RESEARCH ARTICLE

Research on the High-Quality Development of Guangdong Home-stays Promoted by Four-Wheel Drive Linkage under the Background of Digital Economy

Lili Du[1,*] **and Minqing Gan**[1]

[1] School of Digital Economics and Management, Software Engineering Institute of Guangzhou, Guangzhou 510990, China

Abstract

Investigating the high-quality development of rural home-stays is beneficial for local employment and economic growth, promotes urban-rural exchange, aids in the perfection of the tourism industry chain, and enhances the overall competitiveness of tourism. This paper takes 50 operators of rural home-stays in Conghua District as interview subjects, and through in-depth interviews, analyzes the current development status and existing problems of rural home-stays. It proposes feasible suggestions from four levels: home-stay operators, government, industry associations, and universities, providing strong support for the high-quality development of home-stays in Guangdong Province.

Keywords: high-quality development, four-wheel drive linkage, rural home-stays.

1 Overview of Home-stay Development in Guangdong Province

Home-stays, as a new form of tourism business, are an effective means to drive the development of the overall tourism industry chain, aid local employment and economic growth, and support the high-quality development of tourism-strong provinces.With the upgrading of tourism consumption and the increase in personalized demands, the market size of Home-stays continues to expand, with an average annual growth rate exceeding 50% [1]. As of July 15, 2024, there are a total of 287,000 existing home-stay-related enterprises in China;Zhejiang Province ranks first with 35,300 registered enterprises;followed by Guangdong Province with 29,500 registered enterprises; and Sichuan Province ranks third with 18,800 registered enterprises [2].

The rapid development of the digital economy has brought tremendous opportunities for the Home-stay industry in Guangdong Province. Through online platforms and applications, Home-stay operators can disseminate accommodation information more widely to potential customers and achieve online reservations, payments, and customer services [3]. At the same time, digital and intelligent technologies are widely

Submitted: 30 December 2024
Accepted: 28 April 2025
Published: 18 June 2025

Vol. 2, **No.** 2, 2025.
10.62762/JSSPA.2025.821158

***Corresponding author:**
✉ Lili Du
275064210@qq.com

Citation
Du, L., & Gan, M. (2025). Research on the High-Quality Development of Guangdong Home-stays Promoted by Four-Wheel Drive Linkage under the Background of Digital Economy. *Journal of Social Systems and Policy Analysis*, 2(2), 77–84.

© 2025 by the Authors. Published by Institute of Central Computation and Knowledge. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

applied in the Home-stay industry, such as electronic locks and smart home controls, which improve the comfort and safety of accommodation. The application of these technologies not only enhances the service quality of Home-stays but also improves operational efficiency and management levels [5]. In the future, the Home-stay industry in Guangdong Province will continue to maintain a growth trend, with quality, branding, nationalization, intelligence, and environmentally sustainable development becoming the main trends [6].

The rapid development of rural Home-stays in Guangdong Province has provided employment opportunities in rural areas and promoted the development of the rural economy [4]. With the surge in Home-stay supply and the rapid saturation of the market, there is an oversupply of Home-stays, leading to an increasing number of homogeneous products, market fatigue is evident, and overall occupancy rates and customer prices have declined. Against this backdrop, the payback period for Home-stays has lengthened, compounded by high operating costs, which puts pressure on Home-stay operators [8]. Therefore, Home-stays in Guangdong Province need to continuously innovate, improve service quality, and actively seek new growth points.

2 Analysis of Problems and Causes in Home-stay Development in Guangdong Province - Taking Conghua District as an Example

2.1 Analysis of the Constraints on Home-stay Development in Conghua District

As illustrated in Figure 1, among the surveyed operators, 9.52% consider the shortage of professional talent as a difficulty in developing Home-stays, 26.19% lack of financial and credit support, 4.76% lack of guidance from relevant organizations, 61.90% insufficient number of tourists and strong seasonality [15], 19.15% policy encouragement and support, 9.52% lack of skill training, 11.90% absence of standard industry regulations and unregulated operation and management, and 11.90% lack of unified government promotion. The majority of operators believe that the difficulties in developing Home-stay tourism are the lack of financial and credit support and the insufficient number of tourists with strong seasonality, indicating that the government needs to relax the conditions for Home-stay loans and operators should consider how to cope with the crisis during the off-season [14].



Figure 1. Factors constraining the development of Home-stays.

2.2 Analysis of the Main Issues and Causes in the Development of Home-stays in Conghua District

2.2.1 *The architectural style of Home-stays is monotonous, lacking distinctive features*

As shown in Figure 2, among the surveyed operators, 45.24% chose to build new structures, none chose traditional old houses, 42.86% chose to renovate and

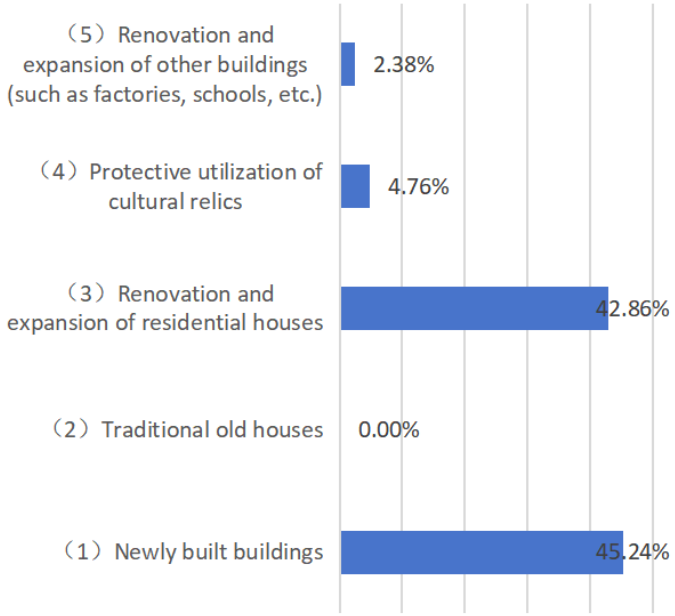


Figure 2. Different attributes of Home-stay architecture.

expand residential buildings, 4.76% chose to utilize protected cultural relics, and 2.38% chose to renovate and expand other types of buildings (such as factories, schools, etc.). This indicates that most operators prefer to build new structures or renovate and expand residential buildings, and it is advisable to incorporate local characteristics and cultural connotations into the architectural design [9].

2.2.2 *The Home-stay products are primarily focused on accommodation and lack personalized services*

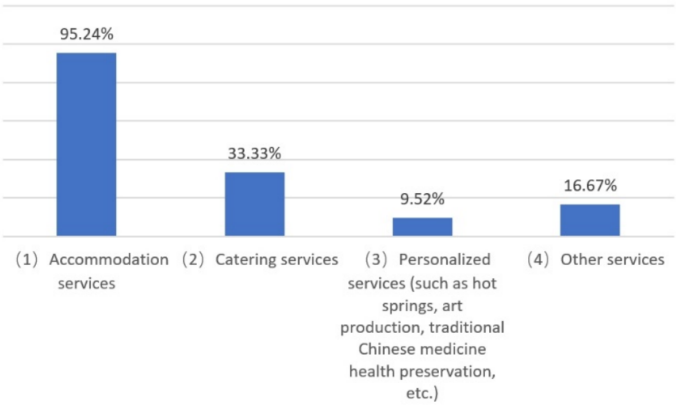


Figure 3. Home-stay services.

As presented in Figure 3, among the surveyed operators, 95.24% provide accommodation services, 33.33% provide catering services, 9.52% offer personalized services (such as hot springs, art creation, traditional Chinese medicine health preservation, etc.), and 16.67% provide other services. This indicates that most Home-stays primarily focus on accommodation services, and some Home-stays offer personalized services to provide visitors with a higher sense of experience.

2.2.3 *The workforce is primarily local, with a low barrier to entry for employees and a lack of training*

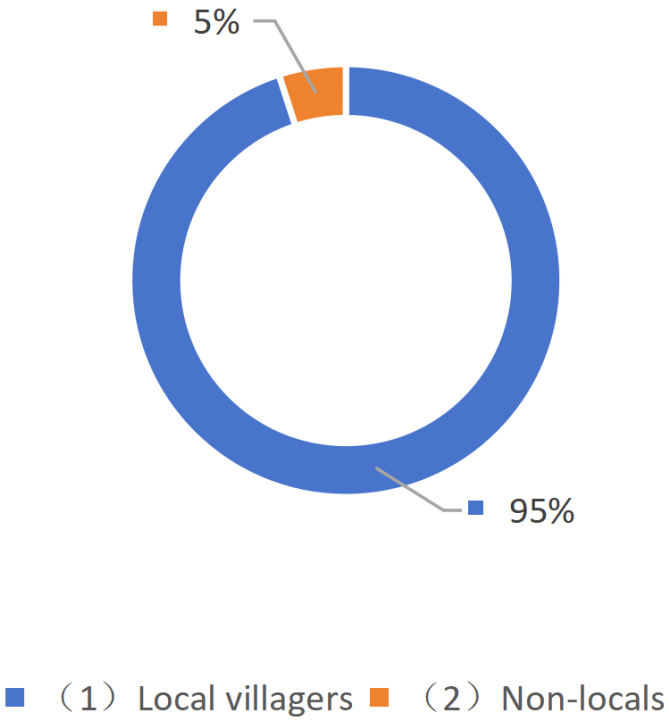


Figure 4. Distribution of Home-stay employees.

As shown in Figure 4, among the surveyed operators, 95% chose local villagers as employees, and 5% chose people from other places as employees. This indicates that rural Home-stay operators predominantly employ local, familiar individuals

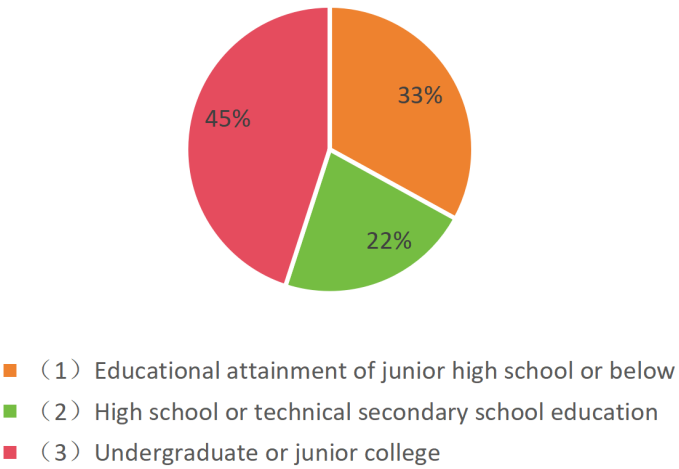


Figure 5. Educational background distribution.

As presented in Figure 5, among the surveyed operators, 14 individuals with junior high school education or below accounted for 33%, 9 individuals

with high school or vocational secondary school education accounted for 22%; 19 individuals with undergraduate or associate degrees accounted for 45%; and there were 0 individuals with graduate degrees. This indicates that the threshold for operating rural Home-stays is relatively low, and education level does not have a significant impact.

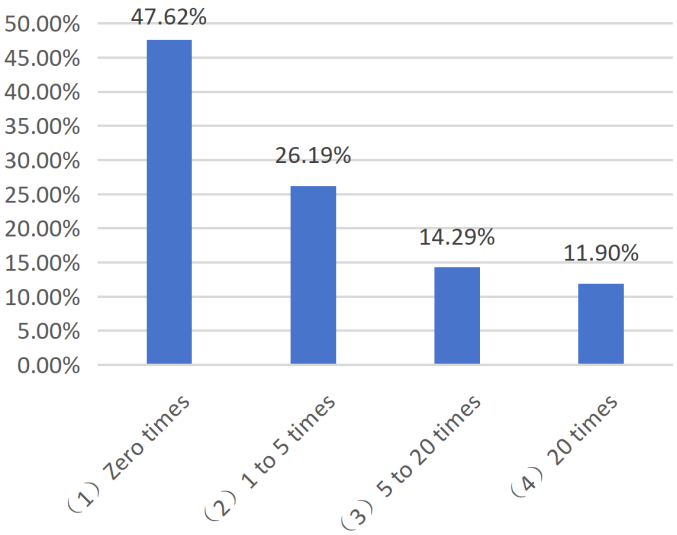


Figure 6. Distribution of participation in Home-stay tourism knowledge training.

As illustrated in Figure 6, among the surveyed operators, 47.62% attended 0 training sessions, 26.19% attended 1-5 training sessions, 14.29% attended 5-20 training sessions, and 11.90% attended 20 or more training sessions. This indicates that the majority of rural Home-stay operators do not place a high level of importance on Home-stay tourism knowledge training and have a low level of participation [10].

2.2.4 More than three-quarters of the target customers are parent-child families, and over seventy percent are repeat customers from offline channels, but there is a strong dependency on online marketing channels, with fewer independent marketing channels

As presented in Figure 7, among the surveyed operators, 14.29% of the guests staying in Home-stays were individual travelers by car, 42.86% were part of group tours, 78.57% were parent-child families, and 4.76% were other travelers. This indicates that the majority of guests staying in rural Home-stays tend to be in groups, primarily consisting of parent-child families [11].

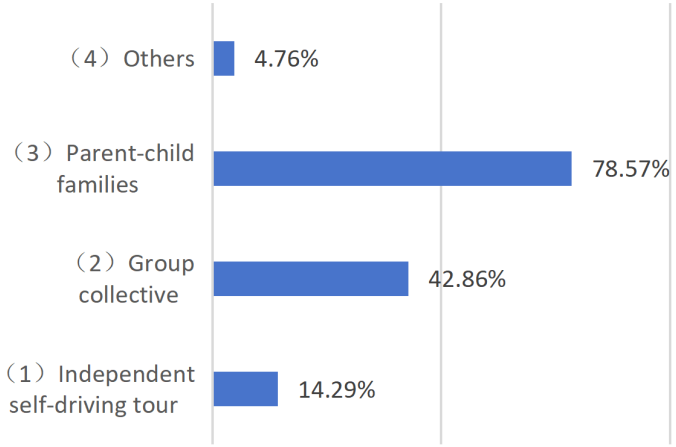


Figure 7. Demographics of guests staying in Home-stays.

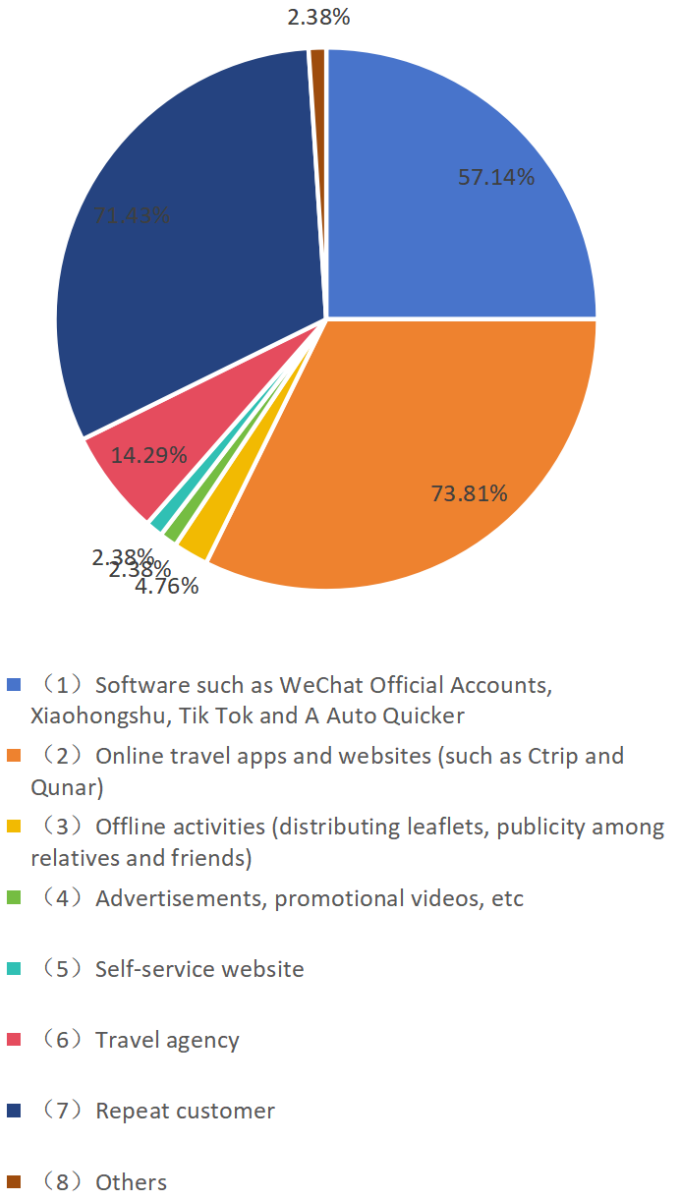


Figure 8. Home-stay promotion channels.

As illustrated in Figure 8, among the surveyed operators, 57.14% chose We Chat Official Accounts, Alongshore (Little Red Book, TikTok, Kuaishou and other platforms for promotion, 73.81% used online apps (such as Ctrip, Qunar, and other websites),

4.76% relied on offline activities (distributing flyers, promotion by friends and family), 2.38% used advertisements and promotional videos, 2.38% had their own websites, 14.29% cooperated with travel agencies, 71.43% relied on repeat customers, and 2.38% used other methods. Operators mainly use We Chat Official Accounts,Little Red Book, Ctrip websites, and repeat customers for promotion, indicating that in the internet era, these social software and related travel apps can better promote rural Home-stays [7]. The high proportion of promotion through repeat customers suggests that providing good Home-stay services can bring higher economic value.

3 Suggestions for High-Quality Development of Rural Home-stays through Four-Wheel Drive Linkage

3.1 Home-stay Aspect

3.1.1 Establish a brand image based on local characteristics and personal integration

In the new era, consumer concepts have undergone significant changes, requiring products to be more personalized to meet the individual needs of different groups. Amid the increasing homogenization of Home-stay products, rural Home-stay operators need to adhere to their unique features while integrating local rural themes and characteristics to create more original products [13]. This will help to build rural living scenes that are more culturally rich, humanely caring, nostalgic, and immersive. At the same time, research should be conducted on the development, design, service provision, and management of Home-stays to establish their own brand culture image, thereby improving the quality and attractiveness of rural Home-stay tourism.

3.1.2 Accurately grasp customer needs and improve customer satisfaction

To enhance the market competitiveness of rural Home-stays, the most important aspect is to analyze from the customer's perspective and uncover their actual needs. First, scientifically refine and position the rural Home-stay market, and provide customized services according to different customer needs to meet their personalized demands. Win customer reputation and trust in the service process, and gradually convert them into loyal customers. Second, use big data technology to establish a database, and collect and analyze customer information based on the degree of participation and the correlation between people and the environment. This will help understand and grasp customer behavior preferences, thereby formulating more accurate marketing plans and further improving customer satisfaction.

3.1.3 Improve the quality of rural Home-stay personnel and introduce professional talent

Most rural Home-stay operators are local villagers who, compared to other tourism projects, lack strength and have a lower level of professionalism in market positioning, pricing strategies, and marketing promotion. They have a weak service consciousness and are at the stage of "selling products" rather than focusing on customer experience value. Operators should actively learn, expand themselves, and stabilize service quality while improving the quality of service personnel to better handle emergencies. Introduce professional talent and input modern marketing concepts, making full use of various information dissemination methods in the information age.

3.1.4 Strengthen cooperation with government departments and industry associations

Rural Home-stay operators should strengthen cooperation with government departments and industry associations to jointly promote the development of rural Home-stays. Government departments and industry associations have clarified the guiding principles, basic principles, and main goals for the development of rural Home-stays [12]. The government provides policy support and financial assistance, and industry associations provide industry information and technical guidance. Rural Home-stay operators should grasp the trends of the times and cooperate with government departments and industry associations under the rural revitalization strategy to meet the consumption needs of tourists and improve operational efficiency.

3.2 Government Aspect

3.2.1 Improve laws and regulations to regulate the development of Home-stays

Nationally, there has always been a relative lack of standardized supervision over Home-stays. Local governments can introduce a series of policies to encourage and guide the development of the Home-stay industry. For example, they can provide support in terms of tax incentives, subsidies, land use, quality supervision, and other institutional constructions to strongly support the development of the Home-stay market.

3.2.2 Introduce incentive policies to enhance risk resistance

The municipal finance should continue to allocate funds to reward and support Home-stays, offering differentiated rewards for graded Home-stays. At the same time, led by the administrative authorities, integrate financial resources such as banks, venture capital, insurance, guarantees, and funds. Combine these with rural leisure tourism and rural revitalization, and coordinate the use of policy funds, village collective self-raised funds, and enterprise funds to form a multi-party interest linkage mechanism adapted to rural development. Encourage the financial industry to launch characteristic financial service products, such as "Home-stay Loan" and "Good Guarantee Loan" focused on the development of Home-stays, clarify the loan process, and enhance the risk resistance of Home-stays.

3.2.3 Strengthen policy inclination and provide intellectual support

In the development of the tourism industry, prioritize the development of Home-stays and introduce policies to promote Home-stays, such as financial subsidies and intellectual support. The current consumer groups of rural Home-stays are mainly dominated by those born in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, with those born in the 1960s and 1970s accounting for a vast proportion. Existing Home-stays mainly focus on the needs of current consumers and tap into the younger consumer groups. However, their management methods and knowledge levels cannot match those of large-scale tourism companies, and they urgently need support in training, marketing, and other aspects to achieve a leap from low-end to mid-to-high-end Home-stays.

3.2.4 Providing infrastructure construction is indispensable

In interviews and surveys with Home-stay operators in Conghua District, it was found that operators generally hope to strengthen local infrastructure construction. The accessibility of transportation in some rural areas is still poor, with narrow rural roads and some remote areas still having dirt and stone roads. If consumers drive in, there are not only no parking areas but also an increased probability of accidents during the journey. To get rich, first build roads, so the first priority in rural revitalization is to build wide and flat roads, try to use cement hardening for main roads, widen roads, and improve the overall environment around the roads. At the same time, a unique road can be built according to local characteristics, build parking lots, and add road signs to attract and retain tourists.

3.2.5 Combine rural revitalization with Green and Beautiful Guangdong

Government departments can take high-quality development as the theme, focus on promoting the construction of beautiful rural actions, implement green development, and promote the construction of ecological civilization to make rural revitalization effective. At the same time, allow the public to participate in strengthening the comprehensive management of the ecological environment, increase publicity efforts, transform the public from onlookers to participants and supervisors of pollution control, promote the development of local rural Home-stays and environmental protection, and turn green mountains and clear waters into mountains of gold and silver.

3.3 Industry Association Aspect

3.3.1 Scale Management and Standardized Operations

Industry associations should establish unified standards for rural Home-stays, regulate business management, enhance service quality, and achieve resource and experience sharing. At the same time, they should strengthen guidance and services, reinforce the rectification of public safety and fire safety hazards in rural Home-stays, actively promote knowledge on fire prevention, theft prevention, and other safety measures to Home-stay operators, and collaborate with tourism, environmental protection, and other departments to strengthen supervision over the service quality, safety management, fire protection facilities, food hygiene, and environmental protection of Home-stays. This ensures orderly development and standardized operations.

3.3.2 Strengthen Training and Improve Skills

Industry associations regularly hold various thematic training sessions to enhance the training of Home-stay operators and practitioners in business management, service etiquette, marketing planning, cooking skills, food hygiene, and safety prevention, thereby continuously improving the comprehensive quality of Home-stay practitioners. They also promote mutual assistance between star-rated hotels and rural Home-stays, encourage hotels to provide professional guidance to rural Home-stay operators, and arrange for Home-stay service staff to rotate and train in hotels, further enhancing the overall service level of rural Home-stays.

3.4 University Aspect

3.4.1 Talent Cultivation and Placement

Universities can supply offer related majors and courses, such as adding courses on Home-stay management and design in tourism management, hotel management, interior design, and other majors to systematically cultivate professional Home-stay talents. They can conduct vocational skill training for Home-stay managers and other practitioners, providing training in service skills, marketing techniques, digital operations, and other areas to enhance their professional quality and service level. Organize practical activities for students, allowing them to intern at rural Home-stays, providing short-term human support for the Home-stays while also allowing students to apply their knowledge to practice.

3.4.2 Technical and Design Support

Universities can provide professional design solutions, leveraging the strengths of design and architecture majors to plan and design the exterior and interior of Home-stays, integrating local cultural elements to create Home-stays with regional characteristics. They can help solve technical challenges, using the research strength of universities to assist with technical issues in the construction and operation of Home-stays. Build digital platforms and develop digital tools suitable for Home-stays, such as reservation management systems and customer relationship management systems, to help Home-stays improve operational efficiency and management levels, and expand customer channels.

3.4.3 Cultural and Creative Empowerment

Explore cultural connotations and organize experts and scholars to research and excavate local historical culture, folk customs, etc., to provide cultural creativity and thematic planning for Home-stays, allowing visitors to experience rich cultural content during their stay. Conduct creative marketing activities, using the media, advertising, and other professional resources of universities to develop personalized marketing strategies for rural Home-stays, enhancing the Home-stays' visibility and reputation through new media platforms and creative activities. Promote the integrated development of industries, leveraging the comprehensive advantages of university disciplines to facilitate the integration of Home-stays with agriculture, handicrafts, and other industries, developing characteristic experience projects to increase the added value and attractiveness of Home-stays.

Data Availability Statement

Data will be made available on request.

Funding

This work was supported without any funding.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate

Not applicable.

References

[1] China IRN. (2024). *2024 Home-stay Industry Development Status, Competitive Landscape, and Development Trends and Prospects Analysis*. China IRN Research Report. Retrieved from https://www.chinairn.com/hyzx/20240719/164335254.shtml

[2] China Report. (2024). *China Home-stay Industry Development Trend Analysis and Future Prospects Research Report (2024-2031)*. China Baogao Research Report. Retrieved from https://www.chinabaogao.com/jingzheng/202408/723732.html

[3] Tang, G. N., Ren, F., & Zhou, J. (2022). Does the digital economy promote "innovation and entrepreneurship" in rural tourism in China?. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 979027. [CrossRef]

[4] Zhou, X., Wang, Y., & Ma, P. (2022). Survey on the tourist satisfaction of rural homestay based on the theory of importance–performance analysis. *Frontiers in psychology, 13*, 940345. [CrossRef]

[5] Zhang, H., Shen, Q., & Xiong, L. (2024, December). A Study on Service Quality Evaluation of Rural Homestays Based on SERVQUAL and IPA Models. In *Proceedings of the 2024 4th International Symposium on Big Data and Artificial Intelligence* (pp. 35-39). [CrossRef]

[6] Yang, X. S., & Xu, H. (2022). Producing an ideal village: Imagined rurality, tourism and rural gentrification in China. *Journal of Rural Studies, 96*, 1-10. [CrossRef]

[7] Yu, H. (2024). Mobile Media Empowering Micro-entrepreneurship? The Chinese Case Study. In *The Mobile Media Debate* (pp. 11-24). Routledge.

[8] Wang, D., & Ap, J. (2013). Factors affecting tourism policy implementation: A conceptual framework and a case study in China. *Tourism Management, 36*, 221-233. [CrossRef]

[9] Janjua, Z. U. A., Krishnapillai, G., & Rahman, M. (2021). A systematic literature review of rural homestays and sustainability in tourism. *Sage Open, 11*(2), 21582440211007117. [CrossRef]

[10] Peters, M., & Buhalis, D. (2004). Family hotel businesses: strategic planning and the need for education and training. *Education+ Training, 46*(8/9), 406-415. [CrossRef]

[11] Fu, L., Sanada, J., & Zhang, W. (2025). Toward Sustainable Tourism: An Activity-Based Segmentation of the Rural Tourism Market in China. *Sustainability, 17*(8), 3341. [CrossRef]

[12] Liu, C., Dou, X., Li, J., & Cai, L. A. (2020). Analyzing government role in rural tourism development: An empirical investigation from China. *Journal of Rural Studies, 79*, 177-188. [CrossRef]

[13] Lee, S. H., & Kinginger, C. (2016). Authenticating practices in Chinese homestay interactions. *Authenticity, language and interaction in second language contexts*, 151-176. [CrossRef]

[14] Li, T., Liu, J., Zhu, H., & Zhang, S. (2018). Business characteristics and efficiency of rural tourism enterprises: an empirical study from China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 23*(6), 549-559. [CrossRef]

[15] Shen, S., Wang, H., Quan, Q., & Xu, J. (2019). Rurality and rural tourism development in China. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 30*, 98-106. [CrossRef]



Lili Du was born in Hebei,China,in 1983. From 2003 to 2007, she studied in Northeast Normal University and received her bachelor's degree in 2007.From 2008 to 2011,she studied in Northeast Normal University and received her Master's degree in 2011.She has published a total of 30 papers,three of which has been indexed by EI. Her research interests mainly focus on Cultural tourism,Smart tourism,rural tourism, and so on. (Email: dll@mail.seig.edu.cn)



Minqing Gan was born in Guangdong,China, in 2003.Studying at Software Engineering Institute of Guangzhou. (Email: 1931088416@qq.com)