

Research on the Integration of Cultural Heritage Scenes and Urban "Night Economy" Development

-- Based on the Moderating Effect of Nostalgia

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Abstract: As the best preserved cultural site in Lingnan, Zhaoqing Fucheng boasts rich cultural heritage, with significant potential for integrating ancient cultural heritage with night-time economy. Based on scene theory, this study employed structured questionnaires for data collection and SPSS for analysis to explore tourists' perceptual experiences and night-time imagery during nighttime visits, along with their evolutionary mechanisms. Results indicate that tourist experiences positively influence night-time imagery and behavioral intentions; night-time imagery positively affects behavioral intentions while partially mediating this relationship; and nostalgic emotions positively moderate the connection between experiences and behavioral intentions. These findings provide empirical support for scene construction and emotionalized operation in cultural heritage night-time economy.

Keywords: Cultural heritage; Night economy; Zhaoqing Fucheng; Nostalgia.

1. Introduction

Zhaoqing Fucheng, the site of the Ming-Qing Guangdong-Guangxi Governor's Office, served as the political, military, and cultural hub of Lingnan, witnessing the fusion of Central Plains culture with Lingnan culture [1]. The site, together with the surrounding Song Dynasty city wall ruins and arcade streets, forms the unique cultural heritage system of Zhaoqing Fucheng, which holds significant historical and cultural value. It is of great importance for studying the history, architectural culture, and techniques of Zhaoqing Fucheng [2].

The integration of cultural heritage with the night economy serves as a key driver for upgrading urban cultural tourism consumption. As a city's unique cultural asset, cultural heritage demonstrates tremendous potential when combined with distinctive nighttime economic activities. This synergy not only aids in preserving and passing down cultural legacies but also enriches the night economy with profound cultural significance, thereby enhancing a city's cultural soft power [3].

Lai Shengwei (2023) proposed that, given Yangzhou's unique geographical features and long-standing historical legacy, its ancient city's night economy cluster should highlight local characteristics through cultural, tourism, culinary, and accommodation offerings [4]. Current research on the integration of Zhaoqing Fucheng's cultural heritage sites with night economy development remains insufficient, while the field also faces challenges such as balancing preservation and utilization, conveying cultural significance, and ensuring sustainable development.

Zhaoqing Fucheng's cultural relics, including the Zhongfu City, Song Dynasty city walls, and arcade streets, are highly compatible with the nighttime economy's demand for "food, tourism, shopping, entertainment, sports, exhibitions, and performances." However, research on Zhaoqing Fucheng's nighttime economy remains limited, particularly in quantitative analysis of tourists' perceptions and the evolution of nighttime tourism imagery. This study, based on the

hypothesis model that "tourist experience positively influences nighttime tourism imagery and behavioral intention; nighttime tourism imagery positively influences behavioral intention with partial mediation; and nostalgic emotion positively moderates the relationship between experience and behavioral intention, aims to reveal the mechanisms and pathways of these three factors. The findings provide empirical evidence for the development of Zhaoqing Fucheng's nighttime economy.

2. Research Hypotheses

Grounded in scene theory, this study posits that cultural heritage scenes form distinctive cultural spaces through the integration of spatial environments, cultural facilities, and experiential activities [5]. Relevant research has shown that immersive cultural experiences in the nighttime economy effectively stimulate tourists' willingness to consume [6]. Consequently, deep engagement with cultural scenes during nighttime visits positively influences tourists' revisit intentions and consumption behaviors. Based on this analysis, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Tourist experiences have a positive impact on behavioral intentions.

Scenography theory emphasizes how the "facilities-activities-crowds" dynamic shapes the perception of a place [7]. Innovative practices like the digital lighting projections on Zhaoqing's ancient city wall and the night performances at the Fucheng Ruins Park's government office activate the spatiotemporal narrative of historical scenes, creating a "fusion of past and present" nighttime experience for visitors. The quality of nighttime consumption experiences directly influences tourists' cognitive schemas of urban culture [8], providing cross-cultural empirical support for the hypothesis. Therefore, this study proposes hypothesis:

H2: Tourist experience has a positive impact on night tour imagery.

Night tour imagery influences consumption decisions

through emotional memory and symbolic value [9]. The nighttime visualization of Zhaoqing's ancient city wall enables visitors to develop cultural identity when perceiving the 'millennium-old city defense' imagery, thereby triggering consumption behavior. The joint World Heritage application experiences in Nanjing, Xi'an, and other cities demonstrate that the imagery communication of city wall heritage significantly enhances tourists' willingness to pay [10], validating the imagery-behavior transmission mechanism. Therefore, this study proposes hypothesis:

H3: Night tour imagery has a positive impact on behavioral intention.

The case study of Yangzhou Ancient City demonstrates that the Xiao Qinhuai River Night Tour project, through the mediating role of 'waterfront culture' imagery, increased the tourist experience conversion rate by 37% [4], confirming the existence of a mediating pathway. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Night tour imagery mediates the relationship between tourist experience and behavioral intention.

Research highlights the "memory-bearing" function of cultural heritage [10]. The deliberate preservation of Republican-era shop names in the restored arcade streets of Zhaoqing Ancient City [11] achieves cultural identity through evoking nostalgic emotions. Studies show that when historical elements constitute over 60% of nighttime tour experiences, tourists' nostalgic feelings significantly enhance their influence on consumption decisions [12], providing a threshold reference for setting moderating variables. Therefore, this study proposes hypothesis:

H5: Nostalgic emotions mediate the relationship between tourist experiences and behavioral intentions.

3. Research Methodology

Based on scenario theory and tourist experience models, a structured questionnaire was designed with four modules: demographic characteristics, nighttime tourism behavior, experience perception, and behavioral intention, comprising 28 items (using a 7-point Likert scale). The sample was selected from the core area of Zhaoqing Fucheng's nighttime tourism zone (Song Dynasty City Wall and Qilou Street) through non-random sampling. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed, with 40 invalid responses (logical contradictions or incomplete answers) excluded, yielding 310 valid responses (88.57% validity rate). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 27.0.

4. Empirical Research Analysis

4.1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The gender distribution shows males at 32.9% and females

at 67.1%, with women constituting the majority. Age-wise, the most represented group is 25 and under (36.13%, 112 individuals), followed by 26-35 years (27.42%, 85), 36-45 years (16.13%, 50), 46-55 years (12.26%, 38), and 55+ (8.06%, 25). Geographically, 132 respondents (42.58%) are Zhaoqing natives, 103 (33.23%) from other Guangdong regions, and 75 (24.19%) from outside Guangdong. Occupationally, 109 (35.16%) are students, 43 (13.87%) are education/cultural workers, 62 (20%) are corporate employees, 30 (9.68%) are civil servants, 29 (9.35%) are business managers, 26 (8.39%) are freelancers, and 11 (3.55%) hold other positions.

Regarding night tour frequency in Zhaoqing Fucheng, 150 respondents (48.39%) reported 3-5 visits annually, while 95 (30.65%) chose 1-2 visits per year. The highest frequency was 5+ visits (65, 20.97%). For duration, 88 respondents (28.39%) spent 3-4 hours per visit, followed by 58 (18.71%) for 1-2 hours, 72 (23.23%) for under 1 hour, 72 (23.23%) for 2-3 hours, and 20 (6.45%) for over 4 hours. Regarding spending, 109 respondents (35.16%) spent under 200 yuan per visit, 8 (2.58%) exceeded 1,000 yuan, 82 (26.45%) spent 201-400 yuan, 26 (8.39%) 401-600 yuan, and 85 (27.42%) 600-1,000 yuan.

4.2. Reliability Analysis

This study employed SPSS software to assess the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The analysis revealed an overall reliability of 0.979, approaching 1, indicating excellent reliability of the scale. The three dimensions—tourist experience, night tour imagery, and nostalgic emotion—along with behavioral intention, all demonstrated reliability above 0.8, meeting the Cronbach's alpha coefficient threshold of 0.7. This confirms the robust reliability of all variables.

4.3. Validity Analysis

The KMO value of the scale is 0.981, which is higher than 0.8, and the Bartlett's p-value is 0.05, which is very significant.

Table 1 presents the factor extraction status and information extraction details, with the following data: During the factor analysis, four factors were successfully extracted. After rotation, their variance explained rates were 19.161%, 18.105%, 17.137%, and 16.479% respectively, with the cumulative variance explained rate reaching 70.882% after rotation. This indicates that the four extracted factors effectively capture 70.882% of the information from the total 28 indicators, with an even distribution of information extraction. Overall, the results of this factor analysis are commendable, demonstrating strong validity and rationality.

Table 1. The total variance of the original variables of factor consolidation

Number	Initialeigenvalues			Extract load square sum			The sum of the squares of the rotational loads		
	Total	Variance explained	Accumulated %	Characteristic root	Variance Explained Ratio %	Accumulated %	Total	VarianceExplainedRatio %	Accumulated %
1	18.195	64.982	64.982	18.195	64.982	64.982	5.365	19.161	19.161
2	0.597	2.131	67.113	0.597	2.131	67.113	5.07	18.105	37.266
3	0.557	1.988	69.101	0.557	1.988	69.101	4.798	17.137	54.403
4	0.503	1.798	70.898	0.503	1.798	70.898	4.614	16.479	70.882
5	0.496	1.773	72.671	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	0.486	1.736	74.408	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	0.47	1.68	76.088	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	0.446	1.591	77.679	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	0.428	1.528	79.207	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	0.418	1.491	80.698	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	0.411	1.468	82.166	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	0.393	1.402	83.568	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	0.387	1.382	84.95	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	0.362	1.294	86.244	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	0.355	1.268	87.512	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	0.341	1.216	88.728	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	0.338	1.208	89.936	-	-	-	-	-	-
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28	0.175	0.624	100	-	-	-	-	-	-

4.4. Regression Validation Analysis

4.4.1. Analysis of Tourist Experience and Night Tour Imagery on Behavioral Intention

The regression analysis of behavioral intention demonstrates an R^2 coefficient of 0.863, indicating that the independent variables—enjoyment, educational, escape, aesthetic experiences, resource conditions, night tourism activities, night tourism facilities, and comprehensive management—account for 86.3% of the variance in the dependent variable behavioral intention, demonstrating strong model fit. With an F-value of 640.646 and a significance level $p=0.000$ (below 0.05), the regression model is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Regression analysis results (Table 2) indicate that the entertainment experience coefficient ($\beta=0.062$, $t=1.468$, $p=0.143$) lacks statistical significance, suggesting this dimension has no significant impact on tourists' behavioral decisions. In contrast, the educational experience demonstrates strong explanatory power with a standardized coefficient of 0.258 ($t=4.163$, $p<0.01$), indicating that knowledge acquisition effectively guides tourists' behavioral choices. The aesthetic experience also shows positive

influence, with a significant regression parameter ($\beta=0.129$, $t=3.225$, $p=0.001$) at the 1% level, highlighting the importance of artistic perception in tourism decision-making. However, the escape experience failed to meet statistical significance criteria ($\beta=0.019$, $t=0.729$, $p=0.467$). These findings collectively confirm the differentiated impacts of tourism experience elements on behavioral intentions, providing data support for Hypothesis H1.

At the environmental factor level, the regression coefficient of 0.120 ($t=3.372$, $p=0.001$) confirms the impact of tourism resource conditions, demonstrating that destination endowment plays a foundational role in tourist decision-making. Nighttime economic activities show significance at the 5% level through the estimated parameter of 0.105 ($t=2.538$, $p=0.012$), reflecting the appeal of extended-time consumption. The supporting service facilities exhibit an impact intensity of 0.126 ($t=3.115$, $p=0.002$), highlighting the importance of infrastructure development. The management system dimension demonstrates the strongest explanatory power with a coefficient of 0.158 ($t=2.828$, $p=0.005$), emphasizing the critical role of organizational operations. These empirical findings form a coherent logical chain, thereby validating Hypothesis H3.

Table 2. Results of linear regression analysis

	Non-standardized coefficients		standardization coefficient	t	p
	B	StandardError	Beta		
Constant	0.131	0.123	-	1.064	0.288
Entertainment experience	0.062	0.042	0.066	1.468	0.143
Educational Experience	0.258	0.062	0.248	4.163	0.000**
Aesthetic experience	0.129	0.04	0.134	3.225	0.001**
Avoiding experiences	0.019	0.026	0.025	0.729	0.467
Resource conditions	0.12	0.035	0.145	3.372	0.001**
Night-time Recreational Facilities	0.126	0.041	0.133	3.115	0.002**
Integrated management	0.158	0.056	0.156	2.828	0.005**

Note: Dependent variable = behavioral intention; *p<0.05
**p<0.01

4.4.2. Analysis of Tourist Experience on Night Tour Imagery

As shown in Table 3, the quantitative analysis using tourist perception experience as the independent variable and night tourism imagery as the dependent variable demonstrates a model goodness-of-fit of 0.895, indicating that the observed

variables effectively explain 89.5% of the variance in the dependent variable. The F-test confirms the model's statistical significance (F=2623.499, p<0.001), which validates the research value of the explanatory variables' mechanism in explaining the dependent variable. The standardized regression coefficient (0.965, t=51.220, p<0.001) reveals a significant positive correlation between tourist experience levels and night tourism imagery. This provides empirical support for Hypothesis H2.

Table 3. Regression analysis of tourists' experience on night tour imagery

	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardization coefficient	t	p	Collinearity diagnostics	
	B	Standard erro	Beta			VIF	Tolerance
constant	0.208	0.1	-	2.069	0.039*	-	-
Tourist Experience	0.965	0.019	0.946	51.22	0.000**	1	1
R2	0.895						
Adjust R2	0.895						
F	F(1,308)=2623.499, p=0.000						
D-W	1.993						
Note: The dependent variable is night tour imagery. *p<0.05 **p<0.01							

4.4.3. Analysis of the Mediating Effect of Night Tour Imagery

The mediation effect test (Table 4) revealed strong correlations among independent variable X (tourist experience), mediator variable M (night tourism imagery), and dependent variable Y (behavioral intention). In Model 1, the standardized coefficient of X (tourist experience) reached 0.946 with p <0.000, confirming its significant impact on behavioral intention. Model 2 incorporated the mediator

variable M (night tourism imagery), showing a standardized coefficient of 0.516 (p <0.000) and a 0.424 standardized coefficient for X (tourist experience). Compared to Model 1, the inclusion of M (night tourism imagery) increased the significance of X's impact on Y, indicating partial mediation. This suggests that night tourism imagery serves a dual role: it can influence behavioral intention through tourist experience, while also directly affecting it. Therefore, Hypothesis H4 is supported.

Table 4. Mediation analysis

	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardization coefficient	t	p	Collinearity Diagnosis	
	B	Standard erro	Beta			VIF	Tolerance
Constant	0.208	0.1	-	2.069	0.039*	-	-
Tourist Experience	0.965	0.019	0.946	51.22	0.000**	1	1
Constant	0.143	0.12	-	1.194	0.234	-	-
Tourist Experience	0.443	0.069	0.424	6.433	0.000**	9.518	0.105
Night tour imagery	0.53	0.068	0.516	7.843	0.000**	9.518	0.105

Note: Dependent variable = Behavioral Intention; *p<0.05
**p<0.01

As shown in Table 5, c represents the regression coefficient of X on Y (when there is no mediating variable M in the model), i.e., the total effect; a represents the regression coefficient of X on M, b represents the regression coefficient of M on Y, and a*b is the product of a and b, which is the

mediating effect; 95%BootCI indicates the 95% confidence interval calculated by Bootstrap sampling, excluding 0 (95% BootCI = 0.367~0.615), indicating significance; c' represents the regression coefficient of X on Y (when there is a mediating variable M in the model), i.e., the direct effect; a is significant (p=0.965=), b is also significant (p=0.530=), and c' is significant (p = 0.443), and a*b has the same sign as c',

indicating that the mediating effect is partially mediating.

Table 5. Summary of mediation test results

Item	c	a	b	a*b	a*b	a*b	a*b	a*b	c'	inspect the conclusion
	Total effect			Mediating effect value	(BootSE)	(z)	(p)	(95%BootCI)	Direct effect	
Customer experience=> night tour imagery=> behavioral intention	0.954**	0.965**	0.530**	0.511	0.063	8.053	0	0.367~0.615	0.443**	Partial mediation

Note: *p<0.05 **p<0.01; bootstrap Type=Percentile bootstrap

4.4.4. Analysis of the Moderating Effect of Nostalgia

Hypothesis H4 of this study posits that tourist experience indirectly moderates behavioral intention through nostalgia. When examining the effect of X (tourist experience) on Y (behavioral intention), the research investigates whether the moderating variable Z (nostalgia) plays a role—specifically, whether the magnitude of X's impact on Y differs significantly across levels of Z. To test this moderating effect, the prerequisite is that tourist experience must first demonstrate a significant influence on behavioral intention.

As shown in Table 6, the moderating effect is analyzed through three models comprising independent variable X (tourist experience), moderating variable Z (nostalgic

emotion), and dependent variable Y (behavioral intention). The analysis examines the impact of independent variable (tourist experience) on dependent variable (behavioral intention) without considering the interference of moderating variable (nostalgic emotion). The results indicate that tourist experience has a significant effect ($t=39.071, p=0.000 < 0.05$), demonstrating a significant relationship between tourist experience and behavioral intention. The interaction term between tourist experience and nostalgic emotion also shows statistical significance ($t=-4.769, p=0.000 < 0.05$), revealing that the moderating effect of nostalgic emotion varies significantly across different levels. The regression coefficient of the interaction term (0.148) indicates that nostalgic emotion exerts a positive moderating effect on the influence of tourist experience on behavioral intention.

Table 6. Analysis of adjustment effects

Item	Tourist Experience					Tourist Experience*Nostalgia				
	B	Standard Error	t	p	β	B	Standard Error	t	p	β
Constant	5.2	0.03	173.648	0.000**	-	5.42	0.054	100.742	0.000**	-
Tourist Experience	0.954	0.024	39.071	0.000**	0.912	0.452	0.074	6.108	0.000**	0.432
Nostalgia						0.16	0.056	2.836	0.005**	0.165
Tourist Experience*Nostalgia						0.148	0.031	4.769	0.000**	-0.348
R2	0.832					0.856				
Adjust R2	0.832					0.855				
F	F(1,308)=1526.520, p=0.000					F(3,306)=606.712, p=0.000				
$\Delta R2$	0.832					0.011				
ΔF	F(1,308)=1526.520, p=0.000					F(1,306)=22.739, p=0.000				

Note: Dependent variable = behavioral intention; *p<0.05**p<0.01

5. Research Conclusions and Implications

5.1. Research Conclusions

Using Zhaoqing Fucheng as a case study, systematically explores the integration pathways between ancient cultural heritage scenes and the night economy through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The key findings are as follows:

(1) Tourist experience has a positive impact on behavioral intention.

During Zhaoqing Fucheng's night tours, educational experiences (e.g., historical explanations of the Fucheng Prefecture Office and ancient city walls) and aesthetic experiences (e.g., the digital light projection show "Millennium City Defense" and the Republican-era decorations of the arcade street) emerged as key drivers of

behavioral intentions. For instance, the Duan inkstone-making experience allowed tourists to deeply engage in intangible cultural heritage preservation, significantly boosting their willingness to purchase cultural and creative products. The artistic presentation of the ancient city wall light show further enhanced the intention to revisit. In contrast, purely recreational activities (such as ordinary night market games) showed no significant impact, highlighting the unique value of knowledge and artistic perception in cultural heritage night tours. Therefore, it is essential to focus on culturally empowering experience design while reducing low-value-added entertainment.

(2) Tourist experience has a positive impact on night tour imagery.

The city shapes unique imagery through the synergy of "facilities, activities, and crowds." For instance, the digital lighting projections on the ancient city wall (facilities) paired with nighttime performances at the Imperial City Ruins Park

(activities) create a "fusion of past and present" experience. The restored Republican-era shops on the arcade street (facilities) combined with intangible cultural heritage performances (activities) reinforce the "living history" concept. These experiences directly enhance tourists' cultural understanding of Zhaoqing's night tourism. Therefore, continuous innovation in experiential formats is essential to activate the spatiotemporal narratives of historical scenes.

(3) The Positive Influence of night tour imagery on Behavioral Intention.

Zhaoqing's "Millennium City Defense" imagery influences consumer decisions through emotional resonance. The nighttime illumination of ancient city wall inscribed bricks, for instance, immerses visitors in historical grandeur, fostering cultural identity and driving purchases of cultural products while encouraging repeat visits. Nighttime performances at the Imperial City Ruins Park deepen visitors' understanding of Zhaoqing's heritage, stimulating local dining consumption. To amplify this impact, strategic promotion through short-video platforms—highlighting core experiences like "Ancient City Light Shows" and "Intangible Cultural Heritage Performances"—can create viral check-in spots, boosting both spending and sharing willingness among tourists.

(4) Partial Mediating Effect of night tour imagery.

In this study context, tourist experiences directly influence behavior (e.g., purchasing cultural products after inkstone appreciation) while indirectly shaping decisions through imagery (e.g., creating a "fusion of ancient and modern" perception after light shows, prompting revisit plans). The 0.511 mediation coefficient indicates imagery serves as a critical bridge between experience and behavior. Establishing an "experience-imagery-behavior" closed-loop is essential. For instance, guiding visitors to the "Living Intangible Cultural Heritage" exhibition after inkstone appreciation reinforces imagery perception, followed by launching complementary cultural products to enhance conversion efficiency.

(5) The positive mediating role of nostalgia.

The preserved Republican-era shop names and vintage signage along Zhaoqing's Qilou Street evoke nostalgic emotions, enhancing experiential behavior. For instance, tourists are more likely to participate in photo sessions with Republican-era attire in nostalgic settings, resulting in higher spending. Data indicates that the mediating effect becomes significant when historical elements account for over 60% of the experience, a threshold met by Zhaoqing's implementation. To maximize the mediating effect of nostalgia and boost tourist loyalty, it is essential to explore the nostalgic value of historical elements and design activities like "Republican-Era Night" and "Old Zhaoqing Memory Exhibition." Maintaining a historical element ratio of $\geq 60\%$ ensures optimal nostalgic mediation.

5.2. Research Implications

(1) Theoretical Implications

The study validates the shaping effect of the "facilities-activities-populations" interaction on night tourism imagery, enriching the theoretical framework of nighttime cultural heritage consumption scenarios and providing empirical references for cross-cultural research. It reveals the moderating effect of nostalgia, deepening the understanding of the relationship between emotional factors and behavioral decisions in cultural heritage tourism, and offering new

perspectives for emotional marketing theory. By clarifying partial mediating pathways of night tourism imagery, the research refines the internal logic of "experience-image-behavior" and provides insights for constructing subsequent tourism behavior models.

(2) Practical recommendations

Focus on educational experiences (e.g., Duan Inkstone Intangible Cultural Heritage classes) and aesthetic experiences (e.g., digital light shows of ancient city walls), while reducing ineffective entertainment options. For younger demographics (36.13% aged 25 or younger), develop participatory activities like AR interactions and cultural craft workshops.

Zhaoqing Fucheng's unique identity is cultivated through historical element visualization (e.g., nighttime projections of inscribed bricks) and spatiotemporal storytelling (e.g., the Fu City Ruins Park's night performance of the Fu Prefecture Office). To strengthen cultural identity, historical symbols like Republican-era shop signs can be preserved, with "nostalgic-themed nights" designed to evoke emotional resonance among visitors. The proportion of historical elements should be carefully controlled to maximize their impact. Comprehensive management (e.g., service training and safety measures) and infrastructure (e.g., night tour signage and transportation links) should also be enhanced to ensure a seamless visitor experience.

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