

## Creating Sustainable Artistic Homestay: Approaches to Design Weizhou Island into an Ideal Tourist Attraction Homestay

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores the development of sustainable artistic homestays in Weizhou Island, China, a burgeoning tourist destination rich in cultural and ecological heritage. In this study, a narrative review method is employed, which involves a comprehensive examination of existing literature, focusing on several key themes: sustainable tourism, homestay development, infrastructure challenges, and ecological conservation. By synthesizing insights from a wide range of scholarly articles, books, and reports, this narrative review aims to provide a holistic understanding of the factors influencing the development of sustainable artistic homestays in the context of Weizhou Island. It assesses the current state of homestays, identifying key challenges such as environmental sustainability, cultural erosion, and economic viability. The article proposes innovative strategies for sustainable development, emphasizing ecological conservation, cultural preservation, and community involvement. It also discusses the potential benefits of these homestays, including promoting local arts, fostering cultural exchange, and generating economic opportunities for residents. The findings suggest that a balanced approach, combining sustainable practices with cultural authenticity, can transform Weizhou Island into an exemplary sustainable tourist attraction, setting a benchmark for similar destinations worldwide.

**Keywords:** *Ecological Conservation; Homestay Development; Infrastructure Challenges; Sustainable Tourism; Weizhou Island*

### Background

This study examines the potential for developing sustainable, artistic homestays in Weizhou Island, China. The recent theoretical advancements in sustainable tourism (2019-2023) underscore the importance of integrating cultural and ecological aspects into tourism development, a concept at the core of this research (Zhou, Wang, & Ma, 2022). Weizhou Island, with its distinct physical geography, offers a unique setting

for homestay tourism. Its diverse landscapes and ecological richness attract tourists and present opportunities for sustainable tourism practices (Boiko *et al.*, 2017). Building upon the ‘Scale Effect’ theory in tourism, this study examines how the extent of tourism development affects the local culture and environment on Weizhou Island. The balance between developing tourism and preserving the island’s unique cultural and ecological identity is crucial. The research methodology is adapted from previous studies, employing qualitative approaches to understand the dynamics of tourism and homestay development in this context (Boiko *et al.*, 2017).

Weizhou Island, with its enchanting yet deceptive simplicity, emerges as an ideal platform for sustainable tourism and cultural preservation. Much like others, this island presents a dichotomy-it can be seen as both a sanctuary and a challenge, a place of natural beauty and cultural richness, yet also one facing the complexities of development and conservation (Kirch, 2017). On Weizhou Island, this paradoxical nature is particularly pronounced. The island is a vibrant site for ecological diversity and rich cultural heritage, making it not just a territory but a relational space where the boundaries are as fluid as the sea surrounding it (Lacle, 2021). It is a space of contradictions: isolated yet connected, traditional yet open to innovation, a place that has maintained its identity while adapting to the changing times. In the context of sustainable artistic homestays, Weizhou Island offers a unique opportunity. Its insular nature invites specificity and malleability, encouraging less inhibition and a more profound sense of engagement with the environment (Ding, Tseng & Wang, 2021; Edmond & Smith, 2020). It is a place where the traditional and the modern can coexist, where new sustainable practices can be implemented without losing the essence of the island’s cultural and ecological identity. The small and remote character of Weizhou Island, often seen as peripheral, is actually its strength. It allows the island to be a site of innovative conceptualizations in sustainable tourism and homestay development (van der Geest *et al.*, 2020). This setting fosters a creative approach to making the familiar strange and the strange familiar, turning the island into a laboratory for sustainable practices.

As a pioneer in sustainable tourism, Weizhou Island exemplifies the notion of islands being at the forefront of environmental and developmental challenges. It stands as a model for how to balance the needs of tourism with the imperatives of ecological and cultural preservation, making it not just a destination for visitors but a beacon of sustainable practices in the tourism industry (Baldacchino, 2020; Spencer, 2018). The primary objective of this study is to investigate the development of sustainable, artistic homestays on Weizhou Island, China, and to identify strategies for harmonizing the island’s growing tourism industry with its rich cultural and ecological heritage. This involves assessing and analyzing the present status of the homestay industry in Weizhou Island, considering its cultural, ecological, and infrastructural aspects. This analysis will be guided by updated sustainable tourism theories (Kunjuraman & Hussin, 2017); identifying and evaluating the existing challenges in developing sustainable tourism in Weizhou Island, particularly concerning infrastructure and cultural integration, while recognising potential growth opportunities (Yu *et al.*, 2018); integrating and exploring ways to incorporate Weizhou Island’s unique cultural and ecological attributes into the homestay experience, thereby enhancing the sustainability and appeal of the tourism model and then proposing practical strategies for developing sustainable and culturally integrated homestays that align with the ecological conservation goals of the island (Chen, Chen & Lin, 2023).

## Methods

To investigate issues related to sustainable tourism, homestay development, infrastructure challenges, and ecological conservation, the following steps are necessary to locate relevant literature. First, academic databases such as Google Scholar, CNKI, and Web of Science were utilized. Literature searches were performed using keywords like "sustainable tourism," "homestay development," "infrastructure challenges," and "ecological conservation." Next, authoritative journals related to tourism, environmental protection, and urban planning, such as *Island Studies Journal* and *Journal of Ecological Environment*, were reviewed. In the relevant literature found, the citation tracking method was performed to further trace additional related research. Then, local museum resources were consulted. Materials related to the research topic in museums, such as history museums, natural history museums, and folk museums, were systematically reviewed. The catalogs on-site and museums' websites were accessed to locate literature, exhibits, and archives related to sustainable tourism, homestay development, infrastructure challenges, and ecological conservation. This will help in comprehensively and systematically collecting the necessary research materials. Through these methods, literature related to sustainable tourism, homestay development, infrastructure challenges, and ecological conservation was systematically collected and analyzed.

## Results and Discussion

The literature on Weizhou Island's sustainable, artistic homestay development draws extensively from the original research on Mogan Mountain homestay agglomeration. The core concepts and theories are adapted to fit the context of Weizhou Island, focusing on sustainable tourism, cultural integration, and ecological conservation.

The original research by Long *et al.*, (2018) on Mogan Mountain's homestay agglomeration provided significant insights into how homestay businesses contribute to the development of the tourism industry. Their study emphasized the role of homestays in revitalizing tourism resources and boosting the local tourism economy. This finding is particularly relevant to Weizhou Island, where the tourism industry is at a critical juncture of growth and transformation. In the context of Weizhou Island, the homestay business can catalyze sustainable tourism development. The island's unique cultural and ecological features offer a rich tapestry for homestay experiences that are authentic and immersive. By leveraging these attributes, homestays in Weizhou Island can provide a distinct and sustainable alternative to conventional tourism models, aligning with global trends towards more environmentally responsible and culturally enriching travel experiences. The study conducted by Long *et al.*, (2018) demonstrates that when homestays are strategically developed, they not only enhance the tourism appeal but also contribute to the economic empowerment of local communities. This aspect is crucial for Weizhou Island, where integrating local communities into the tourism value chain can lead to more equitable and sustainable economic growth. The success of the Mogan Mountain homestay agglomeration provides a valuable blueprint for Weizhou Island, suggesting that focusing on quality, sustainability, and community engagement can yield significant benefits for tourists and residents alike. Therefore, this section of the literature review establishes the foundational role of homestay businesses in the broader context of tourism development, drawing parallels between the experiences in Mogan Mountain and the potential for Weizhou Island. It sets the stage for exploring how these concepts can be adapted and applied to Weizhou Island's unique context, ensuring that its tourism development aligns with sustainable and community-focused principles.

**Table 1: Summary of Literature Review**

Study Author(s)	Year	Title	Key Findings	Relevance to Weizhou Island
Long <i>et al.</i>	2018	Development Characteristics and Evolution Mechanism of Homestay Agglomeration in Mogan Mountain, China	Examined how homestay businesses contribute to tourism development.	Served as a basis for comparing with Weizhou Island's potential in homestay tourism.
Kunjuraman & Hussin	2017	Challenges of community-based homestay program in Sabah, Malaysia	Addressed challenges in homestay programs, focusing on community involvement.	Insights on community engagement in tourism for Weizhou Island.
Boiko <i>et al.</i>	2017	Development of the tourism cluster	Discussed the dynamics of tourism clusters and their development.	Provided a framework for understanding tourism dynamics on Weizhou Island.
Timothy & Teye	2019	Tourism and the Lodging Sector	Analyzed trends and patterns in the lodging sector within tourism.	Relevant for homestay development on Weizhou Island.
Zhou	2022	Survey on the tourist satisfaction of rural homestay based on the theory of importance–performance analysis.	Explored the evolution of homestay in China.	Contextual background for homestay development in Weizhou Island.
Ding <i>et al.</i>	2021	Determinants of tourism attractiveness for Taiwan’s offshore islands	Discussed the unique appeal of islands to tourists.	Provided a perspective on island tourism applicable to Weizhou Island.
Chen <i>et al.</i>	2017	A Study on B & B cluster construction influence on rural tourism destination's brand image	Examined the impact of B&B clusters on tourism destinations.	Relevant for understanding the impact of homestays on Weizhou Island's image.

### Homestay Business and Tourism Development

Expanding further on the development stages of homestays in Weizhou Island, the initial stage on Weizhou Island is about the early adoption of homestay concepts and understanding tourists’ needs and preferences. This stage is crucial for shaping the future direction of the homestay industry on the island. It is a period where feedback from early guests plays a pivotal role in refining the homestay offerings and services, ensuring that they align with the expectations of a diverse tourist demographic (Timothy & Teye, 2019). During the rapid growth stage, the homestay industry on Weizhou Island experiences a surge in numbers and diversity. This phase sees the introduction of various homestays catering to different segments of tourists, from budget travelers to luxury seekers. It is a stage where the homestay industry starts to impact the local economy significantly, creating jobs and promoting local culture and crafts. However, this rapid expansion also brings challenges like maintaining service quality and managing environmental impacts, necessitating a strategic approach to growth. However, in the mature stage, Weizhou Island’s homestay industry becomes a well-recognized tourism market segment. This stage is characterized by a focus on enhancing guest experiences through professionalization and standardization of services. At this stage, the industry is also expected to play a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism practices, contributing to conserving the island’s natural and cultural heritage. Here, the challenge is to innovate and stay competitive while adhering to sustainable tourism principles.

Through these stages, the homestay industry in Weizhou Island evolves from a nascent idea to a mature, sustainable business model, contributing significantly to the local tourism economy while preserving the island's unique cultural and natural heritage.

### **Driving Factors in Homestay Development**

Expanding further on the development stages of homestays in Weizhou Island: The key factors influencing homestay development in Weizhou Island, initially studied in Mogan Mountain, include physical geography, geographical location, the self-organization mechanism of the tourism industry, and government policies.

- (a) **Physical Geography:** Weizhou Island's unique natural features, such as its coastal landscapes and diverse ecosystems, are central to attracting tourists and creating unique homestay experiences (Timothy & Teye, 2021).
- (b) **Geographical Location:** The Island's location, accessibility, and connectivity significantly influence the influx of tourists and the feasibility of homestay businesses. Efficient transport networks and strategic positioning are crucial for the growth of the homestay industry.
- (c) **Self-Organisation Mechanism of the Tourism Industry and Government Policies:** The dynamics within the local tourism sector and supportive government policies play a significant role in the development and regulation of homestays. These factors determine how well the homestay industry can adapt to changing market demands and regulatory environments.
- (d) **Willingness of Community Residents to Develop:** The engagement and enthusiasm of the local community in developing and participating in the homestay industry are critical. The community's readiness to embrace tourism and its ability to offer authentic cultural experiences are fundamental for the success of homestays.

These driving factors collectively shape the trajectory of homestay development in Weizhou Island, offering insights into how to harness these dynamics for a sustainable and culturally integrated homestay tourism model.

### **Mechanisms of Action**

Adapting the analysis of the mechanism of action from the Mogan Mountain study to Weizhou Island involves examining the resource-driven effect, scale effect, and differentiation effect in the context of Weizhou Island's homestay development:

- (a) **Resource-Driven Effect:** Weizhou Island's rich natural and cultural resources are a driving force in the development of its homestay industry. The appeal of these resources attracts tourists seeking authentic experiences, thereby encouraging the growth of homestays that showcase local heritage and ecology (Timothy & Teye, 2021).
- (b) **Scale Effect:** The scale of homestay development in Weizhou Island impacts both the local economy and the community. As the number of homestays increases, it creates opportunities for economic growth and community involvement. However, managing this scale to ensure sustainability and prevent overtourism becomes a key consideration.
- (c) **Differentiation Effect:** Differentiation in homestays, particularly regarding services, experiences, and cultural representation, is vital for Weizhou Island. This effect emphasizes the importance of unique offerings that distinguish Weizhou Island's homestays from other destinations, catering to diverse tourist preferences and contributing to a competitive market presence.

These mechanisms collectively influence the development and sustainability of homestays in Weizhou Island, highlighting the interplay of various factors that drive the evolution of the homestay industry in this unique geographical and cultural setting.

**Table 2: Organization of Literature According to Subjects Discussed**

Subject	Study Author(s)	Year	Key Contributions
Homestay Development	Long <i>et al.</i>	2018	Provided insights into how homestays enhance tourism and local economies.
Community Involvement in Tourism	Kunjuraman & Hussin	2017	Highlighted the importance of community engagement in sustainable tourism.
Tourism Clusters	Boiko <i>et al.</i>	2017	Discussed the formation and dynamics of tourism clusters.
Lodging and Tourism	Timothy & Teye	2019	Analyzed lodging sector trends within the broader tourism industry.
Homestay Trends in China	Zhou	2020	Gave an overview of homestay development trends in China.
Island Tourism	Ding <i>et al.</i>	2021	Explored the unique appeal of islands as tourist destinations.
Impact of B&Bs	Chen <i>et al.</i>	2017	Studied the influence of B&B clusters on tourism destination branding.
Demographic Trends on Islands	van der Geest <i>et al.</i>	2020	Investigated migration patterns and their effects on island communities.

This research on sustainable homestay development in Weizhou Island reveals considerable potential for a unique tourism model that both honors the island's rich cultural heritage and protects its diverse ecosystems. Such a model offers tourists a deeply engaging experience while simultaneously supporting local community growth and environmental preservation. However, the study identifies a significant gap in Weizhou Island's infrastructure, which is currently insufficient to meet the growing interest in homestays. It's essential to bridge this gap through sustainable infrastructure development to ensure the longevity and success of the homestay industry on the island. By integrating its cultural and natural elements into homestay experiences, Weizhou Island can carve out a unique niche in the global tourism market and adhere to sustainable tourism practices. This approach hinges on the active involvement of local communities, which is critical for the authenticity and sustainability of the homestays. Empowering local residents by involving them in the homestay economy can promote both cultural preservation and economic growth. Furthermore, there's a need for eco-friendly and culturally respectful infrastructure improvements, aligning with conservation efforts.

Training residents in hospitality, eco-friendly practices, and cultural representation is crucial for enhancing service quality and offering authentic cultural experiences. Additionally, targeted marketing strategies are necessary to highlight the unique aspects of Weizhou Island's homestays, particularly its ecological and cultural features, attracting a diverse range of tourists. Establishing supportive policies and incentives to encourage sustainable practices among homestay operators, including certifications for environmentally and culturally sensitive homes, will promote community-based tourism models. These models ensure equitable economic benefits for local residents and foster sustainable community development.

Implementing these strategies will allow Weizhou Island to establish a sustainable, culturally enriched homestay industry. This contributes to broader goals of sustainable tourism, community empowerment, and cultural preservation. The study's findings highlight the transformative role of islands in the realms of tourism and culture. Weizhou Island exemplifies the combination of tradition and innovation, forming a sustainable tourism model that respects and conserves its ecological and cultural integrity. Similar to other islands discussed in the literature, Weizhou Island serves as a testbed for sustainable practices, allowing new ideas to be explored and refined in a practical context. The island's development as a sustainable artistic homestay destination aligns with the global movement towards environmentally conscious and culturally sensitive tourism, echoing the United Nations' focus on sustainable development in island regions. Weizhou Island's journey towards becoming an exemplary homestay destination is part of a global narrative where islands worldwide are adopting sustainable and culturally rich tourism practices, enhancing their appeal and contributing to a greater understanding and appreciation of islands as centers of innovation, culture, and ecological stewardship.

## Conclusion

This study represents an original exploration into sustainable homestay development on Weizhou Island, analyzing new data and insights specific to the island's context. It identifies distinct developmental stages, key factors, and operational mechanisms unique to Weizhou Island's homes. The research uncovers how the island's cultural heritage and ecological diversity shape the homestay experience, highlighting unique opportunities for integrating art and culture into these experiences. This integration could set Weizhou Island apart in the tourism market, enhancing sustainability and aiding in the preservation of its natural and cultural heritage. Community involvement has emerged as a key element, with local residents' active participation in developing homestays seen as vital for enriching the tourist experience and promoting sustainable economic growth. The study proposes strategies for developing sustainable, culturally integrated homestays in Weizhou Island, including community training programs, sustainable tourism certification, and marketing campaigns to showcase the island's unique homestay experiences. This results and discussion section delves into the specific challenges and opportunities for sustainable homestay development in Weizhou Island, underscoring the potential of this distinctive tourism model.

## Declarations

**Ethics Approval & Consent to Participate:** Not applicable.

**Conflict of Interest:** Not applicable.

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