

# Differences in the accommodation experience between domestic and international tourists at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area

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**ABSTRACT:** *In recent years, the homestay model has developed rapidly at ecotourism and community-based tourism destinations, among which the Ba Be Lake tourist area is one of the most representative destinations in Northeast Vietnam. However, differences in travel motivations, service expectations, and cultural backgrounds between domestic and international tourists may lead to differences in their accommodation experiences at homestays. This study aims to analyze and compare the accommodation experiences of domestic and international tourists at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area, while also identifying the main dimensions constituting tourists' accommodation experiences at this destination.*

*The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. Survey data were collected from 180 tourists who had stayed at homestays in the study area, including 110 domestic tourists and 70 international tourists. The analytical methods used include descriptive statistics and the Independent Samples t-test to assess differences in experience between the two tourist groups.*

*The research findings indicate that tourists generally had positive evaluations of their accommodation experiences at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area, particularly regarding factors such as the natural environment, hosts' hospitality, and local cultural experiences. However, the analysis also reveals several differences between the two groups of tourists. International tourists tended to rate factors related to indigenous cultural experiences, interaction with hosts, and local cuisine more highly, whereas domestic tourists placed greater emphasis on accommodation facilities and amenities.*

*The findings provide important insights into the characteristics of tourists' experiences at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area and propose several managerial implications for improving service quality and promoting sustainable homestay tourism development in accordance with the needs of different tourist groups.*

**Keywords:** *Homestay tourism; Tourist experience; Domestic tourists; International tourists; Ba Be Lake; Community-based tourism*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, community-based tourism and small-scale accommodation models such as homestays have increasingly played an important role in promoting sustainable tourism development at many destinations around the world. Unlike traditional accommodation establishments such as hotels or resorts, homestays offer tourists opportunities to experience local life, interact directly with host communities, and explore indigenous cultural values (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015; Farmaki, 2019). In the context of the growing popularity of experiential travel, homestays are regarded as a type of accommodation capable of creating unique and highly personalized tourism experiences (Stone & Nyaupane, 2018; Mura & Tavakoli, 2021).

Tourist experience has become a central topic in modern tourism research. According to Pine and Gilmore (2011), the core value of tourism services lies not only in the physical product but also in the experiences perceived by tourists throughout their participation in tourism activities. In the accommodation sector, tourists' experiences are often shaped by various factors, such as the quality of facilities, interactions with staff or hosts, the surrounding environment, as well as the cultural and social characteristics of the destination (Kim et al., 2012; Cetin & Bilgihan, 2016). In the context of homestays, experiential factors are often closely associated with community life, local customs, and hosts' hospitality, thereby differentiating them from standardized forms of accommodation (Farmaki, 2019; Mura & Tavakoli, 2021).

In addition, many studies have shown that tourism experiences may differ significantly across different tourist groups, particularly between domestic and international tourists. These differences often stem from factors such as cultural background, service expectations, travel motivations, and familiarity with the local environment (Li et al., 2018; Prayag et al., 2020). While domestic tourists often place greater emphasis on amenities, convenience, and cost, international tourists tend to seek more localized experiences, including interaction with

local communities, cultural exploration, and participation in traditional activities (Stone & Nyaupane, 2018; Farmaki, 2019). Therefore, understanding differences in experiences across tourist groups is of great importance for improving service quality and designing tourism products that meet the needs of each market segment.

In Vietnam, the homestay model has developed strongly in many ecotourism and community-based tourism destinations such as Sa Pa, Mai Chau, Ha Giang, and Ba Be Lake. The Ba Be Lake tourist area, located in Bac Kan Province, is considered one of the most representative ecotourism destinations in Northeast Vietnam, distinguished by its diverse natural ecosystem, characteristic lake–limestone mountain landscape, and the cultural identity of ethnic minority communities such as the Tay, Dao, and H'Mong. In recent years, many households in this area have developed homestay services to serve tourists, thereby contributing to local livelihoods and promoting sustainable tourism development (Nguyen & Cheung, 2022).

Although homestays at Ba Be Lake are increasingly attracting both domestic and international tourists, academic studies on accommodation experiences in this area remain relatively limited. In particular, few studies have focused on analyzing differences in experiences between these two tourist groups, despite the fact that differences in expectations and travel behavior may significantly affect tourists' satisfaction and service evaluations. Clarifying these differences is not only academically meaningful but also provides a practical basis for homestay owners and local tourism managers to improve service quality and design experiences appropriate to each tourist segment.

On this basis, this study aims to analyze and compare the accommodation experiences of domestic and international tourists at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area. Specifically, the study focuses on three main objectives: (1) identifying the principal dimensions constituting tourists' accommodation experiences at homestays; (2) analyzing tourists' evaluations of these experiential dimensions; and (3) comparing differences in accommodation experiences between domestic and international tourists. The findings are expected to contribute to a clearer understanding of tourist experience characteristics in the context of community-based homestays in Vietnam, while also providing managerial implications for improving service quality and promoting sustainable tourism development in the Ba Be Lake tourist area.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Homestays in community-based tourism**

Over the past few decades, community-based tourism has become an important approach to promoting sustainable tourism development, particularly in rural areas and regions endowed with distinctive natural and cultural resources. One of the most common models in community-based tourism is the homestay, in which tourists stay directly in the homes of local residents and have opportunities to experience the life, culture, and customs of the host community (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015; Farmaki, 2019).

Unlike commercial accommodation establishments such as hotels or resorts, homestays are usually small in scale, operated by local households, and closely embedded in the socio-cultural context of the destination. Therefore, this type of accommodation not only provides lodging services but also serves as a bridge between tourists and the local community (Stone & Nyaupane, 2018). According to Mura and Tavakoli (2021), homestays are capable of creating authentic tourism experiences through direct interaction between tourists and hosts, thereby helping visitors gain a deeper understanding of local culture, lifestyles, and indigenous values.

In the context of sustainable tourism development, homestays are also regarded as an important instrument for enhancing the participation of local communities in tourism activities. When local residents are directly involved in providing accommodation services, they can benefit from tourism-generated income while also contributing to the preservation of traditional cultural values and the local natural environment (Prayag et al., 2020). However, in order for the homestay model to develop effectively and sustainably, a clear understanding of tourists' needs and experiences is essential.

### **2.2. Tourist experience in homestay accommodation**

The concept of tourist experience has become a central topic in modern tourism research. According to Pine and Gilmore (2011), in the experience economy, the value of products and services lies not only in tangible elements but also in the perceptions and experiences that customers obtain during the consumption process. In tourism, tourist experience is formed through interactions between tourists and the environment, services, and people at the destination (Kim et al., 2012).

Many studies have indicated that tourism experience often comprises multiple dimensions, such as the physical environment, experiential activities, social interaction, and tourists' emotions (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2016; Mura & Tavakoli, 2021). In the accommodation sector, tourists' experiences may be influenced by factors such as room quality, amenities, services, the surrounding space, as well as the service attitudes of staff or hosts (Farmaki, 2019). These studies suggest that tourism experience is a multidimensional concept, shaped through tourists' interactions with service elements, the natural environment, and the cultural context of the destination. In the context of homestays, tourists' experiences often depend not only on the quality of physical facilities but are also strongly influenced by the extent of interaction with the local community, the authenticity of cultural activities,

and the hospitality of hosts. Therefore, analyzing tourist experience in the homestay context requires simultaneous consideration of both accommodation service factors and the socio-cultural factors of the destination.

For homestays, tourist experience is often distinctive compared with other forms of accommodation. The study by Stone and Nyaupane (2018) shows that the homestay experience is associated not only with the quality of physical facilities but also with factors such as host hospitality, interaction with the local community, and opportunities to experience indigenous culture. These elements contribute to a sense of authenticity and a stronger connection between tourists and the destination.

In addition, the natural environment and surrounding landscape also play an important role in the accommodation experience at ecotourism destinations. According to Prayag et al. (2020), natural scenery, fresh air, and a tranquil atmosphere can significantly enhance tourists' satisfaction and positive emotions. Therefore, in the context of homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area, which is located in a region with distinctive natural scenery, environmental and natural factors are expected to constitute one of the key components of tourists' experiences.

### **2.3. Differences in tourism experience between domestic and international tourists**

A topic of considerable interest in tourism research is the difference in behavior and experience among different groups of tourists, particularly between domestic and international tourists. Many studies suggest that differences in culture, social background, and travel motivation can significantly affect how tourists perceive and evaluate tourism services (Li et al., 2018; Farmaki, 2019).

Domestic tourists are often more familiar with the local culture, language, and environment; therefore, they tend to place greater emphasis on the practical aspects of services, such as amenities, price, and convenience during their stay (Prayag et al., 2020). In contrast, international tourists often seek experiences that are exploratory and different from their everyday living environment. As a result, they are generally more concerned with factors such as cultural identity, interaction with the local community, and the authenticity of the tourism experience (Stone & Nyaupane, 2018).

In the context of homestay accommodation, these differences may be reflected in various aspects. International tourists often highly value opportunities to interact with hosts, experience traditional cuisine, and participate in local cultural activities. Meanwhile, domestic tourists may place more emphasis on room comfort, living amenities, and service convenience (Mura & Tavakoli, 2021). These differences indicate that understanding the experiential characteristics of each tourist group is necessary for designing homestay products and services that are aligned with market needs.

### **2.4. Analytical framework of homestay accommodation experience**

In tourism research, tourist experience is often examined through multiple dimensions reflecting the interactions among tourists, the environment, and service-related factors at the destination. One widely used theoretical framework is the Memorable Tourism Experience model proposed by Kim et al. (2012), in which tourism experience is shaped through factors such as emotion, involvement, novelty, and social interaction. In addition, Pine and Gilmore's (2011) experience economy theory also argues that the value of tourism services is created through the experiences perceived by tourists while participating in tourism activities.

Based on these theoretical approaches, many studies on homestays and community-based tourism suggest that tourists' accommodation experiences depend not only on the quality of physical facilities but are also closely associated with factors such as the natural environment, interaction with hosts, local culture, and experiential activities at the destination (Farmaki, 2019; Mura & Tavakoli, 2021).

Drawing on the review of studies on tourist experience and the characteristics of the homestay model, this study proposes an analytical framework for accommodation experience at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area consisting of six main dimensions. The first is physical facilities and accommodation amenities, reflecting the extent to which physical elements such as guest rooms, beds, and sanitary facilities meet tourists' needs. The second is local culinary experience, representing tourists' opportunities to enjoy traditional local dishes. The third is interaction with hosts and the local community, relating to the degree of exchange and the hospitality of homestay owners. The fourth is indigenous cultural experience, including learning about the customs, practices, and daily life of the local community. The fifth is the environment and natural landscape, reflecting tourists' perceptions of the natural surroundings of the homestay. Finally, the sixth dimension is overall satisfaction with the accommodation experience.

This analytical framework is used as the basis for designing the survey questionnaire and analyzing differences in experience between domestic and international tourists at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to analyze differences in the accommodation experiences of domestic and international tourists at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area. The qualitative method was used to explore the factors constituting the accommodation experience and to support the interpretation of the

quantitative findings, whereas the quantitative method was employed to measure tourists' evaluations of the experience dimensions and to test differences between the two tourist groups.

The study's analytical framework was developed based on a review of the literature on tourist experience and the characteristics of the homestay model in community-based tourism. The accommodation experience was examined through six main dimensions, including physical facilities and accommodation amenities, local culinary experience, interaction with hosts and the local community, indigenous cultural experience, environment and natural landscape, and overall satisfaction with the accommodation experience. On this basis, the survey questionnaire was designed with 24 observed variables and employed a 5-point Likert scale to measure tourists' perceptions.

Research data were collected from two sources. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with tourists and homestay owners in order to clarify the factors influencing the accommodation experience. A total of 10 interviews were conducted, including 6 tourists who had previously stayed at homestays and 4 homestay owners in the Ba Be Lake tourist area. Information collected from these interviews was used to support the development of the survey questionnaire and to provide context for interpreting the quantitative analysis results.

Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire survey administered to tourists who had stayed at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, and 180 valid responses were collected, including 110 domestic tourists and 70 international tourists. The research sample was selected using the convenience sampling method due to the difficulty of identifying the tourist population at the destination in advance.

The qualitative interviews were conducted to further explore the factors influencing tourists' accommodation experiences and to support the process of constructing the survey questionnaire. Information obtained from the interviews helped identify experience dimensions that were appropriate to the homestay context in the Ba Be Lake tourist area, while also providing context for explaining the quantitative findings in the discussion section.

The survey data were processed using SPSS statistical software. The analytical methods used included descriptive statistics to analyze sample characteristics and tourists' evaluations of the experience dimensions, Cronbach's Alpha to assess the reliability of the scales, and the Independent Samples t-test to compare differences between domestic and international tourists. In addition, the qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis to supplement and explain the quantitative results.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Sample characteristics

The research sample consisted of 180 tourists who had stayed at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area. Of these, 110 were domestic tourists (61.1%) and 70 were international tourists (38.9%). In terms of gender, the proportion of female respondents was slightly higher than that of male respondents. Regarding age, the 25–34 age group accounted for the largest proportion of the total respondents, followed by the 35–44 age group. This indicates that young and middle-aged tourists were the main groups choosing homestay accommodation in the study area.

Most tourists visited Ba Be for the first time, accounting for more than 60% of all respondents. This suggests that Ba Be remains a relatively new destination for many tourists, particularly international visitors. The most common length of stay at homestays was one to two nights, which is consistent with the characteristics of short ecotourism trips in the mountainous areas of northern Vietnam.

Regarding information channels, online platforms and social media played an important role in helping tourists become aware of homestays in Ba Be. In particular, international tourists tended to search for and book accommodation through OTA platforms such as Booking or Agoda, whereas domestic tourists more commonly learned about homestays through social media or recommendations from friends and relatives.

**Table 1. Characteristics of the survey sample (n = 180)**

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tourist group	Domestic	110	61.1
	International	70	38.9
Gender	Male	82	45.6
	Female	94	52.2
	Other	4	2.2
Age	18–24	28	15.6
	25–34	64	35.6
	35–44	46	25.6
	45–54	25	13.9
	≥55	17	9.4
Number of visits to Ba Be	First visit	116	64.4

Length of stay	Second visit	39	21.7
	≥3 visits	25	13.9
	1 night	74	41.1
	2 nights	69	38.3
	≥3 nights	37	20.6

(Source: Author's survey and analysis results, 2026)

The results in Table 1 indicate that the survey sample exhibited a relatively diverse distribution in terms of demographic characteristics and travel behavior. This diversity contributes to a relatively comprehensive representation of the characteristics of tourists who chose to stay at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area.

#### 4.2. Overall evaluation of homestay accommodation experience

Before conducting descriptive statistical analysis and comparisons between tourist groups, the study first assessed the reliability of the scales using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The results show that all scales achieved Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.7, indicating that the observed variables had good reliability and were appropriate for use in subsequent analyses.

**Table 2. Reliability test of the scales**

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Physical facilities and amenities	4	0.81
Local cuisine	4	0.79
Interaction with hosts	4	0.84
Cultural experience	4	0.82
Environment and landscape	4	0.86
Overall satisfaction	4	0.80

(Source: Author's survey and analysis results, 2026)

The descriptive statistical results indicate that tourists generally gave positive evaluations of their accommodation experiences at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area. The mean values of most experiential dimensions were higher than the midpoint of the scale (3 points), suggesting that tourists had a relatively high level of satisfaction with accommodation services in the study area.

Among the surveyed factors, environment and natural landscape received the highest evaluation from tourists. Many respondents considered the fresh natural setting and the surrounding lake and forested mountain scenery to be the most prominent factors contributing to the attractiveness of the accommodation experience in Ba Be. This is consistent with Ba Be's characteristics as an ecotourism destination with a rich natural ecosystem.

In addition, the factor of interaction with hosts and the local community also received a high evaluation. Many tourists stated that the friendliness and hospitality of homestay hosts contributed to a sense of closeness and comfort during their stay. Local culinary experience and indigenous cultural experience were also positively evaluated, indicating that homestays in Ba Be have, to some extent, met tourists' needs for cultural exploration.

However, the dimension related to physical facilities and accommodation amenities had a lower mean score than the other factors. Some tourists noted that the amenities at certain homestays remained rather basic and needed improvement in order to enhance the overall quality of the experience.

**Table 3. General evaluation of the accommodation experience dimensions**

Experience dimension	Mean	SD
Physical facilities and amenities	3.82	0.71
Local cuisine	4.18	0.63
Interaction with hosts	4.26	0.58
Cultural experience	4.11	0.66
Environment and landscape	4.43	0.54
Overall satisfaction	4.15	0.61

(Source: Author's survey and analysis results, 2026)

Overall, the results show that the accommodation experience at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area was positively evaluated by tourists, especially with respect to factors related to nature, culture, and the hospitality of the local community.

#### 4.3. Differences in accommodation experience between domestic and international tourists

To determine whether there were differences in accommodation experience between domestic and international tourists at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area, the study compared the mean values of the

experience dimensions between the two tourist groups. The Independent Samples t-test was employed to assess the statistical significance of differences between the groups.

The analytical results indicate that there were significant differences between domestic and international tourists in several experiential dimensions. Specifically, international tourists tended to give higher evaluations to factors related to indigenous cultural experience, interaction with hosts, and local culinary experience. By contrast, domestic tourists tended to rate factors related to physical facilities and accommodation amenities more highly. These differences reflect variations in the expectations and travel motivations of the two tourist groups.

**Table 4. Comparison of the accommodation experience between domestic and international tourists**

Experience dimension	Domestic tourists (Mean ± SD)	International tourists (Mean ± SD)	p-value
Physical facilities and amenities	3.91 ± 0.68	3.68 ± 0.74	0.031
Local cuisine	4.09 ± 0.64	4.31 ± 0.58	0.018
Interaction with hosts	4.18 ± 0.60	4.38 ± 0.52	0.022
Cultural experience	3.97 ± 0.67	4.33 ± 0.55	0.001
Environment and landscape	4.39 ± 0.56	4.49 ± 0.49	0.184
Overall satisfaction	4.09 ± 0.62	4.25 ± 0.57	0.071

*(Source: Author's survey and analysis results, 2026)*

The results in Table 4 show that international tourists rated indigenous cultural experience and interaction with hosts significantly higher. This may be explained by the fact that international tourists often seek experiences that are exploratory and different from their home environments. Interacting with the local community, learning about customs and traditions, and participating in traditional cultural activities help them develop a deeper understanding of the destination.

Meanwhile, domestic tourists rated physical facilities and accommodation amenities more highly. This reflects a common pattern in domestic tourist behavior, as they often place greater emphasis on the convenience and comfort of accommodation services. Some domestic tourists noted that homestay amenities still needed improvement in order to better meet their needs for rest during travel.

Regarding environment and natural landscape, the analytical results show that both tourist groups gave very high evaluations, and the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant. This indicates that the natural landscape and ecological environment of the Ba Be Lake tourist area are commonly attractive to both domestic and international tourists.

Overall, the findings show that although both groups of tourists had positive evaluations of the homestay accommodation experience in Ba Be, differences in needs and expectations still existed. International tourists tended to attach greater importance to factors related to culture and social interaction, whereas domestic tourists placed more emphasis on amenities and accommodation comfort. These findings are important for designing tourism products and improving homestay service quality in order to better meet the needs of each tourist segment.

#### **4.4. Discussion of research findings**

The research findings indicate that the accommodation experience at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area was positively evaluated by tourists across most experience dimensions. In particular, factors related to the natural environment, hosts' hospitality, and indigenous cultural experience received high evaluations from both tourist groups. This reflects the important role of natural resources and local cultural identity in creating the attractiveness of the homestay model at ecotourism destinations.

First, the factor of environment and natural landscape received the highest evaluation among all experience dimensions. This result shows that the lake scenery, forested mountains, and distinctive ecological setting of Ba Be play an important role in enhancing tourists' accommodation experiences. This finding is consistent with previous ecotourism studies, in which the natural environment is considered one of the most important factors influencing tourists' perceptions and satisfaction at nature-based destinations (Prayag et al., 2020). For homestays located in areas with outstanding natural resources such as Ba Be, preserving the ecological environment and maintaining a peaceful atmosphere are essential factors contributing to the enhancement of tourists' experience quality.

The findings of this article also reinforce previous studies on differences in tourist behavior and experience among tourist groups. Li et al. (2018) argued that domestic and international tourists often hold different expectations regarding tourism services due to differences in cultural background and travel motivation. Whereas international tourists tend to seek exploratory experiences and cultural differences, domestic tourists are usually more concerned with amenities and service convenience. The findings from the Ba Be Lake tourist area show a

similar pattern, with international tourists giving higher evaluations to factors related to cultural experience and interaction with the local community.

These findings suggest that homestay establishments need to pay attention to the diversity of needs and expectations among different tourist groups. Designing tourism products that are appropriate for each market segment not only contributes to improving tourists' experiences but also helps strengthen the competitiveness of the destination in the context of an increasingly diversified tourism market.

Second, the research findings indicate that interaction with hosts and the local community is an important component of the homestay experience. Many tourists highly appreciated the friendliness, hospitality, and supportive attitude of homestay owners during their stay. This shows that the human factor plays an important role in creating memorable experiences for tourists. This finding is consistent with studies on community-based tourism, in which interaction between tourists and the local community is considered a core factor contributing to the authenticity of the tourism experience (Stone & Nyaupane, 2018; Mura & Tavakoli, 2021).

In addition, the findings also reveal certain differences in accommodation experience between domestic and international tourists. Specifically, international tourists tended to rate factors related to indigenous cultural experience, interaction with the community, and local culinary experience more highly. This may be explained by the fact that the travel motivation of this group is often closely associated with the desire to explore culture and seek localized experiences. Previous studies have likewise shown that international tourists tend to place greater importance on the authenticity of tourism experiences and opportunities to interact with local communities (Farmaki, 2019).

By contrast, domestic tourists tended to pay greater attention to factors related to physical facilities and accommodation amenities. This difference may stem from the fact that domestic tourists are generally more familiar with the local culture and environment; therefore, they place less emphasis on cultural exploration and are more concerned with comfort during their stay.

Although certain differences existed, the findings show that the overall satisfaction of both tourist groups with the homestay accommodation experience in Ba Be remained high. This indicates that the homestay model in the study area has, to some extent, met the needs of both domestic and international tourists. However, the findings also suggest that improving certain factors, such as physical facilities, living amenities, and communication ability with international tourists, could further enhance the quality of tourists' experiences.

Overall, the findings not only clarify the characteristics of tourists' accommodation experiences at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area but also demonstrate the differences in expectations and needs among different tourist groups. These results provide not only empirical evidence of differences in accommodation experience between domestic and international tourists but also help clarify the role of cultural, social, and environmental factors in shaping tourism experience within homestay models. This contributes additional academic evidence to studies on tourist experience in the context of community-based tourism at developing destinations.

## **V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

This study aimed to analyze the differences in accommodation experiences between domestic and international tourists at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area. Based on a survey of 180 tourists who had stayed at homestays in the study area, the findings indicate that tourists generally held positive evaluations of their accommodation experiences in Ba Be. Factors related to the natural environment, hosts' hospitality, and indigenous cultural experience were regarded as important components contributing to the attractiveness of the homestay model at this destination.

The findings also indicate that certain differences existed in the accommodation experiences of domestic and international tourists. Specifically, international tourists tended to rate more highly the factors related to indigenous cultural experience, interaction with hosts, and local culinary experience. This reflects the general tendency of international tourists to seek exploratory experiences and cultural differences during their trips. Meanwhile, domestic tourists tended to place greater emphasis on factors related to physical facilities and accommodation amenities, indicating a stronger concern for comfort and convenience during their stay.

Based on the research findings, several managerial implications may be proposed to improve the quality of homestay services in the Ba Be Lake tourist area. First, homestay owners should pay greater attention to preserving and promoting indigenous cultural values in tourism activities, such as introducing traditional cuisine, organizing cultural exchange activities, or creating opportunities for tourists to participate in the daily activities of the local community. These activities may contribute to enhancing tourists' experiences, particularly those of international visitors.

Second, the physical conditions and amenities of homestays should continue to be improved in order to better meet the needs of domestic tourists as well as to enhance the quality of accommodation services. Improving guest rooms, sanitary facilities, and basic living amenities may contribute to increasing tourists' satisfaction during their stay.

Third, homestay establishments should strengthen the use of online platforms and digital communication channels in promotion and in reaching the international tourist market. The effective use of online booking platforms and social media may help improve access to international tourists while also contributing to the promotion of the tourism image of the Ba Be Lake tourist area.

In addition, the study also makes an academic contribution by providing empirical evidence of differences in accommodation experiences between domestic and international tourists in the context of community-based homestay tourism in Vietnam—a context that remains relatively underexplored in the current academic literature.

Although the study has provided important insights into tourists' accommodation experiences at homestays in the Ba Be Lake tourist area, it still has several limitations. The survey sample size was relatively limited and concentrated in only several homestays within the study area. Therefore, future studies may expand the survey scope to other community-based tourism destinations in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of homestay accommodation experiences in Vietnam.

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