

Influence of Catering Resource Distribution in Typical Forest Parks on Tourists' Visiting Willingness

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Abstract Catering in scenic areas is an important part of tourist experiences, yet the existing research on catering resources mainly focuses on tourist satisfaction and resource development, with limited analysis on the impact of catering resources distribution on tourists' visiting willingness. Thus, based on case analysis, surveys and data analysis, this study selected Mount Tai Scenic Area as the research object to conduct an in-depth investigation on the impact of the distribution of catering resources on tourists' visiting willingness, which identified many challenges faced by the distribution of catering resources in the scenic area and their underlying causes, finding that while there were rich varieties and concentrated catering options in high-traffic areas with strong tourists' visiting willingness, significant gaps remained in locations with weak tourists' visiting willingness. Furthermore, the overall catering offerings in Mount Tai Scenic Area demonstrated a notable deficiency in food products that authentically integrate with Mount Tai's distinctive cultural heritage. To address such issues, improvement strategies were proposed for the development of catering resources in Mount Tai Scenic Area, including spatial development and integration, exploration of cultural connotations, and enhancement of tourism value, which provided insights for refining management of catering resources in forest park scenic spot, optimizing catering services, and enhancing the tourism experience of tourists.

Keywords Mount Tai Scenic Area, Forest park catering, Distribution of catering resources, Visiting willingness

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As a service project of tourist attractions, catering can not only increase profits and improve income, but also directly involve the tourist experience, making it an important part of tourist attractions. However, the general distribution mode of catering resources in scenic areas needs to be adjusted and improved according to tourists' willingness to visit, so as to promote the development of the scenic spot.

At present, the strategic management of catering resources in scenic areas in China has become a critical driver for the continuous development of tourism industry economy. Challenges faced by scenic areas are how to develop and reasonably distribute catering resources in scenic areas, create catering products with local characteristics and cultural marks, and stimulate the diversification of catering in scenic spots. Investigating the distribution of catering resources in scenic spots is the primary task of forest park scenic areas.

By analyzing the statistical data of tourists' catering preferences in forest park scenic spots, this study investigated their impact on the catering resources in the scenic spots, and proposed scientific decisions to solve the problems, so as to improve the existing problems of catering resources in forest park scenic areas and promote the vigorous development of catering industry in the scenic spots.

1 Research overview

Catering service in tourism scenic areas refers to the dining provisions tailored to meet the dietary needs of service provided for the catering needs of tourists during their visits. As an integral component of scenic area services, the quality and style of catering service reflect the overall management and features of the destination. The catering offerings in scenic areas typically encompasses the following types: diverse food stalls with affordable pricing, hygienic fast-food outlets prioritizing convenience, specialty restaurants and time-honored eateries showcasing regional culinary traditions, themed dining venues, as well as agritainment (Nongjiale) and outdoor barbecues. This study focuses on catering resources that address energy replenishment for tourists engaged in prolonged exploration of mountainous forest parks. Some of the catering involved include catering in some important nodes, such as snacks, fast meals, and light fare.

Foreign research on catering in forest park scenic spots mostly involves ecological catering tourism, where farms and restaurants seamlessly integrate. Studies reveal that leisure dining in forest park scenic spots constitute a significant profit source. Visitors to forest parks expend physical energy much faster than in other tourist destinations, making catering resources crucial

to their experiences^[1]. At present, the research on catering in forest tourist attractions in China remains underdeveloped, with limited academic output. Existing domestic studies on forest park catering still largely fall within the broad category of general social catering research, and there are few relevant research results, rendering previous findings on conventional catering industries inapplicable to forest parks. Exploring the operational composition and core values of forest park catering based on its unique features will significantly benefit scientific management and sustainable development of these scenic areas. In foreign countries, the research related to restaurant management has achieved substantial progress. In addition, tourist satisfaction models have been established, demonstrating extensive and in-depth research degrees. Making full of natural elements to create distinctive ecological restaurants in forest parks, while capturing visitors' taste buds, will greatly promote the development of catering in the scenic spot.

Food consumption serves as a fundamental survival need and a critical component of tourism experiences. Existing research on catering resources mainly focuses on tourist satisfaction and resource development, with limited analysis on how catering resource influences tourists' willingness to visit. The gap hinders forest park scenic areas from aligning catering services with

visitor needs. To address this, with Mount Tai's Honemen Scenic Area as the study subject, this study employs case study analysis, surveys and data analysis to explore the impact of catering resource distribution on tourists' visiting willingness, which enriches the theoretical framework of forest park catering research and broadens its perspectives^[2]. Tourists' visiting willingness reflects the attraction and competitiveness of forest parks, which is central to the sustainable tourism development of forest park scenic areas. Theoretically, insufficient catering resources cannot meet visitors' demands, which undermines stable tourist flows. Therefore, the influence of catering resources on tourists' visiting willingness is the reflection of the core competitiveness of forest park scenic spots. By mapping the distribution of catering resources and compiling data tables reflecting tourists' feedback on the resources, this study analyzes the influences based on the integration of various indicators with catering theories. It is of great significance for the development of forest park scenic spots to effectively analyze and predict the potential catering needs of tourists, so as to design catering products that meet the needs of tourists, and improve tourists' loyalty to the forest park scenic areas.

Catering experiences constitute an indispensable part of tourism activities, as visitors now seek not merely energy replenishment but immersive engagement with regional cultural characteristics and local customs through dining. Taking Mount Tai Scenic Area as an example, this research analyses the distribution of catering resources based on tourists' visiting willingness, propose suggestions to help the catering development of forest park scenic spots, which can enrich tourist' experience, improve tourists' satisfaction, promote the high-quality development of catering resources in Mount Tai scenic spot, and provide experience for the development and improvement of other forest park scenic areas^[2].

2 Forest park catering resources

2.1 Characteristics

The catering resources in forest park scenic areas are influenced by various conditions, mainly with the following characteristics:

(1) Complexity of catering management in forest park scenic areas. The diverse and rugged terrain, with many slopes, affects the distribution of catering resources and complicates overall management^[3].

(2) Diversity of customer sources. Due to

the unique location of the forest park scenic areas, the core catering customers come from all over the country, with limited local residents. These customers have different catering habits and catering consumption levels.

(3) Relevance. As a subsystem of the scenic area system, the catering activities in the forest park scenic areas must be closely related to other parts of the scenic areas. Therefore, various catering businesses must have a strong correlation with the whole scenic area^[4].

(4) Diversified business entities. The catering industry in forest parks involves multiple stakeholders, resulting in diverse management and operational models.

2.2 Impact of forest park catering resources on tourists' visiting willingness

In order to break through the traditional dilemmas faced by catering industry in the traditional forest park scenic areas, it is essential to emancipate from conventional thinking constraints and develop differentiated dining services that align with tourists' dieting preferences at different locations. This constitutes the fundamental essence of catering in forest park scenic areas. Through the investigations on the distribution of catering resources and analysis of data of tourists' visiting willingness in Mount Tai Scenic Area, it is found that the spatial layout of catering resources is the critical factor. Successful forest park catering must be closer to tourists, so that tourists can not only enjoy the desirable meals but also develop emotional resonance with the atmosphere and environment of the forest park, thereby creating "added value" beyond mere dining experiences.

In mobile Internet times, it has become increasingly accessible to collect relevant catering preference data by using mobile phone applications. Platforms like Meituan, for instance, feature regional customer dining preference rankings and dedicated suggestion portals for gathering consumer preferences, so that customers cannot only clearly understand local catering resource distribution but also provide feedback on preferred dining options. Forest park scenic areas can adopt similar strategies to systematically collect and analyze tourists' culinary preferences across different zones, thereby developing catering services aligned with mainstream visitor demands. With the rapid growth of tourism industry, innovative enhancements for forest park catering must extend beyond food quality improvements. Operators should capitalize on the parks'

ecological advantages by integrating nature-immersive dining concepts, creating distinctive multi-sensory culinary experiences that harmonize with forest environments. This ecological-dining synergy not only elevates meal enjoyment but also reinforces the unique value proposition of forest park destinations.

By making full use of the Internet mobile data, analyzing the catering willingness and preferences of tourists, adopting innovative application models for catering resource, and constantly innovating, forest park tourist attractions can effectively meet the inner needs of tourists and provide high-quality catering services^[5]. Catering preferences of tourists have spurred new catering modes in forest park scenic areas, with most tourists prioritizing online browsing to select suitable dining options before offline experience. Aligning with visitor perspectives, it is essential to develop Internet-based culinary platforms utilizing preference data. On the one hand, online comments and recommendations posted by tourists after offline experiences significantly influence the online decision-making behaviors of potential visitors^[6]. In the environment of advocating open tourism, tourists will inevitably face multiple considerations when choosing restaurants within forest park scenic areas. In addition to food safety, dish taste, and per capita price, many factors will be considered to make decisions, where high-quality preference-driven online platforms substantially impact dining decisions. On the other hand, visitors' evolving culinary preferences and emotional changes throughout their park journey further affect consumption behaviors, necessitating dynamic adjustments to platform recommendation strategies^[7]. Studying tourists' catering preferences and summarizing the catering resources of forest park scenic areas based on network data and field research can help launch innovative catering modes, enhance the influences, enrich the image connotation, align dining services with visitor expectations, and improve satisfaction. With growing consumer demand and rapid development of tourism, the refinement of catering industry in forest park scenic areas must be intensified. Recent advancements in Internet technologies have created favorable conditions for scenario-based dining experiences^[8]. The contextualization of catering consumption in forest parks represents an inevitable result of personalized service, which is bound to profoundly reshape the catering industry through deepening

technological integration.

3 Overview of catering resources in Mount Tai Scenic Area

3.1 Spatial distribution characteristics of catering resources in Mount Tai Scenic Area

Located at No.45 Hongmen Road in Taishan District, Tai'an City, Mount Tai Scenic Area covers an area of more than 400 km² and holds the prestigious AAAAA-level tourist attraction certification. Legend goes that Mount Tai originated from the head of Pangu, the mythical creator of the universe, which transformed into the Eastern Scared Mountain (Dongyue) while facing eastward. Nestled within the Qilu hilly region along the eastern edge of the North China Plain, it is revered as the "King of the 5 Scared Mountains" and acclaimed as the "Supreme Leader of the 5 Peaks." The catering resources of the area are predominately cluster around Zhongtianmen (Middle Heaven Gate), complemented by strategically positioned supply stations along the iconic hiking route from Hongmen (Red Gate) Palace to Riguan Peak. The following distribution of catering resources in Mount Tai Scenic Area significantly targets the locations with dense tourists and strong tourists' visiting willingness.

Hongmen Palace at Mount Tai embodies a unique architectural integration of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, housing the revered Bixia Yuanjun (commonly known as "Taishan Grandma") within its Hongmen Palace. This culturally rich tourists hub features highly concentrated catering resources, including beverage and ice cream stalls, public service points, 7-11 convenience stores, and traditional Ankang rice cake vendors. Featuring modern tastes, the area offers both Chinese-style fast food and Western options like Burger King, which have become particularly popular among young visitors for their blend of cultural authenticity and contemporary appeal.

During the Guangxu era of the Qing Dynasty, Liu Tinggui, a talented scholar from Lixia, and his companions inscribed the cryptic Chinese characters "Chong Er" (虫 二) while climbing Mount Tai. For decades, visitors puzzled over their meaning until the 1960s, when scholar Guo Moruo deciphered the riddle. He revealed that adding "frames" to the 2 characters transforms them into "wind" (风) and "moon" (月), while removing the frames yields "boundless beauty of wind and moon" (风 月

无边). This iconic inscription, now celebrated as Mount Tai's most famous stone-carved word puzzle, marks the Chong Er Rest Point along the route. Today, hikers pause here to refuel at beverage stalls and snack on fresh seasonal fruits, continuing a centuries-old tradition of contemplation and enjoying the mountain's poetic landscape.

Ascending from the Chong Er Stone Inscription, hikers pass numerous fruit and beverage stalls along the trail, with the densest cluster at Sihuai Tree. This notable stop features the iconic Sihuai Tree Store, a well-stocked hub brimmed with supplies. Independent vendors dot the path, offering hot corn and porridge to replenish weary climbers. Beyond standard shops and energy drinks, the area tempts visitors with specialty pastries and fresh seasonal fruits, creating a vibrant mix of nourishment options tailored to hikers' needs.

Zhongtianmen, a central hub for cable cars and shuttle buses, features a bustling cluster of food and beverage vendors with transparent pricing: trekking poles (¥5 each), local-style pancakes (¥5 each, prices vary by filling), Nongfu Spring bottled water (¥5 each), Red Bull energy drinks (¥10 per can), and cucumbers (¥3 each). Fresh fruits like apples, cantaloupes, and pineapples share space with energy-boosting chocolate bars for hikers. Small eateries and street stalls line the area, offering specialties such as scallion pancakes, stuffed egg crepes, fried chicken fillets, fried chicken burgers, and assorted snacks. A standout is the tea-infused beverage stall near Longquan Spring—the only one of its kind—adding a unique flavor to this lively mountain rest stop.

Shibapan (Eighteen Mountain Bends), the steepest and most challenging section of Mount Tai, still offers no shortage of food vendors. A steaming bowl of instant noodles here revitalizes weary hikers, fueling their final push to Nantianmen (Southern Heavenly Gate), while stalls brim with fresh fruits.

Above the bends lies Nantianmen's Tianjie (Heavenly Street), a bustling hub for dining and lodging. Lit by glowing retro-style shops built into the cliffs, it ranks among China's top 10 distinctive markets. Flanked by steep cliffs on one side and a row of souvenir stalls and eateries on the other, the street serves hearty Chinese meals like sliced noodles, dumplings, and beef noodles—though prices are higher compared to those at Zhongtianmen. Further up, the historic Bixia Temple stands as Mount Tai's largest, oldest, and

most revered architectural complex. Built in 1009 after Emperor Zhenzong of the Song Dynasty held the grand Fengshan Ritual there in 1008, its construction demanded immense resources, with materials painstakingly hauled from the foot of the mountain. Yet, despite its grandeur, the temple area lacks dining options—hikers must press onward to Riguan Peak, a sunrise-viewing landmark, where only self-service beverage vending machines offer respite.

3.2 Data analysis of important catering resources in Mount Tai Scenic Area

Mount Tai Scenic Area in Tai'an was selected for field research, and interviews with tourists within the scenic area were conducted to collect data for preliminary analysis, to explore the relationship between tourists' visiting willingness and catering resources. This helped forest ark scenic areas define the target catering markets and implement targeted management for catering resources. Further in-depth analysis of tourists' dining preference data provided customized suggestions for innovative catering resource strategies, promoting sustainable tourism development of forest park scenic areas. The data collection period was from March 30, 2023 to April 20, 2023, gathering basic information from 44 businesses along the route of Mount Tai Forest Park. The questionnaire covered the following: per capita consumption, preference intention, and satisfaction with food pricing. Sampling points and locations included: 6 places at Hongmen Palace (7-11 Convenience Store, Automatic Vending Machine, Ankang Cake, Public Service Point, Chinese Fast Food, Western Fast Food); 2 at Chong'er Temple (Beverage Store and Fruit Stall); 4 at Sihuai Tree (Sihuai Tree Store, Beverage Store, Pastry Store and Fruit Stall); 20 at Zhongtianmen (Pancake Stall, Instant Noodles Stall, Automatic Vending Machine, Fruit Kiosk, Fruit Stall, Fruit Drink Stall, Chinese Casual Dining, Snack Stall, Chinese Restaurant, Chinese Fast Food, Tea Shop, Cold Drink Counter, Mini Mart, Chinese restaurant, Cafe, Noodle Restaurant, Chinese Restaurant, Convenience Store, General Store, Mount Tai Specialty); 5 at Shibapan (Beverage Shop, Fruit Stall, General Store, everage Shop, Fruit Beverage Shop); 6 at Nantanmen (Chinese Restaurant, Chinese Fast Food, Fast Food, Specialty Restaurant, Dessert Shop, Chinese Restaurant); 1 at Riguan Peak (Automatic vending machine).

Data analysis reveals that tourists' catering consumption shows a normal distribution, that is, "low at both ends and high in the middle"

(Fig.1), with 38.6% spending 10–30 yuan per capita, 39.8% spending 30–60 yuan, while only 9.2% exceeded 60 yuan and 12.4% spent less than 10 yuan.

The survey on the catering preferences of tourists in Mount Tai Forest Park reveals that the most popular option is Chinese-style light meals (accounting for 27.3%), followed by the cultural and creative specialty catering (19.2%), snacks (18.3%), self-brought food (13.6%) and automatic vending machines (5.8%). This indicates a relatively average demand level for catering services in the forest park, with tourists showing a preference for convenient Chinese-style meals (such as instant noodles) and local delicacies that reflect the cultural characteristics of Mount Tai (Fig.2).

As shown in Fig.3, the survey on tourists' satisfaction with pricing in Mount Tai Forest Park reveals that most visitors express moderate satisfaction with the prices, which generally fall short of their psychological expectations.

As shown in Fig.4, the distribution of catering resources in the Forest Park Scenic Area is as follows: restaurants accounted for 43.20%, snack bars 23.70%, fast food restaurants 55%, while fruit stores and beverage stores ranked the highest, accounting for 63.20% and 71%, respectively.

The consumption levels of food and accommodation in Taishan Scenic Area are generally low, with a highly imbalanced consumption structure. Tourists in the park have relatively modest requirements for food hygiene, price, and taste, indicating significant room for improvement and untapped potential for food in the scenic area. The food consumption of tourists in the scenic spot displays a “polarized consumption pattern” (high at both ends and low in the middle), coupled with fluctuating food consumption level, which cannot meet the diversified needs of tourists. Such consumption trend is shaped by factors such as the composition of catering offerings, pricing strategies and other variables. For the park, efforts should prioritize innovative culinary products with distinctive tourism features to stimulate spending among middle-aged and elderly tourists, solo travelers, and non-local visitors. While Chinese-style meals, fast food, and local specialty cuisine dominate tourists' dietary choices, a notable portion of visitors still opt to bring their own food in the in-depth investigation. This highlights systemic shortcomings in the park's ability to provide high-quality, environmentally appealing, and

culturally immersive dining experiences.

3.3 Practical problems of catering resources in Mount Tai Scenic Area

3.3.1 Poor ductility of catering products. Although Taishan Scenic Spot has a complete range of catering products, its product extensibility is not high and there is a lack of cultural and creative tourism products. This underutilization of the forest park's natural landscapes and historical heritage in designing immersive dining environments or thematic restaurants has diminished visitor engagement. The cultural essence of Mount Tai—immortalized by Li Bai's poetic exclamation “A long cry at Heaven's Gate summons winds across miles” and Du Fu's iconic verse “Reaching the summit, all peaks dwarf below”—remains inadequately integrated into catering experiences. As a sacred cultural zenith where generations of literati traced predecessors' footsteps to witness its

grandeur, the scenic area's catering resources hold untapped potential to combine catering with historical cultures and regional charm. Contemporary successes like cultural-themed ice cream innovations exemplify how culinary-artistic integration could amplify tourist appeal.

The catering services within the Mount Tai Scenic Area mainly feature ordinary snacks that lack distinctiveness, which have a high degree of repetition with food offerings in other ordinary forest park tourist attractions. The catering offerings have failed to develop unique characteristics, with limited spatial distribution of dining facilities. For many years, no new catering products have been developed, and there is a lack of cultural and creative catering products.

3.3.2 Large price gap of catering products in the scenic spot. The quality of tourism resources in the scenic area does not align well with the catering offerings, and the significant gap between quality and price leads to a great psychological disparity among visitors before and after visiting. Currently, there are no unified pricing regulations for catering products in the Mount Tai Scenic Area. Horizontally, unreasonable price gaps exist for the same category of food and beverages. For instance, the same kind of mineral water can be sold for 5 yuan at one place or 10 yuan at another, creating dissatisfaction and diminishing visitors' overall perception of the scenic area. Vertically, prices for the same category of catering items across

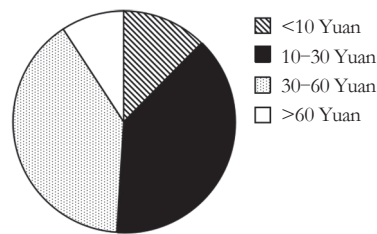


Fig.1 Distribution of per capita consumption structure of tourists in Mount Tai Scenic Area

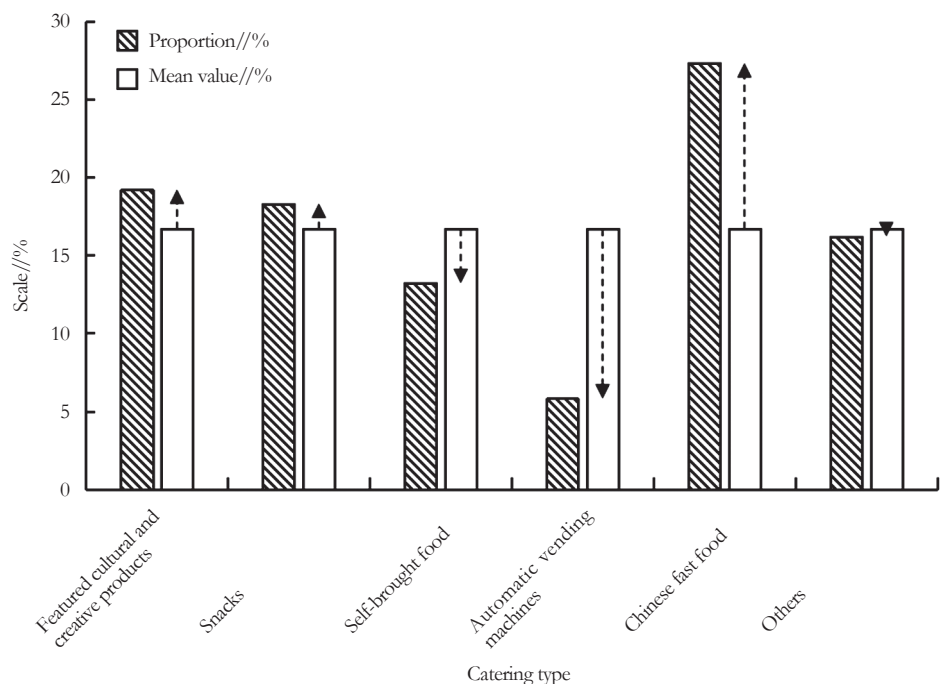


Fig.2 Distribution of catering types and preferences of tourists in Mount Tai Scenic Area

different elevation points are also unreasonable. Investigations reveal that some vendors inside the park violate the general pricing pattern—where prices increase with height—by charging higher prices at higher-altitude locations compared to those at lower altitude, a phenomenon observed in numerous cases. To address this imbalance, the scenic area should adopt a comprehensive pricing strategy that integrates demand dynamics and elevation factors, which would help rectify the irrational pricing structure of catering products and enhance effective management of the catering services in the area.

3.3.3 Uneven distribution of catering resources in featured scenic spots. The catering resources in Mount Tai Scenic Area are mainly concentrated at Zhongtianmen, followed by Hongmen and Tianjie of Nantianmen, while other distinctive attractions like Riguan Peak and Bixia Temple

lack adequate dining facilities. Such uneven distribution results in prolonged queuing time due to concentrated tourist flows and limited rest area, causing significant time waste during peak dining periods^[9]. This has also led some businesses to ignore the quality of dishes in order to make food quickly, which is very different from the taste of local specialties^[9].

4 Suggestions on future development and integration of catering products in forest park scenic spots

4.1 Plan with foresight and adapt to existing conditions

Spatial development and integration of catering resources refers to the rational development based on the in-depth investigation and analysis of catering tourism resources, followed by rational development plans that align with

regional resource advantages and factor endowments. This approach aims to avoid excessive homogenization or singleness of catering options, ensuring that projects can meet the catering needs of tourists in multiple levels and aspects. Additionally, based on market demands and visitor flow patterns, strategic clustering of dining facilities across distinct zones should be implemented to foster spatial connectivity, thereby optimizing accessibility and service efficiency^[5].

China's extensive history and vast territory have fostered a diversity of regional snacks across the country. However, in forest park scenic areas, authentic local cuisines are often overshadowed by commercialized food options dominated by profit-driven models, leaving tourists deprived of genuine culinary experiences. The development of catering services in these areas should prioritize quality and regional distinctiveness over mere profit maximization. By integrating local specialty snacks while preserving environmental integrity, forest parks can make use of the curiosity-driven consumption psychology to create unique dining offerings. Blending folk-cultural elements with localized flavors not only attracts visitors but also serves as a vital means to promote and preserve regional culinary heritage.

Scenic areas can strategically cluster diversified catering resources and products in places where tourists are concentrated while preserving the uniqueness of key attractions, and make full use of the spatial advantages along pathways by installing directional signage, advertisements, and promotional markers at major intersections and trunk roads to simultaneously guide visitors and amplify culinary service visibility.

4.2 Integrate cultural features

Caozhi depicted his mystical encounter at Mount Tai: "Wandering through mist-veiled peaks, where fair youths astride white deer offered mystic herbs". Zhang Heng expressed profound yearning in *Four Sorrows*: "My longing rests upon Mount Tai, yet rugged Liangfu thwarts my passage. I turned to the East and looked at my tears." Confucius climbed the East mountain and felt the State of Lu was small; climbed Mount Tai and felt the world was small—an enduring perspective guiding literati through millennia as they retrace the sages path to witness the "world-shrinking" panorama. Emperor Qin's stone inscriptions preserve Li Si's seal script across 22 centuries, while the cypresses planted by Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty still breathe vitality, and the Inscription for Mount

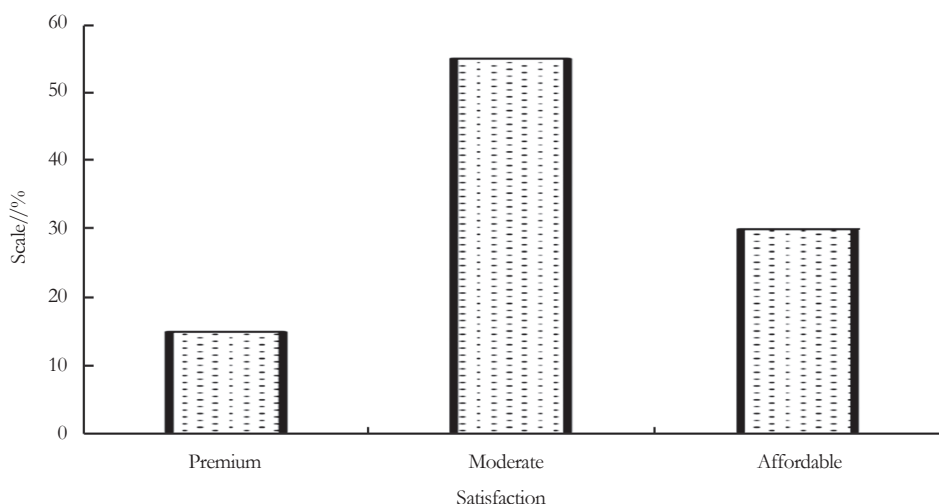


Fig.3 Proportion of tourists' satisfaction with catering prices in Mount Tai Scenic Area

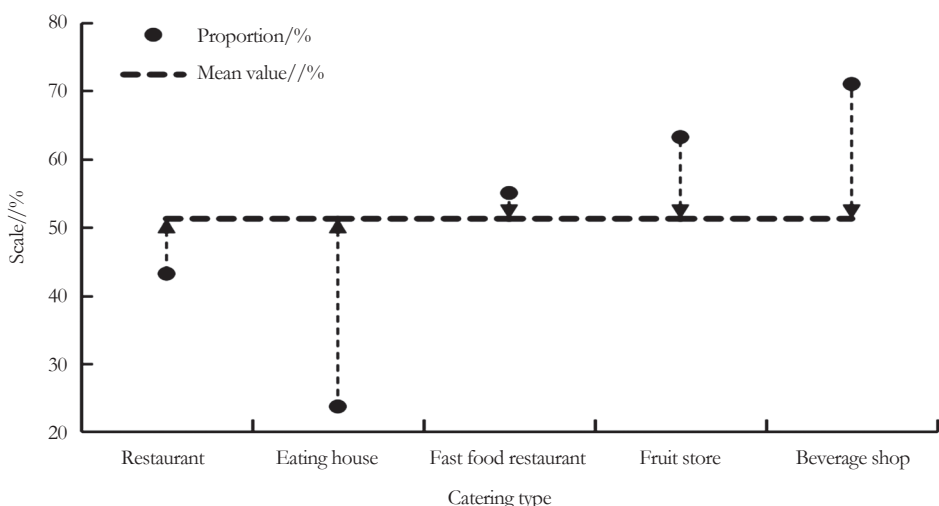


Fig.4 Per capita consumption distribution of tourists in Mount Tai Scenic Area

Tai of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang Dynasty has become the most important inscription on Mount Tai. Integrating the spectacular landscape of Mount Tai Scenic Area with catering innovation presents extraordinary potential: drawing inspiration from eco-restaurant concepts to craft immersive dining experiences that blend cultural heritage with natural splendor. Strategic implementations could include cultural-creative ice cream mirroring landmark scenery, cuisines infused with indigenous motifs, forest-harmonized dining venues, and centralized logistics replacing scattered stalls with standardized, scale culinary operations—ultimately elevating regional cuisine into an integral element of the living cultural tapestry of Mount Tai.

4.3 Standardize market operation and strengthen personnel service training

The popularity of Pangdonglai and Zibo barbecue ultimately stems from their exceptional product quality and attentive service. Zibo barbecue has allowed visitors to rediscover the long-lost human touch, experiencing the city's warmth and hospitality. Similarly, fostering a sense of human connection is essential in forest park tourism. To achieve this, it is crucial to enhance service training for staff in forest park scenic areas. Rather than merely promoting slogans like “Shandong, the epitome of Chinese etiquette, finds its barbecue soul in Zibo,” efforts should focus on helping Chinese tourists fall in love with Shandong's mountains. Visitors should not only enjoy hiking but also savor Shandong's unique culinary delights while exploring the mountains, creating a holistic experience that combines natural beauty with authentic local hospitality and flavors.

While issues like inflated prices and occasional tourist scams in scenic areas cannot be entirely eradicated, relevant authorities can mitigate these problems through targeted regulation and systemic reforms. First, reforms should focus on optimizing business management frameworks. Second, enhanced training programs for catering operators are essential to elevate overall service standards. Forest park scenic zones require special attention, with tailored policies to support local catering businesses. For small and difficult problems, a dual approach of “targeted campaigns” and “long-term strategies” should be adopted, emphasizing strengthened quality management and improved communication with business operators. Simultaneously, hygiene awareness among owners must be elevated through health education programs for employees of

small and medium-sized catering enterprises, coupled with intensified public awareness campaigns on sanitation standards to foster a deeper understanding of personal and public health. Authorities should prioritize consolidating regulatory achievements by reinforcing education and outreach efforts, while establishing robust supervision and inspection mechanisms to ensure sustained compliance and accountability. At Mount Tai Scenic Area, most catering businesses are small or medium-sized, with operators often lacking adequate education and professional skills, coupled with high employee turnover and insufficient expertise. Under such circumstances, effective oversight is challenging to enforce, making it difficult to ensure proper hygiene and environmental standards, which pose significant risks. Annual media reports highlight recurring issues of unhygienic practices and inflated pricing in the catering industries of forest park scenic areas. Tourists increasingly prioritize affordability, health, and sanitation alongside food quality. Therefore, to prevent disruptions to travel itineraries and negative impacts on visitor experiences, authorities must strengthen regulations over catering market operations^[10].

4.4 Enhance network publicity

The explosive popularity of Zibo barbecue offers key lessons: online promotion plays a pivotal role. For forest park scenic zones to stand out in their catering offerings, leveraging online platforms for robust promotion is essential. Prior to the Labor Day holiday, Zibo's cultural and tourism authorities launched an official WeChat mini-program for Zibo barbecue services, integrating travel maps, cultural tourism routes, barbecue restaurant guides, accommodation recommendations, and even real-time updates on restaurant occupancy—down to details like neighborhood eateries. As a key development area for forest park scenic zones, local cultural and tourism departments should prioritize spring tourism demand by utilizing digital platforms. This includes producing promotional short videos, launching a dedicated dining app for the park's restaurants, and intensifying marketing efforts to raise visitor awareness and expand market reach. Emphasis should also be placed on crafting a polished online brand image for the park's dining offerings, shifting promotional focus from traditional TV ads to digital media. By creating visually appealing advertisements and concise, catchy slogans, the park can enhance its appeal and attract a broader audience. To enhance popularity, the scenic

area could collaborate with local influencers—such as Tai Shan Juan Jie and Laizhou Food & Fun Community—to create online content introducing the forest park's attractions and promoting its specialty dining offerings.

For forest park scenic areas, implementing seasonal discounts could be an effective strategy. During off-peak tourism periods, moderately reducing food and beverage prices would attract more visitors, thereby boosting overall visitor numbers. Additionally, distributing online group-buying vouchers and launching restaurant promotional campaigns could stimulate bulk purchases and rapidly increase sales revenue. To further promote dining businesses, the scenic area could introduce tiered discounts, such as offering an 20% discount on meal packages for groups of 5 or more, or providing complimentary hiking essentials like trekking poles or bottled water to diners.

To develop innovative culinary sales channels, forest park scenic areas should first establish an official website dedicated to their dining services. This platform would centralize information, reservations, and purchases, offering visitors convenient and efficient access to dining options. Second, creating official social media accounts (e.g., Weibo) would foster public interaction, enabling the park to gauge visitor preferences and refine its culinary offerings accordingly. In the digital era, regionally distinctive food products no longer rely solely on in-park sales; they can gain visibility through collaborations with major social platforms like Weibo, travel bloggers, online photo essays, live-streams by influencers, and WeChat Moments posts across [9]. Many forest park restaurants are now merging traditional brick-and-mortar operations with online stores, partnering with online platforms like Meituan and Ele.me to expand sales channels and accessibility. Additionally, launching a WeChat official account to share dining updates and promotions, while running online discount campaigns, allows the park to track consumer behavior. By analyzing data from both online and offline interactions, the park can identify dining preferences, predict trends, and tailor offerings to maximize satisfaction—effectively transforming data insights into strategic advantages for culinary innovation and revenue growth.

5 Conclusions and prospects

In recent years, as a pillar industry of
(To be continued in P82)

education into every link of professional talent cultivation, cultivate landscape designers with both professional qualities and social responsibility in the new era, and provide talent support for the construction of beautiful China. In the future, we will further explore new paths for applying digital technology to ideological and political education in the course, create immersive learning experiences based on cutting-edge technologies such as virtual simulation and big data, so as to allow the wisdom of gardens to shine in the new era and cultivate high-quality garden talents who combine ability with political integrity.

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the national economy, the catering industry has experienced robust growth. However, the catering industry within forest park scenic areas still holds substantial untapped potential alongside persistent challenges. Some problems will affect the sustainable development of forest park scenic areas, which requires the attention of all sectors of society and the attention of relevant regulatory authorities.

This study approaches the development of forest park scenic area from the perspective of tourist experience value. Building on existing research and integrating the unique characteristics of catering resources in these areas, it proposes actionable recommendations through interviews and analysis of online data. Key strategies include: strategic resource utilization aligned with park ecosystems, cultural integration into products to highlight regional heritage, standardized market operations with enhanced service protocols, and amplified digital marketing

to boost visibility.

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