the form of food and shelter. Sharing food and shelter is not found in the HT literature but from the anthropological perspective. Price (1975) asserted that food and shelter sharing among family members is common in many societies, and mostly when they are in conditions of scarcity of food supplies.

8.3 The Impacts of Homestay Tourism

The research examined the impacts of HT on the livelihoods of the HOs by adopting a sustainable livelihood lens. In line with the SLF, the research also analysed the

livelihood capitals and other livelihood activities to see how these aspects contribute to homestay operation which leads finally to the livelihood outcomes.

- The implications of livelihood capitals on homestay tourism

The findings clearly indicated that while Scoones' (1998) framework acknowledges the natural, human, financial, physical, and social capitals as the livelihood capitals playing an important role to the sustainable livelihood outcomes, and I would acknowledge that culture was part of Scoones' (1998) model. However, culture is such a strong capital in my research that needs to be identified separately. In my research, the findings indicated that a "cultural capital" played a fundamental role in HT in Laos. The findings of this study are in alignment with tourism literature which agrees that traditional cultural activities play a crucial part in HT programme (Boonratana, 2010; Lama, 2013; Yasami et al., 2017). Specific to the research context, traditional skills in handicraft making, traditional dances "*Mure folk dance*" and "*Khummu folk dance*", have been used by the operators as icon activities of HT and without these traditional activities, the establishment of HT would not be completed. This finding confirmed that cultural capital is a strong part of HT in the case of Laos. Although Scoones' (1998) framework may not highlight a cultural capital as a separate capital given that Scoones' (1998) framework is in of the field of agricultural development, for rural HT, cultural capital is considerable. Yes, some tourism scholars have done research on CBT by adopting Scoones' (1998) framework to analyse tourism capitals (Mbaiwa, 2011b; Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010), within CBT, homestay is under the CBT umbrella. Therefore, the finding of "*cultural capital*" is important for adding to this literature.

Another difference between Scoones' (1998) framework and my study is comparing these capitals. Comparing to what extent the contribution of each capital into account helps the parties such as the Lao Government to deeply understand the rural circumstances. The findings strongly confirmed while natural, human, and social are strong capitals, the financial and physical capitals are weak in contributing to HT. Natural capital strongly contributes to HT due to the fact that there are plenty of natural resources in the PKK NP such as forest, waterfalls, rivers, flora and fauna that the homestay operator has accessed. According to Kunjuraman and Hussin (2017), having a strong natural capital offers the homestay operation to have more choices in diversifying the homestay products, particularly, the nature-based tour programs. In

addition, human capital also strongly contributes to homestay operations. Through the provision of training, supported by the Lao Government and NGOs, the hospitality and English skills of the operators were significantly built up. The development of human capacity plays a crucial role in homestay operations given that the majority of visitors are international tourists as discussed in Chapter 3. Having hospitality and English skills enables them to host and communicate with these international tourists effectively (Osman & Bakar, 2014). Having strong human capital which is gained from being trained by the government and NGOs, opens opportunities for the operators to gain strong social capital. The findings confirmed that the operators do not only have strong social capital with the communities, but also with the government, international donors, and tour operators. It is asserted by Osman and Bakar (2014) that the social network with these organisations offers the operators the ability to access other capitals such as human capitals by accessing further training about hospitality and English skill, and in addition to gain further financial support from these mentioned organisations.

However, financial and physical capitals are weak in contributing to the homestay operations given that there is a limitation in what is available for them. The findings indicated that although the financial capital is supported by international governments and NGOs as discussed in Chapter 5, and this capital strongly helps the communities in operating homestays, it is short-term support. Due to having limitations in the ability to access further financial capital, it also lowers the physical capital, particularly a road which is the most important part of physical capital, but it does not strongly contribute to HT in the communities. If financial and physical capitals are weak continually, they may undermine natural and human capitals (DfID, 1999).

- Positive implications of livelihood outcomes

A number of positive impacts of HT on livelihood are in alignment with Scoones' (1998) framework. The findings discovered that cash-based income, gender empowerment enhancement, cultural revitalisation, and environmental enhancement are the main positive impacts of homestay operations. These findings also confirmed through HT literature that all these positive impacts are fundamental contributions of HT to the homestay livelihoods (Anand, Chandan, Singh, & Development, 2012; Hussin & Kunjuran, 2014; Razzaq et al., 2011; Shukor et al., 2014). However, while

these mentioned positive outcomes match to the original framework to a certain level, this study discovered that cash-based income, gender empowerment enhancement, cultural revitalisation, and environmental enhancement outcomes are much more specific to HT and the difference of these are discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.5.

The findings confirmed that a cash-based income was very important for the operators as it helped support the family's daily expenditure. For example, it can be expended for food and household supplies, and children's education. This means that it enhances human capital by gaining good health as well as accessing education and physical capital in terms of adding necessary equipment for homestay production, and in turn, if human capital is enhanced, they offer more benefit to the homestay operation in the future. However, the SLF looks for level of income and consumption by individual or households for sustainable livelihood rather than specifically at what types of income as discovered by this research that is important for the HOs' livelihoods.

The findings also strongly confirmed that women receive more respect from society and family members than before. Particularly, traditionally women in the rural community in Laos seem not to have power in decision-making and income making in the family compared to men. Homestay offers this opportunity to women and it was regarded as a positive impact on their livelihoods (Anand, Chandan, Singh, et al., 2012). The involvement of women reflects the SLF in terms of the well-being of the individual.

In addition, better waste management is also strongly confirmed as a positive sustainable livelihood outcome of HT, and this discovery is strongly in line with the SLF. As is asserted by Scoones (1998) it is sustainable when the natural resources are not destroyed by the livelihood activities. It was revealed that since HT was introduced villagers were encouraged to pay attention to managing the waste by the use of rubbish bins inside and outside the house. This can enhance the tourist's satisfaction of the environment offered by the community. Most importantly, it also enhances natural capital.

However, while cash-based income, gender empowerment enhancement, and environmental enhancement are all in line with Scoones' (1998) framework, the cultural benefit was discovered by this study. The cultural revitalisation as a result of HT was specifically found in HT literature (Shukor et al., 2014; Yasami et al., 2017).

The literature strongly asserts that in this HT context, cultural revitalisation was found as the fundamental positive outcome of HT on the sustainable livelihood of the HOs. In my research, the findings confirmed that the traditional skills and knowledge about making handicraft products were imported to the generations through formal training and informal instructions by the parents to the young people. The cultural revitalisation did not only offer sustainability of livelihood but a stronger sense of identity and pride, which offers sustainable tourism development in the community.

Overall, these findings strongly indicated the positive impacts of rural HT on the sustainable livelihood outcomes of the operators. However, these positive outcomes come with costs which is discussed in the following section.

- Negative implications of sustainable livelihood

Despite positive impacts, the negative implications of sustainable livelihoods were found in the study. The negative implications faced by the HOs were the opportunity costs, culture shock, and conflict with villagers. The initial framework did not fully emphasise the significance of the livelihood costs affecting the achievement of sustainable livelihood in specific contexts. Therefore, the livelihood costs as the extended component were added to the revised framework. A livelihood cost is identified as an important component of the sustainable livelihood framework in the context of HT given that the implications of livelihood costs do not apply only for the individual operators but also affect the whole HT development.

For individual operators, the experience of the opportunity costs undermines the operators to get a better choice of activities due to the fact that the operators cannot refuse to host guests in the rice cultivation. This can result in weakening productivities as discussed in Chapter 7. Similarly, using small livestock for homestay services productions also can lead to lower financial capital due to the fact that the savings of the family is mostly from agricultural activities including animals while income from homestay is mostly only enough for daily expenditure as discussed in Chapter 6. The strong implications of having limited financial capital results in poor physical capital. As the findings showed in Chapter 6, the operators cannot afford to renovate their household facilities themselves.

In addition, culture shock is a negative implication of sustainable livelihood as this links to the well-being of the operators. The well-being, in this case, means the happiness and enjoyment of the operators in hosting guests. Based on Scoones' (1998) framework, well-being is one of the sustainable livelihood outcomes, but if the operators experience culture shocks frequently, the operators may not get a greater sustainable livelihood. Furthermore, culture shock negatively affects social capital with international tourists given that the operators may have negative perceptions towards international guests and do not want to extend the social network to them (Tavakoli et al., 2017). Having a poor social network with guests can negatively impact financial capital given that tourists can promote the homestay to their friends when they are in their original countries. Thus, tourists act as a marketing channel by word-of-mouth advertising which is expressed in a study by (Schott & Nhem, 2018).

Conflict with villagers also causes challenges to the HOs given that community tourism is not successful without good cooperation from all the villagers residing in the same community. Conflict with the villagers can be a negative implication of sustainable livelihood in terms of waste management because the villagers may not be happy to give cooperation in terms of keeping a better environment, and this can lower the quality of air and the beauty of the communities. Again, it can undermine the natural capital that plays an important role in HT.

These findings also clearly show while Scoones' (1998) framework does not include negative implications of sustainable livelihood in the discussion, the negative implications of sustainable livelihood are taken into the discussion on the revised framework of sustainable livelihood for rural HT context to add more understanding of the trade-off of the outcomes. The findings suggested that if these negative implications are not mitigated, the sustainable livelihood outcomes will not improve. Therefore, the recommendations for mitigation and management of these negative implications are provided and discussed in the following section.

8.4 Recommendations

The recommendations to mitigate and manage the negative implications of sustainable livelihood outcomes are divided into three groups: recommendations for Lao government, international governments and NGOs, and communities based on the main actors involved in the HT development discussed in Chapter 5.

- Lao Government

In order to reduce the opportunity costs, the Lao Government should give further training for homestays, which is not only for the operators but also for their family members. As the findings showed in Chapter 6, the family members play an important role in homestay operations given that these people have strong skills in cleaning and cooking. However, none of the family members have enough skill in hosting and communicating with guests in English. This issue causes difficulty for the operators in terms of competition for time when only one person is requested at the same time. If more than one person in the family can do as much as the operators do, the competition for time would be mitigated. Therefore, training for family members to have enough skills, particularly in English, could help.

Similarly, to mitigate the loss of economic value from the use of domestic livestock, training could also help. The Lao Government should train the operators to know the market trends and know how to calculate the price of the food bought from the market with the price of selling domestic livestock to the market.

The Lao Government also has a role in mitigating the culture shock. Actually, some 'dos and don'ts' in Laos is created for tourists visiting Laos, as this study refers to in Chapter 5, but that is more general advice which does not cover specific issued for particular contexts. Therefore, the government should produce posters with specific codes of conduct for tourists visiting the PKK NP CBT and post them in the homestays, tourist offices, and a community lodge. In addition, the HOs should be given training to understand foreign culture and their expectations towards homestay operation. This could encourage operators to have more of an open mind to accept other cultures.

- International governments and NGOs

As the findings indicated that the greatest challenge of HT in gaining a better livelihood was the financial limitation in improving the infrastructure. To facilitate the smooth operation of HT, improving infrastructure particularly road access to the communities and to the tourist sites is necessary. Hence, the international agencies should have some budget to improve infrastructure because better infrastructure conditions would boost the sustainable livelihood outcomes of the HOs as well as the villagers. This mechanism could also reduce conflict between HOs and villagers. As

the findings showed in Chapter 6, the conflict related to jealousy and people not being happy with the benefit that HOs gain from tourism while a road shared is being used for tourist's transportation. Therefore, if the road was improved, it may satisfy the villagers, and also spread the benefits across the communities.

- Communities

In order to manage conflict, the communities should treat villagers as the same as they do the HOs in terms of accessing the village fund. Although the fund is mainly built from tourism income, giving support to other villagers when they are experiencing an emergency can make them feel like they belong to the tourism group. This can then encourage them to have a positive perception of the HOs because what the operators do can offer them benefit.

To mitigate culture shock, the head of the tourist guides should take an advance opportunity to disseminate codes of conducts to tourists. Together with this, when tourists check in to the homestay, the operators should take a detour around the house and also explain how to use the household facilities. This mechanism is recommended based on the findings discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.4.2.3 Also, this will help to share the expectations of tourists while doing homestay.

On the government level, it is recommended that government should provide training for homestay family members about hospitality and English skills, and marketing or economic trends to help mitigate opportunity costs given that when human capacity is built, it enables them to work substitute each other when one is busy with farming activities. However, communities can do more than the government given that the operators can impart skills and knowledge gained from training and through the experience to their family members by informal instruction and taking evening time while having dinner to teach them step by step. All in all, if these recommendations are implemented, it could contribute to a greater sustainable livelihood outcome.

8.5 Contributions of this Research

This research has deepened the understanding of the impacts of HT on the sustainable livelihood of the HOs in the context of a developing country. By recognising that sustainable livelihood of the rural community who operate homestays plays a

significant role in sustainable tourism development. This study contributes to both literature and practice as presented in the following sections.

- Contribution to literature

This research contributes to Scoones and other researchers. This study demonstrated that although the Scoones' (1998) framework was viewed as an effective tool to analyse the sustainable livelihood of the poor in the developing country context, the components in the framework viewed of the sustainable livelihood had limitations when it came to use it to analyse the livelihood outcomes in the HT context. The initial framework did not fully emphasise the significance of "*cultural capital*", and the "*livelihood costs*" affecting the sustainable livelihood in specific contexts. Therefore, "*cultural capital*" and the "*livelihood costs*" were added to the revised framework. In relation to a "*cultural capital*", this study added to the knowledge on the link between "*cultural capital*" and the homestay operation and sustainable livelihood outcomes. This study also reinforces the benefit of cultural capital for HT identified by (Jamal et al., 2011; Kayat, 2009; Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015) in a study of cultural activities and HT. In terms of the "*livelihood costs*" contributes to the literature by deepening the understanding of the negative implications of sustainable livelihood, and also this study reinforces the negative impacts of homestay tourism identified by studies of (Ashley, 2000; Agyeiwaah et al., 2014; Nor & Kayat, 2010).

- Contributions to practice

The findings of this research will be helpful for government and the tourism related organisations in Laos given that the tourism developer and policy-makers can utilise the research findings to guide their decision-making in developing HT in the future. As the findings indicated that the greatest challenge to HT gaining a better livelihood was the financial limitation in improving the infrastructure. To facilitate the smooth operation of the HT, improving infrastructure particularly road access to the communities and to the tourist sites is necessary. Hence, the national infrastructure plan is important and required to ensure Laos has better infrastructure condition to support the HT in order to boost the sustainable livelihood outcomes of the HOs as well as the villagers as a whole.

8.6 Direction for Future Research

With the revised framework of the SLF for HT, this research opens several possibilities for future work in both the domains of the SLF and HT.

For tourism literature, the revised framework has the potential for use in other similar contexts of tourism such as rural ecolodges and village or country houses, particularly in developing countries. The framework forms a broad starting point for future researchers by providing a number of themes and indicators for a sustainable livelihood that can be critiqued and developed in order to acquire a deep understanding of the contribution of the SLF to HT in other contexts.

For Scoones (1998), while it contributed to filling an existing gap of the SLF in relation to HT, due to the unique features of the HT, which is social and cultural exchange orientated and located in the rural community, the findings of this study may not be applicable to other types of modern and large-scale accommodations such as hotels or resorts. Therefore, future research on sustainable livelihoods of the operators in larger scale accommodation would be able to expand the findings of this study.

Another area emphasised in this study is the significance of the emerged indicators for livelihood sustainability, especially the deeper understanding of the relationship between the ability to mitigate the opportunity costs, culture shock, and conflict with villagers to achieve a greater sustainable livelihood. The implications of this study show that the role of the government in minimising the livelihood costs in order to gain a betterment of the sustainable livelihood would be a very important area for future research. The implications of cultural capital addition to the other capitals and comparative analysis between communities would also be significant areas for future research.

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Appendix A: Information sheet for interviews

Information sheet for the interview - Community leaders/ tourism committees

Research title: An Examination of Rural Homestay Operations through the Lens of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework: A Case Study of Phou Khao Khouay National Park Community-Based Tourism (PKK NP CBT), Lao PDR

Researcher: Khamsavay PASANCHAY
School of Management
Victoria University of Wellington

I am a Master student in Tourism Management at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) in New Zealand. This research project is being carried out to fulfill the requirements of my Master Degree. The main purpose of my research is to examine how tourism has impacted on the livelihood of homestay operators. The research project has three aims: (1) to explore the structure and characteristics of homestay operation of PKK NP Community-Based Tourism, (2) to critically examine the impacts of tourism on the sustainable livelihood of homestay operators, (3) to develop a framework for Sustainable Rural Livelihood through homestay tourism.

Additionally, my research will hopefully assist people in the field of tourism development to ensure the homestay businesses fitting the livelihoods circumstances of homestay operators operating under the Community-Based Tourism project.

I am going to interview the homestay operators, community leaders and tourism committees. As you are community leaders and tourism committees, I would like to invite you for the interview. The place and time for the interview is at your own convenience. Based on my research aims, I want to find out how the impacts of Community-Based Tourism on the ways of living of homestay operators, your opinion on the implementation of homestay businesses whether it fits to the current livelihood of the homestay operators.

If you agree to take part, I will invite you for face-to-face interview.

- The interview will take around 60 minutes
- Your answers will be noted and recorded digitally (with your agreement)
- During the interview, if you feel uncomfortable to answer or do not want to answer, you can skip to other questions
- If you would like to withdraw from the interview, the interview will be terminated
- If you would like to withdraw from taking part of the project, you can withdraw from the study up to four weeks after the date of your interview. If you withdraw, the information you provided will be destroyed or returned to you.

The research project has been reviewed and approved by Bolikhamxay Department of Information, Culture and Tourism and PKK NP Community-Based Tourism committees, and Victoria University Human Ethics Committee with approval number 0000026296. Responses will form the basis of my research project and will be reported confidentially. It will be not be possible for you to be identified personally. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality but there is a possibility that participants may be recognised by those known to them. All material collected will be confidential. I will transcribe and analyse the information. Only my supervisor and I will read the notes or transcripts of the interview. Your name will not be mentioned in any reports. The interview transcripts, summaries, and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed five years after the research ends (March 2023).

The thesis of this project will be submitted for marking to the School of Management and deposited in the University Library, published in academic or professional journals. I may also use the results of my research for conference presentations and academic reports.

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student:

Name: Khamsavay Pasanchay

Course: Master of Tourism Management

School: School of Management

Phone: + [REDACTED]

(Laos)

+ [REDACTED]

(New Zealand)

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Supervisor:

Name: Dr. Christian Schott

Role: Senior lecturer

School: School of Management

Phone: + [REDACTED]

(New Zealand)

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Information sheet for the interview – Homestay Operators

Research title: An Examination of Rural Homestay Operations through the Lens of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework: A Case Study of Phou Khao Khouay National Park Community-Based Tourism (PKK NP CBT), Lao PDR

Researcher: Khamsavay PASANCHAY
School of Management
Victoria University of Wellington

I am a Master student in Tourism Management at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) in New Zealand. This research project is being carried out to fulfill the requirements of my Master Degree. The main purpose of my research is to examine how tourism has impacted on the livelihood of homestay operators. The research project has three aims: (1) to explore the structure and characteristics of rural homestay operation of PKK NP Community-Based Tourism, (2) to critically examine the impacts of tourism on the sustainable livelihood of homestay operators, (3) to develop a framework for Sustainable Rural Livelihood through homestay tourism.

Additionally, my research will hopefully assist people in the field of tourism development to ensure the homestay businesses fitting the livelihoods circumstances of homestay operators operating under the Community-Based Tourism project. I am going to interview the homestay operators, community leaders and tourism committees. As you are homestay operators, I would like to invite you for the interview. The place and time for the interview is at your own convenience. Based on my research aims, I want to find out how you operate homestay businesses, and how the operation of homestay businesses impacts on your assets, livelihood activities, and livelihood outcomes.

If you agree to take part, I will invite you for face-to-face interview.

- The interview will take around 60 minutes
- Your answers will be noted and recorded digitally (with your agreement)
- During the interview, if you feel uncomfortable to answer or do not want to answer, you can skip to other questions
- If you would like to withdraw from the interview, the interview will be terminated
- If you would like to withdraw from taking part of the project, you can withdraw from the study up to four weeks after the date of your interview. If you withdraw, the information you provided will be destroyed or returned to you.

The research project has been reviewed and approved by Bolikhamxay Department of Information, Culture and Tourism, and PKK NP Community-Based Tourism committees, and Victoria University Human Ethics Committee. Responses will form the basis of my research project and will be reported confidentially. It will be not be possible for you to be identified personally. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality but there is a possibility that participants may be recognised by those known to them. All material collected will be confidential. I will transcribe and analyse the information. Only my supervisor and I will read the notes or transcripts of the interview. Your name will not be mentioned in any reports. The interview transcripts, summaries, and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed five years after the research ends (March 2023).

The thesis of this project will be submitted for marking to the School of Management and deposited in the University Library, published in academic or professional journals. I may also use the results of my research for conference presentations and academic reports.

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student:

Name: Khamsavay Pasanchay

Course: Master of Tourism Management

School: School of Management

Phone: + [REDACTED]

(Laos)

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(New Zealand)

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Supervisor:

Name: Dr. Christian Schott

Role: Senior lecturer

School: School of Management

Phone: + [REDACTED]

(New Zealand)

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form – Community leader and tourism committee interviews

Research title: An Examination of Rural Homestay Operations through the Lens of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework: A Case Study of Phou Khao Khouay National Park Community-Based Tourism (PKK NP CBT), Lao PDR

Researcher: Khamsavay PASANCHAY
School of Management
Victoria University of Wellington

I have read or had explained to me the 'Participant Consent Form'. The researcher has also explained to me about the process of the interview. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time without any reason.

By signing below, I acknowledge that:

- My identity will be kept confidential so my real name will not be mentioned in any reports;
- There is a possibility that my participation may be recognised by those known to them;
- I can withdraw from this study up to four weeks after the date of the interview, and any information that I have provided will be returned to me or destroyed;
- The information I have provided will be destroyed five years after the research ends;
- I understand my input and any information I provide will be interpreted, analyzed, and published in a thesis, as well as to be presented at conferences and in academic forms of publication such as journal articles;
- I can choose not to answer some of questions, and the interview will take around 60 minutes;
- The information will only be seen by a researcher and her supervisor, and information will be stored securely.

Please check where is applied:

- ☐ I permit the researcher to make audio recordings.
- ☐ I request a summary of my interview for review.
- ☐ I request to receive a summary of the report via my address below.

I, _____, agree and consent to the above statements.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Role in the village: _____ Mobile: _____

E-mail: _____

Participant Consent Form – Homestay Operator interviews

Research title: An Examination of Rural Homestay Operations through the Lens of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework: A Case Study of Phou Khao Khouay National Park Community-Based Tourism (PKK NP CBT), Lao PDR

Researcher: Khamsavay PASANCHAY
School of Management
Victoria University of Wellington

I have read or had explained to me the 'Participant Consent Form'. The researcher has also explained to me about the process of the interview. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time without any reason.

By signing below, I acknowledge that:

- My identity will be kept confidential so my real name will not be mentioned in any reports;
- There is a possibility that my participation may be recognised by those known to them;
- I can withdraw from this study up to four weeks after the date of the interview, and any information that I have provided will be returned to me or destroyed;
- The information I have provided will be destroyed five years after the research ends;
- I understand my input and any information I provide will be interpreted, analyzed, and published in a thesis, as well as to be presented at conferences and in academic forms of publication such as journal articles;
- I can choose not to answer some of questions, and the interview will take around 60 minutes;
- The information will only be seen by a researcher and her supervisor, and information will be shared securely

Please check where is applied:

- ☐ I permit the researcher to make audio recordings.
- ☐ I request a summary of my interview for review.
- ☐ I request to receive a summary of the report via my address below.

I, _____, agree and consent to the above statements.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mobile: _____ E-mail: _____

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedules for community leaders and tourism committees

Research title: An Examination of Rural Homestay Operations through the Lens of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework: A Case Study of Phou Khao Khouay National Park Community-Based Tourism (PKK NP CBT), Lao PDR

Researcher: Khamsavay PASANCHAY

School of Management

Victoria University of Wellington

1. When did the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) emerge?
2. Why does CBT emerge?
3. Do government, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and private companies support the CBT?
4. How does the CBT organize?
5. How many people visiting the village?
6. How many people choose to stay overnights in homestay?
7. Why do people do not stay in homestay?
8. What support do homestay operators get from CBT?
9. What facilities do families have?
10. Do families operated homestay participate in communal activities?
11. How is income from the homestay operators distributed in the village?
12. How does a homestay operation fit into the CBT?

Interview Schedules for homestay operators

Research title: An Examination of Rural Homestay Operations through the Lens of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework: A Case Study of Phou Khao Khouay National Park Community-Based Tourism (PKK NP CBT), Lao PDR

Researcher: Khamsavay PASANCHAY

School of Management

Victoria University of Wellington

1. Where did you grow up?
2. What did you do before operating homestay?
3. How many people in your families? What does each person do?
4. How many houses, domestic animals, and plots of land do you own?
5. What qualification do you have?
6. How long have you been operating homestay?
7. How would you describe what you do in running your homestay?
8. How is homestay operation structured and managed?
9. How do government, tour companies, and tourism committee help you to operate homestay?
10. How many bedrooms do you have?
11. How many guests can you accommodate?
12. How often do you host or receive tourists?
13. Roughly, how much income do you make for each night?
14. How is the income from your homestay distributed in the family?
15. What are the problems you face in operating homestay?
16. What are the good and bad things about operating homestay operation?
17. If you compare among other livelihood activities and operating homestay, which one do you prefer? Why?
18. Does an operating homestay change your daily routine?
19. Are you happy with what you are doing now?
20. What do you do in your free time?
21. How do you divide tasks to each family member?
22. Where do you get food sources from?
23. How does your family livelihood change since operating homestay?