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THE EFFECT OF CO-CREATION EXPERIENCE ON  
HOMESTAY REVISIT INTENTION AMONG  
TOURISTS IN CHINA WITH THE  
MEDIATION OF POST-TRIP  
PERCEPTIONS



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THESIS PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS  
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2025



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## ABSTRACT

Grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, this study aimed to determine the effect of Co-creation Experience (CCE) dimension [i.e., Co-creation Behavior (CCB) and Experiencescape (EXP)] on Post-trip Perceptions (PP) dimension [i.e., Memorability (MEM) and Satisfaction (SAT)], the effect of CCE and PP dimensions on Homestay Revisit Intention (HRI) and the mediating role of PP dimension in the effect of CCE dimension on HRI. This study was conducted in Henan Province, China. The sample for this study consisted of 433 homestay tourists, who were selected using a cluster sampling technique. Data were collected using a questionnaire as an instrument and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings showed that CCB ( $\beta=0.705$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and EXP ( $\beta=0.183$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) have a significant positive effect on MEM. The findings also revealed the significant positive effect of CCB ( $\beta=0.243$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and EXP ( $\beta=0.620$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) on SAT. Furthermore, CCB ( $\beta = 0.243$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), MEM ( $\beta = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and SAT ( $\beta = 0.332$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) significantly and positively affect HRI, but not EXP ( $p=0.128$ ). Moreover, the findings highlighted that MEM and SAT act as significant mediators in the effect of CCB and EXP on HRI. In conclusion, the findings provide strong empirical support for the effect of CCE and PP dimensions on HRI, and highlight the mediating role of PP dimension. In implication, to strengthen tourists' revisit intentions to homestays, the findings suggest that homestay operators and stakeholders should focus on enhancing co-creation experiences through meaningful interactions and fostering positive post-trip perceptions.





**PENGARUH PENGALAMAN CIPTA-SAMA TERHADAP HASRAT  
KUNJUNGAN SEMULA KE INAP DESA DALAM KALANGAN  
PELANCONG DI CHINA DENGAN PERANTARAAN  
PERSEPSI PASCA-PERJALANAN**

**ABSTRAK**

Berdasarkan model Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR), kajian ini bertujuan menentukan pengaruh dimensi Pengalaman Cipta-Sama (CCE) [iaitu, Tingkah laku Cipta-sama (CCB) dan Lanskap Pengalaman (EXP)] terhadap dimensi Persepsi Pasca-perjalanan (PP) [iaitu, Memorabiliti (MEM) dan Kepuasan (SAT)], pengaruh dimensi CCE dan PP terhadap Hasrat Kunjungan Semula ke Inap Desa (HRI) serta peranan perantaraan dimensi PP dalam hubungan antara dimensi CCE dan HRI. Kajian ini dijalankan di Wilayah Henan, China. Sampel kajian ini terdiri daripada 433 orang pelancong inap desa yang dipilih menggunakan teknik pensampelan berkelompok. Data dikumpul menggunakan borang soal selidik sebagai instrumen dan dianalisis menggunakan Model Persamaan Struktural (SEM). Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa CCB ( $\beta=0.705$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) dan EXP ( $\beta=0.183$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) mempunyai pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap MEM. Dapatan juga mendedahkan pengaruh positif yang signifikan CCB ( $\beta=0.243$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) dan EXP ( $\beta=0.620$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) terhadap SAT. Selanjutnya, CCB ( $\beta=0.243$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), MEM ( $\beta=0.34$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), dan SAT ( $\beta=0.332$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) secara signifikan dan positif mempengaruhi HRI, tetapi tidak untuk EXP ( $p=0.128$ ). Selain itu, dapatan menunjukkan bahawa MEM dan SAT bertindak sebagai perantara yang signifikan dalam pengaruh CCB dan EXP terhadap HRI. Kesimpulannya, dapatan kajian menyokong secara empirikal terhadap pengaruh dimensi CCE dan PP terhadap HRI, dan menegaskan peranan perantara dimensi PP. Implikasinya, bagi mengukuhkan hasrat untuk kunjungan semula pelancong ke inap desa, dapatan kajian mencadangkan agar pengendali inap desa dan pihak berkepentingan memberikan tumpuan terhadap meningkatkan pengalaman cipta-sama melalui interaksi yang bermakna dan memupuk persepsi pasca-perjalanan yang bermakna.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CB-SEM	Covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling
CCB	Co-creation Behavior
CCE	Co-creation Experience
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CMB	Common Method Bias
CR	Construct Reliability
CS	Customer Satisfaction
D <sup>2</sup>	Mahalanobis Distance
DF	Degrees of Freedom
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EXP	Experiencescape
FIML	Full Information Maximum Likelihood





GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
GOF	Goodness-of-Fit
HRI	Homestay Revisit Intention
IC	Inter Construct Correlations
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
MEM	Memorability
MSA	Measure of Sampling Adequacy
O	Organism
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PP	Post-trip Perceptions
P2P	Peer-to-Peer
R	Response
RI	Revisit Intention
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
RO	Research Objectives
RQ	Research Questions
S	Stimulus
SAT	Satisfaction
SDL	Service Dominant Logic
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual





SSCI	Social Sciences Citation Index
S-O-R	Stimulus-Organism-Response
S-R	Stimulus-Response
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index
ULMC	Unmeasured Latent Method Factor
$\chi^2$	Chi-Square
$\chi^2/df$	The Normalized Chi-Square





## APPENDIX LIST

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- B The Standard Z-Scores for Each Item (Pilot Study)
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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION



#### 1.1 Introduction

Amid the rapid development of the tourism industry, homestays, as a unique and culturally immersive lodging option, have gained increasing popularity among travelers (Li et al., 2024). Homestays not only provide lodging but also enhance tourists' sense of belonging and participation through unique cultural atmospheres and personalized services (Chen et al., 2020). However, as market competition intensifies, how to improve tourists' revisit intentions to ensure sustainable development and brand loyalty has become a focal issue for homestay owners and researchers (Shin et al., 2021). Therefore, a high-quality homestay experience is essential for attracting





tourists, meeting their unique accommodation needs, and fostering revisit intentions. Co-creation experiences serve as an effective approach to strengthening homestay market competitiveness and supporting sustainable development through increased revisit intentions.

Chapter 1 provides a brief explanation of the research topic, beginning with the research background in section 1.2, including the development status of China's homestay industry and its significance to the nation. Following this is the problem statement in section 1.3, addressing current challenges faced by Chinese homestays and the research gap resulting from limitations in past studies. Consequently, this study proposes four research objectives and research questions are also described in section 1.4 and 1.5 to examine the mediating role of tourist experience between co-creation experience and revisit intentions. The hypotheses in part 1.6 are then discussed to identify the relationships among these variables. In the section 1.7 and 1.8 on the study's significance, the importance and contributions of this research to both academia and practitioners are highlighted. The definitions of the constructs utilized in this research are provided in section 1.9. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a summary of the research.





## 1.2 Background to the Research

In the tourism field, revisit intention refers to the likelihood of tourists returning to a destination or accommodation after their initial visit (Chen et al., 2020). Similar to repeat purchase intention in consumer behavior, it is widely regarded as a key measure of loyalty. Both concepts highlight the cost-effectiveness and long-term benefits of retaining existing customers compared to acquiring new ones (Anshu et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022; Peng et al., 2018). In tourism, revisit intention is particularly important, as it is strongly influenced by the quality and uniqueness of experiences. However, in China's homestay industry, revisit intentions remain relatively low due to challenges such as service homogeneity, limited innovation, and inconsistent satisfaction (Li et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2023). This indicates that many homestay providers have yet to develop compelling experiences that generate lasting impressions and loyalty.

Experience has always been an essential part of the tourism industry. The idea of "experience" has been investigated in a wide range of hospitality and tourism settings, including the airline industry (Seo et al., 2020), cruise tourism (Radic et al., 2021), hotels (Tavitiyaman et al., 2022), restaurants (Hernandez-Rojas et al., 2021), tourism destinations (Alyahya & McLean, 2022), and peer-to-peer accommodations (So et al., 2021), researchers have demonstrated that superior experiences drive customer satisfaction and revisit intention. In the case of homestays, which often





emphasize emotional connection, authenticity, and local culture, the ability to deliver distinctive and personalized experiences becomes even more crucial (Niu et al., 2023).

Customer experience in the tourism and hospitality industry is multifaceted, shaped by accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment, interaction, and technological engagement (Zhang et al., 2023). It is not confined to a single service moment but formed throughout the customer journey (Kuehnl et al., 2019). Importantly, this journey is increasingly co-created through interactions among guests, hosts, and staff (Shin et al., 2020). However, in practice, many Chinese homestays still operate in a product-centric mode, offering limited avenues for tourists to engage meaningfully in shaping their stay. This disconnect often leads to lower emotional engagement and reduces the perceived uniqueness of the experience.

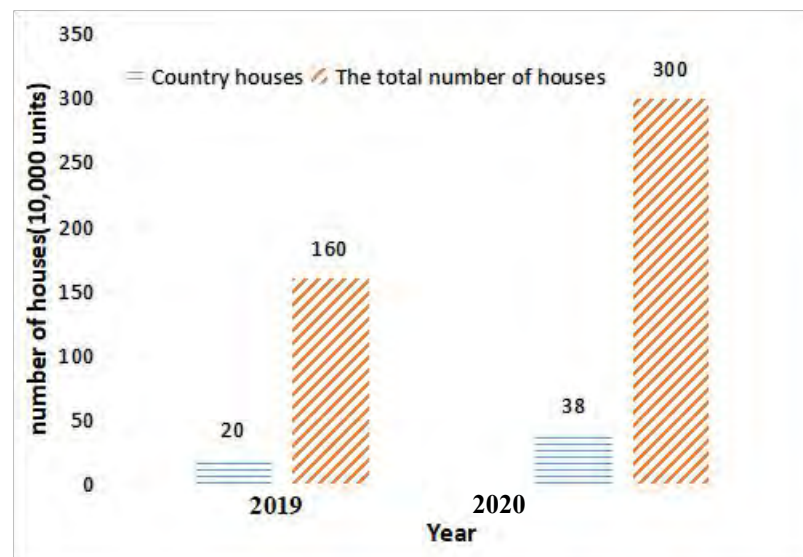
The tourism industry has undergone a transformation—from offering standardized services to creating emotionally resonant, personalized experiences (Zhao et al., 2022). Homestays are at the forefront of this shift. Unlike hotels, homestays provide a context for close host-guest interaction, local cultural immersion, and participation in daily life and traditions (Karki et al., 2019). These features meet growing tourist demand for deeper, more authentic experiences. Beyond individual traveler satisfaction, homestays also stimulate local economies, diversify rural incomes, and support sustainable tourism development (Ismail et al., 2016).



Driven by policies such as rural revitalization and growing interest in the sharing economy, China's homestay industry has expanded rapidly in both scale and format (Huang & Cheng, 2019). The market has seen the emergence of various models including farmhouses (Fanelli & Romagnoli, 2020), family inns (Yan, 2021), and short-term rental platforms (Young & Corsun, 2021). Since 2015, the industry has entered a phase of explosive growth. In particular, between 2019 and 2020, the number of listings and transaction volume grew sharply, reflecting strong market momentum (Ultimate Solutions, 2022) (Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1**

05-4506832 2019-2020 China's total number of homestay housing (unit: 10,000 units) ptbupsi



Source: Ultimate Solutions (2022)

However, growth in quantity has not been matched by improvements in service quality. Despite this rapid growth, the market remains fragmented and lacks



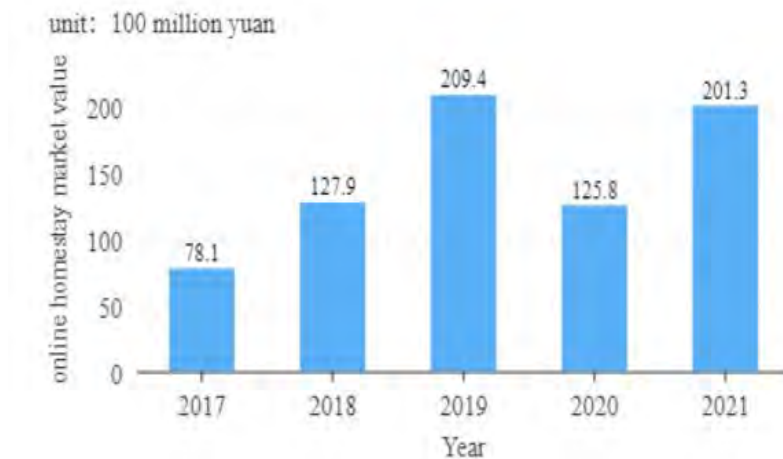
operational standardization. Many investors pursue rapid returns without sufficient attention to service innovation or experience quality. Reviews from major platforms such as Ctrip and Xiaohongshu frequently cite inconsistent service, limited emotional warmth, and generic decor as key reasons for dissatisfaction. Consequently, homestays face difficulties in building long-term guest relationships.

From 2019 to 2021, the online homestay market in China experienced growth setbacks due to COVID-19 but quickly rebounded, showing strong resilience (China Tourism and Homestay Development Association, 2021). The total number of rural homestay listings on platforms such as Tujia exceeded 630,000 by mid-2021, with bookings and revenue both rising (Industrial Research Institute, 2022). Yet industry observers note that beneath this growth lies a growing polarization—between properties that deliver rich, differentiated experiences and those that merely offer beds. The latter struggle to inspire repeat visits. (Figure 1.2). It is worth noting that these figures represent the most recent official data currently available, further underscoring the market's potential for sustained growth in the future.



**Figure 1.2**

*Transaction value of China's online homestay market from 2017-2021*



Source: China Tourism and Homestay Development Association (2021)

As competition intensifies and customer expectations rise, tourists increasingly demand personalized and emotionally engaging accommodations. Young and middle-income consumers, who dominate the homestay user base, are particularly sensitive to service quality, interactive engagement, and local cultural value (Zhao et al., 2020a). This shift makes revisit intention a crucial competitive advantage. From an industry perspective, cultivating long-term relationships with tourists not only improves revenue stability but also reduces acquisition costs and boosts word-of-mouth referrals.

Despite this, there is limited understanding of how co-creation—where tourists actively participate in shaping their experience—can enhance post-trip evaluations and ultimately foster loyalty. While many homestay operators recognize the value of

unique experiences, few systematically implement strategies to involve tourists in meaningful ways. This highlights a gap between theoretical potential and operational reality.

Therefore, this study responds to the need for more research into the experiential and psychological mechanisms behind revisit intention. It focuses on co-creation experience (CCE), including co-creation behavior (CCB) and the immersive design of the experience environment (EXP), and examines how these dimensions influence post-trip perceptions (PP) such as satisfaction and memorability. By understanding this pathway, homestay operators may better design experiences that promote tourist retention and strengthen market competitiveness.

### 1.3 Problem Statement

In recent years, the rapid expansion of the homestay industry has intensified market competition, particularly in China, where the sector has grown significantly but now faces stagnation in quality, innovation, and customer retention. While the trend of consumption upgrade continues to drive tourist expectations (Rai et al., 2021), many homestays remain limited by homogeneous services, lack of personalization, and declining satisfaction rates (Ismail & Daud, 2020). Consequently, enhancing tourists'



revisit intention (HRI) has become a critical issue for homestay operators striving for sustainability and differentiation (Luo et al., 2022).

HRI is widely recognized in marketing literature as a key indicator of consumer loyalty and long-term profitability. Compared to acquiring new customers, retaining existing ones—particularly by increasing their revisit intention—is more cost-effective and stable (Ali et al., 2023a). In the homestay context, however, tourists often report unsatisfactory experiences due to poor service design, lack of emotional engagement, insufficient cultural resonance, or lack of memorable features (Prebensen et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2021). These experience deficiencies directly lower satisfaction and diminish the likelihood of return visits, triggering a range of negative business outcomes such as reduced customer loyalty, increased operating costs, and decreased brand equity (Lane et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2023).

While multiple studies confirm the influence of tourism experience on revisit intention (Promnil, 2020; Salehi, 2024), there remains limited understanding of how specific experiential elements—particularly tourists' active participation in co-creation—contribute to lasting impressions and behavioral outcomes. Tourists are no longer passive recipients of service; instead, they are active participants in shaping their own experiences. This co-creation process, in which tourists interact with homestay hosts, staff, and even other guests, plays a crucial role in influencing





emotional and cognitive outcomes such as satisfaction, memory, and loyalty (Campos et al., 2017; Carvalho & Alves, 2023).

A growing body of research has examined the role of co-creation behavior (CCB) in enhancing value and satisfaction across hospitality settings (Jiang et al., 2021; Liu & Jo, 2020; Xu et al., 2021b). CCB includes activities such as helping others, giving feedback, engaging in shared tasks, and interacting with service personnel. These behaviors not only enhance the service experience but also build psychological ownership and emotional bonds between tourists and the destination (Meng & Cui, 2020). However, while the relationship between CCB and revisit intention has been examined to some extent, other elements of co-creation—especially the physical and social environment, or "experiencescape" (EXP)—have received far less attention.

EXP refers to the design of physical, sensory, and social elements that shape tourists' holistic experience in a given space (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Chen et al., 2023). In the homestay context, experiencescape includes not only architectural aesthetics and room layout but also ambient features such as smell, sound, lighting, and host-guest interaction. A well-designed EXP can provide emotional stimulation, cultural immersion, and personalization, which are increasingly valued by experience-driven consumers. Despite this, few studies have empirically tested the





direct or indirect relationship between EXP and revisit intention, particularly when compared to CCB (Mei et al., 2020; Kwame Opoku et al., 2023; Cho et al., 2019).

Therefore, this study addresses an underexplored area by jointly examining the two key dimensions of co-creation experience—CCB and EXP—and their relationship with tourists' revisit intention. Unlike earlier studies that either focused exclusively on service delivery or generalized tourist satisfaction, this study aims to conceptualize co-creation as a multidimensional construct and test its influence using a structural framework grounded in behavioral theory.



consumer behavior, positing that environmental stimuli directly cause behavioral outcomes (Watson, 1913; Liu et al., 2023). In tourism, S-R theory has been applied to understand how tourists respond to service quality, destination image, and physical setting (Ali et al., 2018; Poggesi et al., 2022). However, S-R theory does not sufficiently account for the internal psychological processes that mediate between stimulus and response. In this context, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), offers a more comprehensive framework by incorporating the role of internal states—emotions, cognition, and motivation—as mediators.



The S-O-R model has been widely adopted in tourism and hospitality research to study how external stimuli (e.g., environment, service quality) influence internal states (e.g., satisfaction, perception, memory), which in turn shape behavioral responses (e.g., loyalty, revisit intention) (Kabadayi et al., 2023; Huang & Bu, 2022). In this study, CCE—comprising both CCB and EXP—functions as the stimulus (S), post-trip perceptions (PP) including satisfaction (SAT) and memorability (MEM) as the organism (O), and revisit intention (HRI) as the response (R).

Although satisfaction has been well established as a key antecedent of behavioral intention (Abdullah & Lui, 2018; Jeong & Kim, 2020b), its role as a mediator in the relationship between co-creation experience and revisit intention remains underexplored. Similarly, memorability—defined as the extent to which a tourist retains and emotionally values the experience—is emerging as a critical but often neglected component of post-trip perceptions. Studies suggest that MEM has long-term behavioral consequences, including increased loyalty, recommendation, and future visits (Harrington et al., 2021; Sthapit et al., 2020; Li et al., 2022).

This study responds to the lack of integrated models that incorporate both immediate (SAT) and enduring (MEM) post-trip perceptions to explain how co-creation influences revisit intention. By examining the dual-dimensional structure of CCE (CCB and EXP) and the mediating roles of PP (SAT and MEM), this study seeks to build a more nuanced understanding of tourist decision-making processes.



The findings are expected to offer both theoretical contributions to experience-based tourism research and practical implications for homestay operators aiming to enhance guest satisfaction, emotional resonance, and loyalty.

Moreover, this study is positioned within the context of Chinese homestay tourism—a setting where cultural interaction, personalized engagement, and environmental aesthetics are becoming central to consumer choice. Despite this, limited empirical research has tested the mediating role of SAT and MEM in this context. Most existing studies are situated in hotel or mass tourism settings, overlooking the specific dynamics of homestays that emphasize intimacy, interaction, and co-creation (Zhang et al., 2021; Bu et al., 2022).

Therefore, this study aims to address the following research problem: While co-creation experience (CCE) is increasingly recognized as a determinant of revisit intention (HRI), the underlying mechanisms—particularly the role of post-trip perceptions (PP), namely satisfaction (SAT) and memorability (MEM)—remain insufficiently understood, especially in the context of Chinese homestay tourism.

By examining how the two dimensions of CCE (CCB and EXP) influence revisit intention through PP, this study seeks to build a more nuanced understanding of tourist decision-making processes. The findings are expected to offer both theoretical contributions to experience-based tourism research and practical





implications for homestay operators aiming to enhance guest satisfaction, emotional resonance, and loyalty.

Specifically, the main objective of this study is to examine the effect of CCE on HRI through the mediating roles of SAT and MEM among homestay tourists in China. This approach is intended to help destination marketers and homestay managers retain existing tourists by managing both experiential inputs and psychological outputs of the tourism experience.



#### 1.4 Research Objectives



Based on the problem statement and the identified gaps in previous research, this study aims to address and meet the following general and specific research objectives (RO). The general research objective is to empirically test the mediating role of PP between CCE and HRI.

This study proposes and presents the following more specific research objectives:

RO1: To determine the effect of co-creation experience (CCE) dimension [co-creation behavior (CCB) and experiencescape (EXP)] on post-trip perceptions (PP)



dimension [memorability (MEM) and satisfaction (SAT)] among tourists in China.

RO2: To determine the effect of co-creation experience (CCE) dimension [co-creation behavior (CCB) and experiencescape (EXP)] on homestay revisit intention (HRI) among tourists in China.

RO3: To determine the effect of post-trip perceptions (PP) dimension [memorability (MEM) and satisfaction (SAT)] on homestay revisit intention (HRI) among tourists in China.

RO4: To determine the mediating effect of post-trip perceptions (PP) dimension [memorability (MEM) and satisfaction (SAT)] in the effect of co-creation experience (CCE) dimension on homestay revisit intention (HRI) among tourists in China.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

In line with the research objectives, this study has formulated four research questions (RQs) regarding the extent to which CCE effects HRI through the mediating effect of PP. The research questions are as follows:



RQ1: What is the effect of co-creation experience (CCE) dimension [co-creation behavior (CCB) and experiencescape (EXP)] on post-trip perceptions (PP) dimension [memorability (MEM) and satisfaction (SAT)] among tourists in China?

RQ2: What is the effect of co-creation experience (CCE) dimension [co-creation behavior (CCB) and experiencescape (EXP)] on homestay revisit intention (HRI) among tourists in China?

RQ3: What is the effect of post-trip perceptions (PP) dimension [memorability (MEM) and satisfaction (SAT)] on homestay revisit intention (HRI) among tourists in China?

RQ4: Do post-trip perceptions (PP) dimension [memorability (MEM) and satisfaction (SAT)] mediate the effect of co-creation experience (CCE) dimension on homestay revisit intention (HRI) among tourists in China?





## 1.6 Research Hypotheses

Table 1.1 lists all the hypotheses to be tested in this study in relation to the research objective and question.

**Table 1.1**

*Summary of Hypotheses*

Research Objective and Research Question	Hypotheses
RO1 and RQ1	H1: CCB significantly and positively affects MEM. H2: EXP significantly and positively affects MEM. H3: CCB significantly and positively affects SAT. H4: EXP significantly and positively affects SAT.
RO2 and RQ2	H5: CCB significantly and positively affects HRI. H6: EXP significantly and positively affects HRI.
RO3 and RQ3	H7: MEM significantly and positively affects HRI. H8: SAT significantly and positively affects HRI.
RO4 and RQ4	H9: MEM mediates the effect of CCB on HRI. H10: MEM mediates the effect of EXP on HRI. H11: SAT mediates the effect of CCB on HRI. H12: SAT mediates the effect of EXP on HRI.

## 1.7 Conceptual Framework of Research

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the S-R model developed by Watson (1913) and the S-O-R model developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974).





Focusing on the context of homestay tourism, this study adopts the S-O-R theory perspective to explore how tourists' experiential setting and co-creation behavior in homestays affect their post-trip perceptions and revisit intentions. In this context, the co-creation experience within homestays becomes central to understanding tourist behavior. Through multifaceted interactions involving nature, society, and culture, co-creation significantly enhances tourists' memory and satisfaction levels.

In this study, co-creation experience serves as a key source of stimulus (S). Through co-creation behavior, tourists actively engage in the design and interaction within the experience, leading to a heightened sense of value and emotional connection. In addition, factors such as facilities, service quality, and atmosphere are also part of the stimulus.

Furthermore, tourists' post-trip perceptions, including memorability and satisfaction, can be viewed as the organism (O). The stimuli generated by the co-creation experience influence tourists' psychological responses, such as an increase in satisfaction and positive memories of the experience. This creates a cognitive and emotional association with the destination or accommodation.

Finally, the response (R) is reflected in tourists' revisit intentions. When tourists develop positive post-trip perceptions (satisfaction and memorability) as a result of the stimulus from the co-creation experience, they are more likely to revisit

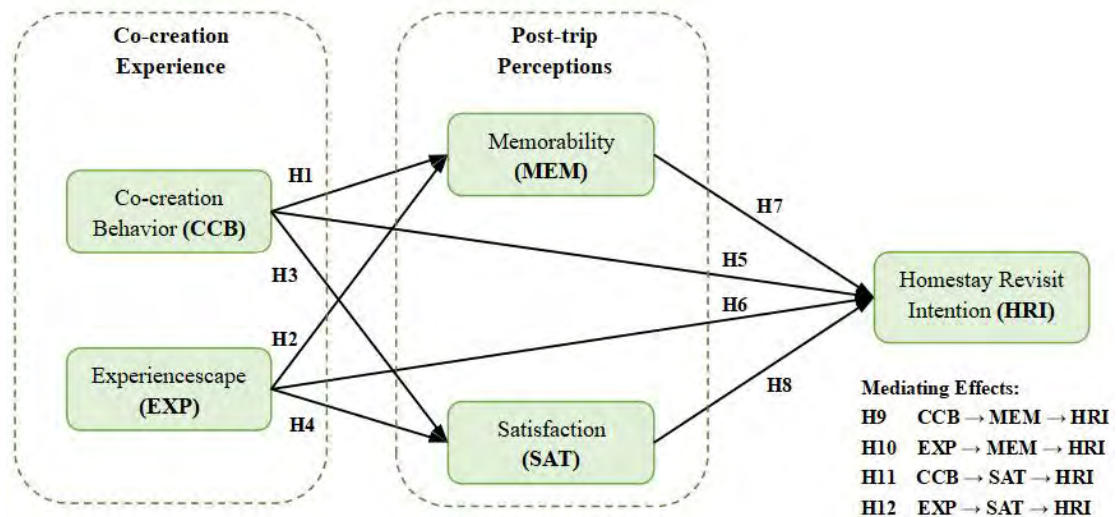




the destination or accommodation. This response represents a behavioral manifestation of prior experiences, as tourists' positive reactions to previous experiences translate into an increased likelihood of revisiting.

Therefore, the conceptual framework proposed in this study defines co-creation experience through two dimensions — experiencescape and co-creation behavior — and uses post-trip perceptions, specifically memorability and satisfaction, as key indicators to examine their influence on tourists' revisit intentions. In this study, co-creation experience is set as the independent variable, revisit intention as the dependent variable, and post-trip perceptions as the mediating variable. To test the direct effect of co-creation experience on post-trip perceptions, Hypotheses 1 to 4 are proposed; to examine the direct effect of co-creation experience on revisit intention, Hypotheses 5 to 6 are established; to evaluate the direct effect of post-trip perceptions on revisit intention, Hypotheses 7 to 8 are introduced; and finally, to verify the mediating effect of post-trip perceptions between co-creation experience and revisit intention, Hypotheses 9 to 12 are put forward. Figure 1.3 illustrates the conceptual framework proposed in this research, which will be elaborated upon in the following chapter.



**Figure 1.3***Conceptual Framework of Research***1.8 Significance of the Research**

A review of existing research highlights the need for deeper exploration of the theoretical foundations and empirical investigations concerning revisit intention within the homestay industry (Lim & Lee, 2020; Ramele & Yamazaki, 2020). Addressing this gap, the present study contributes to the growing body of knowledge by building upon and extending prior research in the field of tourism, with a specific focus on homestay contexts.



### 1.8.1 Theoretical Significance

From the perspective of tourist behavior research, this study extends the application of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory, offering a new theoretical perspective for existing tourism behavior literature. The S-O-R theory emphasizes how external stimuli influence individual behavior through internal psychological states, such as emotions and cognition. Building on this framework, this study incorporates co-creation experience (CCE) and post-trip perceptions (PP) as critical constructs into the theoretical model, further enriching the applicability of the S-O-R theory in tourism behavior research. By integrating these constructs, the study provides significant theoretical support for understanding the psychological processes through which homestay tourists develop revisit intentions in specific contexts.

Although previous studies have attempted to apply the S-O-R theory to tourism research, particularly in consumer behavior and experiential studies, systematic investigations into revisit intention in the homestay context remain scarce (Janjua et al., 2021). The unique contribution of this study lies in constructing a comprehensive model that integrates two core dimensions of CCE (experiencescape [EXP] and co-creation behavior [CCB]) with related dimensions of PP (memorability [MEM] and satisfaction [SAT]) under the S-O-R framework. This framework offers a more holistic and dynamic perspective to explain the formation of revisit intention





among homestay tourists, providing novel theoretical tools and research directions for the field.

Furthermore, this study highlights two critical interactive parties in the CCE process: service providers (EXP) and customers (CCB). This finding not only provides empirical support for applying value co-creation theory to the homestay context but also emphasizes the profound impact of the bidirectional interactions between supply and demand in shaping tourist behavior. This analytical framework deepens the application scenarios of value co-creation theory in tourism and homestay research while offering an empirical foundation for its further development.



More importantly, the study examines the mediating role of PP in the relationship between CCE and homestay revisit intention (HRI), which has been rarely investigated in previous research. By examining the mediating role of PP, the study addresses a critical gap in the existing literature on the CCE-HRI relationship, providing significant and innovative theoretical insights. On one hand, the study validates the indirect effects of CCE on HRI through PP, uncovering the intrinsic psychological mechanisms within this relationship. This provides the S-O-R theory with richer application scenarios. On the other hand, the study benchmarks the relative influence of two key dimensions of PP (MEM and SAT). By elucidating the importance of these indirect pathways through a multiple mediator model, the study offers new perspectives for theoretical inquiry and empirical analysis.





In summary, this study not only expands the applicability of the S-O-R theory but also enriches its application details within the field of tourism behavior research. These findings offer a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding the role of CCE in the decision-making processes of homestay tourists and deepen academic understanding of the complexities of tourist behavior and its psychological mechanisms. These contributions enhance the depth of theoretical knowledge and provide valuable references for future research in homestay and other tourism settings.



### 1.8.2 Practical Significance



Attracting and retaining tourists remains a critical challenge for many homestay operators (Kiswanto et al., 2023; Ly et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022; Larasati & Kusumah, 2019). This issue largely stems from a lack of systematic understanding of the key factors influencing tourists' decision-making, making it difficult for operators to implement effective strategies (Tang et al., 2022). From a hypothesis-driven perspective, this study develops a comprehensive analytical framework to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for homestay operators, tourists, and policymakers.





Firstly, the proposed model examines the potential roles of homestay servicescape and tourists' co-creation behavior (CCB) in enhancing satisfaction (SAT), memorability (MEM), and revisit intention (HRI), emphasizing the importance and likely impact of these variables. This framework offers clear directions for homestay operators to improve service and experience design. For instance, operators can optimize physical environment quality, create unique service atmospheres, and actively encourage tourists to participate in co-creation processes, thereby strengthening tourists' psychological experiences and emotional value. In addition, the integration of value co-creation highlights the critical role of interactive experiences, suggesting that operators should design more tourist-centered projects to enhance overall performance and customer loyalty.

Secondly, the hypothesis framework also underscores the potential influence of co-creation experiences on tourist satisfaction and memory formation, offering tourists a theoretical basis for understanding their active role in shaping their experiences. By participating more actively in co-creation activities, tourists are likely to achieve more enjoyable and memorable experiences, fostering stronger emotional connections with destinations. This framework provides valuable insights for tourists to enhance their travel value.





Finally, the study offers important implications for policymakers by providing a theoretical basis for the development of policies to support the homestay industry. By analyzing the relationships between co-creation elements and tourist behavior, the study supports the formulation of targeted policies to promote industry growth. For example, policymakers could encourage homestay operators to incorporate culturally rich co-creation projects and enhance service infrastructure through financial subsidies or training programs. Moreover, establishing industry standards and evaluation systems can improve the overall service quality of the sector and drive its sustainable development. These measures not only enhance tourist satisfaction with homestays but also inject vitality into local economic and cultural tourism development.



In summary, this study, from a hypothesis-driven perspective, clarifies actionable pathways for homestay operators to optimize services and enhance tourist participation, provides a theoretical basis for tourists to improve their travel experiences, and offers policy recommendations for promoting sustainable development in the homestay sector. These practical implications help bridge the gap between theory and practice, contributing to the high-quality growth of the homestay industry and enhancing the competitiveness of tourism destinations.





## 1.9 Operational Definition

The following are the definitions and descriptions of the core concepts utilized in this study.

### 1.9.1 Homestay

According to the National Tourism Administration of China (2017), homestay could be defined as “using local residential and other related idle resources; the owner participates in the reception and provides small accommodation facilities for tourists to experience the local nature, culture and production, and lifestyle”. As noted by Chen et al. (2024b), homestays are accommodation facilities repurposed from unused residential resources in rural areas by their owners, providing tourists with lodging that offers relaxation, entertainment, and an authentic experience of local culture. Homestays not only provide travelers with opportunities to deeply understand and experience local culture but also play a significant role in promoting local economic development, enhancing the quality of the tourism experience, and contributing to sustainable tourism development.





Therefore, this study focuses primarily on rural homestays, which, unlike traditional hotels, represent a non-standard form of tourist accommodation. Their core feature lies in the co-creation capacity between tourists and hosts. This capacity is reflected in their ability to engage in communication and interaction that showcases personal charm, expresses friendliness, fosters socialization and sharing, and offers service and assistance.

### 1.9.2 Co-creation Experience (CCE)

The concept of co-creation experience is based on the notion of the customer as a value creator, who interacts with the organization to "co-create" value (Prebensen et al., 2013). According to Mathis et al. (2016) and Cao et al. (2023), the formation of co-creation experience occurs through "interactive communication" between customers and service providers or other customers to jointly create value.

In this study, the co-creation experience refers to the experience of using and jointly creating tourism-related goods and services with homestay hosts. At the same time, tourists can also create their experiences by integrating appropriate resources and interacting with others. This experience can be achieved through two dimensions: Co-creation Behavior (CCB) and Experiencescape (EXP).





### 1.9.2.1 Co-creation Behavior (CCB)

Co-creation behavior refers to tourists' physical and mental engagement in the co-creation experience, as well as their interactive communication with other stakeholders (Bertella, 2014). The co-creation behavior of homestay tourists emphasizes a tourist-centered approach, characterized by on-site engagement that includes active participation and interactive communication (Campos et al., 2017). According to Yi and Gong (2013), co-creation behavior typically comprises two higher-order factors: customer participation and citizenship behavior. Participation behaviors include information seeking, information sharing, and personal interaction, while citizenship behaviors encompass feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance.

In this study, co-creation behavior refers to tourists' actions of actively participating and voluntarily supporting the enhancement of the homestay experience quality. Tourists' participation behavior involves proactive engagement, such as seeking information about homestay activities and services, sharing experience details with others, and interacting with hosts and fellow tourists to enhance mutual understanding. Citizenship behavior, on the other hand, reflects tourists' spontaneous support, including providing feedback to improve services, promoting the homestay, helping others during activities, and showing tolerance toward minor issues. These behaviors collectively represent tourists' direct involvement and supportive attitude toward the homestay, fostering a positive co-creation experience.





### 1.9.2.2 Experiencescape (EXP)

Bitner (1992) coined the umbrella term "servicescape" to refer to the physical features of the environment where consumers and employees operate. "Experiencescape" is an extension and expansion of "servicescape" (Edvardsson et al., 2010). According to Pizam and Tasci (2019), Experiencescape refers to the combination of sensory, functional, social, natural, and cultural elements within a product or service environment, all enriched by a culture of hospitality. This collective environment shapes the experiences of consumers, employees, and stakeholders, influencing their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions—whether positive or negative—toward brands, services, products, and organizations.

In this study, experiencescape refers to the sensory, functional, social, natural, and cultural stimuli that shape tourists' experiences during homestay visits. Grounded in a culture of hospitality and designed to benefit tourists, hosts, and other stakeholders alike, these elements aim to evoke positive or negative cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses toward the products, services, brands, and the homestay environment, ultimately cultivating a meaningful and enriching experience.



### 1.9.3 Post-trip Perceptions (PP)

In previous studies, although the term "post-trip perceptions" was not explicitly defined, scholars have consistently focused on tourists' emotional demands and the psychological perceptions derived from unique experiences, such as nostalgia, tranquility, and satisfaction (Zatori et al., 2018; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017b). For instance, Campos et al. used "memorability" (Campos et al., 2017), Mathis et al. employed "tourist satisfaction" (Mathis et al., 2016), and Castellani et al. referred to "refreshing experience" (Castellani et al., 2020) to express tourists' subjective psychological assessment of their travel experiences. Numerous studies also indicate that post-trip perceptions are central to the tourism experience, and creating high-quality post-trip perceptions—and effectively conveying them—is a key strategy for enhancing a destination's competitive advantage (Plunkett & Brooks, 2018a), especially dimensions such as memorability (Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011; Oh et al., 2007) and satisfaction (Neal et al., 2004, 2007).

Therefore, in this study, post-trip perceptions refer to the various subjective psychological assessments made by tourists after completing a homestay tourism activity. In this study, it is reflected through two dimensions: memorability and satisfaction.



### 1.9.3.1 Memorability (MEM)

In tourism research, memorability represents the conceptualization of the tourism experience as a psychological event and is regarded as a subjective psychological state (Larsen, 2007). It exists in both positive and negative forms, but scholars in tourism research, particularly in destination marketing, primarily focus on the significance of positive memorable experiences. For instance, research by Campos et al. (2017) indicates that memorable tourism experiences enable tourists to build identity, enhance personal abilities, obtain desired values, and fulfill cherished dreams. Memorability is defined as “the tourist’s subjective evaluation of the recalled experience relative to short- and expected long-term memory effects (vividness and durability)” (Campos et al., 2017, p.106).

In this study, memorability is regarded as an outcome of tourists' co-creation experiences in homestays, serving as a dimension of post-trip perceptions and reflecting the extent to which co-creation experiences and events leave lasting and vivid memories in tourists' minds.





### 1.9.3.2 Satisfaction (SAT)

Consumer satisfaction, as defined by Giese et al. (2000), is the response to the perceived difference between certain standards and the perceived performance of a product. In the field of tourism research, tourist satisfaction is the crucial indicator of experience quality (Chen et al., 2023; Mathis et al., 2016).

Therefore, this study defines satisfaction as the outcome of tourists' judgments regarding their co-creation experience during homestay tourism. Satisfaction is a psychological concept involving a sense of well-being and pleasure, arising from the interaction between a tourist's actual experience at the homestay and their pre-formed expectations. When tourists perceive that their co-creation experience surpasses these expectations, they feel satisfied with the experience outcome.

### 1.9.4 Homestay Revisit Intention (HRI)

Revisit intention refers to the possibility of tourists choosing a new destination again for the future and is viewed as the tendency shown by tourists when evaluating their desired destination (Ali et al., 2023b). According to Coudounaris and Sthapit (2017), when individuals find a travel experience memorable, they recall the feelings brought about by elements of the experience (such as excitement, enjoyment, entertainment,





pleasure, and meaning) after the experience has ended, which in turn influences their revisit intention the destination. Similarly, an increase in travel satisfaction can affect individuals' behavioral decisions.

Therefore, in this study, the homestay revisit intention is defined as the likelihood of tourists returning to the homestay, influenced by the subjective psychological assessments formed after their co-creation experience at the homestay.

### 1.10 Research Structure



There are five chapters in this study. The research's fundamental concepts are explained in the first chapter, highlighting challenges linked to the study's topic. Chapter 2 covers the hypotheses that will be investigated and a critical analysis of the pertinent literature on homestay visitors' intentions to return. The research methods used to examine proposed hypotheses are described in Chapter 3. The empirical findings from hypothesis testing are presented and explained in Chapter 4. The study's primary conclusions are discussed in Chapter 5, along with the study's limits and implications, recommendations for further research, and conclusions.





## 1.11 Summary

This chapter describes the fundamental concepts of the research and introduces the issues pertinent to the study's topic. This chapter, in particular, briefly describes the valuable study on homestay visitors' intentions to return and the absence of research on how intentions are formed in the literature. The next section of the chapter gives an overview of the study's objectives, aims for the research, anticipated contributions, definition of structure, and general structure. The next chapter reviews the work and deeply discusses the underlying theory, research framework, and research hypotheses.

