

Research on the High-Quality Development Path of Rural Homestays in Lu'an City under the Rural Revitalization Strategy--Based on the SWOT Analysis Framework

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Keywords: Rural Revitalization, Rural Homestay, High-Quality Development, SWOT Analysis, Linshuizhai Ecological Park

Abstract: Rural homestays are the core carrier to activate idle rural resources and promote the in-depth integration of agriculture, culture and tourism. Against the dual background of the continuous advancement of China's rural revitalization strategy and the continuous upgrading of tourism consumption, they have become an important force driving the prosperity of rural industries and helping farmers achieve common prosperity. This study takes the homestays at Linshuizhai Ecological Park in Jinzhai County, Lu'an City, Anhui Province as a typical case. Through on-site visits and investigations, data collation and verification, and systematic SWOT analysis, it focuses on integrating the latest industrial data in 2025 to comprehensively sort out the key internal and external factors affecting homestay development. The research finds that relying on the characteristics of Dabie Mountain's "red tourism + green ecological resources", Linshuizhai Ecological Park has established a "homestay + multi-format" linkage model and an "enterprise + village collective + farmer" benefit-sharing mechanism. In 2024, the homestay's turnover exceeded 70 million yuan, boosting the county to receive 16.01 million tourists with a comprehensive income of 12.44 billion yuan. From January to September 2025, the operating income of homestays reached 68.82 million yuan, making the homestay industry an important pillar for rural revitalization in Jinzhai. However, it also faces common industry problems such as product homogenization, shortage of professional talents, significant seasonal fluctuations in passenger flow, and pressure on ecological carrying capacity. Based on the strategic matching analysis of the SWOT matrix, this paper proposes a full-chain development path of "upgrading formats, cultivating talents, year-round operation, digital transformation, and adhering to ecology". It not only provides an operable plan for improving the quality and efficiency of Linshuizhai Ecological Park but also offers a reference for the high-quality development of similar rural homestays across the country.

1. Introduction

Since the implementation of China's rural revitalization strategy, rural homestays, as an important link for resource circulation, have not only effectively activated idle rural houses, forestlands and other resources but also promoted the in-depth integration of agriculture, culture and tourism, broadening income-increasing channels for farmers. They have become a key format for rural industrial development. The development of rural homestays is essentially a process of regional resource capitalization and spatial value reconstruction. Lefebvre's spatial production theory points out that the core of spatial reconstruction lies in realizing the dual upgrading of social relations and economic value through resource integration. This theory provides important theoretical support for the transformation of rural homestays from a single accommodation function to a multi-format integration.[1] The 2023 Central No.1 Document clearly proposed to "cultivate new rural industries and formats", which was further upgraded to "implement a special action for the quality improvement and upgrading of rural homestays" in 2025, marking that the homestay economy has entered a new stage of "institutional reconstruction" from "format innovation".

Anhui Province is rich in cultural and tourism resources, boasting three types of high-quality resources: revolutionary tourism resources, natural ecological resources, and historical sites. To promote the development of the homestay industry, Anhui Province has issued the Three-Year Action Plan for the High-Quality Development of "" (2024-2027), establishing a comprehensive support system covering standard formulation, brand cultivation, and talent training. By 2025, the province will have nurtured more than 8,000 homestays, among which the number of graded homestays ranks among the top in China, forming ten major homestay clusters such as Lujiang, Yuexi, and Jinzhai. Existing studies have shown that the formation of regional homestay clusters requires three conditions: suitable resource endowments, strong policy support, and robust market demand. The rapid development of Anhui's homestay industry is the result of the synergistic effect of these three factors.[2]

Lu'an City, Anhui Province, is located in the core area of the Dabie Mountain old revolutionary base, with a forest coverage rate exceeding 45%. It is home to national-level scenic spots such as Tiantangzhai and Wanfo Lake, and also bears profound memories of China's revolutionary history, providing unique conditions for the development of integrated homestays. The city has been promoting the "Ecological Original Flavor · Rural Homestay Lu'an" project, and by 2025, it has developed 766 various homestays. Jinzhai County of Lu'an City has successfully been selected as one of the "Top Ten Wanmei Homestay Clusters" relying on the advantages of clustered homestay development. Linshuizhai Ecological Park Homestay is located in the core homestay cluster of Jinzhai County, covering more than 5,000 mu of core area. It is an idyllic complex integrating ecological sightseeing, red-themed research and study, agricultural experience, and leisure vacation. Since the operation of the homestay sector in 2019, it has gradually formed a dual-core positioning of "red tourism + green ecological resources". In 2025, it also won the national second prize for rural leisure tourism projects, becoming a model of the homestay industry in the region.

From the perspective of industrial integration, the "red + green" dual-resource integration model of Linshuizhai Ecological Park is in line with the core logic of the integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism—that is, realizing value-added through cross-border resource integration. However, the problems it faces in development, such as product homogenization and talent shortage, are also common dilemmas of the current rural homestay industry. Relevant studies show that more than 60% of rural homestays have problems such as superficial product experience and lack of professional talents, which seriously restrict the high-quality development of the industry and require systematic analysis to find solutions.[3]

2. Data and Methods

2.1. Data Sources

Table 1. Data Types and Sources of Jinzhai County, Lu'an City.

Data Type	Specific Content	Link
Overall scale and grade data of homestays	In 2025, there are 194 rural homestays in the county, including 56 high-quality homestays, 1 national Class B homestay, 2 national Class C homestays, and 22 "". It was selected as one of the "Top Ten Wanmei Homestay Clusters"	https://www.ahjinzhai.gov.cn/public/6617541/38146823.html
Homestay operating income data	From January to September 2025, the operating income of homestays was 68.82 million yuan, and the homestay industry has become an important engine for rural revitalization	https://www.ahjinzhai.gov.cn/public/6617541/38146823.html
Homestay ecological integration data	Homestays have expanded integrated experiences such as "+ agriculture", "+ research", and "+ culture". For example, Xiaqing · Canghai Sangtian Homestay has activated idle houses, implanted mulberry cocoon and silk elements, and provided immersive experiences such as mulberry picking and sericulture research	https://www.ahjinzhai.gov.cn/public/6596541/37989872.html

The data and sources used in this study are summarized in Table 1. This study focuses on rural homestays in Linshuizhai, Lu'an City, covering the core area and surrounding supporting homestay clusters, excluding non-operational residential buildings. Located at the eastern foot of the Dabie Mountains, Linshuizhai features a combination of mountain, river valley and pastoral landforms, and belongs to a subtropical humid monsoon climate with distinct seasons and abundant precipitation. Its unique natural and geographical conditions lay a high-quality ecological foundation for the development of homestays. Relying on the rural revitalization strategy and the policy of integrating culture and tourism, Linshuizhai's homestays have achieved large-scale development. At present, there are 42 rural homestays in the region, including 11 high-quality homestays, 3 municipal characteristic homestays, and 8 county-level model homestays, forming a brand cluster with "Linshui Renjia" as the core. From January to September 2025, the operating

income of the homestay cluster reached 18.6 million yuan, receiving more than 120,000 tourists, and becoming an important engine to drive farmers' income increase and activate the village-level collective economy.

Local homestays have developed diverse formats. For example, high-quality homestays such as "Linxi Shanjuji" have activated idle farmhouses, implanted Lu'an Guapian tea culture and Dabie Mountain folk customs, and launched immersive projects such as tea garden picking and ancient tea-making research. This "homestay + local culture" format innovation model is similar to the development path of the Moganshan homestay cluster. Both have achieved an upgrade from "accommodation products" to "experience products" through cultural empowerment. The Moganshan homestay cluster has even driven the premium rate of surrounding agricultural products to 300% through the in-depth integration of the tertiary industry.[4] In terms of operation, a combination of individual household operation and cooperative overall planning is adopted. The homestays in the core area have achieved standardized operation, and 2 homestays have an annual comprehensive income exceeding 3 million yuan. Despite remarkable results, the homestay industry still faces challenges such as unbalanced development, seasonal passenger flow fluctuations, and ecological constraints. How to promote the large-scale, standardized and characteristic development of homestays under the premise of protecting the ecology and inheriting culture has become an important issue for rural revitalization in Linshuizhai.

2.2. Theoretical Basis of SWOT Analysis Method

The SWOT analysis method was proposed by Heinz Wehrich, a professor of management at the University of San Francisco, USA, in the 1980s. It is a strategic planning tool for comprehensive analysis combining internal and external environments. This method takes the SWOT structure matrix as the core and helps people fully understand the research object by systematically identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the research object itself, as well as the opportunities and threats in the external environment. The core value of the SWOT analysis method lies in integrating scattered internal and external factors into a clear analysis framework. Through four strategic combinations—Strengths-Opportunities (S-O), Weaknesses-Opportunities (W-O), Strengths-Threats (S-T), and Weaknesses-Threats (W-T)—it provides a clear direction for decision-making.

Its prominent characteristics are clear organization and a wide application range. It can not only be used for enterprise strategic planning but also guide the design of industrial development paths. It is especially suitable for the research of rural homestays, which are affected by various factors such as resource conditions, policy environment, and market demand. In the research of rural homestays, the SWOT analysis method can effectively decompose the core elements of industrial development: internal strengths and weaknesses mainly focus on factors that the homestay itself can control, such as resource conditions, operation models, and product quality; external opportunities and threats focus on factors that the homestay cannot control, such as policy support, market changes, and industry competition. Through the cross-analysis of these two aspects, targeted and feasible development strategies can be formed. Scholars have used the SWOT analysis method to study the homestay industry in Tonglu, Zhejiang, Dali, Yunnan and other regions, and have achieved practical research results.

2.3. Research Methods

2.3.1. On-Site Investigation Method

From March to October 2025, the research team conducted on-site investigations in Linshuizhai

Ecological Park three times. Through face-to-face interviews with homestay operators, village collective leaders, farmer representatives, and tourists, first-hand information such as the homestay's operation data, benefit distribution methods, and tourists' feedback on product experiences was collected; at the same time, on-site inspections were conducted on the homestay's facility conditions, the operation of experience projects, and the current situation of ecological protection, forming detailed investigation records. The on-site investigation method is the core method to obtain first-hand data in rural homestay research, which can effectively make up for the lack of detail in secondary data.

2.3.2. Data Analysis Method

The core data collected from the survey, such as homestay revenue, occupancy rate, number of jobs driven, and farmers' income increase from 2024 to 2025, were sorted out and verified. By comparing with the average level of the national and Anhui Province's homestay industry, the development effectiveness and existing gaps of Linshuizhai Ecological Park's homestays were quantitatively analyzed, providing data support for identifying the root causes of problems. The data analysis method is of great value in homestay industry research. Through quantitative comparison, the development advantages and shortcomings can be positioned more accurately.

2.3.3. SWOT Analysis Method

Comprehensively sort out the internal strengths and weaknesses of Linshuizhai Ecological Park's homestays, as well as the opportunities and threats brought by the external environment, construct a TOWS analysis matrix, and form targeted development paths through strategic matching to ensure that the research conclusions are scientific and feasible.

3. SWOT Analysis of the Development of Linshuizhai Ecological Park Homestays

3.1. Internal Strengths

Distinctive resource combination advantages. Linshuizhai Ecological Park has unique Dabie Mountain "red revolutionary culture" resources and green ecological resources. In terms of green ecological resources, the park's more than 5,000 mu of ecological space includes various landscapes such as forests, tea gardens, farmland, and streams. The altitude difference enriches the vegetation levels, which fully meets the core demand of rural homestays for "ecological livability". In terms of red revolutionary resources, relying on the historical heritage of Jinzhai County as the "cradle of the Red Army", there are red revolutionary landmarks such as the site of the Lixia Festival Uprising and the Red Army Square around it. The homestay also cooperates deeply with local red revolutionary education institutions to build a characteristic product system of "accommodation + research".

The in-depth integration of "red revolutionary culture + green ecological resources" not only meets the needs of tourists for leisure and vacation but also allows tourists to obtain spiritual and cultural nourishment, which is a core competitiveness incomparable to single-type homestays. Relevant studies have shown that composite resource endowments are the key for rural homestays to form differentiated competitive advantages, and their market attractiveness is significantly higher than that of single-resource homestays.

Solid brand influence and hardware facilities. In terms of brand, it won the national second prize in the rural leisure tourism track of the 2025 Rural Entrepreneurship Project Competition, was rated as "Anhui Beautiful Silver Medal Homestay" and a national 3A-level scenic spot. Relying on the "agriculture + culture + tourism" integration of the primary, secondary and tertiary industries model,

online channels account for 45% of the customer source, and it has accumulated high popularity. In terms of hardware facilities, the homestay uses local stone, bamboo and wood to build characteristic courtyards and guest rooms, which are integrated with the natural environment. It is equipped with facilities such as an ecological restaurant with a capacity of 500 people, an agricultural product exhibition and sales center, and research classrooms, covering various needs such as team research and family vacation. It has obvious large-scale advantages. At the same time, it retains the rural style through micro-renovation, providing tourists with rich experiences. The hardware facilities and brand building level of homestays directly affect tourist satisfaction, which has been verified in many rural homestay studies.[3]

Continuous improvement of comprehensive benefits. In terms of economic benefits, the revenue of the homestay sector in 2025 was 68.82 million, accounting for 62% of the park's total sales (more than 50 million yuan). The occupancy rate in the peak season (July-August and holidays) exceeded 92%, becoming the core profitable sector of the park. In terms of social benefits, the homestay directly drives 86 long-term jobs and 50 seasonal jobs, radiating 230 households of farmers around. The per capita annual income increase is 28,000 yuan, which is significantly higher than the growth rate of the per capita disposable income of rural residents in Jinzhai County; it receives more than 8,000 research teams every year, becoming an important base for red research in Jinzhai County and promoting the inheritance of red culture.[3]

In terms of ecological benefits, the homestay implements environmental protection measures such as solar energy utilization and recycled irrigation after sewage treatment, and has also been rated as a regional ecologically friendly homestay demonstration project, realizing a virtuous cycle of "ecological protection - tourism development - benefit transformation". The comprehensive benefit evaluation of rural homestays should cover three dimensions: economy, society and ecology. The practice of Linshuizhai Ecological Park is in line with the development concept of "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets", realizing the organic unity of the three major benefits.

3.2. Internal Weaknesses

Insufficient in-depth product experience. Despite the unique dual resources of "red tourism + green ecological", the homestay's product transformation is still superficial. The red revolutionary culture experience mainly includes displaying historical materials and visiting revolutionary sites, lacking immersive and interactive projects, and the products are very similar to those of surrounding red homestays; the green ecological experience projects are also dominated by common projects such as forest hiking and tea garden picking, with few in-depth experience contents such as nature education and ecological monitoring, making it difficult to meet the personalized and high-quality experience needs of tourists. Insufficient product innovation capacity leads to a low revisit rate of tourists.

Tourists' experience demand for homestay products has shifted from "sightseeing type" to "in-depth participation type". Products lacking interactivity and innovation are difficult to form sustained attractiveness, which is also the core crux of the current problem of product homogenization in rural homestays. Bama, Guangxi, has effectively solved this dilemma by building a "longevity homestay certification system".[5]

Shortage of professional talents. The shortage of talents is a core problem restricting the high-quality development of homestays. At the management level, there is a lack of compound talents who understand tourism operation, digital marketing, and are familiar with local red culture and ecological resources, resulting in insufficient professionalism in event planning, brand promotion and other work; at the service level, most front-line employees are local farmers. Although they

have a simple service attitude, they have not received systematic training in service etiquette, communication skills, emergency handling and other aspects, and the standardization of services is not high. The talent shortage directly affects the tourist experience.

Existing studies have pointed out that the shortage of talents in rural homestays is characterized by "insufficient total quantity, unbalanced structure, and weak professionalism". This problem is particularly prominent in homestays in old revolutionary base areas and ecological protection areas.[6] The "Digital Mulan" homestay housekeeper training program has effectively improved the professional quality of practitioners through systematic training.

Obvious seasonal fluctuations. Homestay products are greatly affected by natural seasons, with significant differences between peak and off-seasons. The occupancy rate is good in the peak season, but it drops significantly in winter, with a huge gap in passenger flow. The core reason is the insufficient product supply in winter. At present, the homestay only provides basic accommodation and catering services in winter, lacking targeted characteristic projects such as winter health care and folk experience, resulting in the idleness of facilities and manpower and high operating costs. Seasonal passenger flow fluctuation is a common problem of rural homestays. Its root cause lies in the mismatch between product supply and seasonal demand. This dilemma can be effectively alleviated through year-round operation.

3.3. External Opportunities

Increasing policy support. Anhui Province and Lu'an City have provided growing policy support for the homestay industry, forming a comprehensive guarantee system. The Three-Year Action Plan for the High-Quality Development of "" (2024-2027) in Anhui Province clearly stipulates that 150,000 yuan and 100,000 yuan will be awarded to newly rated national Grade A and Grade B homestays respectively, and 50,000 yuan will be granted to selected "Anhui Beautiful" Gold Medal Homestays[7]; Lu'an City has simultaneously promoted the "Ecological Original Flavor · Rural Homestay Lu'an" project, providing precise support in planning approval, land supply, fund support and other aspects, and setting up a special fund for homestay industry development, which is specifically used for infrastructure support and talent training, effectively laying a solid policy foundation for the development of local homestays.

The continuously released policy dividends provide a strong guarantee for homestays to improve quality and build brands. Policy support is an important external driving force for the development of the rural homestay industry. A comprehensive policy system covering financial subsidies, land guarantees and standard formulation can effectively reduce the operating costs of homestays and improve the standardized level of the industry.

Continuous upgrading of market demand. With the improvement of residents' income level and the change of consumption concept, rural tourism consumption is shifting from "simple sightseeing" to "in-depth experience". Tourists are paying more and more attention to cultural connotation, ecological quality and sense of participation. The integrated homestay of "red tourism + green ecological resources" not only meets the needs of tourists to get close to nature and take leisure vacations but also provides red cultural education, which is in line with the current consumption hotspots of "cultural tourism + health care" and "cultural tourism + research". In 2025, the number of rural tourism tourists nationwide exceeded 4 billion, and the homestay market scale is constantly expanding, providing a broad space for Linshuizhai Ecological Park Homestays to expand customer sources and increase customer unit price.[9]

Under the background of consumption upgrading, the rural tourism market shows a development trend of "quality-oriented, personalized and experience-oriented", which creates a good market environment for the development of integrated homestays.[10]

Digital technology boosting development. The rapid development of digital technology provides new opportunities for the transformation of the homestay industry. Anhui Province has actively promoted the "Digital Mulan" homestay housekeeper training program to help practitioners improve their digital skills; social platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu have become important channels for homestay marketing, and smart booking, face recognition check-in and other systems can also significantly improve operational efficiency. The digital transformation of rural homestays can improve operational efficiency and service quality, expand market space, and help them gain a firm foothold in fierce competition. Linshuizhai Ecological Park Homestays can use digital technology to optimize booking processes, accurately locate target customer groups, innovate marketing methods, and further expand market influence.

3.4. External Threats

Continuous rise in operating costs. In recent years, the operating costs of homestays have been rising year by year. In terms of labor costs, with the increase in demand for rural tourism practitioners, the salary level of local labor has been rising year by year; in terms of raw material costs, the prices of agricultural products, building materials and other products fluctuate greatly, pushing up the costs of catering, facility maintenance and other links; in terms of energy costs, the rise in water and electricity prices has further increased the operational burden. In the context of intensified market competition, it is difficult for homestays to transfer cost pressure through substantial price increases, and profit margins have been squeezed. The rise in costs is a common challenge for the development of the rural homestay industry, especially in underdeveloped areas, where cost pressure has a more significant impact on the profitability of homestays [11].

Increasingly high requirements for ecological protection. Linshuizhai Ecological Park is located in the Dabie Mountain ecological function area. With the in-depth advancement of ecological civilization construction, the standards for ecological protection are also constantly improving. Anhui Province has imposed increasingly strict environmental protection requirements on the homestay industry, formulating clear standards for sewage treatment, garbage classification, energy consumption control and other aspects. Homestays need to invest more funds in the upgrading of environmental protection facilities and daily operation and maintenance, such as building high-standard sewage treatment stations and promoting clean energy, which further increases operating costs. If the passenger flow in the peak season exceeds the ecological carrying capacity, the homestay may also face restrictions such as flow limitation and rectification.

The balance between ecological protection and tourism development is the core proposition for the development of homestays in ecological function areas. In 2025, the policy has included homestays in the pilot project of ecological product value realization, providing differentiated development opportunities for ecologically friendly homestays.

Rapid iteration of tourist demand. At present, the demand in the tourism consumption market is changing rapidly. Tourists have increasingly high requirements for the personalization, experience and quality of homestay products, and their pursuit of new experiences is becoming stronger and stronger. If homestays cannot timely grasp market trends, accelerate product iteration and upgrading, and continuously launch innovative experience projects, it will be difficult to meet the diversified needs of tourists, leading to the loss of customers. In addition, tourists are paying more and more attention to service quality, environmental protection concepts and cultural connotations. A shortcoming in any link may affect the brand reputation through online reviews.

The rapid iteration of tourism market demand puts forward higher requirements for the product innovation ability and market response speed of homestays. Homestays that cannot adapt to demand changes will be gradually eliminated by the market.[12]

3.5. TOWS Strategic Matching Matrix

Based on the above analysis of internal and external factors, a TOWS strategic matching matrix for the development of Linshuizhai Ecological Park Homestays is constructed (Table 2), clarifying four major strategic directions:

Table 2. TOWS Strategic Matching Matrix for Linshuizhai Ecological Park Homestays.

Internal Conditions	External Environment: Opportunities (O)	External Environment: Threats (T)
Strengths (S)	S-O Strategy (Growth-oriented): Relying on the dual resources of "red tourism + green ecological resources" and brand advantages, taking advantage of policy support and regional passenger flow dividends, deepen format integration and product innovation, and expand the mid-to-high-end market share.	S-T Strategy (Defensive-oriented): Strengthen the core competitiveness of the integration of "red tourism + green ecological resources", respond to homogenized competition through product differentiation and brand upgrading; adhere to the concept of green development, upgrade environmental protection facilities, meet ecological protection requirements, and consolidate the regional benchmark position.
Weaknesses (W)	W-O Strategy (Turnaround-oriented): Use policy fund rewards and talent training programs to introduce compound professional talents and upgrade the digital operation system; take advantage of the trend of market demand upgrading to develop in-depth experience products and all-season projects, solving the problems of talent shortage and seasonal fluctuations.	W-T Strategy (Diversification-oriented): Optimize the cost structure, improve the level of refined management, and reduce operating costs; accelerate product iteration and service standardization, improve market adaptability, and cope with the pressure of rising costs and demand iteration.

4. High-Quality Development Path of Homestays under the Background of Rural Revitalization

Based on the SWOT analysis and strategic matching results, combined with the development orientation and industry practice of "Anhui Premium Homestays" in Anhui Province, this paper constructs a full-chain path of "format upgrade, talent cultivation, year-round operation, digital transformation, and ecological adherence" to promote the high-quality and sustainable development of Linshuizhai Ecological Park Rural Homestay.

4.1. Format Upgrade: Core Lies in Building an "Red Tourism + Ecology" In-Depth Experience System

To transform from resource display to in-depth experience, the core of Linshuizhai Ecological Park Rural Homestay is to build an "Red Tourism + Ecology" in-depth experience system. First, it is recommended that the operating company of Linshuizhai Ecological Park take the lead, cooperate with red education institutions and historical experts in Jinzhai County to explore local red tourism resources and develop standardized processes. Second, relying on its diverse cultural resources, Linshuizhai Rural Homestay can introduce professional cultural and creative companies to create immersive projects such as battlefield simulations and red script killings, arrange live-action performances involving villagers, and build a multimedia red culture exhibition hall to deepen educational connotations. At the same time, it can cooperate with scientific research institutions through the operating company of Linshuizhai Ecological Park to set up nature classrooms and provide special ecological experiences. Relying on the park's more than 5,000 mu of ecological space, it can upgrade forest health products and build a complete chain of "tea garden research + manual tea making + tea tourism cultural and creative products". In addition, the products of the operating company of Linshuizhai Ecological Park can explore Dabie Mountains folk customs and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) skills, set up handicraft experience workshops, plan characteristic activities in combination with traditional festivals, launch "Dabie Mountains Food Tour", and develop cultural and creative products integrating multiple elements to extend the industrial chain. Format upgrade is the core of high-quality development of rural homestays. Existing studies have shown that in-depth experience-oriented formats can significantly increase tourists' stay time and consumption volume, and are the key for homestays to get rid of homogeneous competition.[13]

4.2. Talent Cultivation: Build a Full-Chain Guarantee Mechanism of "Talent Introduction–Cultivation–Retention"

Linshuizhai Rural Homestay can build a full-chain talent system around "Talent Introduction–Cultivation–Retention" to effectively solve the talent shortage problem. Specific measures are as follows: In terms of talent introduction, it can rely on Anhui Province's homestay industry "double recruitment and introduction" platform to attract needed professional talents through salary incentives, equity cooperation and other methods. At the same time, it can cooperate with individual rural homestays and, in the name of the operating company of Linshuizhai Ecological Park, suggest that the Human Resources and Social Security Bureau and Culture and Tourism Bureau of Lu'an City and Jinzhai County include compound homestay talents in the local "shortage talent catalog", and introduce external professional management talents through supporting policies such as housing subsidies and tax incentives under the "double recruitment and introduction" policy. In terms of talent cultivation, Linshuizhai Rural Homestay can cooperate with tourism colleges and universities to build internship bases and carry out targeted training; invite industry experts to serve as consultants to improve the professional capabilities of the team. This measure is consistent with the idea of alleviating homestay talent shortage through university-enterprise cooperation.[14] In addition, it can jointly organize employees of individual homestays to participate in vocational skills training such as "Digital Mulan", establish a regular internal training mechanism, and conduct special training and external inspections for managers to continuously improve the overall quality of the team [8]. In terms of talent retention, rural homestays can be encouraged to set up special awards to commend outstanding employees, optimize the salary structure, improve welfare guarantees such as "five insurances and one housing fund", and actively create a work atmosphere with a sense of belonging, thereby reducing the talent turnover rate. The construction of the above-mentioned full-chain talent system conforms to the law of talent development in rural homestays

and helps to systematically solve the talent shortage dilemma.[15]

4.3. Year-Round Operation: Focus on Developing Off-Season Products and Precision Marketing

The key for Linshuizhai Ecological Park Rural Homestay to balance seasonal fluctuations is to take the initiative to create off-season demand. First, at the product development level, the homestay should design special product plans for the winter off-season. For the winter market, the homestay should take the initiative to cooperate with local research institutions and primary and secondary schools to jointly design and pre-sell "red-themed winter camp" products; at the same time, it can invite traditional Chinese medicine experts as consultants to jointly develop "mountain forest health" vacation packages, and plan "Spring Festival festive" experience projects integrating local folk customs, striving to increase the winter room occupancy rate to more than 60% by 2026. Second, homestay marketing can focus on the Twenty-Four Solar Terms and traditional culture, and conduct publicity and warm-up in advance to drive off-season passenger flow. For precision marketing, the company needs to establish exclusive files for segmented customer groups such as research, health care and team building, and the sales team should establish long-term cooperation agreements with relevant institutions. At the same time, the homestay should take the lead in building a membership system to increase tourists' revisit rate through exclusive off-season discounts. In addition, it is crucial for homestays to seek support from the industry and policy levels. Homestay owners can actively join provincial and municipal tourism associations, participate in initiating or undertaking industry-specific activities such as off-season forums and photography competitions to introduce non-traditional customer sources. The core of year-round operation is to achieve accurate matching between product supply and seasonal demand. Innovation of year-round products can effectively narrow the gap between peak and off seasons [11].

4.4. Digital Transformation: Technological Empowerment to Improve Operational Efficiency and Service Quality

Linshuizhai Rural Homestay can rely on digital technology to build a full-process smart management system, and use technological empowerment to improve operational efficiency and service quality. Specific measures are as follows: In terms of hardware upgrading, it can introduce equipment such as intelligent access control, unmanned reception, and intelligent energy consumption monitoring to optimize the daily operation process of the homestay and reduce human management costs; at the same time, build an exclusive online service platform for the homestay to realize one-stop online processing of services such as reservation, check-in, ordering, and complaints, and improve the convenience of tourists' experience. In terms of data application, rural homestays can cooperate with professional technology companies to build a customer group data analysis system, conduct accurate statistics and analysis of data such as tourists' sources, consumption habits, stay time, and experience feedback, and provide data support for product optimization and marketing promotion. This measure is highly consistent with the industry trend of digital transformation to improve homestay operational efficiency.[16] In addition, at the safety guarantee level, the homestay uses smart monitoring systems and emergency early warning platforms to realize real-time monitoring of the park's ecological environment, fire safety, and tourists' activities, and build a comprehensive safety protection network. The core of smart empowerment is to realize the refinement and efficiency of homestay operations through the in-depth integration of technology and services, which is an inevitable trend in the modern development of rural homestays.[17]

4.5. Adhere to Ecology: Adhere to Ecological Protection as the Bottom Line of High-Quality Development

The key to Linshuizhai Rural Homestay's sustainable development lies in adhering to ecological protection as the bottom line of high-quality development.

In the initial stage of construction, the developers should give priority to natural and renewable ecological building materials such as bamboo, wood, and reclaimed stone to reduce the use of chemical building materials and environmental pollution. They should also adopt energy-saving and environmentally friendly construction techniques to minimize dust, noise, and the discharge of construction waste. Furthermore, the developers must build a green energy supply system, reasonably configure solar water heaters and photovoltaic power generation equipment, and install matching rainwater collection and sewage purification systems. This holistic approach enables the homestay to achieve the efficient and intensive utilization of energy and water resources, thereby reducing the ecological load at the source.

In the operation and management phase, Linshuizhai Rural Homestay implements a low-carbon service model: the rural homestay operators place environmentally friendly toiletries in guest rooms, prohibit disposable plastic products, and set up classified trash cans with guidance signs in public areas. The homestay popularizes environmental protection knowledge through guest room manuals and offline lectures, and the rural homestay operators regularly organize activities such as garbage classification practices, the maintenance of surrounding green plants, and ecological hiking excursions. These initiatives guide tourists to take the initiative to practice environmental protection behaviors and develop green travel habits.

In the subsequent service upgrading process, the rural homestay operators continuously optimize the ecological management plan, regularly check the operational status of environmental protection facilities, and adjust operational strategies according to changes in the ecological environment. By taking the rural homestay as a carrier to build an ecological protection community, the rural homestay operators not only protect the original natural landscape of the countryside but also enable tourists to deepen their environmental protection awareness through experience. In this way, Linshuizhai Rural Homestay achieves the coordinated development of ecological, social, and economic benefits.

Ecological protection is the premise for the sustainable development of rural homestays. Only by realizing a virtuous cycle between ecological protection and tourism development can the homestay industry ensure its long-term stable development.

5. Conclusions

Taking Linshuizhai Ecological Park Homestay in Jinzhai County, Lu'an City as the research object, based on the SWOT analysis framework, combined with on-site investigations and data verification, this paper systematically analyzes the key internal and external factors of its development under the rural revitalization strategy, constructs a strategic matching matrix and proposes a full-chain high-quality development path. The main research conclusions are as follows:

Linshuizhai Ecological Park Homestay has distinct core competitive advantages and comprehensive development value. Its dual-resource integration characteristic of "red revolutionary culture + green ecological resources", the formed brand influence and the "enterprise + village collective + farmer" benefit-sharing mechanism have not only achieved significant economic benefits but also played an important role in driving farmers' income increase, inheriting red culture, and practicing ecological protection, becoming a typical example of the deep binding of the homestay industry and rural revitalization in the Dabie Mountain old revolutionary base area.

At the same time, the research also confirms that the homestay still faces internal weaknesses

such as product homogenization, shortage of professional talents, and seasonal passenger flow fluctuations in its development. Coupled with external threats such as rising operating costs, higher ecological protection requirements, and accelerated iteration of tourist demand, it restricts its high-quality upgrading pace. This research finding is consistent with the overall development status of the current rural homestay industry, further confirming the common law of the development of resource-integrated homestays.

Based on the strategic matching analysis of the SWOT matrix, the full-chain development path of "upgrading formats, cultivating talents, year-round operation, digital transformation, and adhering to ecology" proposed in this paper not only accurately addresses the weaknesses and external opportunities of Linshuizhai Homestays but also strengthens its resource and brand advantages to cope with external threats, with strong pertinence and operability. Among them, format upgrading is the core starting point, which can solve the problem of superficial product experience; talent cultivation is the key support, providing intellectual guarantee for industrial quality improvement; year-round operation and digital transformation can respectively break the bottleneck of passenger flow fluctuations, while adhering to ecology is the bottom line of sustainable development. The five paths cooperate with each other to form a closed loop.

This development path not only draws on the development experience of advanced domestic homestays but also fully combines the resource endowments and development reality of Linshuizhai Ecological Park, with strong practical guiding significance.

As a benchmark case of homestay clusters in Jinzhai County and even Anhui Province, the development experience of Linshuizhai Ecological Park Homestay and the path proposed in this paper have important reference value for similar rural homestays across the country that rely on the dual resources of "red revolutionary culture + green ecological resources". Under the background of the continuous deepening of the rural revitalization strategy and the continuous upgrading of cultural and tourism consumption, rural homestays must base themselves on regional resources, optimize development strategies with problem orientation, highlight cultural characteristics in format innovation, and adhere to the ecological bottom line in standardized operation, so as to realize the unity of economic, social and ecological benefits, and truly become the core carrier to activate rural development momentum and promote common prosperity.

This study also has certain limitations, and the long-term validity verification of the homestay development path requires follow-up tracking investigations. In the future, we can further combine the effectiveness of digital transformation and year-round operation data to deepen the research on differentiated development strategies of different types of rural homestays, providing more comprehensive theoretical and practical support for the high-quality development of the rural homestay industry.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the Lu'an Philosophy and Social Science Planning Project (Grant No. 2024LSK65).

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