



The Influence of Emotional Design and Demographic Characteristics on Homestay Inn Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Objective The burgeoning homestay inn industry has diversified and personalized accommodation offerings. This study investigates the interplay between demographic variables (such as consumers' gender, age group, educational attainment, occupation type, and income level) and emotional needs (encompassing the utilitarian, visual-aesthetic, and reflective dimensions). The aim is to assist homestay inn in delivering more precisely tailored services and designs. Methods Employing a cross-sectional research approach, this study gathered data from a sample of 916 homestay inns consumers across the nation via online surveys. The data underwent analysis through SPSS, encompassing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Initially, the research focused on delineating the basic characteristics of the respondents and their emotional needs. Subsequently, it probed the existence of correlations between demographic variables and emotional needs. Lastly, the robustness of the regression model was assessed. Results The findings reveal that the primary demographic of homestay inn patrons skews towards younger individuals aged 30-45, with a higher educational background (college degree and above) and higher income brackets (5001-10000 yuan), albeit with diverse occupational profiles. The average score for emotional needs hovered around 8 points, suggesting a generally positive reception towards emotional design among respondents. A statistically significant correlation was observed between demographic variables and emotional design. Nevertheless, the regression model's explanatory power proved limited, indicating the need for more in-depth exploration to unravel the complexities of these relationships.

Keywords: Homestay Inn; Emotional Design; Social Stratification Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Homestay inn have recently emerged as a new segment within China's accommodation industry, experiencing rapid development. As of September 30, 2019, the number of homestay inn on mainland China reached 169,800, a 217.06% increase from over 50,000 in 2016, with homestay inn market revenue hitting 20.94 billion yuan, marking a year-on-year increase of 38.92% (Guo Juyong, 2020). The homestay inn industry operates nearly at full capacity, surpassing the capacity utilization rate of hotels by 29%. According to the "2022 homestay inn Industry Research Report," young people (aged 25-44, accounting for 52.2%) and the middle class (families with an annual disposable income of more than 138,000 yuan, accounting for 49%) significantly contribute to the economic growth of homestay inn consumption, with a clear trend towards consumption upgrading (characterized mainly by high quality, personalization, and in-depth experiences).

The primary objective of this study is to stratify the consumer groups of homestay inn in mainland China based on social stratification theory; secondly, to investigate whether emotional experiences are influenced by social stratification, i.e., the correlation between social stratification and emotional experiences.

The significance of this study lies in: (1) Theoretically, it expands the application of social stratification theory in the homestay inn industry and provides a new theoretical perspective for research in related fields, highlighting the importance of design in enhancing consumer emotional satisfaction. (2) Practically, understanding the relationship between emotional needs and social stratification helps homestay inn offer more targeted services and designs, thereby improving customer satisfaction and loyalty and enhancing overall competitiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Homestay Inn

Though there is no universally accepted definition for a homestay inn, it is commonly understood as a type of lodging where consumers stay in the homes of local inhabitants (Agyeiwaah, 2019; Agyeiwaah & Mensah, 2017; Kwaramba, Lovett, Louw, & Chipumuro, 2012; Tahvonen, 2019). It often overlaps with other accommodation terminologies such as Bed and Breakfast (B&B) (Shen, Miao, Lehto, & Zhao, 2018; Tinsley & Lynch, 2001), Minsu (Ye, Xiao, & Zhou, 2019), grand residences, wilderness or nature cabins (Morrison, Pearce, Moscardo, Nadkarni, & O'Leary, 1996), family hotels (Agyeiwaah, Akyeampong, & Amenumey, 2013), homestay inn, boutique hotels or inns (McIntosh & Siggs, 2005), and small lodging enterprises (Ye et al., 2019). However, these terms generally highlight the accommodation's scale or locale, marking a distinction from homestay inns. As described by Ahmad, Jabeen, and Khan (2014), "homestay inn tourism is characterized by a community-based tourism model wherein consumers reside with a host family. The host family is expected to treat consumers as their own family members, engaging them in everyday activities, sharing local community experiences, and facilitating learning about the lifestyle, culture, and the environment of the area." In 2017, the China National Tourism Administration released the industry standard document "Basic Requirements and Evaluation of Tourism Homestay inn," which explicitly standardizes the English spelling of tourism homestay inn as "homestay inn." It defines it as "utilizing local, idle tourism resources, with the homestay inn host partaking in reception, to offer tourists small-scale lodging facilities that epitomize the local natural, cultural, and productive lifestyle." The defining feature of homestay inns is their focus on the interpersonal relationship between the host and guest, clearly differentiating homestay inns from other accommodation types.

2.2 Social Stratification Theory

Social stratification denotes the disparities among social members and groups due to the differential ownership of societal resources, especially within the systems of social differences institutionalized by laws and regulations (Grusky, 2019). Given a variety of criteria commonly employed, social stratification spans multiple dimensions such as economic indicators (income, wealth, etc.), social prestige (status, occupation, etc.), power (authority, hierarchy), consumption and cultural indicators (levels of consumption, lifestyles, cultural preferences), and demographic characteristics (gender, ethnicity, religion, age, etc.). The rise of the middle class led to the prominence of the class school of thought in the 1970s, focusing on factors like income, education, attractiveness, among others (Grusky, 2019; Rothman, 2002). Weber (1966) elucidated the influence of economic factors on the formation of identity groups, positing that individuals within the same class status share similar income levels, dictating their specific lifestyles; these individuals forge deep bonds within these groups, gradually recognizing their shared identity, and forming a formal community. Identity groups are inclined to develop shared characteristics, such as pace, manners, types of accommodation, food preferences, and more.

In the context of Chinese social stratification research, the terms "class" and "stratum" are frequently utilized, though they bear distinct differences. "Class" is predicated on political or ideological notions, analyzing attributes and conflict theories at the group classification level, whereas "stratum" hinges on economic disparities, the relationships between attribute classifications, and analyses based on functional theories (Li, 2008). An individual's occupation not only directly impacts their income but also affects their educational level and even their social prestige and status (Segura, 2018). Li (2018) introduced a theoretical framework for social class division that is based on occupational classification and the possession of organizational, economic, and cultural resources. Using the China General Social Survey (CGSS), Li (2018) determined that individuals with an annual income between 35,000 and 120,000 yuan, families with an annual income between 69,000 and 230,000 yuan, and those with disposable incomes around 39,000 yuan are categorized as the Chinese middle class. Following the criteria mentioned above and the statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2019) (Table 1), corresponding disposable incomes were segmented into five levels as per China's social stratification. In Chinese society, the social status denoted by an individual's occupation is strongly associated with their educational attainment (Li, 2010).

Table 1 Social stratification in China.

Class	Occupation	Discretionary annual income (¥)
Upper	Senior cadres, entrepreneurs, managers, senior professionals, and a large private owners	79617.4
Upper middle	Middle-level leading cadres, middle-level managers of large enterprises, managers of small and medium-sized enterprises, middle level professional and technical personnel and middle-level business owners	42358.8
Middle	Primary professional and technical personnel, small business owners, office staff, individual industrial and commercial households, senior technicians, large agricultural businesses	27579.3
Lower middle	Self-employed, workers, farmers	16971.3

Lower	Living in poverty, lack of job security, agriculture and the unemployed, the unemployed workers	7305
NOTE: data source (NBSC2019).		

2.3 The Three-Level Theory

The inaugural International Conference on Design & Emotion was hosted in Delft, Netherlands, in 1999. Attendees synthesized the research trends on user emotional experience that had emerged around the 1980s in the design domain. The subsequent biennial International Conferences on Design & Emotion have served as platforms for the exchange of emotional design theories. Several articles related to environmental design and emotional experience research presented at recent iterations of the Design & Emotion International Conferences have provided valuable insights for this paper (LO, 2008).

Donald A. Norman, a globally acclaimed cognitive psychologist devoted to product usability research, has authored a range of works exploring the interplay between design and emotion. His championed "user-centered" design principle has deeply ingrained itself in the design community. In his book, "EMOTIONAL DESIGN: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things," Norman delves into the nexus between human emotional experiences and product design. He acknowledges the complexity of human emotions and, from a psychological viewpoint, examines how to more effectively incorporate emotions into product design to harmonize product aesthetics and usability. Norman's theories have established a robust foundation for the advancement of emotional design research. In this book, Norman proposes three stages of design: The first is the "visceral" level, which represents the sensory components of how objects seem, feel, smell, and sound. Visceral design creates strong, automatic responses. Viscerally beautifully designed items tend to elicit favourable feelings in buyers. The second level is the "behavioural" level, where people create their views of a product via its usage. Product performance is crucial, thus designers must ensure that the product is simple to use and that its purpose is clearly understood. Norman contends that excellent behavioural design should be an integral element of the design process from the start. Third, the "reflective" level is the level at which the product holds significance for consumers; it explains how customers preserve an intrinsic sense of identity throughout time by consuming the product. Marketing has a significant impact in adding reflecting design features into a product. The interplay of these three layers of design culminates in the "emotional design".

METHODS

3.1 Research Design

Building upon Bourdieu's social stratification theory, this research examined the demographic characteristics and emotional needs distribution among homestay inn guests, with a focus on the relationship between the variables of education, occupation, and income and the utilitarian, visual aesthetic, and reflective layers of emotional needs. Additionally, information on gender and age was collected to assess their influence on the emotional experience value for homestay inn guests.

The measurement items were adapted from the theoretical framework proposed by Dr. Qin Yang (2013), utilizing ten indicators to gauge the emotional experiences of homestay inn guests. These indicators correspond to the three dimensions of emotional design: the

"Utilitarian Layer," the "Visual Aesthetic Layer," and the "Reflective Layer." The "Utilitarian Layer" encompasses four indicators: "Safety," "Comfort," "Privacy," and "Effectiveness"; the "Visual Aesthetic Layer" is measured through three indicators: "Rich Visual Effects," "Visual Orderliness," and "Novel Visual Sensations"; the "Reflective Layer" is assessed via three indicators: "Culturality," "Personalization," and "Fashionability."

Prior to the main study, all questionnaire scales underwent a pre-test among 20 homestay inn consumers, leading to revisions of any ambiguous items. A Likert scale ranging from "Very Unimportant (1)" to "Very Important (10)" was implemented. The Cronbach's α for the three levels of emotion exceeded 0.8, demonstrating good internal consistency. The KMO value for the scale was 0.922 (Table 2), well above the 0.5 threshold, indicating its appropriateness for factor analysis. Additionally, the total influence of all common factors on the dependent variable was 74.138%, significantly above the 50% threshold, showcasing that the extracted factors were adequately measured in this study. Following orthogonal rotation using the maximum variance method, the ten measurement indicators were categorized into three factors, with each item's factor loading weight surpassing 0.6, thereby confirming robust validity.

Table 2 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.922
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5363.789
	df	45
	Sig.	0.000

3.2 Data Collection

Considering limitations related to economy, transportation, and implementation, Dali in Yunnan was selected as the sample site for this study. According to the "2018 China homestay inn Industry Development Research Report," Yunnan boasts the highest number of homestay inn in China (119,086), leading the country. Moreover, Dali is recognized as the city with the most homestay inn in Yunnan, based on data from the "2021 Yunnan homestay inn Industry Development Report." Hence, Dali's homestay inn represent a site of both typicality and representativeness for this sample.

Utilizing convenience sampling, eighteen homestay inn with ratings above 4.8 were selected from two prominent Chinese homestay inn booking platforms (Xiaozhu Short Rent and Meituan homestay inn). The survey questionnaires were disseminated to homestay inn guests through the Questionnaire Star platform, yielding a total of 1,067 responses from May 18 to July 31, 2023. From 1,057 questionnaires, those deemed invalid included: (1) questionnaires with numerous missing answers; (2) responses that uniformly selected a single answer throughout; (3) modifications of the original questionnaire for personal preferences; (4) respondents younger than 18 years of age. After excluding invalid questionnaires, 916 valid responses were secured, achieving an effectiveness rate of 86.66%.

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

4.1.1 Participant Demographics

(Table3)The gender distribution is evenly split, with males comprising 49.9% and females 50.1%. The age group distribution reveals that the majority of respondents fall within the 30-45 age range (56.2%), followed by those aged 18-30 (30.6%), and respondents over 45 years

old represent 13.2%. Regarding educational levels, 13.4% of respondents have attained a high school education or lower, 48.5% are college graduates, and 38.1% possess a master's degree or higher. In terms of occupation, company employees (38.4%) and self-employed individuals (32.1%) form the majority, public officials make up 22.5%, and students account for only 7%. The income distribution among respondents is relatively balanced, with the largest group earning ¥5001-10000 (42.1%), followed by ¥2501-5000 (26.4%), below ¥2500 (12.1%), and above ¥10000 (19.3%).

In summary, the study's participants are characterized by: (1) a youthful demographic, primarily aged between 30-45; (2) diversity in occupational types, with a substantial presence of company employees and self-employed individuals, totaling 70.5%; (3) a high level of education, with 86.6% of respondents having attained a college degree or higher; (4) a higher income bracket, with 42.1% of respondents earning between ¥5001-10000.

Table 3 Respondents' characteristics (N=916).

Variables	N(%)	Variables	N(%)
Gender		Educational level	
male	457(49.9)	High school and below	123(13.4%)
female	459(50.1)	college graduate	444(48.5%)
Total	916(100%)	master degree or above	349(38.1%)
Age group		Total	916(100%)
18-30	280(30.6%)	Income level	
31-45	515(56.2%)	< ¥ 2500	111(12.1%)
> 45	121(13.2%)	¥ 2501-5000	242(26.4%)
Total	916(100%)	¥ 5001-10000	386(42.1%)
Occupation type		> ¥ 10000	177(19.3%)
Student	64(7%)	Total	916(100%)
public official	206(22.5%)		
company employee	352(38.4%)		
Self-employed	294(32.1%)		
Total	916(100%)		

4.1.2 Emotional Needs

Table. 4 Respondents' scored on emotional needs

	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Useful Level	916	8.22	8.5	1.693	1	10
Visual Level	916	7.77	8	1.696	1	10
Reflective Level	916	7.76	8	1.753	1	10

Table 4 outlines the descriptive statistics for respondents' emotional needs across three variables: Useful Level, Visual Level, and Reflective Level, with a total sample size of 916. All three variables range from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 10.

The Useful Level has an average score of 8.22, a median of 8.5, and a standard deviation of 1.693, indicating that the majority of respondents rate the Useful Level around 8, showing relatively low overall variability. The Visual Level averages at 7.77, with a median of 8 and a standard deviation of 1.696, suggesting most ratings for the Visual Level cluster between 7.5-

8, also with low overall variability. The Reflective Level has an average score of 7.76, a median of 8, and a standard deviation of 1.753, showing that most ratings for the Reflective Level are concentrated between 7.5-8, with comparably low overall variability. Overall, the average scores for these three variables are near 8, with medians similarly close, indicating uniform ratings across these dimensions within this sample. The small standard deviations point to a concentrated distribution of ratings, underscoring that the majority of respondents positively evaluate emotional design.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 5 Correlation analysis between demographic characteristics and Useful Level

		Gender	Age group	Occupation type	Educational level	Income level
Useful Level	Pearson Correlation	0.027	0.082*	0.095**	0.182**	0.096**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.418	0.013	0.004	0.000	0.004
	N	916	916	916	916	916
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Table 5 presents the results from the Pearson correlation analysis, including Pearson correlation coefficients between variables and the significance levels of these correlations. (1) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Gender and Useful Level is 0.027, nearly zero, with a p-value of $0.418 > 0.05$, indicating that the linear relationship between Gender and Useful Level is not significant. (2) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Age group and Useful Level is 0.082, with a p-value of $0.013 < 0.05$, suggesting a significant positive correlation between Age group and Useful Level. (3) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Occupation type and Useful Level is 0.095, with a p-value of $0.004 < 0.05$, indicating a significant positive correlation between Occupation type and Useful Level. (4) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Educational level and Useful Level is 0.182, with a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, demonstrating a significant positive correlation between Educational level and Useful Level. (5) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Income level and Useful Level is 0.096, with a p-value of $0.004 < 0.05$, indicating a significant positive correlation between Income level and Useful Level. In summary, these results reveal that Age group, Occupation type, Educational level, and Income level have a significant positive correlation with "Useful Level," whereas Gender does not exhibit a significant correlation.

Table 6 Correlation analysis between demographic characteristics and Visual Level

		Gender	Age group	Occupation type	Educational level	Income level
Visual Level	Pearson Correlation	-0.012	0.058	.072*	.078*	.069*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.728	0.078	0.029	0.018	0.038
	N	916	916	916	916	916
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Table 6 shows the correlation analysis results between "Visual Level" and Gender, Age group, Occupation type, Educational level, and Income level. (1) The Pearson correlation coefficient

between Gender and Visual Level is -0.012 , nearly zero, with a p-value of $0.728 > 0.05$, suggesting that the linear relationship between Gender and Visual Level is not statistically significant. (2) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Age group and Visual Level is 0.058 , with a p-value of $0.078 > 0.05$, indicating that the linear relationship between Age group and Visual Level is not statistically significant. (3) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Occupation type and Visual Level is 0.072 , with a p-value of $0.029 < 0.05$, signifying a significant positive correlation between Occupation type and Visual Level. (4) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Educational level and Visual Level is 0.078 , with a p-value of $0.018 < 0.05$, indicating a significant positive correlation between Educational level and Visual Level. (5) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Income level and Visual Level is 0.069 , with a p-value of $0.038 < 0.05$, demonstrating a significant positive correlation between Income level and Visual Level. Overall, these results indicate that Occupation type, Educational level, and Income level have a significant positive correlation with "Visual Level," while Gender and Age group do not show significant correlations.

Table 7 Correlation analysis between demographic characteristics and Reflective Level

		Gender	Age group	Occupation type	Educational level	Income level
Reflective Level	Pearson Correlation	-0.026	0.022	$.095^{**}$	$.071^*$	$.073^*$
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.434	0.511	0.004	0.031	0.026
	N	916	916	916	916	916
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Table 7 outlines the correlation analysis results between "Reflective Level" and Gender, Age group, Occupation type, Educational level, and Income level. (1) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Gender and Reflective Level is -0.026 , with a p-value of $0.434 > 0.05$, indicating that the linear relationship between Gender and Reflective Level is not statistically significant. (2) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Age group and Reflective Level is 0.022 , with a p-value of $0.511 > 0.05$, suggesting that the linear relationship between Age group and Reflective Level is not statistically significant. (3) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Occupation type and Reflective Level is 0.095 , with a p-value of $0.004 < 0.05$, signifying a significant positive correlation between Occupation type and Reflective Level. (4) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Educational level and Reflective Level is 0.071 , with a p-value of $0.031 < 0.05$, indicating a significant positive correlation between Educational level and Reflective Level. (5) The Pearson correlation coefficient between Income level and Reflective Level is 0.073 , with a p-value of $0.026 < 0.05$, demonstrating a significant positive correlation between Income level and Reflective Level. To summarize, these findings suggest that in this survey, Occupation type, Educational level, and Income level have a significant positive correlation with "Reflective Level," while Gender and Age group do not demonstrate significant correlations. Collectively, Age group, Occupation type, Educational level, and Income level show a positive correlation with all three levels of emotional needs, offering crucial insights into the relationships between these factors and emotional needs.

4.3 Regression Analysis

The regression analysis results illustrate the impact of various independent variables (Gender, Age group, Occupation type, Educational level, Income level) on the Dependent Variables (Useful Level, Visual Level, and Reflective Level), including regression coefficients, 95% confidence intervals, and goodness-of-fit.

Table 8 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis - Useful Level

	β (95 % CI)	(Standardised) β	t	p	R ²
(Constant)	7.064 (6.55, 7.58)		26.820	0.000	0.043
Gender	0.078 (-0.14, 0.30)	0.023	0.705	0.481	
Age	0.128 (-0.05, 0.31)	0.048	1.397	0.163	
occupation	0.061 (-0.07, 0.20)	0.032	0.896	0.370	
Educational level	0.418 (0.25, 0.58)	0.166	5.017	0.000	
Monthly Income	0.104 (-0.03, 0.23)	0.057	1.581	0.114	
a Dependent Variable: Useful Level					

From Table 8, it is discernible that Educational level has a significant impact on the dependent variable (Useful Level), with a regression coefficient of 0.418, a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.25 to 0.58, and a corresponding p-value of 0.000, indicating this relationship is statistically significant. However, the impacts of the other four independent variables (Gender, Age group, Occupation type, Income level) are not significant, as their 95% confidence intervals include 0, and their corresponding p-values exceed the typical significance level (0.05). Overall, this model's explanatory power (R²) is low, accounting for only approximately 4.3% of the variance explained, and aside from Educational level, the influences of the other independent variables are not significant.

Table 9 Linear Regression Analysis - Demographics and Visual Level

	β (95%CI)	(Standardized) β	t	p	R ²
(Constant)	7.209 (6.683,7.736)		26.892	0.000	0.013
Gender	-0.037(-0.259,0.184)	-0.011	-0.331	0.741	
Age	0.086(-0.097,0.27)	0.032	0.920	0.358	
occupation	0.075(-0.061,0.211)	0.039	1.082	0.279	
Educational level	0.165(-0.001,0.332)	0.066	1.950	0.051	
Monthly Income	0.07(-0.061,0.202)	0.038	1.047	0.295	
a Dependent Variable: Visual Level					

From Table 9, it is evident that the impacts of all five independent variables on Visual Level are not significant, as their p-values are greater than the significance level (0.05); the model's explanatory power is very low (R²=0.013), indicating only about 1.3% of the variance can be explained. In summary, this regression model does not provide evidence of significant impacts of the independent variables on the dependent variable (Visual Level).

Table 10 Linear Regression Analysis - Demographics and Reflective Level

	β (95%CI)	(Standardized) β	t	p	R ²
(Constant)	7.392(6.849,7.935)		26.712	0.000	0.015
Gender	-0.092(-0.321,0.137)	-0.026	-0.790	0.429	
Age	-0.042(-0.231,0.147)	-0.015	-0.436	0.663	
occupation	0.147(0.007,0.288)	0.074	2.058	0.040	
Educational level	0.143(-0.029,0.315)	0.055	1.635	0.102	
Monthly Income	0.087(-0.049,0.223)	0.046	1.262	0.207	
a Dependent Variable: Reflective Level					

From Table 10, it is observed that in this model, only Occupation type has a significant impact on Reflective Level, with $p=0.04 < 0.05$. The impacts of the other independent variables (Gender, Age group, Educational level, Income level) may not be significant, as their p -values are greater than the usual significance level (0.05). Overall, the explanatory power of this model is also very low, as the R^2 value is small, indicating only about 1.5% of the variance can be explained.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Conclusion

The consumer base of homestay inn primarily consists of young individuals (aged 30-45) with high educational levels (college degree and above) and high incomes (¥5001-10000) but diverse occupations. This finding provides crucial market insights for homestay inn operators, helping them better understand their target audience to offer services and experiences more closely aligned with their needs, thus enhancing market competitiveness. The average scores for emotional needs are close to 8, with medians between 8 and 8.5, and a small standard deviation, indicating that most respondents have a positive evaluation of emotional design. This underscores the significance of emotional design in the homestay inn industry. There are statistically significant correlations between Occupation type, Educational level, Income level, and the three levels of emotional design. This provides more specific information for the homestay inn industry, which can be used to develop differentiated strategies to better meet the needs of different groups. However, the explanatory power of this study's regression models is relatively low, pointing towards directions for further research, possibly involving the consideration of more influencing factors or the need for more complex models to explain these relationships.

5.2 Discussion

The target market for homestay inn is primarily the middle class and above, with income being a decisive or influencing factor on consumer behavior and attitudes (Li, L. & K., & Guoshu, 2017). Additionally, most of these individuals are company employees or business/personal owners. A person's occupation signifies their status and income, which impacts their values, lifestyle, and consumption habits (Mothersbaugh, D. L., 2015). With decent jobs and stable incomes, the middle class seeks new consumer products. The emergence of homestay inn in mainland China in recent years meets this demand. Furthermore, the 31-44 age group is the main market, as consumers in this age range typically have stable jobs and incomes and are open to new experiences.

According to social stratification theory (Weber, 1966), different strata have distinct preferences, with similar lifestyles and common characteristics within the same stratum. Past research has shown that higher income levels, higher educational levels, and engaging in intellectual labor are closely related to more travel activities, such as outdoor interactions and staying in high-end hotels (Kelly, 1983; Manning, R., 1999). People from various occupations possess different cultural capitals and derive different experiences from the products they use. Moreover, against the backdrop of China's social transformation, the middle class increasingly craves consumption upgrading, diverse leisure product choices, high-value refined products, and values emotional communication with product providers. Besides selecting products that differentiate themselves, they also engage in self-pleasing consumption, which has become a trend among the middle class.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study has limitations, offering opportunities for future research. Firstly, the scope and target of the study could be expanded. Researching the social stratification of Chinese homestay inn consumers would make the study's conclusions more representative of the current reality of social stratification in Chinese consumption. Secondly, the low explanatory power of this study's regression models suggests the need to further explore variables that might impact the emotional experiences of homestay inn guests, such as functional cognition, cultural cognition, and service value. Lastly, this study, based on demographic characteristics (gender, age, occupation, education, income, etc.) and social stratification theory, categorizes Chinese consumers into five levels to study their relationship with emotional experiences in homestay inn consumption. However, latent demographic characteristics, such as class, taste, and consciousness, are also important in terms of social status. Future research could further validate the tastes and style consciousness of the "middle class."

Declarations

Informed consent

Obtained informed consent from all participants.

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Data Availability Statement

The data that has been used is confidential.

Declaration of Interest's Statement.

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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