

Does Experience Overrule Innovation? [Towards A Model For Female Owned Successful Homestays In West Bengal]

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Abstract

Tourism has been identified as an essential contributing aspect to the economic growth of a developing nation (Mahajan, 2013). The tourism clusters in West Bengal invite foreign exchange earnings, generate employment and income in the accommodation and transport sector and souvenir industry, and accelerate infrastructure development (Richins&Scarinci, 2009). It may be significant to point out that a particular tourism branch gaining popularity here is homestay tourism. In homestays, guests are either accommodated in the family homes or separate quarters near the homes of the owners running them. (Sood, Lynch et al., 2017). Homestay tourism, an emerging trend that involves staying in smaller family-owned houses rather than in big, marketed hotels and resorts, is quite popular in the Himalayan regions of West Bengal (Bhattacharya, 1986; Pasanchay and Schott, 2021). In this paper, the districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong have been identified as the focal region. In these districts, homestays are predominant due to their abundance of natural beauty and cultural abundance, attracting tourists (Mondal and Samaddar, 2020). It is evident from a simple internet search which shows 79 thousand results for homestays in Darjeeling and Kalimpong (Gauli, Regmi et al. 2022). In a continually changing business environment, it is observed that homestay operators have to be more enthusiastic about taking risks to have a competitive advantage over their rivals by differentiating and creating a sustainable position in the market (Rothaermel, 2008; Shirokova et al., 2016). This study explores the Entrepreneurship Orientations of women running homestays in this region. Primary data was collected through face-to-face interviews and inferences were drawn to identify the competitive edge of the entrepreneurs using a structured questionnaire and a 7-point Likert scale for measuring entrepreneurial orientations. It can be concluded that the risk-taking capacity of the homestay owner, their age, and the period of running the homestays all significantly influence the homestay business to flourish. Such a study may be useful for policymakers in encouraging women to promote homestay as tourism highlights that will bring about greater economic development to this otherwise deprived remote location.

Keywords: Homestay tourism, Entrepreneurial Orientations, Enthusiastic Women Entrepreneurs, Risk-taking capacity, Economic Development.

1. Introduction

The Government of India (2005) proclaimed "Atithi Devo Bhava", meaning that guest is God. It seems to be an accepted Indian philosophy. Indians consider it a colossal honour to have guests in their homes and go out of their way to please them. Tourism has been identified as an essential contributing aspect to the

economic growth of a developing nation (Mahajan, 2013). Over the last several decades, India has been recognised as a desirable destination for tourists seeking various cultural experiences (Kannegieser, 2015). Building a tourism cluster in developing economies like India is a positive force in improving outlying infrastructure and dispersing economic activity (Amposta, 2009). The tourism clusters invite foreign exchange earnings, generate employment and income in the accommodation and transport sector and souvenir industry, and accelerate infrastructure development (Richins & Scarinci, 2009). It is relevant to point out a particular tourism branch, i.e. homestay tourism, illustrating the tourism sector's growth (Hamshah, 2012). It provides a market to sell local entrepreneurs' local products (Budhathoki, 2013). Homestay tourism can make the most of nature's beauty and the community's idyllic customs and cultures as appealing strategies to attract tourists to come to their village, which will heighten the tourism activities in the area. (Frauziah and Hamshah, 2012). The increasing demand for homestays may be explained by recent global social and cultural changes resulting in greater interest and appreciation in cultural heritage, lifestyles and environmental concerns (Hampton, 2003; Anand et al., 2012; Acharya et al., 2013; Mensah et al., 2012).

The crucial components of a homestay programme are education, entertainment, enrichment, food, and hospitality. A homestay concept is similar to western bed and breakfast accommodations. Guests are either accommodated in the family homes or separate quarters nearby the local family homes (Sood, Lynch et al., 2017). Homestay tourism, an emerging trend that involves staying in smaller family-owned houses rather than in big, commercially marketed hotels and resorts, is quite popular in the Himalayan regions of West Bengal (Bhattacharya, 1986; Pasanchay and Schott, 2021). People may choose to stay in a local homestay because there is more interest in many aspects of local culture and a heightened interest in traditions, lifestyles, and concern for environmental issues worldwide (Kannegieser, 2015; Basu et al., 2019). The steady growth of homestay ownership has occurred due to its use in many contexts throughout the region. Homestay owners gain from their homestay business with additional benefits like preserving social, economic, and cultural advancements (Paul, 2014; Sunny, 2019). In a continually changing business environment, it is observed that homestay operators have to be more enthusiastic about taking risks to have a competitive advantage over their rivals by differentiating and creating a sustainable position in the market (Rothaermel, 2008; Shirokova et al., 2016).

The participation of females in the homestay industry is a growing phenomenon, yet research in this area is limited. From secondary data, we have witnessed that there has been an upsurge in the establishment and successful running of homestays independently by female entrepreneurs (P. Khan and D. Mitra, 2017). Previous studies exploring the impacts of tourism on rural communities conclude that the micro-businesses of local homestays provide a multitude of benefits for women, including increased financial stability, employment, improved inter-household relationships, and greater access to various social goods (Hampton, 2003; Anand et al., 2012; Acharya et al., 2013; Mensah et al., 2012).

The West Bengal Tourism Department had launched "Visit Dooars 2021", focusing on the Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Coochbehar districts, creating an influx of tourists in that area (Deb, 2021). Tourists prefer homestays to hotels for a variety of reasons. Accommodations are unique and have a particular personality. People who are over satisfied with sterile hotels consider homestays as a safe way to experience India's unique beauty and cultural diversity. Plantation bungalows, historic Havelis (mansions) of kings and zamindars, forts, and even Himalayan distant rural cottages are among the variants. There are fewer rooms in a homestay than at a hotel, and the travellers enjoy more individualised care. Occasionally, the rapport between the guests becomes so intense that relationships form and the

guests return to the same homestay every time. The hosts' extensive knowledge of the location makes it easy to see and do a snap. The proprietors of the homestays are frequently eager to show the guests around. Several exciting and innovative activities are arranged just for them, like herding cattle at the Himalayas' foothills, tours for tea tasting etc.

Homestays are an accommodation format in which the residential architecture, ecological environment and local culture are comprehensively transformed (Karki, Chhetri et al., 2019; Walter, Regmi, & Khanal, 2018). They are also an essential alternative to traditional accommodations (Yuan, Tsai, & Chang, 2018). It can meet guests' personalised accommodation needs (Jamal, Othman et al., 2011) and play critical roles in promoting economic growth, protecting traditional culture and art, and other areas (Karkiet al., 2019; Walter et al., 2018). Today, homestays have become a critical part of tourism in many countries (Yuan et al., 2018) and even an essential local tourist attraction (Tsujii, Takahashi, Fujita, & Tsuda, 2014), receiving significant attention and support from many countries. In a continually changing business environment, the female homestay operators have to be more innovative in seeking a competitive advantage among their rivals by differentiating and creating a sustainable position in the market (Rothaermel, 2008; Shirokova et al., 2016).

In tourism, the higher levels of entrepreneurship orientation [EO] of every firm indicate a greater tendency to be innovative and proactive in developing new tourism products and services. Succinctly, entrepreneurship orientation [EO] represents a firm's decision-making practices, managerial philosophies and strategic behaviours that are entrepreneurial (Anderson, Covin et al., 2009). Entrepreneurship orientation [EO] can be viewed as a strategic orientation that has the potential to equip a firm with the capability to overcome its resource inadequacies; and leverage existing competencies and resources in identifying and exploiting tourism opportunities (Cossio-Silva et al., 2015; Roxas & Chadee, 2013). By studying these female entrepreneurs operating homestays, we have witnessed the aspect of entrepreneurial orientations [EO], matter significantly in running the homestays successfully and moving them along the paths of success. These females entrepreneurs are analysed on the factors like autonomy, proactiveness, innovative skills, risk-taking ability and competitiveness of entrepreneurial orientation to gather ant patternistic similarity among successful homestay operators.

In this paper, the districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong, West Bengal, India have been identified as the focal region. Here homestays are pretty predominant due to their abundance of natural beauty and cultural diversity, attracting tourists all over the world (Mondal and Samaddar, 2020). It is evident from a simple internet search, which shows 79 thousand results for homestays in Darjeeling and Kalimpong (Gauli, Regmi et al. 2022).

2. Survey Of Literature

It is witnessed that community-based tourism and homestays have evolved as alternative tourism methods to combat mass tourism in developing countries to help rural communities globally through grassroots development, local participation, empowerment, and capacity building (Dangi & Jamal, 2016; Isaac, 2010). "Homestay tourism" trend involves staying in smaller family-owned houses rather than in big, marketed hotels and resorts and is quite popular in the Jalpaiguri Himalayan region of West Bengal (Bhattacharya, 1986; Pasanchay and Schott, 2021). People may choose to stay in a local homestay to witness local culture and a heightened interest in traditions, lifestyles, and concern for environmental issues worldwide (Kannegieser, 2015; Basu et al., 2019). The steady growth of homestay ownership has occurred due to its use in many contexts throughout the region. Men and women profit from it with

additional benefits like preserving social, economic, and cultural progress (Paul, 2014; Sunny, 2019). The idea of a homestay programme has successfully contributed to providing alternative accommodation options to tourists that seek a different type of holiday compared to those offered in tourism packages (Chan et al., 2004). At the same time, Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2015) denote homestay as the process of commercialising one's home to utilise residential space for practical purposes. Pusiran and Xiao (2013) opined a homestay as a home or a living place together with a family unit that occupies the household. It is a type of tourism intimately related to the local community's nature, culture, customs, and traditions (Wijesundara&Gnanapala, 2016). Homestay seems to be a tourism product that is useful to address socio-economic, political, ethnic and gender disparities (Acharya &Halpenny, 2013). Most homestays take place in rural areas which actively owned, managed and operated by the communities. This exposure lets the tourists reside and enjoy the local traditional activities and cultural performances (Acharya &Halpenny, 2013; Jamal, Othman, & Muhammad, 2011).

Wipada (2007) defined a homestay as one type of lodging tourists share with the homeowner to learn culture and lifestyle from the homeowner, who is ready to convey and share their customs and culture. The homeowner prepares lodging and food for the tourists with reasonable pay. Lynch, McIntosh and Tucker(2009) provided a broader definition of homestay by referring to them as commercial homes where visitors or guests pay to stay in private homes and communications and exchange with a host or family. This concept exhibits and promotes a unique characteristic. It fosters interaction between host families and tourists, which acts as a development tool, uplifting awareness of cultural exchanges and respect for the host's culture(Jamilah and Hamzah,2007) ensues. Homestay is a different accommodation mode than a hotel, motel, or even bread and breakfast accommodations typically located in suburban or urban areas. The homestay location is predominantly rural and remote, where the host community still practices conventional living and firmly adheres to their cultures and traditional practices.

Tosun(2006) established that the majority (exceeding 80%) of the local community in a regional destination would like to take the leading role as entrepreneurs and workers at all levels. They tend to encourage other locals to invest in and work in tourism. Baron (2005) ideated that one of the crucial questions in the entrepreneurship zone is to understand why some individuals engage in entrepreneurship activities while others do not. According to Osman, Ahmad, and Zainal(2008), various schools of thought ranging from trait-based research to studies emphasising cognitions make fundamental assumptions that entrepreneurship enables an individual to practice desired goals voluntarily. Wall and Long (1996) viewed homestays as locally owned and operated, making the local community participate in tourism activities as entrepreneurs. Hinch and Butler (1996) had shown that economic reasons are the primary considerations and the motivating factor for the local people to get involved in tourism development. Dales (2000) indicated that the homestay operations are additional income sources for locals as they undertake other forms of employment and maintain their social and religious responsibilities. Kayat (2009) observed that no other tourism product offers this character, which forms an essential strength.

According to Bhuiyan, Siwar et al. (2011), homestays provide job opportunities for local communities and improve the locals' quality of life (QoL). Further, homestays ensure social, cultural, and economic benefits for the local community and sustainable development (Chaiyatorn, Kasoses, and Thitphat, 2010). Lynch (2003) identified the creation of a supply chain facilitating homestay initiatives. These range from janitor services to handicrafts and small local food supplies that supplement a visitor's stay. Moscardo (2008) also explained that as the tourism industry offers job opportunities in remote rural and hilly areas, it decreases local people's transmission of jobs in bigger cities. As Lynch (2003) had put it – when tourists spend

money in the local economies, sometimes they raise the regional incomes by even more than the value of their spending, indicating a monetary increase in the communities, alluding to various social and cultural benefits. Bhuyian et al. (2012) described that the homestay products enable the homestay operators to uplift the locals' living standards with a primary focus on the economic and social advancement of themselves and the community. The homestay programs address many economic, environmental, and socio-cultural challenges that the local communities face (Colton, Whitney-Squire, 2010). Therefore potential benefits of homestays to the community include economic benefits, such as contributions to rural development and poverty eradication (Goh, 2015; Müller, Huck, & Markova, 2020; Salazar, 2012). It strengthens local cultural traditions (Kayat, 2010; Lenao, 2015), empowers rural communities (Salazar, 2012), ensures cross-cultural exchange (Regmi & Walter, 2016), and the preservation of the natural environment and wildlife (Newsome, Moore, & Dowling, 2012; Reimer & Walter, 2013).

The challenges of operating homestays cannot be ignored even though they offer many benefits (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen, & Duangsaeng, 2015). Tosun (2000) highlights that running a homestay is time-consuming as participants require considerable time and skills to organise and sustain the homestay, which may cause conflict with other livelihood activities (Ashley, 2000). Conflicts can arise both within and between different communities (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015), given that people share the same resources and use these resources to gain personal benefits or make a living. Despite the vital role afforded to homestays as a significant component of community-based tourism (Sen & Walter, 2020), and by implication, as an agent of sustainable rural development, there is still a substantial gap in knowledge about the holistic impacts of homestays on sustainable livelihoods of the operators as well as the (host) communities more broadly.

According to Kozak and Rimmington (2000), tourist satisfaction is essential to survive the competition. Tourist satisfaction has become a crucial tool for measuring cultural heritage (Peleggi, 1996). Tourist satisfaction evolves out of motivation, a combination of needs and desires that affect travel (O'Leary & Deegan, 2005). Although other issues affect tourist behaviour, motivation is considered the primary indicator of why tourists behave in specific ways (Fodness, 1994). Previous research has stated that tourist motivation springs from inner driving need to be away from daily, routine, mundane environments in search of new (Butcher, 2003; MacCanell, 1999 & Wang, 1999). Individuals escape everyday environments seeking recreational opportunities like visiting new places, having new experiences, and meeting new people (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1997). Lynch (2003) asserted that homestays are popular with tourists who want to mingle with local people, try local cuisine and take a deep interest in their social systems, lifestyle, and culture. However, Levitt (1996) concluded that severe considerations for a homestay programme are – accommodation, food, hospitality, education, entertainment, and enrichment. However, not much research has been done on homestay issues (Crompton and McKay, 1997; Dahlkes, 2000; Donnelley, 2007; Colton & Whitney-Squire, 2010).

Lovelock (1991) defines positioning as "establishing and maintaining a distinct place in the market for an organisation and its product." According to Pike (2012), effective positioning in the customer's minds guarantees advantages of the homestay destination. Decrop (2009) ideated that the perceived unique value of the homestay programmes enables the tourists to select the homestays. A perceived outstanding value is explained by factors that influence tourists choosing a homestay (Decorp, 2009). Therefore the operators and the marketers need to mark out these unique features that the homestay tourists seek to create the best picture of the homestay in their minds. Nowacki (2009) held that the perception of the quality of a provider is directly correlated to the satisfaction of visitors. The perceived quality of the destination and service

quality of the homestay makes the tourist decide to visit the destination and the homestay (Decorp, 2009). As Alexandris, Dimitriadis&Marakta (2002) noted, visitors enthusiastically pay more if they believe that the service quality of the destination is the same as they perceived.

Transportation is a fundamental precondition in tourism. According to Gosshing and Hall (2006), good accessibility is one of the considerations for tourists before they travel. Therefore accessibility is a focal point in selecting homestays. According to Decorp(2009), its accessibility and social value motivate tourists to choose homestays. Scheyvens (2003) stated that homestay tourists get attracted by the locals' ethnocentrism, lifestyle, serviceability, culture, and hospitality when it comes to social value.

According to Decorp (2009), the branding of the homestay programme is an essential criterion that tourists consider before travelling. Before selecting the homestay, tourists look into branding. Activities, resources, and support strengthen the skills and abilities of people and communities to enable them to take effective action and lead roles in the development of their communities and homestays (Donnelley, 2007). As put forward by Laws, Moscardo and Prideaux (2006), good presentation, excellent customer service and good communication skills are the fundamentals for achieving customer satisfaction. Homestay tourism mainly offers tourists the available natural and cultural attractions (Anand, Chandan, & Singh, 2012; Gu & Wong, 2006; MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003; Musa, Kayat&Thirumoorthi, 2010).

3. Research Gap

To legitimate new research, the researcher needs to analyse the existing literature in similar research bodies. Most of the prior studies were focused on tourists' perceived value and satisfaction with homestay tourism programmes. Many types of earlier research evaluated the impact of homestay programmes on the local community and the overall development of the area. Again the commercialisation of rural homes and historical houses were notable points to be analysed upon. As homestay tourism is emerging strongly as a branch of tourism, it is affecting the quality of life of the rural communities. Hence we witness, research made on the socio-economic well-being as a result of the homestay tourism programmes. Many studies explored the basis of guest satisfaction in homestay tourism. This study tries to explore the impact of Entrepreneurial Orientations of women in the success of homestay tourism. It aims to provide avenues to make homestay tourism a success. This study aims to check the entrepreneurial orientations kindling homestay tourism.

3.1 Research Objectives

1. Scan the available virtual platforms to evaluate their potential usage by female entrepreneurs in running their homestays.
2. Identify the factors that influence the success of homestay business
3. Assess the importance of the age of the homestays to gauge any link between older homestays and business.
4. Identify and analyse the nature and extent of involvement of female entrepreneurs in the running of homestays.
5. Identify the dormant strengths and possible threats to the running of homestays by the female entrepreneurs.

3.2 Scope of the Study

Matriarchal societal norms predominate in the north and northeastern segments of India. Female run homestays are pretty common in these areas. It is a popular trend of "homestay tourism" that has emerged in Darjeeling district and Kalimpong district. Recent global social and cultural changes may explain this

increasing demand for homestays, resulting in greater interest and appreciation in cultural heritage, lifestyles, and environmental concerns.

- tourist perceived value and satisfaction towards homestay tourism programme
- impact of homestay programme on the local community and overall development of the area.
- commercialisation of rural homes and historical houses.
- socio economic well-being as a result of the homestay tourism programme.

3.3 Sample Area

West Bengal has a diverse topography. With beautiful hills in the north, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Alipurduar, and Coochbehar have constantly attracted tourists from Bengal, India, worldwide. This study focuses on the Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of West Bengal. These districts have lush green meadows, sprawling tea gardens, deep forests with rich wildlife, hillocks and sparkling waterfalls, and rivers and creeks infested with migratory birds. Instead of star hotels, tourists prefer homestays to stay during their visits here (S.A. Jamal, 2011). Data were collected from 60 females who run homestays in the Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of West Bengal. Questions were asked directly as face to face interviews were conducted with them. The female entrepreneurs were given the scaled questionnaire containing structured questions.

4. Research Methodology

The study explored the variation in the influence of each of the components of orientation on the success of these homestays. Through the direct face to face interviews, data was gathered on the entrepreneurship orientation variables and the success was captured through the perception of the owner about the expansion of business or an increase in the income levels.

The population for this study comprised all the homestays run by female entrepreneurs. A 21-item instrument was used to measure the entrepreneurial orientation scales. Each item was measured on a seven-point scale. The instrument was derived from previous studies and composed of three metrics for each of the five EO dimensions. The original 9-item instrument from Covin and Slevin (1989) was taken for innovativeness, risk-taking and proactiveness. This instrument has been used in many empirical studies on EO (Rauch et al., 2009; George and Marino, 2011). The other two dimensions – competitiveness and autonomy – were mainly derived from a study by George et al. (2001). A few items for risk-taking and competitiveness were borrowed from Lumpkin and Dess (1996) and Chang et al. (2007). While conducting the interviews, questions had to be translated verbally to Bengali/Hindi so that the homestay owners understand better. There were some structured questions in the same questionnaire to get their overall position on income earnings and the success of the businesses.

This study is based on primary data describing the effects of entrepreneurial orientations [EO] on female-run homestay businesses in the Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of West Bengal. It checks the applicability of Miller(1983), Covin, & Slevin(1989), Huges & Morgan(2007), Chang et al.(2007) and Lumpkin & Dess(1996) scales to measure entrepreneurial orientations [EO] in running homestays successfully with flourishing businesses.

A questionnaire addressed to them was designed to analyse the relationship between EO and the performance of homestays run by female entrepreneurs. This paper seeks to get a more in-depth look at how EO impacts homestay performance. It accomplishes this aim by investigating the impact of each entrepreneurial dimension separately within the accommodation sector like the homestays.

We considered the dependent variable as the business flourish with the independent variables as innovativeness, proactiveness, autonomy, competitiveness and risk-taking.

5. Descriptive Analysis and Findings

A total of 60 female homestay owners were presented with the questionnaire bearing the scale, and data was collected through face-to-face interviews. The questionnaire devised included measures of entrepreneurial orientations [EO], earning performance, structural performance, marketing and running performance and overall performance. A few structured questions in the questionnaire helped collect data quickly over a limited time. The questions asked as per entrepreneurial orientations [EO] scales interpreted results.

Here we can segment the data into three (3) sets of variables: business, respondent, and entrepreneurial orientation.

(A) Respondent variables

From the results generated, sample characteristics were observed. Those characteristics comprised the respondent variables. The entrepreneurs running the homestays were maximum middle-aged i.e 60% were between 41 and 60 years and above. As far as their education level was concerned, only 30% did not complete their School Final Level examination. Among the entrepreneurs, 3% were Post Graduates but 43.3% had passed their Madhyamik Pariksha (School Final Examination), 56.7% had passed Higher Secondary Examination i. e Class 12 and 40% are graduates. This showed that homestay owners have good educational backgrounds.

Table 6.1 : Respondent Variables

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
(i)Age Groups		
20 years -30 years	12	20%
31 years -40 years	12	20%
41years -50 years	16	26.7%
51years -30 years	12	20%
61years and above	8	13.3%
Total	60	100%
(ii)Education		
Class 4- Class 10	18	30%
MP	8	13.3%
Class 12	8	13.3%
Graduate	24	40%
Post Graduate	2	3.3%
Total	60	100%

Source: Primary Data

Two major things were observed from the survey -maximum women who are running homestays are middle aged (41-50 years) and educated (Graduate).

(B) Business Variables

The survey portrayed sample characteristics related to the homestay business solely analysed as business variables. It was witnessed that the homestay business is the only source of income for 63.3% of the homestay owners and they were only running homestays to sustain their livelihood and living. Among the homestays surveyed 93.3% are less than or are just 10years old. As per the guidelines for running homestays, 63.3% of the homestays are having 1-5 rooms but 36.7% have more than 5 rooms. The homestay owners answered that the owners and their family members are the only staff in the homestays(86.7%). Only 13.3% of the homestay owners are appointing outside hired staff to operate efficiently during peak seasons with full occupancy.

Table 6.2: Business Variables

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
(i) Source of Income		
Homestay is the only source of income	38	63.3%
Homestay is the additional Source of Income	22	36.7%
Total	60	100
(ii) Years of Business		
Less than 1 year	6	10%
1 year – 5 years	22	36.7%
6 years – 10 years	28	46.7%
11 years- 15 years	4	6.7%
Total	60	100
(iii)Employee Size		
2-6 people	52	86.7%
7-11 people	8	13.3%
Total	60	100
(iv)Size of Homestay		
1-5 rooms	38	63.3%
6-11 rooms	22	36.7%
Total	60	100

Source : Primary Data

(C) Entrepreneurial Variables

The variables of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) refer to the processes, practices and decision activities leading to new entry or opportunity for an individual/firm (Covin & Slevin, 1989). Entrepreneurial variables are viewed as resources to the entrepreneur as well as the firm (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001) like innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, competitiveness and autonomy. In the entrepreneurship domain, the construct of entrepreneurial orientation was operationalized by Miller (1983) and Covin and

Slevin (1989). Their construct consisted of three dimensions: innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness to improve the performance of a business. In general, most researchers see entrepreneurs as individuals who tend to be innovative risk-takers (Baumol, 1993; Schumpeter, 1934). Innovation is an important aspect of EO as it reflects how firms might pursue new opportunities (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). One of the earliest characteristics ascribed to entrepreneurs was that of risk-taking (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). The very idea of working for “oneself” implies the risk of not only lost capital but the opportunity cost of having earned wages in the employ of another firm. EO has been used by Covin and Slevin (1989) and Miller (1983) to investigate risk-taking by individuals within firms. Business owners will probably range from risk averse to risk prone. Female small business owners have been found to have similar levels of risk-taking propensities as well as innovativeness (Sonfield, Lussier, Corman, & McKinney, 2001). Proactiveness is the act of anticipating problems or opportunities before their occurrence, being prepared for the problems and taking advantage of the opportunities. Miller (1983) suggests that entrepreneurial firms are the ones that are “first” to develop proactive innovations. Although it is related to innovation, proactiveness is focused more on the pursuit of opportunities and initiating activities (Covin & Slevin, 1989). They are willing to grab onto new market opportunities as leaders, even if they are not the first (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Lumpkin & Dess (1996) also characterize the opposite of proactiveness as being “passive” rather than “reactive”. Competitive aggressiveness describes how firms or business owners relate or respond to competitors. More specifically, it refers to a firm’s inclination to directly challenge its competition with intensity (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996) or even unconventional tactics (Cooper, Willard, & Woo, 1986). Utilizing unconventional methods to compete with others in the marketplace may be particularly important for small business owners (Cooper & Dunkelberg, 1986; Stone, 1995). Lumpkin and Dess proposed the inclusion of autonomy as a dimension of EO in 1996. Autonomy is essential to the processes of leveraging a firm’s existing strengths, identifying opportunities that are beyond the organization’s current capabilities, and encouraging the development of new ventures and/ or improved business practices (Kanter, North, Bernstein, & Williams, 1990). To evaluate the entrepreneurial orientation modes in this study reliability and validity of the scales were ensured. Cross-tabulations were done to analyse the interrelationships between the variables. The variables thus chalked out are innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking ability, competitiveness and autonomy. To perform the study, the reliability of the scales were ensured.

(a) Innovativeness

Summary Item Statistics								Reliability Statistics		
	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Item Means	4.853	3.233	5.933	2.700	1.835	1.001	5	.704	.727	5
Inter-Item Correlations	.347	-.030	.769	.799	-.25.904	.049	5			

(b) Proactiveness

Summary Item Statistics								Reliability Statistics		
	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Item Means	4.853	3.233	5.933	2.700	1.835	1.001	5	.704	.727	5
Inter-Item Correlations	.347	-.030	.769	.799	-.25.904	.049	5			

(c) Risk taking Ability

Summary Item Statistics								Reliability Statistics	
	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Item Means	3.842	2.833	4.367	1.533	1.541	.479	4	.632	4
Inter-Item Correlations	.296	-.016	.599	.616	-.36.839	.060	4		

(d) Competitiveness

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	4.233	3.833	5.200	1.367	1.357	.423	4

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.677	.646	4

(e)Autonomy

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	5.017	4.433	5.400	.967	1.218	.211	4

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.872	.874	4

Entrepreneurial variables are viewed as resources to the entrepreneur as well as the firm (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001) like innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, competitiveness and autonomy. To evaluate the entrepreneurial orientation modes in this study reliability of the scales were ensured. Reliability is the measure of the internal consistencies of the constructs in the study. A construct is reliable if the Alpha value is greater than .80(Hair et al.,2013).

The results revealed Alpha value = .850 validating the constructs/ variable

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	4.435	2.833	5.933	3.100	2.094	.620	21
Inter-Item Correlations	.207	-.322	.839	1.160	-2.608	.050	21

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.850	.845	21

Case Processing Summary

Cases	Valid	N	%
	60	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Homestay businesses have emerged as a significant avenue for women entrepreneurs, particularly older and educated females, who are leveraging their skills and life experiences to create successful ventures. These women often operate their homestays with minimal external assistance, relying on family support and their own resourcefulness. Insights from various tables reveal that education, experience, and financial prudence play pivotal roles in their success. The data highlights trends such as the correlation between age and income stability, the limited use of capital investment, and the ability of older homestay businesses to flourish. This report elaborates on these observations with detailed analysis.

Table 6.3: Age & Educational Qualifications

Age	Educational Qualifications					
	Class 4-10	MP	Class 12	Graduate	Post Graduate	Total
20-30 years	0	2	6	4	0	12
31-40 years	4	2	0	4	2	12
41-50 years	6	2	2	6	0	16
51-60 years	4	0	0	8	0	12
61and above	4	2	0	2	0	8
Total	18	8	8	24	2	60

Source: Primary Data

We observe that older and educated females have opted to start a homestay and are running them successfully(40%). The data reveals that older and educated females are more likely to start and successfully manage homestays, accounting for 40% of the total female homestay owners. In comparison, only 30% of female homestay owners are school dropouts(Table 6.3). This suggests that education plays

a significant role in understanding and managing the nuances of the hospitality business. Educated women are better equipped to handle the financial, administrative, and operational challenges of running a homestay. Their ability to interact with diverse guests, adapt to market trends, and implement effective marketing strategies may also contribute to their success.

Table 6.4: Age and number of years of running the homestays

Age	Number of years				
	Less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	Total
20-30 years	2	4	4	2	12
31-40 years	0	6	6	0	12
41-50 years	2	6	8	0	16
51-60years	2	4	6	0	12
61 and above	0	2	4	2	8
Total	6	22	28	4	60

Source: Primary Data

It is also seen that older women and old homestays are carrying on the homestay business successfully (46.67% - Table 6.4). The findings indicate that older women and homestays that have been operational for a long time are carrying on the business successfully, with a success rate of 46.67%. This reflects the value of experience and stability in the homestay business. Older women, often possessing years of life experience and interpersonal skills, are likely to create a warm and hospitable environment for guests. Older homestays, having established a reputation over time, benefit from repeat customers and word-of-mouth referrals, further boosting their success rates.

Table 6.5: Educational Qualifications and Age of the Homestay

Education	No. years of running homestay				
	Less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	Total
Class 4- 10	0	6	12	0	18
MP	0	2	6	0	8
Class 12	2	2	2	2	8
Graduate	4	10	8	2	24
Post Graduate	0	2	0	0	2
Total	6	22	28	4	60

Source: Primary Data

It is viewed that the number of qualified graduate females who run these homestays is almost 40%, and their homestays (47% - Table 6.5) are also older. Nearly 40% of the qualified graduate females have ventured into the homestay business, and 47% of these homestays are older and well-established. These women, supported by their higher education, have a better understanding of customer preferences and

market demands. Their homestays are often characterized by better organizational structures and enhanced guest experiences, which contribute to their longevity and success. Additionally, their ability to utilize family support and minimize dependency on external help enables them to maintain operational efficiency.

Table 6.6: Total Staff and number of rooms

Number of staff	Number of rooms		
	1-5 rooms	6-10 rooms	Total
2-6 people	36	16	52
7-11 people	2	6	8
Total	38	22	60

Source: Primary Data

These females are running the homestays with their family support and minimum outside help. Table: 6.6 depicts that more than 50% of female homestay owners do not appoint outside staff to run their homestays.

Table 6.7: Capital and Number of rooms

Capital	Number of rooms		
	1-5 rooms	6-10rooms	Total
Rs 1,00,000- Rs 10,00,000	24	12	36
Rs 11,00,000-Rs 20,00,000	2	6	8
Rs 21,00,000- Rs 30,00,000	4	2	6
Rs 31,00,000-Rs 40,00,000	2	0	2
Others	6	2	8
Total	38	22	60

Source: Primary Data

During the interviews, it was evident from their answers that 60%(Table 6.7) of the homestay owners limited their capital contribution to Rs.10,00,000. It did not vary with the number of rooms in the homestays. Interestingly, this investment does not vary significantly with the number of rooms in the homestay. This finding suggests that these women adopt a conservative financial approach, focusing on efficient utilization of available resources rather than expanding rapidly. Their ability to manage within a limited budget while maintaining quality services reflects their resourcefulness and commitment to financial sustainability.

Table 6.8 : Capital and Income

Capital	Income			
	Rs10,000- Rs20,000	Rs21,000- Rs 30,000	Rs31,000- Rs 40,000	Total
Rs1,00,000- Rs10,00,000	24	8	4	36
Rs11,00,000- Rs20,00,000	6	2	0	8

Rs21,00,000- Rs30,00,000	6	0	0	6
Rs31,00,000- Rs40,00,000	2	0	0	2
Others	8	0	0	8
Total	46	10	4	60

Source: Primary data

It was viewed that older females (76%)(Table 6.8) are consistent in generating steady incomes(60%) . Around 60% of homestay owners reported consistent income generation from their business. This steady financial performance reflects the growing popularity of homestays as a preferred accommodation option. Factors such as personalized guest experiences, cost-effective operations, and effective marketing contribute to this consistency. Furthermore, the ability to adapt to guest preferences and maintain quality standards ensures repeat customers and stable revenue.

Table: 6.9 Perception of Success and Age of Homestay

Perception of Success	Age					
	20-30years	31-40 years	41-50years	51-60years	61 and above	Total
No	5	8	2	4	4	23
Yes	7	4	14	8	4	37
Total	12	12	16	12	8	60

Source : Primary Data

This data suggests that middle-aged individuals, particularly those between 41–50, are more likely to perceive their homestay business as a success, possibly due to a combination of experience, stability, and active involvement. This table links the age of the homestay to perceptions of business flourishing. Out of 60 respondents, 37 believe their business is flourishing, while 23 do not. Among homestays aged 6–10 years, 20 out of 28 respondents (71.4%) report flourishing businesses, indicating that established homestays tend to perform better. Homestays aged 1–5 years have a mixed outcome, with 9 out of 22 respondents (40.9%) perceiving success. For homestays less than a year old, only 4 out of 6 respondents (66.7%) perceive success, reflecting the challenges of newer establishments. The 11–15-year category shows a higher success rate, with all 4 respondents considering their business flourishing. This data underscores the importance of time in building a successful homestay business, as older and more established homestays are more likely to thrive.

Table: 6.10 Perception of Success and Total Income

Perception of Success	Total Income			
	Rs10,000-Rs20,000	Rs21,000-Rs 30,000	Rs31,000-Rs40,000	Total
No	15	6	2	23
Yes	31	4	2	37

Total	46	10	4	60
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Source:Primary data

This table examines whether businesses that are flourishing have experienced an increase in monthly income. The data shows that the perception of success is highest in the lowest income bracket (Rs. 10,000–Rs. 20,000), likely reflecting realistic expectations among respondents in this category. In contrast, respondents in the mid and high-income brackets display lower success perceptions relative to their earnings, possibly due to higher expectations or operational challenges. This table highlights the nuanced relationship between income levels and the perception of success in homestay businesses. While higher income does not guarantee a stronger sense of success, the majority of respondents in the lower-income bracket perceive their business as successful, emphasizing the role of expectations and operational context in shaping success perceptions.

Table:6.11 Business flourish and Future Income rise

Business flourish	Future Increase in Income		
	No	Yes	Total
No	9	14	23
Yes	1	36	27
Total	10	50	60

Source:Primary data

The overall trend shows that respondents with flourishing businesses are far more likely to expect future income growth. This highlights the importance of maintaining a thriving business model, as it not only ensures current financial success but also instills confidence in future profitability. Conversely, those struggling to flourish tend to exhibit more cautious expectations for income increases.

Table:6.12 Business Flourish and Increase in monthly income

Business Flourish	Increase in Monthly Income		
	No	Yes	Total
No	11	12	23
Yes	0	37	37
Total	11	49	60

This table examines whether businesses that are flourishing have experienced an increase in monthly income. Among the 37 respondents with flourishing businesses, all but one (97.3%) report an increase in their monthly income. For the 23 respondents whose businesses are not flourishing, only 12 (52.2%) have experienced a rise in monthly income.

The data highlights a strong association between business success and steady monthly income growth, emphasizing the financial stability and benefits of a flourishing homestay business.

Firstly, to establish the interrelations between the variables co-relations were tried among them. To analyse the components affecting the homestay business after correlations were calculated, it was witnessed that there is a **very low positive** correlation between the selected variables.

Table 6.13 Correlations Tables

Correlations				
		Age	TotalIncome	FutureIncreaseInIncome
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.139	.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.290	.489
	N	60	60	60
TotalIncome	Pearson Correlation	.139	1	-.229
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.290		.078
	N	60	60	60
FutureIncreaseInIncome	Pearson Correlation	.091	-.229	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.489	.078	
	N	60	60	60

Source: Primary data

From the above and the table below we form the hypothesis and before equating variables, to check their dependency, Chi-square tests were also conducted.

We consider the following by developing hypothesis to establish the relations between age of the homestay owner, age of the homestay and success of the homestay. Let H_0 be the age of the homestay owner and his perception of success are not associated. H_1 is age of the homestay owner and his perception of success are associated.

Table 6.14: Relation between Age and Homestay Success

Success of Homestay	Age of the Owner					
	20-30years	31-40 years	41-50years	51-60years	61 and above	Total
No	5	8	2	4	4	23
Yes	7	4	14	8	4	37
Total	12	12	16	12	8	60

Table 6.14: Chi square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi square	9.236 ^a	4	.055
Likelihood Ratio	9.880	4	.042
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.132	1	.031
N of valid cases	60		

a. 5 cells (50%) have expected counts less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.07

This implies that the two factors (Age and Perception of business) are not independent which means that there is association between them since the p-values are less than 0.05.

From the Chi-Square Test, we see an association between the age of the homestay owner and the perception of the homestay business. So, we may say with age comes maturity, agility and experience of successfully running homestays.

For data analysis, binary logistic regression was conducted. To estimate the influence of independent variables upon the dependent variables the data was regressed. Thereafter we have tried to measure the factors that influence the success of the homestays.

7. Discussions and Conclusions

Here inferences can be drawn from the equation –

$Y=f(x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots)$ where y = Perception of success and

x_1 = Innovativeness

x_2 = Proactiveness

x_3 = Risk Taking

x_4 = Competitiveness

x_5 = Autonomy

x_6 = Age of the owner

x_7 = Age of the homestay

Here perception of success was taken as the dependent variable with innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, competitiveness, autonomy, age of the homestays and age of its owner as independent variables, binary logistic regression delivered the table below :

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Innovativeness	-.013	.229	.003	1	.955	.987
Proactiveness	-.157	.249	.399	1	.528	.855
Risk Taking	.592	.339	3.045	1	.081	1.807
Competitiveness	.206	.277	.551	1	.458	1.229
Autonomy	-.045	.179	.063	1	.802	.956
Age of the owner	.572	.326	3.072	1	.080	1.771
Age of homestay	.798	.437	3.328	1	.068	2.221
Constant	-5.233	2.352	4.949	1	.026	.005

All are significant at 0.08 (i.e. at 80% level of significance), which implies that the variables - risk-taking capacity, the homestay business's age and the entrepreneur's age, i.e. the homestay owner, are both positive and significant. We submit that the significance is at 80% level in spite of the weaknesses. As business flourish was taken as the dependent variable with innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, competitiveness, autonomy, age of homestays and age of the owner as independent variables, binary logistic regression was done. Binary logistic regression is a widely used statistical technique for analyzing data with a binary response variable. The primary reason for using binary logistic regression is that it can effectively model the relationship between a categorical outcome (e.g., 0/1, yes/no, etc.) and a set of predictor variables. Therefore we may suggest older the homestay business, it is flourishing more than the

younger ones, so experience matters. The older the homestay business, the more the entrepreneur has understood the market and can take risks. As per the DCHB report, 2011, apart from traditional tourist attractions, tourism activity in the form of “home stay” has expanded in popularity over the years (DCHB report, 2011). “West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy – 2022” was formulated consolidate and promote the homestay segment for the long running homestays. Homestay-based tourism can offer a sustainable solution to the perils of overtourism in Darjeeling hills, not only by preaching and following responsible tourism practices but also by diverting a substantial portion of tourist inflow to various unexplored virgin areas of Darjeeling hills for over a long time (Dutta & Mukhopadhyay 2024). So, homestay business I present for a long time in the Darjeeling areas, giving the homestay owners experience and expertise.

Proactiveness and innovativeness of entrepreneurial orientation [EO] are not significant and are negative. So they may be assumed to be the lacuna in the ecosystem itself. These businesses are steadily running but are not innovative or proactive. In-depth studies are further required with a larger sample size to interpret whether tourists are not eager to experiment with new opportunities or the ecosystem is not supporting innovation or proactiveness. The variables are insignificant. The negative b values contradict traditional entrepreneurial understanding of innovation, and proactiveness makes homestay businesses flourish. Though we have indications that the tourism industry is often less innovative (Hjalager, 2002, 2009), (Tetzschner & Herlau, 2003) and more so in remote hamlets where this study has been conducted. The lack of motivation, knowledge and resources is often why the industry is not innovative (Blichfeldt, 2009). Rojas and Alococer (2021) analysed the positive effects of visitor satisfaction from traditional restaurants with perceptions of the local gastronomy, the overall image of a city, and loyalty to that destination. The internal environment of a destination is expected to be modelled on the theory of resource earnings, considering the company's resources (Barney, 1991), structure (Wolfe, 1994), and culture apart from innovation (Quinn and Cameron, 1999). Despite the wealth of environment-related research, there are few studies on factors that lead hotel firms to establish a proactive environmental policy (Park and Kim, 2014). Knowledge of proactivity effects on organisations is also limited (Raki, Nayer et al., 2021). It can be inferred that the traditional businesses are flourishing over time as tourists seek a conventional environment in homestays. When the tourists visit the homestays, they want to experience the traditional customs of the destination, preferring the homestays far from modern amenities and advancements and therefore proactiveness and innovation have not been influencing success of business.

It can be concluded that homestays run by female entrepreneurs are getting popularity and escalation in the Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of West Bengal. These females with time and experience have understood the twists and turns of the trade, and are non-hesitant in taking risks making their homestay business flourish and prosper.

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