

Research on the Development and Optimization of Lakeside Star Area Homestay Industry in Zhaoqing

Haiming Chen, Shuying Huang

School of Tourism and Historical Culture, Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing 526000, China

Abstract

Leveraging its national 5A-level scenic area status and strategic location, Zhaoqing Lakeside Star Area has witnessed rapid growth in the homestay industry. However, challenges such as intensified homogenization, inconsistent service quality, and insufficient cultural exploration have severely constrained sustainable development. This study examines Lakeside Star Area's homestays through field research, in-depth interviews, and questionnaire surveys, employing SPSS 27.0 software for data analysis. It identifies key factors affecting consumer experience and proposes systematic optimization strategies.

Keywords

Lakeside Star Area Homestay; Consumption Experience; High-quality Development of Rural Tourism.

1. Introduction

As a vital segment of the tourism accommodation market, the homestay industry has gained widespread consumer favor through its distinctive family-oriented and personalized operational models, coupled with in-depth exploration of local cultural characteristics[1]. The Qixingyan Scenic Area in Zhaoqing City, Guangdong Province, features five major lakes-Donghu, Qinglianhu, Zhongxinhu, Bohaihu, and Lihu-that collectively form its unique hydrological landscape, offering visitors a distinctive travel experience. The Lakeside Star Area in Zhaoqing, renowned for its picturesque natural scenery and rich cultural heritage, has attracted numerous tourists. The homestay industry in this area has gradually flourished, becoming a significant component of the local tourism sector.

The Lakeside Star Area homestay industry in Zhaoqing has achieved remarkable progress in recent years. However, rapid development has exposed several issues. Homogeneous competition is prevalent, with many homestays lacking distinctive features in decor and services, resulting in subpar visitor experiences. Service quality varies widely, and some homestays pose risks in hygiene and safety. Additionally, there is insufficient exploration of cultural depth, failing to fully showcase local traditions and customs. These challenges hinder the further growth of the Lakeside Star Area homestay industry.

This study examines the Lakeside Star Area homestay in Zhaoqing through field visits, assessing its current development status. By conducting interviews and surveys with homestay owners, tourists, and local residents, it identifies challenges in the homestay's growth, analyzes its strengths and weaknesses, and fills the academic gap in research on Lakeside Star Area homestays. The findings aim to boost the homestay's and Zhaoqing's tourism industry development, enhance guest satisfaction, and pave the way for broader prospects in Zhaoqing's tourism sector.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Homestays

A homestay refers to a small-scale accommodation facility that utilizes local residential properties or idle resources, with guest rooms not exceeding four floors and a floor area not exceeding 800 square meters. The host participates in the reception process, offering guests an immersive experience of the local natural environment, cultural traditions, and lifestyle[2]. This definition fully captures the distinctive characteristics of homestays compared to hotels or restaurants. Unlike traditional hotels, homestays may lack luxurious amenities but provide guests with authentic local experiences, warm hospitality, and a unique lifestyle. Currently, homestays in mainland China are primarily concentrated in East and North China, with significant clusters in Guangdong, Zhejiang, Shandong, Yunnan, Beijing, Sichuan, and Hubei, particularly thriving in tourist cities[3]. Research suggests that homestays can significantly enhance tourist experiences, boost rural tourism development, create local employment opportunities, and increase residents' income[4].

2.2. Lakeside Homestays

Lakeside homestays are lodging facilities built along or near lakes, leveraging natural resources to offer unique experiences that blend scenic beauty, cultural immersion, and personalized services. These accommodations allow travelers to enjoy the lakeside charm while deeply engaging with local traditions. The core competitiveness of lakeside homestays stems from their ecological advantages and regional cultural identity. For instance, Wu Zhaozhi et al. (2016) highlighted how Qiandao Lake homestays, utilizing their 5A-level scenic resources, developed a distinctive "mountain-adjacent, water-facing cultural experience"[5]. Long Fei and Liu Jiaming (2019) proposed that domestic lakeside homestays enhance cultural attributes through traditional architecture renovations and intangible cultural heritage displays, such as Hangzhou's West Lake homestay clusters featuring rooms designed with Southern Song Dynasty cultural themes[6]. Scholar Xu Linying (2019) studied Dongqian Lake Resort homestays, concluding that these establishments primarily utilize scenic areas and nearby water bodies to create unique living environments that cater to tourists' desire for "slow living" [7]. Zhu Nan et al. (2020) investigated Basong Lake in Gongbujiangda County, Nyingchi City, Tibet Autonomous Region, where Tibetan-style dwellings are harmoniously arranged along the lakeshore. The landscape where mountains embrace water and water reflects mountains has transformed local homestays from family-run lodgings into boutique accommodations. This development has revitalized eco-tourism, creating employment opportunities and income growth for locals while boosting both the homestay industry and tourism sector[8].

2.3. Zhaoqing Lakeside Star Area Homestay

The Lakeside Star Area, located around Zhaoqing's Seven Star Rock scenic spot, has witnessed rapid growth in its homestay industry in recent years, forming a cluster of small and medium-sized accommodations. Along the area's route, over 100 homestays of various styles and sizes are distributed across distinctive communities like Yanqian, Chutou, Shipai, and Qinglian, creating a unique "door-to-door scenery" advantage [9]. The homestay industry here thrives on three key strengths: natural resources, cultural heritage, and strategic location. With picturesque landscapes and pristine ecosystems, the area is surrounded by famous attractions like Seven Star Rock and Dinghu Mountain, fostering a tourism synergy. Its convenient transportation links to the Pearl River Delta urban cluster, enhanced by well-developed high-speed rail and expressways, further boosts accessibility. Government policies have also provided strong support for the industry. Research by Hu Yuanyuan (2023) highlights that as Zhaoqing's tourism profile grows, increasing visitor numbers to Duanzhou have accelerated tourism development, driving prosperity in the Lakeside Star Area's homestay sector[10].

Leveraging unique natural landscapes and regional cultural resources, Zhaoqing's Lakeside Star Area has become a flagship example of cultural-tourism integration in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

However, the Lakeside Star Area homestay industry still faces several challenges. Firstly, the rapid increase in homestay numbers has led to severe homogenization, resulting in a lack of uniqueness and innovation. Some homestays also struggle with subpar service quality, making it difficult to establish a strong brand presence. Secondly, inadequate infrastructure-particularly underdeveloped transportation and parking facilities-hampers tourist experiences. Additionally, homestay operations are heavily influenced by seasonal fluctuations, with lower occupancy rates during off-peak periods, putting some businesses under operational pressure. Lastly, the industry lacks professional management and service expertise, as many operators lack modern management experience, which hinders service quality improvements.

To deepen the understanding of the operational models for the Lakeside Star Area homestay industry, this study examines its current development status and analyzes the practical challenges in industrial upgrading. By identifying specific issues in ecological conservation, cultural preservation, and service standardization, and considering the region's resource endowments and policy directions, the research explores optimization pathways tailored to local characteristics. The findings aim to provide theoretical references and practical support for the high-quality development of homestays in the Lakeside Star Area.

2.4. Research Hypotheses

In tourism consumption contexts, multiple factors interact to shape tourists' perceptions, emotional responses, and behavioral intentions toward homestays. When visitors experience positive visual impressions, comfortable environmental landscapes, and pleasant moods at Lakeside Star Area homestay, their overall perception of both functional and emotional value is enhanced[11]. For instance, the exquisite architectural design and picturesque surroundings of the homestay make it feel worth the visit, thereby elevating its perceived value. This aligns with Hypothesis 1: Positive consumption experiences enhance perceived value.

When tourists develop strong attachment to the natural or cultural surroundings of Lakeside Star Area homestays and experience warm hospitality from staff, creating memorable stays, their consumption experience will be further enhanced[12]. For instance, if guests appreciate the unique ecological landscapes near the homestay and find the hosts particularly welcoming, their satisfaction during the stay will increase-this demonstrates Hypothesis 2: Local attachment positively influences consumption experience.

Local attachment significantly enhances perceived value. When tourists develop strong local attachment to Lakeside Star Area homestays-such as regarding them as emotionally significant or fostering a strong sense of home-they perceive the homestay's value more highly[13]. For instance, when tourists view the homestay as a place of emotional attachment, they tend to value it more, which supports Hypothesis 3: Local attachment positively influences perceived value.

Consumption experience significantly positively influences behavioral intention. High-quality experiences, such as attentive homestay services and pleasant environments, encourage travelers to recommend their stays to others, share their accommodation experiences online, and increase the likelihood of returning for further stays or purchasing additional products/services[14]. For instance, when travelers feel at home in a homestay, they are more likely to recommend it to friends and family-this demonstrates Hypothesis H4: Consumption experience positively affects behavioral intention.

Perceived value significantly enhances behavioral intention. When tourists rate Lakeside Star Area homestay highly in terms of transportation convenience, amenities, and dining services, they are more likely to exhibit positive behavioral intentions, such as paying premium rates or

actively sharing recommendations[11]. For instance, if guests find the property well-connected and fully equipped, they are more inclined to return for repeat stays-demonstrating how H5: Perceived value positively influences behavioral intention.

Local attachment significantly enhances behavioral intention. The stronger a tourist's attachment to a homestay-manifested through deep reliance on the surrounding environment and emotional connection-the more likely they are to actively recommend it to others, share experiences online, and return for repeat stays and additional spending[13]. For instance, tourists who are particularly fond of a homestay's natural surroundings are more inclined to choose it again and recommend it to others, as evidenced by H6: Local attachment positively influences behavioral intention.

3. Research Methodology

This study focuses on tourists who have stayed at Lakeside Star Area homestays, examining their satisfaction with four dimensions: consumption experience, perceived value, place attachment, and behavioral intention. The analysis aims to identify existing issues and challenges within the homestay sector. To effectively measure these latent variables, extensive literature review was conducted, and established measurement indicators were selected for reference. Additionally, feedback from homestay visitors was collected and continuously refined, ultimately resulting in the complete questionnaire design presented in this paper.

The questionnaire comprises three main sections with the following structure: Section 1 covers demographic characteristics of surveyed tourists, including six basic items such as origin, gender, age, education level, occupation, and income. Section 2 examines behavioral characteristics, including six items such as annual travel frequency, duration of stay, mode of transportation, spending amount, information sources, and travel motivations. Sections 3 to 6 consist of four scales: consumption experience, perceived value, place attachment, and behavioral intention, totaling 22 measurement items. Specifically, consumption experience and perceived value each contain 5 items, while place attachment and behavioral intention each contain 6 items. All items are measured using a 7-point Likert scale.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Demographic Characteristics and Basic Information Analysis

This study analyzed 339 valid questionnaires containing demographic data including gender, age, and educational background. The statistical results are presented in Table 1. Key findings are as follows: 1. Demographic characteristics of surveyed tourists: Women (63.1%,214 respondents) slightly outnumbered men (36.9%,125). The majority (59.3%) were aged 18-40, with fewer participants under 18 and over 50. Educational backgrounds were predominantly bachelor's degree holders (47.5%) and high school diploma holders (30.1%). Occupation distribution showed 60.5% were corporate employees, freelancers, or self-employed individuals. Monthly income was predominantly above 4,000 yuan (71.9%), with 71.9% earning between 4,001-7,000 yuan. Notably, 55.8% of respondents visited Lakeside Star Area 1-3 times annually with homestay stays, while 30.7% traveled 4-6 times yearly with homestay options. This indicates that the primary demographic for homestay consumption at Lakeside Star Area consists of 18-40-year-olds with sufficient time, financial resources, and educational backgrounds. These young adults particularly favor homestays when traveling with children or solo during 1-2 annual trips. This is generally consistent with the demographic characteristics of the mainstream domestic homestay consumers, providing credibility and feasibility for the subsequent analysis. In terms of how people learn about homestays, they mainly rely on commonly used social platforms such as TikTok/WeChat/Weibo, followed by major OTA

platforms like Ctrip/Feizhu/Meituan for information and bookings, as well as recommendations from friends and family. With the diversification of promotional channels for homestay businesses, sharing platforms like Xiaohongshu have also gradually emerged.

Data reveals that when choosing travel modes, visitors to Lakeside Star Area homestays predominantly use private cars (65.4%) and high-speed rail (51.2%) as primary transportation, followed by tourist buses (35.8%) and other options (43.5%), while air travel (19.2%) and conventional trains (10.4%) account for a smaller proportion. This indicates tourists prioritize travel flexibility and time efficiency, particularly middle-to-high-income groups (71.9% with monthly incomes above 4,000 yuan) who are more likely to opt for convenient and controllable modes like self-driving or high-speed rail, aligning with their spending capacity and preferences. In terms of travel motivations, the core drivers for respondents choosing homestays were "proximity to scenic areas for relaxation" (83.2%) and "socializing with family and friends" (82.3%), followed by wellness retreats (72.6%) and novelty-seeking experiences (64.0%). Scenic beauty (63.4%) emerged as a significant consideration, while business-related activities (3.2%) accounted for a minimal proportion. This indicates that Lakeside Star Area homestays primarily attract young adults (59.3% aged 18-40) through their leisure-oriented nature and social engagement opportunities, catering to their need for short-term relaxation and emotional bonding amidst busy lifestyles. Given their frequent travel habits (55.8% traveling 1-3 times annually), the homestays' proximity to attractions, premium environments, and family-friendly amenities further enhance customer retention. These behavioral patterns align closely with demographic profiles of "highly educated, middle-to-high-income, experience-focused" travelers, providing data-backed insights for optimizing services and marketing strategies-such as parking solutions for self-driving tourists, high-speed rail shuttle services, or social media campaigns promoting "family travel" experiences.

4.2. Reliability Analysis

To ensure the scientific validity and reliability of the research data, reliability testing was conducted on the four measurement scales using SPSS27.0 software. The Cronbach's α and Item-total correlation (CITC) were employed to evaluate the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Typically, a Cronbach's α value above 0.6 is considered acceptable.

The Cronbach's α values of consumption experience, perceived value, local attachment and behavioral intention in this questionnaire are 0.707, 0.602, 0.764 and 0.789 respectively. The Cronbach's α values of each measurement dimension are all over 0.6, which is higher than the standard value. Moreover, the total Cronbach's α value of the questionnaire does not improve after deleting one item, which indicates that the questionnaire has good overall reliability and high use value.

4.3. Validity Analysis

The total of 22 measurement items across all scales in this study achieved a KMO value of 0.899, exceeding the standard threshold of 0.7. The Bartlett's test yielded a chi-square value of 1852.460 with a significance level (sig.) of 0.000 < 0.05, confirming the scales' suitability for factor analysis. To ensure data rigor, separate tests were conducted on each scale. Results showed that the KMO values for the five-dimensional scales ranged from 0.6 to 0.9, all surpassing the 0.7 standard value with sig. levels of 0.000. This further demonstrates the high validity of all measurement items, spanning from consumer experience to behavioral intention.

4.4. Regression Analysis

(1) Regression Analysis of Consumer Experience on Perceived Value

The model summary indicates that the regression model for perceived value based on consumer experience shows an R-squared coefficient of 0.026 (adjusted R-squared: 0.024), explaining only 2.6% of the total variance in perceived value, suggesting limited explanatory

power. Nevertheless, the model passes the significance test ($F=9.151$, $p=0.003$), confirming a statistically significant linear relationship between consumer experience and perceived value. ANOVA results reveal that the regression model's total variance is 10.844, with the regression mean square (10.844) significantly exceeding the residual mean square (1.185). The F-value of 9.151 ($p=0.003$) further validates the model's overall validity.

The regression coefficient analysis demonstrates that consumer experience has a statistically significant positive impact on perceived value ($B=0.164$, $p=0.003$), with a standardized Beta coefficient of 0.163. This indicates that each 1-unit increase in consumer experience corresponds to an estimated 0.164-unit increase in perceived value. The intercept term (constant) is 3.273 ($p<0.001$), representing the baseline perceived value score of 3.273 when consumer experience is zero. In the collinearity test, both the tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values are 1.000, confirming no multicollinearity issues among the independent variable (consumer experience) and other model variables, ensuring high reliability of the results.

The analysis confirms that while consumer experience significantly enhances perceived value, its explanatory power remains limited. A more comprehensive regression model should incorporate variables like cultural symbol integration and infrastructure optimization. For practical implementation, Lakeside Star Area homestay recommends enhancing service standardization (e.g., staff training) and cultural immersion (e.g., intangible cultural heritage experiences) to deepen the consumer experience, thereby systematically improving tourists' overall perception of the homestay's value.

(2) Regression Analysis of Local Attachment to Consumption Experience

The model summary indicates that the regression model of consumer experience on perceived value shows an R-squared coefficient of 0.026 (adjusted R-squared: 0.024), explaining only 2.6% of the total variance in perceived value. The model passes the significance test ($F=9.151$, $p=0.003$), confirming a statistically significant linear relationship between consumer experience and perceived value. ANOVA results reveal that the regression model's total variance (10.844) is significantly higher than the residual variance (1.185), with an F-value of 9.151 ($p=0.003$), further validating the model's overall validity. However, the residual variance accounts for 97.4% of the total variance.

The regression coefficient analysis demonstrates that consumer experience has a statistically significant positive impact on perceived value ($B=0.164$, $p=0.003$), with a standardized Beta coefficient of 0.163. This indicates that each 1-unit increase in consumer experience corresponds to an estimated 0.164-unit increase in perceived value. The intercept term (constant) is 3.273 ($p<0.001$), representing the baseline perceived value score of 3.273 when consumer experience is zero. In the collinearity test, both the tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values are 1.000, confirming no multicollinearity issues among the independent variable (consumer experience) and other model variables, ensuring high reliability of the results.

The analysis confirms that while consumer experience significantly enhances perceived value, its explanatory power remains limited. A more comprehensive regression model should incorporate variables like cultural symbol integration and infrastructure optimization. For practical implementation, Lakeside Star Area homestay recommends enhancing service standardization (e.g., staff training) and cultural immersion (e.g., intangible cultural heritage experiences) to deepen the consumer experience, thereby systematically improving tourists' overall perception of the homestay's value.

(3) Regression Analysis of Local Attachment to Perceived Value

The model summary indicates that the regression model for perceived value with local attachment shows an R-squared coefficient of 0.341 (adjusted R-squared: 0.339), with the

model passing the significance test ($F=174.148$, $p<0.001$), demonstrating a statistically significant linear relationship between local attachment and perceived value. ANOVA results reveal a total sum of squares (SS) of 139.750, residual sum of squares (RSS) of 270.436, and an F-value of 174.148 ($p<0.001$), further validating the model's overall validity.

Regression analysis demonstrates that local attachment has a significant positive effect on perceived value ($B=0.604$, $p<0.001$), with a standardized Beta coefficient of 0.584. This indicates that each 1-unit increase in local attachment corresponds to an estimated 0.604-unit increase in perceived value. The intercept term (constant) is 1.272 ($p<0.001$), representing the baseline perceived value score of 1.272 when local attachment is zero. The collinearity test shows a tolerance of 1.000 and a variance inflation factor (VIF) of 1.000, confirming no multicollinearity issues among the independent variable (local attachment) and other model variables, ensuring high reliability of the results.

The analysis confirms that local attachment significantly enhances perceived value, with a high explanatory power ($R^2=34.1\%$). This indicates that tourists' functional reliance on homestay environments and their emotional attachment can effectively elevate their overall perception of homestay value. Practically, Lakeside Star Area homestay should deepen cultural symbol integration (e.g., Bao Gong culture-themed designs) and create emotional interaction scenarios (e.g., family activities) to strengthen local attachment. This approach will systematically optimize perceived value, providing theoretical and practical foundations for sustainable homestay industry development. Future research could incorporate variables like service quality and infrastructure to construct a multiple regression model, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the driving mechanisms behind perceived value.

(4) Regression Analysis of Consumer Experience on Behavioral Intention

The model summary indicates that the regression model between consumer experience and behavioral intention demonstrates a statistically significant linear relationship, with an R-squared coefficient of 0.055 (adjusted R-squared: 0.052) and a significant F-value ($F=19.553$, $p<0.001$). ANOVA results show the total variance explained by the model is 28.564 ($F=19.553$, $p<0.001$), further validating the model's robustness.

Regression analysis demonstrates that consumer experience positively influences behavioral intention ($B=0.266$, $p<0.001$), with a standardized Beta coefficient of 0.234. This indicates that each 1-unit increase in consumer experience corresponds to an expected 0.266-unit increase in behavioral intention. The intercept term (constant) is 2.791 ($p<0.001$), representing the baseline behavioral intention score when consumer experience is zero. Multicollinearity tests show a tolerance of 1.000 and a variance inflation factor (VIF) of 1.000, confirming no multicollinearity issues among independent variables (consumer experience) and other model variables, ensuring high reliability of the results.

The analysis confirms that consumer experience significantly positively influences behavioral intention, though its explanatory power remains limited ($R^2=5.5\%$). This indicates that tourists' repurchase or referral behaviors are not solely dependent on consumption experience but are also driven by factors such as place attachment and cultural engagement. For practical implementation, Lakeside Star Area homestays should enhance the depth of consumer experience by optimizing service processes (e.g., ensuring service stability during holidays) and enriching cultural experiences (e.g., intangible cultural heritage handicraft activities), thereby indirectly promoting the transformation of tourists' behavioral intentions. Future research could develop a multiple regression model incorporating variables like place attachment and infrastructure to comprehensively reveal the driving mechanisms of behavioral intention, providing more precise strategic support for the sustainable development of the homestay industry.

(5) Regression Analysis of Perceived Value to Behavioral Intention

The regression model analysis of perceived value on behavioral intention demonstrated a significant linear relationship ($R^2=0.465$, adjusted $R^2=0.464$, $F=293.144$, $p<0.001$). ANOVA results showed a total variance of 242.315 ($F=293.144$, $p<0.001$), confirming the model's validity. The regression coefficient ($B=0.769$, $p<0.001$) indicates a strong positive correlation, with a standardized Beta coefficient of 0.682 (meaning a 1-unit increase in perceived value predicts a 0.769-unit increase in behavioral intention). The intercept term (constant) was 1.011 ($p<0.001$), representing the baseline behavioral intention score when perceived value equals zero. Multicollinearity analysis revealed no significant issues (tolerance/VIF both 1.000), ensuring reliable results.

The analysis confirms that perceived value significantly positively influences behavioral intentions, with a high explanatory power ($R^2=46.5\%$). This indicates that tourists' overall perception of homestays' functional and emotional values effectively drives behaviors such as repeat purchases, recommendations, and premium payments. Practically, Lakeside Star Area homestays should enhance perceived value through systematic approaches like improving service standardization (e.g., staff training) and cultural IP development (e.g., intangible cultural heritage experiences), thereby boosting consumption conversion and market penetration. Future research could introduce moderating variables (e.g., guest demographics) or mediating variables (e.g., place attachment) to further elucidate the mechanisms of perceived value's impact on behavioral intentions, providing more precise theoretical support for optimizing the homestay industry.

(6) Regression Analysis of Local Attachment to Behavioral Intention

The model summary indicates that the regression analysis of local attachment on behavioral intention demonstrates a significant linear relationship, with an R^2 of 0.451 (adjusted R^2 : 0.450), $F=277.292$, and $p<0.001$. ANOVA results show a total variance of 235.127 ($F=277.292$, $p<0.001$), confirming the model's robustness. The 54.9% residual variance suggests strong explanatory power of local attachment, though integrating additional variables (e.g., perceived value or cultural experience) could provide a more comprehensive understanding of behavioral intention drivers.

Regression analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between local attachment and behavioral intention ($B=0.784$, $p<0.001$), with a standardized Beta coefficient of 0.672. This indicates that a 1-unit increase in local attachment corresponds to an expected 0.784-unit increase in behavioral intention. The intercept term (constant) was 0.477 ($p=0.038$), representing a baseline behavioral intention score of 0.477 when local attachment was zero, though its practical significance is limited. The collinearity test showed a tolerance of 1.000 and a variance inflation factor (VIF) of 1.000, confirming no multicollinearity issues among the independent variable (local attachment) and other model variables, thus ensuring high reliability of the results.

The analysis confirms that place attachment significantly positively influences behavioral intentions, with a high explanatory power ($R^2=45.1\%$). This indicates that tourists' functional dependence on homestay environments and their emotional attachment effectively drive behaviors such as repeat purchases, recommendations, and premium payments. Practically, Lakeside Star Area homestays should enhance place attachment by integrating cultural symbols (e.g., Lingnan architectural designs) and creating emotionally engaging scenarios (e.g., family activities), thereby systematically improving conversion rates. Future research could develop multivariate regression models incorporating perceived value and service quality to fully reveal the driving mechanisms of behavioral intentions, providing more precise strategic support for the sustainable development of the homestay industry.

5. Conclusion and Implications

5.1. Research Findings

(1) The consumer demographic profile is well-defined, with clearly delineated demand orientation.

Demographic analysis of 339 valid samples reveals distinct characteristics of the core clientele at Lakeside Star Area homestays: 59.3% of guests are urban leisure travelers aged 18-40, 47.5% hold bachelor's or college degrees, and 71.9% belong to the middle-to-high-income group with monthly earnings exceeding 4,000 yuan. Behavioral data further confirms their preference for short-distance vacations-55.8% of tourists travel 1-3 times annually, while 30.7% make 4-6 trips. The heavy reliance on private cars (65.4%) and high-speed rail (51.2%) underscores efficiency-driven travel choices. Notably, 83.2% of travelers prioritize "proximity to scenic spots" and "social interactions with family and friends," with family trips accounting for 41.6% and friend groups (including couples) making up 28.9%. This highlights the need for homestay products to enhance family-friendly amenities (e.g., children's playgrounds) and social spaces (open kitchens, rooftop gardens). Simultaneously, comprehensive upgrades are required to address parking facility shortcomings (currently rated 3.47/5), such as installing new energy vehicle charging stations and implementing time-sharing parking systems.

(2) The advantages of environment and visual experience are remarkable, but the service shortcomings become the key bottleneck.

Consumer experience metrics reveal that homestays excel in environmental aesthetics, scoring 5.65 (SD=1.654) for surrounding landscapes, 5.42 for architectural style, and 5.23 for interior design. This highlights the dual appeal of Lakeside Star Area's ecological resources and Lingnan architectural heritage. However, service quality shows significant disparities: the "homecoming comfort" score averages 4.73 (SD=1.698) with a variance of 2.882, indicating uneven service standards. In-depth interviews revealed that 34.7% of guests complained about delayed responses (e.g., over 15 minutes without reply), while 21.3% noted staff inadequacy (e.g., failure to explain local intangible cultural heritage crafts). To address this, a "dual-service system" is recommended: implementing ISO-standardized procedures (e.g., 30-second response mechanism) for basic services, and developing immersive cultural experiences (e.g., inkstone carving workshops) for value-added services. This tiered approach aims to enhance experience consistency across service levels.

(3) The differentiation of functional value recognition and the defects of infrastructure are prominent.

The perceived value analysis reveals dual attributes in homestay development: Transportation convenience (4.68 points) and facility completeness (4.68 points) receive high recognition, closely tied to the location advantage within a 5-kilometer radius of scenic areas. However, room privacy (3.46 points) and parking accessibility (3.47 points) emerge as significant pain points, with 68.4% of tourists reporting inadequate soundproofing and over 20-minute parking search times during peak periods. While catering services score 4.39 points, the variance of 3.552 indicates demand differentiation-46.2% of tourists expect 1-2 daily local specialty dishes (e.g., Dinghu Shangsou), while 23.1% prefer international light meal options. Recommendations include implementing the "Infrastructure Doubling Plan": comprehensively upgrading soundproofing systems (e.g., installing rubber vibration-absorbing pads), building intelligent parking guidance systems, and launching "food mystery box packages".

(4) Strong sense of local dependence, and emotional stickiness needs deep cultivation.

The Local Attachment Scale reveals strong functional dependence on Lakeside Star Area's ecological resources (5.06 points), with 91.3% of tourists identifying "natural landscapes" as the key factor in choosing this homestay. However, emotional connection dimensions show

relatively weak performance: "home identification" (4.66 points) and "emotional uniqueness" (4.62 points) average close to theoretical thresholds. In-depth interviews revealed only 19.8% of tourists could clearly describe exclusive memory points of the homestay. To address this, an "emotional landmark" strategy is proposed: installing a "Star Lake Memory Wall" (displaying handwritten stories from past guests) in public areas, providing customized emotional service packages (including local plant specimens and hand-drawn maps) in guest rooms, and using AR technology to recreate historical scenes of the Tanka fishing village, transforming physical spaces into narrative emotional carriers.

(5) The behavior intention is characterized by "high willingness to spread, low consumption extension".

Behavioral intention data reveals homestays' strong word-of-mouth potential: online sharing willingness (4.54) and friend/recommendation index (4.51) significantly exceed the industry average (3.8±0.5). However, extended consumption willingness remains weak, with only 36.4% of tourists willing to pay a 15%+ premium during holidays, and participation in ancillary activities remains low. Notably, the willingness to prioritize lodging (4.11) is strongly correlated with seasonal factors. To address this, a "dynamic revenue model" has been designed: introducing "off-peak special packages" (early bird prices + free cycling vouchers) during slow seasons, implementing "value anchoring strategies" (e.g., purchase of accommodation with complimentary Star Lake boat tickets) during peak seasons, and developing IP co-branded derivatives (e.g., "Seven Stars Accompanying the Moon" cultural blind boxes) to create multi-tiered consumption scenarios.

(6) The data reliability and validity are reliable, and the variable relationship reveals the driving path.

The Cronbach's α coefficient (0.612-0.789) and KMO value (0.899) confirm the scale's strong reliability and validity. Structural equation modeling reveals that perceived value accounts for 46.5% of behavioral intention ($\beta=0.687$, $p<0.01$), followed by place attachment (45.1%, $\beta=0.642$, $p<0.01$), while consumption experience has a weaker direct impact (5.5%, $\beta=0.241$, $p>0.1$). Notably, emotional value ($\beta=0.315$) and social value ($\beta=0.278$) significantly moderate repurchase intention. This suggests developing a "value-experience-emotion" triad model, such as digitizing service touchpoints through IoT technology (e.g., smart mattresses monitoring sleep quality and recommending personalized breakfast plans) while implementing the "Homestay Host Story Initiative" to foster emotional connections.

5.2. Research Implications

(1) At the level of homestay operators

Establish a standardized management system for homestay services. To address service experience fluctuations and content homogenization, operators should develop a scientific management framework through dual approaches: standardization and personalization. At the standardization level, drawing on mature practices from the hotel industry, they should create a "Homestay Service Operation Manual" specifying key metrics like response times and cleaning protocols—for instance, ensuring check-in takes no more than 5 minutes and daily linen changes with strict disinfection. For personalized service development, emphasize local cultural empowerment by organizing staff training on Lakeside Star Area's historical narratives and intangible cultural heritage skills (e.g., Duan inkstone carving and steamed bun wrapping), enabling them to provide immersive cultural interpretation. Tailored for family guests, design interactive experience kits containing DIY craft materials, children's picture books, and local ecological guides. This not only accommodates multi-generational travel needs but also boosts non-room revenue through value-added services, aiming to increase non-room consumption conversion rates to 30% within three years.

Promote intelligent infrastructure upgrades. Homestays should systematically address shortcomings in privacy, security, and transportation infrastructure through phased renovation projects. For safety and privacy enhancement, prioritize installing triple-glazed soundproof doors and windows in all guest rooms with 100% coverage, while implementing smart door locks and 24/7 surveillance systems to ensure visitor privacy and property protection. To resolve parking challenges, collaborate with local governments to build shared underground smart parking facilities equipped with license plate recognition and reverse parking systems. Additionally, plan shuttle bus routes within homestay clusters to reduce walking distances to within 100 meters. Emphasize eco-friendly designs by planting noise-reducing vegetation (e.g., oleander and coral trees) along parking-to-homestay access roads, and using grass-embedded bricks for eco-friendly parking spaces to mitigate noise pollution while enhancing landscape harmony.

(2) At the industry association level

Establish a service quality certification system. Industry associations should lead the development of a local standard titled "Lakeside Star Area Homestay Service Quality Classification and Evaluation," referencing France's "Rural Homestay Alliance" certification model. A tiered system of "Gold Homestay" and "Silver Homestay" should be established, with evaluation criteria including service responsiveness, cultural integration, and facility completeness. Certified homestays may enjoy policy benefits such as tax reductions and government priority recommendations, fostering a virtuous cycle of "certification-driven improvement." Regular third-party audits should be conducted, with non-compliant homestays being dynamically delisted to drive industry-wide service quality upgrades. Promote "Homestay+" industrial synergy. Centered on homestays, integrate agriculture, fisheries, and cultural industries to create a composite industrial chain. For agritourism, collaborate with nearby orchards and tea gardens to offer "Homestay + Picking" packages, granting 10% discounts to guests with valid stays. For fisheries, develop Lakeside Star Area night fishing experiences where homestays can arrange fishing boats and cooking spaces, with caught fish processed into on-site dinners. For cultural empowerment, establish a "Lakeside Star Area Homestay Cultural Fund" to encourage designers to create intangible cultural heritage derivatives (e.g., Tanka shell paintings, fishing net woven bags), with exhibition spaces within homestays and revenue shared between creators and homestays, forming a closed-loop cultural monetization system.

(3) Government-level

Refine the policy support framework. The government should introduce the "Lakeside Star Area Homestay Quality Development Support Measures" to establish a multi-tiered policy support network. In terms of land supply, designated construction land indicators for homestays should be allocated outside ecological protection red lines, allowing village collectives to revitalize idle land through leasing. Financially, service quality-certified homestays will receive equipment upgrade subsidies-such as 50% fiscal subsidies for smart security system installation. To attract talent, income tax reductions will apply to homestays hiring professional managers and new media teams. Promote infrastructure sharing. The government should lead the "Lakeside Star Area Transportation Optimization Project" to systematically enhance accessibility and visitor experience. Road upgrades will widen main thoroughfares within homestay clusters to two-lane bidirectional roads, equipped with solar streetlights and signage for nighttime safety. Shuttle services will launch new energy bus routes from high-speed rail stations, reducing peak-hour intervals to 15 minutes while providing free WiFi and travel guides. Smart navigation systems will display real-time occupancy rates, special services, and event information at scenic area entrances to guide tourist flow and prevent congestion. Through these measures, the Lakeside Star Area homestay industry will transition

from "traffic dependency" to "quality-driven" development, injecting sustainable growth momentum into regional cultural tourism economy.

Acknowledgments

Funded projects:

1) Guangdong Province's 2025 Educational Science Planning Project "Research on the Mechanism of Empowering High-Quality Development of County-Level Cultural Tourism Economy through Higher Tourism Education under the Guidance of the 'Double Hundred Action' " (2025GXJK0579);

2) Zhaoqing University's 2024 School-level Curriculum Ideological and Political Reform Demonstration Project: "Ideological and Political Culture and Tourism".

References

- [1] Ma Liang, Yan Tingyu. A Review and Prospect of the Development of Rural Homestays in China [J]. *China Agricultural Resources and Regionalization*, 2023,44(12):165-170.
- [2] Wu Xiaojun, Yu Lanlan. Clarification of the Concept, Evolution of Connotation and Development of the Business Form of Homestays. *Tourism Research*. 2018,10(2):84-94.
- [3] Wu Wenzhi, Cui Chunyu. High-quality development of rural homestays in China: supply-demand characteristics, path selection, and construction of a social effect evaluation system [J]. *Tourism Guide*, 2025,9(03):20-43.
- [4] Jiang Jiaqian, Li Yan. A Review of Domestic and International Research on Tourism Homestays [J]. *Tourism Research*, 2014,6(04):16-22.
- [5] Wu Zhaozhi, Sheng Ruilan. Development Status and Feasibility Analysis of Qian Island Lake Homestays [J]. *Modern State-Owned Enterprises Research*, 2016, (24):194-195.
- [6] Long Fei, Liu Jiaming, Chang Jingliang. Current Research Status and Future Prospects of Domestic Homestays [J]. *Urban Studies Journal*, 2019,40(01):31-37.
- [7] Xu Linying, Shen Shiwei. Development Mechanism of Suburban Scenic Area Homestays: A Case Study of Operators in Dongqian Lake, Ningbo [J]. *Productivity Research*, 2019, (03):51-56.
- [8] Zhu Nan, De Zhuo, Dong Xiuli, Zhaba Wangqing. From family-run inns to boutique homestays: Ecotourism has flourished in a village [J]. *China Xizang*, 2020(02):40-43.
- [9] Tang Jinhong. Over 80 homestays are blooming, Zhaoqing Lakeside Star Area homestay cluster takes initial shape [N]. *NetEase News*, 2022 (digital edition).
- [10] Hu Yuan, Du Zhefeng. Duanzhou's Party-building-led empowerment of the homestay industry. *Xijiang Daily*, 2023-08-03 (001).
- [11] Huang Heping, Liu Ying, Zhong Wei, et al. Scene cognition and intentionality: the mediating role of emotional identification and the moderating effect of perceived value-A case study of high-end homestays in Shanghai [J]. *Tourism Science*, 2025,39(08):113-133.
- [12] Li Xinran. The Impact of Authentic Perception of Rural Homestays on Co-creation of Tourist Value: A Perspective on Local Attachment and Rural Life Experience [J]. *Journal of Heilongjiang Vocational College of Ecological Engineering*, 2025,38(05):30-38.
- [13] Wu Tongyi, Jiang Huanzhou, Li Jun, et al. The Mechanism of Tourist Perceived Value, Place Attachment and Behavioral Intention: A Study Based on the Perspective of Tourists at the 'High Mountain and Flowing Water' Toasting Ceremony in Xijiang Miao Village [J]. *Anhui Agricultural Science*, 2025,53(20):109-114.
- [14] Liang Tingting. A Study on the Relationship Between Tourists' Accommodation Experience, Cultural Identity, and Behavioral Intentions [D]. *Guizhou Normal University*, 2018.