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Analysis of Differences in 'Night Economy' Consumption Experience in Urban Cultural Heritage Scenarios

-- Based on Variance Analysis

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Abstract: The night economy in cultural heritage contexts serves as a pivotal driver for urban cultural tourism consumption upgrades. However, existing research lacks systematic exploration of micro-behavioral variables (night tour frequency, duration, and spending amount) and their impact on experience quality, hindering precise operational strategies. This study examines Zhaoqing Fucheng night tourism as a case study to analyze the influence mechanisms of demographic characteristics and micro-behavioral variables on consumption experiences. Using structured questionnaires, we collected 310 valid samples and conducted independent samples T-tests, one-way ANOVA, and Scheffe post-hoc analyses. Results indicate: Gender and residential location show no significant impact on core variables like tourist experience and night tour imagery; Age significantly affects behavioral intention only; Cultural perception shows the most pronounced deepening effect with 3-5 annual night tours; 1-2 hour tour duration achieves optimal spatial layout compatibility; Spending amounts between 201-400 yuan best align with value expectations. This research enriches empirical studies on cultural heritage night economy consumption experiences, providing strategic references for precise operations in Zhaoqing Fucheng and similar projects.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage; Night Economy; Consumption Experience; Difference Analysis.

1. Introduction

Zhaoqing Fucheng, the best-preserved Song Dynasty city wall site in Lingnan, holds profound historical and cultural significance as a unique architectural heritage. The site comprises three key components: the administrative complex ruins, the Song Dynasty city wall, and the arcade street. This preservation is of great importance for studying the history, architectural culture, and construction techniques of Zhaoqing Fucheng [1]. Zhaoqing Fucheng served not only as the seat of the Guangdong-Guangxi Governor's Office during the Ming and Qing dynasties, but also as the site of China's earliest urban flood control project, the Song Dynasty city wall surrounding the prefectural city [2]. The early Zhaoqing residents, living within the prefectural city, gradually developed the bustling arcade street ruins [3].

In recent years, Zhaoqing Fucheng Night Tour, as a typical case of Lingnan cultural heritage revitalization, has faced practical challenges during its operation, including fluctuating revisit rates, insufficient compatibility between experience duration and spatial layout, and misalignment between consumption amounts and tourists' value expectations. Meanwhile, the behavioral differences among various age groups also urgently require precise resolution. However, existing research on factors influencing cultural heritage night economy consumption experiences mostly focuses on single dimensions, lacking systematic exploration of quantitative relationships between micro-behavioral variables (such as night tour frequency, duration, and consumption amounts) and experience quality. Moreover, empirical studies addressing multi-group differences in specific cultural heritage scenarios remain scattered, making it difficult to support precise operational strategies at the practical level. Therefore, this study takes Zhaoqing Fucheng Night Tour as a case to expand the application of scene theory [4], aiming to systematically analyze the impact mechanisms of demographic characteristics and micro-behavioral variables on consumption experiences, fill theoretical research gaps, and provide empirical evidence for practical operations.

2. Literature Review

The concept of night-time economy originated in the UK during the 1970s, when the country introduced this economic framework to address the sparse nighttime population in urban centers [5]. It typically refers to a modern consumption model operating from 6 PM to 6 AM, primarily catering to local residents and tourists through activities like shopping, entertainment, dining, leisure, and tourism experiences. Spanning from evening to early morning, this economic model engages both locals and visitors through diverse scenarios—such as experiential shopping, leisure dining, and tourism participation—creating a distinctive time-specific economic pattern [6]. China's night economy, which began developing in the 1990s, has evolved through three phases: extended hours operation, extensive management, and intensive operation. It has transformed from early night markets with lighting to a diversified nighttime consumption market encompassing "food, tourism, shopping, entertainment, sports, exhibitions, and performances," gradually becoming a new blue ocean for urban consumption [7]. Shaw (2014) proposed that as an important component of urban economy, the night economy can create more job opportunities, enhance residents' consumption levels, and promote the prosperity of urban culture [8]. Seijas and Gelders (2021) conducted several studies on the impact effects of the night economy, pointing out that it can facilitate urban industrial agglomeration and drive the transformation

and upgrading of urban economies [9]. Scholars like Zhang Zhixin proposed that the development of nighttime consumption economy can also improve urban residents' quality of life, promote consumption upgrades, enhance city brand value, and strengthen urban external presentation [10].

Developed in the post-industrial era of the 1980s within the context of modern urban cultural development, the Scene Theory was proposed by American scholar Terry N. Clark as a framework examining local styles, aesthetic characteristics, and their role in urban development [4]. This theory posits that scenes constitute social landscapes formed through the interaction and activities of people with specific social attributes within defined spatial boundaries. These scenes exist in daily life through both subjective perceptions and objective structures. By adopting a cultural perspective, the theory enables researchers to understand how activity patterns and scene value orientations influence social development. It analyzes the cultural and spiritual value orientations generated by the combination of community environments, activities, facilities, and residents. Different individuals and groups seek out suitable scenes for settlement, living, working, and cultural practices, thereby driving urban and community development [11]. Scenario theory provides a new research approach for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). By embedding the value concepts of ICH into the flexible composition of community, facilities, and activity elements, it achieves the integration and interaction of these elements, forming a living space for ICH. This attracts people to participate in co-creating the scenario, thereby realizing the innovative transformation of ICH [12]. It is clear that the protection of cultural heritage needs to be placed in a special cultural scene, and the research idea of scene theory has reference value for the protection of cultural heritage. It has positive significance in cultural inheritance, economic development and city image building.

As a unique cultural asset of cities, cultural heritage demonstrates tremendous potential when integrated with the night economy. This synergy not only aids in preserving and passing down cultural heritage but also enriches the night economy with profound cultural significance, thereby enhancing a city's cultural soft power [13]. Drawing on Yangzhou's ancient city, Lai Shengwei proposed that the night economy cluster should highlight the city's unique cultural, tourism, culinary, and accommodation features. The theme could be themed around night-time attractions like the Slender West Lake and the Xiao Qinhuai River waterfront economy, serving as a hub for local visitors and a core area for the ancient city's comprehensive night economy [14]. Currently, research on the integration of Zhaoqing Fucheng with night economy development remains limited, and the field faces challenges such as balancing preservation and utilization, conveying cultural significance, and ensuring sustainable development.

3. Research Methods

Based on the scene theory and tourist experience model, a structured questionnaire was designed, which included four modules: demographic characteristics, night tourism behavior, experience perception, and behavioral intention, with a total of 28 items. The content of the questionnaire was validated through literature review and expert consultation (including one professor of tourism management and one executive of a cultural tourism enterprise).

The sample was selected from the core area of Zhaoqing Fucheng night tour (Song Dynasty city wall, arcade street) and the stratified random sampling method was used to allocate the sample size according to the characteristics of age, occupation and residence.

4. Empirical Research Analysis

4.1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The gender distribution of the sample shows that males account for 32.9% while females constitute 67.1%, with females being the majority. In terms of age, the most common group is those aged 25 or younger, comprising 112 respondents (36.13%), whereas the least represented group is those aged 55 and above, with 25 respondents (8.06%). Regarding residential location, local residents from Zhaoqing account for the largest proportion at 132 respondents (42.58%), followed by non-local visitors from outside Guangdong Province, who make up 24.19% (75 respondents). In terms of occupation, students represent the most common group with 109 respondents (35.16%).

4.2. Reliability and Validity Analysis

This study employed SPSS software to assess the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The analysis revealed an overall reliability coefficient of 0.979, approaching 1, indicating excellent reliability. The three dimensions—tourist experience, night tour imagery, and nostalgic emotion—along with behavioral intention, all demonstrated reliability coefficients above 0.8, meeting the Cronbach's alpha threshold of 0.7 and confirming good reliability. The KMO value of 0.981, exceeding 0.8, confirms the data's suitability for factor analysis. The Bartlett's test yielded a p-value of 0, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

4.3. Analysis of Variance

(1) Analysis of the main variables by gender

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, independent samples t-tests were conducted on tourists 'experience, night tour imagery, nostalgic feelings, and behavioral intentions. The results indicated that the Sig. (two-tailed) values for gender differences in tourists' experience, night tour imagery, nostalgic feelings, and behavioral intentions were all greater than 0.05, suggesting no significant gender differences. This indicates that tourists' willingness to experience night tours in Zhaoqing Fucheng is not influenced by gender.

Table 1. Analysis of the main variables by gender

Variable	Gender	Quantity	Average value	Standard deviation
Tourist Experience	Male	102	5.1013	1.2924
	Female	208	5.227	1.1967
Night tour imagery	Male	102	5.198	1.2589
	Female	208	5.215	1.2524
Nostalgia	Male	102	5.173	1.3759
	Female	208	5.281	1.3088
Behavioral intention	Male	102	5.1887	1.33379
	Female	208	5.2055	1.26315

Table 2. One-way ANOVA

Variable	F	Sig	t	Degree of freedom	Sig	Mean difference	Standard error value	95% confidence interval	
								lower limit	Upper limit
Tourist Experience	0.738	0.391	-0.846	308	0.398	-0.1257	0.1485	-0.418	0.1665
Night tour imagery	0.117	0.733	-0.114	308	0.909	-0.0173	0.1516	-0.3157	0.281
Nostalgia	0.275	0.601	-0.673	308	0.502	-0.1082	0.1609	-0.4248	0.2084
Behavioral intention	0.515	0.474	-0.108	308	0.914	-0.0168	0.1555	-0.3228	0.28925

(2) Analysis of Tourists 'Residence on Key Variables

Based on Table 3 data, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine regional differences in tourist experience, nighttime tourism perception, nostalgic sentiment, and behavioral intention. The results showed no significant differences (Sig> 0.05) across all four dimensions, indicating consistent performance across regions. This demonstrates that consumers' actual spending intentions are not influenced by their geographic location.

Table 3. ANOVA analysis of variables by region

Place of residence	Variable		Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F	Sig
A. Local Zhaoqing residents B. Other areas within Guangdong Province C. Outside Guangdong Province	Tourist Experience	Intergroup	1.171	2	0.585	0.386	0.68
		Within the group	465.106	307	1.515		
		Total	466.277	309			
	Night tour imagery	Intergroup	0.807	2	0.403	0.256	0.774
		Within the group	483.964	307	1.576		
		Total	484.771	309			
	Nostalgia	Intergroup	0.517	2	0.259	0.145	0.865
		Within the group	546.051	307	1.779		
		Total	546.568	309			
	Behavioral intention	Intergroup	1.594	2	0.797	0.481	0.619
		Within the group	508.381	307	1.656		
		Total	509.975	309			

(3) Analysis of the main variables according to age

The single-factor ANOVA analysis in Table 4 examined differences across age groups in four dimensions: tourist experience, night tour imagery, nostalgic sentiment, and behavioral intention. The results showed no significant differences (Sig>0.05) in tourist experience, night tour imagery, and nostalgic sentiment across age groups, while behavioral intention exhibited a statistically significant difference (Sig=0.028<0.05). This indicates that while age groups showed no statistically significant differences in tourist experience, night tour imagery, or nostalgic sentiment—reflecting relatively consistent attitudes—age differences did influence behavioral intention, demonstrating that consumers' travel behavior intentions are constrained by age variations.

Table 4. ANOVA analysis of variables according to age

Age	Variable		Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F	Sig	
A. 25 years of age or younger B. 26-35 years of age C. 36-45 years of age D. 46-55 years of age E.55 years of age or older	Tourist Experience	Intergroup	11.955	4	2.989	2.006	0.094	P>0.05
		Within the group	454.322	305	1.49			
		Total	466.277	309				
	Night tour imagery	Intergroup	11.888	4	2.972	1.917	0.107	P>0.05
		Within the group	472.883	305	1.55			
		Total	484.771	309				
	Nostalgia	Intergroup	12.248	4	3.062	1.748	0.139	P>0.05
		Within the group	534.32	305	1.752			
		Total	546.568	309				
	Behavioral intention	Intergroup	17.871	4	4.468	2.769	0.028	P<0.05
		Within the group	492.104	305	1.613			
		Total	509.975	309				

(4) Analysis of the main variables according to the frequency of night travel

As shown in Table 5, the one-way ANOVA analysis revealed significant differences in tourist experience, night tour imagery, nostalgic feelings, and behavioral intention among visitors with varying night tour frequencies (Sig<0.05). Subsequent post-hoc Scheffe's multiple comparison analysis further demonstrated that tourists engaging in night tours 3-5

times annually exhibited significantly higher average scores in these four dimensions compared to those with 1-2 times annual engagement or over 5 times annual engagement.

Table 5. ANOVA analysis of frequency of night-time visits on each variable

Frequency	Variable		Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F	Sig	Scheffe
A. Once or twice a year B. Three to five times a year C. More than five times a year	Tourist Experience	Intergroup	15.283	2	7.641	10.721	0	B>A
		Within the group	218.815	307	0.713			C>A
		Total	234.098	309				B>C
	Night tour imagery	Intergroup	14.329	2	7.164	9.519	0	B>A
		Within the group	231.058	307	0.753			C>A
		Total	245.387	309				B>C
	Nostalgia	Intergroup	13.931	2	6.966	8.48	0	B>A
		Within the group	252.169	307	0.821			C>A
		Total	266.1	309				B>C
	Behavioral intention	Intergroup	9.32	2	4.66	5.966	0.003	B>A
		Within the group	239.788	307	0.781			C>A
		Total	249.108	309				B>C

(5) Analysis of the main variables with the length of night tour

As shown in Table 6, the one-way ANOVA analysis revealed significant differences in tourist experience, night tour imagery, nostalgic emotion, and behavioral intention across four variables with different night tour durations (Sig<0.05). Subsequent Scheffe's post-hoc multiple comparisons demonstrated that tourists experiencing 1-2 hours of night tours scored significantly higher on all four dimensions compared to those with 2-3 hours, 3-4 hours, under 1 hour, or over 4 hours of duration.

Table 6. ANOVA analysis of the variables with respect to the duration of nocturnal wandering

Duration	Variable	Difference	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F	Sig	Scheffe
A. 1-2 hours B. 1 hour C. 2-3 hours D. 3-4 hours E. More than 4 hours	Tourist Experience	Intergroup	15.126	4	3.781	5.244	0	A>B
		Within the group	219.92	305	0.721			A>C
		Total	235.045	309				A>D
	Night tour imagery	Intergroup	15.998	4	3.999	5.368	0	A>B
		Within the group	227.235	305	0.745			A<C
		Total	243.233	309				A>D
	Nostalgia	Intergroup	11.238	4	2.809	3.469	0.009	A>B
		Within the group	247.038	305	0.81			A>C
		Total	258.276	309				A>D
	Behavioral intention	Intergroup	12.267	4	3.067	4.025	0.003	A>B
		Within the group	232.38	305	0.762			A>C
		Total	244.647	309				A>D

(6) Analysis of the main variables of the amount of night-time consumption

Table 7. ANOVA analysis of different consumption amounts on each variable

Sum of consumption	Variable	Difference	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig	Scheffe
A. Over 1,000 yuan B. Under 200 yuan C. 201-400 yuan D. 401-600 yuan E. 600-1,000 yuan	Tourist Experience	Intergroup	16.113	4	4.028	5.586	0	C>A
		Within the group	219.943	305	0.721			C>B
		Total	236.056	309				C>D
	Night tour imagery	Intergroup	16.47	4	4.118	5.487	0	C>A
		Within the group	228.888	305	0.75			C>B
		Total	245.358	309				C>D
	Nostalgia	Intergroup	18.233	4	4.558	5.617	0	C>A
		Within the group	247.508	305	0.812			C>B
		Total	265.74	309				C>D
	Behavioral intention	Intergroup	8.41	4	2.102	2.668	0.032	C>A
		Within the group	240.302	305	0.788			C>B
		Total	248.711	309				C>D

As shown in Table 7, the one-way ANOVA analysis revealed significant differences in tourist experience, night tour imagery, nostalgic emotion, and behavioral intention across four groups based on night tour spending amounts

(Sig<0.05). Subsequent Scheffe's post-hoc multiple comparisons confirmed that tourists spending 201-400 yuan per visit demonstrated significantly higher average scores in these four dimensions compared to those spending less than 200 yuan, 401-600 yuan, 600-1000 yuan, and over 1000 yuan per visit.

5. Research Conclusions and Implications

5.1. Research Findings

(1) Gender and Residence Have No Significant Impact on Core Variables.

The independent sample T-test and one-way ANOVA analysis revealed no statistically significant differences in tourist experience, night tour imagery, nostalgic sentiment, or behavioral intention between genders and regions (Sig>0.05). This indicates that the cultural appeal of Zhaoqing Fucheng's night tours demonstrates cross-gender and cross-regional universality. The experience design, centered on the ancient city walls, arcade streets, and Fucheng Ruins Park, shows no gender bias or regional limitations. This reflects the public value of Lingnan ancient city cultural heritage, which can satisfy the common needs of historical and cultural experiences for tourists from different genders and regions.

(2) Age significantly influences behavioral intention.

The one-way ANOVA analysis revealed that age only significantly affects the behavioral intention dimension, while showing no significant impact on tourist experience, night tour imagery, or nostalgic emotion. This indicates that different age groups share consistent cognitive and emotional perceptions of Zhaoqing Fucheng night tours, but exhibit differences in actual behavioral conversion (e.g., consumption, revisit, and sharing). For instance, younger groups may demonstrate stronger behavioral intention due to higher decision-making flexibility, whereas middle-aged and elderly groups may exhibit lower behavioral intention due to time constraints or consumption habits. This suggests that the behavioral conversion mechanism of Zhaoqing Fucheng night tours requires further exploration by considering age-related consumption characteristics.

(3) The most significant effect of deepening cultural perception is when the frequency of night tour is 3-5 times per year.

Post-hoc multiple comparisons of nighttime visit frequency revealed that groups visiting 3-5 times annually scored significantly higher across all core variables compared to other frequency groups. This finding highlights the cumulative value of moderate revisit frequency in enhancing cultural heritage experiences at Zhaoqing Fucheng. The nighttime tours encompass multidimensional cultural scenarios, including the visual impact of the ancient city wall light show, the commercial ambiance of arcade streets, and the cultural night performances at the Fucheng Ruins Park that convey local spirit. First-time visitors (1-2 visits) may only experience partial scenes, making it difficult to form a complete cultural understanding. Over-revisits (5+ times) risk aesthetic fatigue from repetitive exposure, diminishing perceptual quality. A 3-5 visit frequency allows visitors to progressively explore deeper layers—first experiencing the historical narrative of the light show, then understanding the commercial atmosphere of arcade streets, and finally appreciating the cultural significance of Fucheng Ruins Park—achieving progressive cultural immersion that ultimately elevates evaluation scores across all dimensions.

(4) The optimal duration for night tours is 1-2 hours, which best matches the spatial layout and delivers the most satisfying experience.

Post-event analysis of nighttime tour durations reveals that 1-2 hour sessions yield optimal visitor engagement, establishing the "golden duration threshold" for Zhaoqing Fucheng's night tours. The core experience follows a linear route: from the ancient city wall entrance through the arcade street's intangible cultural heritage zone to the Fucheng Ruins Park's government office exhibition site. This approximately 1.5-hour walking route perfectly balances visitor satisfaction. The duration ensures complete immersion in key attractions like the illuminated light show and heritage performances while preventing fatigue and distraction from extended stays. Exceeding 2 hours risks diverting attention to peripheral commercial areas, whereas under 1 hour may leave major cultural elements unexplored. Thus, the 1-2 hour framework aligns seamlessly with Zhaoqing Fucheng's spatial layout and experiential design.

(5) Nighttime consumption between 201-400 yuan matches the value expectation best and delivers the highest experience quality.

Post-event analysis of night tour spending reveals that the 201-400 yuan range yields the highest satisfaction scores, aligning with Zhaoqing Fucheng's perceived value proposition. This spending tier covers essential transportation (100-150 yuan), intangible cultural heritage experiences (100-150 yuan), and local cuisine (50-70 yuan), effectively addressing tourists' dual needs for cultural immersion and material satisfaction. This spending level corresponds to Zhaoqing's mass tourism psychology as a third-tier city: expenditures below 200 yuan typically cover single attractions without comprehensive experiences, while amounts above 400 yuan exceed some tourists' expectations, leading to diminished value perception. Thus, the 201-400 yuan range emerges as the optimal balance between experience quality and cost-effectiveness.

5.2. Research Implications

(1) Strengthening Universal Communication and Experience Design

Capitalizing on gender and regional inclusivity, Zhaoqing Fucheng's night tourism can be strategically marketed nationwide with standardized campaigns. The promotion should spotlight core cultural identifiers like "Millennium-old Prefecture" and "Living Intangible Cultural Heritage," while preserving universal attractions such as the arcade street's commercial ambiance and the cultural night performances at the Fucheng Ruins Park—activities that transcend gender and geographical boundaries—to broaden its appeal.

(2) Segment the age market and accurately activate behavioral intention

To address the impact of age on behavioral intentions, it is essential to conduct in-depth analysis of behavioral drivers across different age groups. For instance, digital initiatives such as AR interactive experiences and short video creation incentives can be tailored for those under 25. For middle-aged and elderly demographics, designing "cultural heritage immersion tours" packages—featuring expert-led tours and nostalgic scene check-ins—can enhance conversion efficiency across all age groups.

(3) Optimize participation threshold to enhance experience value

To address the moderate revisit effect of night tours, the "Fucheng Night Tour Membership Program" could be introduced. This initiative would offer exclusive benefits like ticket discounts and priority access to cultural and creative products for repeat visitors attending 3-5 tours annually, encouraging moderate revisit frequency while deepening their appreciation and connection with Fucheng's cultural heritage. Leveraging the golden threshold concept for optimal tour duration, we recommend creating 1-2 hour condensed night tour routes that integrate key attractions including the ancient city wall, Fucheng Ruins Park, Fuyi (Prefectural Government Office), and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Zone along Qilou Street. These routes should feature scheduled heritage performances and light shows to ensure visitors fully experience cultural scenes within reasonable timeframes, avoiding perceptual biases caused by overly long or short engagements. Based on spending value alignment, a 201-400 yuan cultural experience package should be designed, covering basic admission, intangible cultural heritage products, and local specialty cuisine. This approach not only meets tourists' dual needs for cultural immersion and material consumption but also aligns with public expectations for Fucheng night tours, ultimately enhancing overall experience quality and purchase intent.

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