



Perception of homestay owners towards the homestay scheme in Uttarakhand Garhwal

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Abstract

The research focuses on the opinions of homestay participants registered with the State Homestay Scheme in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand. It focuses on key aspects of homestay operations, including financial benefits, government support, cultural exchange, marketing support, and prevailing sentiments. Understanding stakeholders' perspectives is crucial to developing and implementing effective homestay tourism policies in hilly regions such as Garhwal. Due to geographic challenges, poor connectivity, lack of awareness, and time constraints, a questionnaire was distributed randomly to 300 homestay stakeholders, and 116 responded. Utilising Jamovi statistical software, this quantitative study analysed data from 90 stakeholders after removing some outlier findings. To perceive the connections between homestay stakeholder perceptions on the scheme, we applied statistical tools, specifically descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. The results show that stakeholders' understandings of the scheme are generally positive, and marketing support is considered to have the most significant impact on the overall perception of stakeholders. Regression analysis revealed that marketing support is the only statistically significant predictor that strongly influences stakeholders' perception. The cultural exchange dimension was acknowledged but did not significantly influence overall perception. This study recommends improving marketing infrastructure, increasing government participation in outcomes, and promoting cultural aspects to enhance the sustainability and success of the homestay sector. This study provides quantitative evidence for the limited research present on homestay tourism in Garhwal and offers data-driven insights for policymakers and stakeholders.

Keywords: Homestay tourism, Stakeholder perceptions, Tourism policy support, Local economic development, Cultural exchange, and Uttarakhand Garhwal

Introduction

Homestay tourism adopts sustainable solutions in mountain systems worldwide. It contributes to regional income diversification, heritage preservation, and equitable benefit distribution (Dar *et al.*, 2024)^[10]. State programmes in Garhwal, Uttarakhand, aim to mitigate outmigration and divert tourists from conventional hotels (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2026)^[8]. The state's homestay scheme, launched in, 2018, named "Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grah Awas Yojana" has since expanded its policy framework, subsidies, and registration processes. By July, 2024, the www.uttarastays.com portal offered over 5000 registered homestays across

Uttarakhand (<https://www.euttaranchal.com/tourism/uttarastays.php> 2024; Awasthi, 2024)^[2]. The operations of the Uttarakhand government encompass both informal family arrangements and formal businesses of varying sizes and market positions (Kannegieser, 2015)^[15]. The richness of Garhwal – highlighted by its unique architecture, cuisine, festivals, the Char Dham pilgrimages, trekking trails, and other attractions – draws tourists seeking authentic experiential tourism (Jana publication & research, 2025)^[13].

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The sector faces several formal challenges, including seasonal variations, inadequate infrastructure such as roads, power, and internet, geographic remoteness, and competition from established hotels (Hasija *et al.*, 2021)^[12]. More importantly, owner perceptions play a crucial role. They shape operational decisions, investment choices, quality performance, and sustainability strategies (Bachok *et al.*, 2018)^[3].

Even so, the quantitative studies that are specific to Uttarakhand are scarce and are superseded by qualitative case studies, and a few of them are rigorously validated with statistical data (Sati & Banergee, 2025)^[21].

Research problems and objective

However, this body of literature and first-hand reports show mixed results; homestay owners often grapple with the challenges of seasonality, poor infrastructure, insufficient government support, and poor marketing policies (Bhardwaj, 2022)^[6]. In addition, the lack of systematic, quantitative analysis, with regard to stakeholder perceptions along critical operations dimensions, is also conspicuous. This research

addresses this gap by measuring homestay stakeholders' perceptions, such as economic benefits from operating a homestay, government support, marketing assistance, and cultural exchanges, thereby helping inform evidence-based policy development.

Literature review

In homestay tourism, accommodation is done in the homes of the local people, and thus, tourists can go through local daily home activities and learn the local culture (Uniyal, 2024)^[29]. In contrast to the traditional types of commercial accommodation, homestays focus on cultural exchange, involvement of locals, and additional income-generation (Chand, Dr. Kumar, *et al.*, 2024)^[9]. Homestays are being marketed in the mountain destinations as a viable alternative to large hotels, cultural preservation, equal distribution of economic benefits, and less environmental degradation (Nath Shivya, 2021)^[18]. In relation to the tenets of sustainable and community-based tourism, homestays allow the local owners to own it, maintain the cultural heritage, provide authentic experiences, and ensure environmental guardianship (Uniyal *et al.*, 2023)^[30]. Besides, they are directly involved in strengthening communities, particularly those limited by job opportunities and intense out-migration, by enhancing self-sufficiency and increasing the sustainability of local livelihoods (Rana & Chauhan, 2020)^[20].

Economic benefit, dimension

The economic value brought by homestays is the main factor attracting people to use them, and it is also the key factor determining whether homestays can achieve long-term sustainable development. The empirical research shows that the homestays provide additional sources of income, better financial stability at the household level, and investments in education, health, and housing, and in addition, they produce indirect employment and local multiplier effects (Sengupta & Bhattacharya, 2018)^[22]. However, its returns are limited due to seasonality, inadequate infrastructure, limited capacity, and the need for excessive capital investment during the initial investment period (Bhardwaj, 2022)^[6]. Consequently, the final economic outcomes vary significantly in terms of geographic location, market access, facility quality, and external support, with external support depending on geographic location.

Government support, dimension

Government support for the homestay involves complex policy structures, regulatory agreements, financial assistance, training programs, and advocacy efforts, all of which are inseparable from promoting the sustainable development of homestay businesses (Uniyal, 2024)^[29]. Once the government intervention is achieved successfully, it is possible to increase the market accessibility, to improve the quality of the services, as well as to increase the capacity of the operators, but empirical research revealed that there is always a gap between the policy development and its execution (Lakhera *et al.*, 2025)^[16]. Residential hotel owners often complain about

bureaucratic red tape, limited training and financial investment opportunities, delayed welfare payments, and unfair enforcement of regulations. Such challenges reduce the perceived effectiveness of governmental aid and inhibit the sector's growth, particularly among small and resource-limited players.

Marketing support, dimension

The marketing response, including customer contact, promotion, branding, digital assimilation, and self-marketing potentials, continues to be important in the visibility, demand creation, and financial sustainability of homestays (Mannu, 2022)^[17]. These aspects are identified as the building blocks in the academic discourse that allow service providers to develop their distinct value propositions and to be able to approach potential guests in a strategic way (Singh Jagwan, 2023)^[24, 25]. Although the state government has been encouraging homestay tourism using the official portal known as <https://uttarastays.com>, a portal that is designed to expand the market reach, individual proprietors, particularly those located in remote areas, have been facing many obstacles as far as marketing is concerned (Government of Uttarakhand., 2022)^[11]. All these are due to the lack of money, the lack of a required skill set, and the lack of institutional support, which suppresses the successful outreach. Empirical research always reveals that there are gaps in branding strength, digital presence, and targeted promotion. These deficiencies lead to the excessive dependence on word-of-mouth communications and the strong seasonality of demand, which, in combination, suppresses further market growth.

Cultural exchange, dimension

Cultural exchange, including interactions between hosts and guests, preservation of heritage, and maintaining authenticity, are key aspects of B&B tourism (Smith & Richards, 2019)^[26]. Homestay owners see cultural exchange as a vital part of their work and promote local traditions, food, and practices. Research suggests that homestays help strengthen cultural identity, build communities, and pass on traditions from generation to generation (Chand, Kumar, *et al.*, 2024)^[9]. However, it is difficult for owners to strike a balance between maintaining cultural authenticity and meeting tourists' expectations. This issue highlights the need for support to achieve positive sociocultural results while reducing the risks of commercialization (Ardianto, 2022)^[1].

Integrated perception and scheme evaluation

Recent studies on Uttarakhand's homestay scheme show its potential and the challenges of putting it into action (Joshi & Raghav, 2023)^[14]. Evidence suggests that it positively affects rural income and employment, especially in areas like Kumaon. Efficient policy, implementation and compliance with regulations are associated with better local economic outcomes (D. Singh *et al.*, 2024). Factors such as service quality, cultural immersion, sustainability, digital marketing, and stakeholder teamwork play important roles. However,

there is limited research that takes a broad view to assess how economic, government, marketing, and cultural factors shape stakeholders' perceptions. Understanding how these factors influence each other is vital for deciding which policy changes to make and how to use resources effectively (Bhatt *et al.*, 2019)^[7].

Research gaps

A review of the existing literature reveals that there is a significant lack of research on homestay tourism related to the perceptions of homestay stakeholders in Garhwal, Uttarakhand. Most studies rely on small case studies or qualitative methods or focus primarily on community development, which limits a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder motivations. While people recognise the importance of economic benefits, government support, marketing, and cultural exchange, these aspects are rarely discussed in a quantitative, multidimensional framework.

Moreover, studies specific to Garhwal are scarce, emphasising the need for localised, data-driven research to guide effective and sustainable policy actions.

Research hypotheses

Based on a review of the literature and a theoretical framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₀₁: There is no significant perception of homestay owners towards all four dimensions (Eco. Benefit, Govt. support, Cultural exchange, and Marketing support) of the homestay scheme.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between four-dimensional perception and overall perception of homestay owners.

H₀₃: There is no strong predictor from any dimensional perception of the overall perception of the homestay scheme.

Conceptual framework

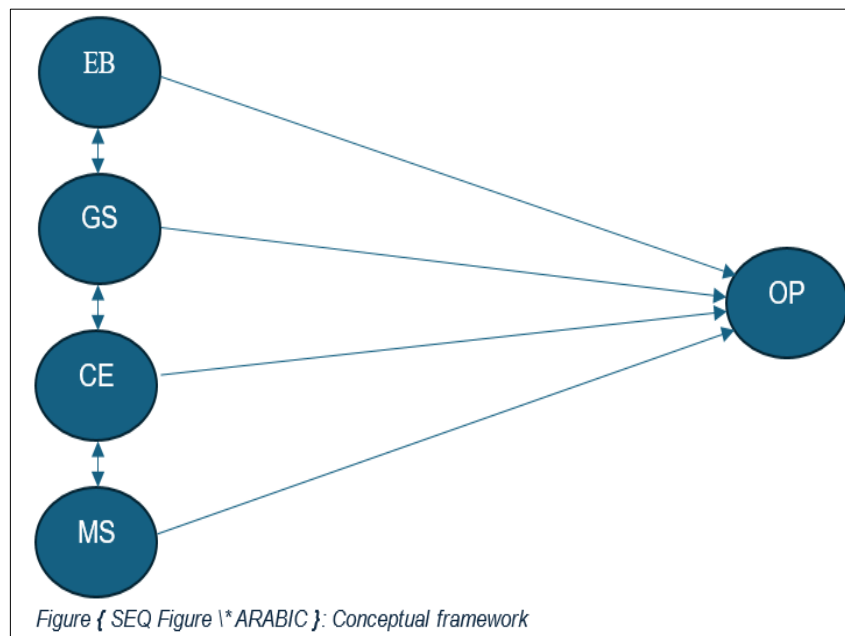


Fig 1: Shows the conceptual framework for the study

The conceptual framework shows the relationship between the main independent and dependent variables: Economic Benefits (EB), Government Support (GS), Cultural Exchange (CE), and Marketing Support (MS). It also includes the dependent variable, Overall Perception (OP), of the homestay scheme. The framework presumes that each dimension affects stakeholders' perception of the scheme independently, but it also recognizes the links between the independent variables. This model guided the empirical analysis. We tested the proposed relationships statistically using Jamovi statistical software to understand their influence on stakeholders' overall perception.

Research methodology

This study used a descriptive-analytic paradigm in this qualitative study to scrutinize the attitudinal responses of homestay proprietors toward the Uttarakhand Homestay

Scheme systematically by considering the Garhwal region, a culturally diverse and rich tourist destination in the Garhwal, which consists of seven districts, namely Pori Garhwal, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Rudraprayag, Dehradun, and Haridwar (Tripathi, 2023)^[28]. A carefully designed Likert-scale questionnaire that was thoroughly tested by domain specialists was used to measure dimensions, including the economic benefits, the governmental support, the marketing facilitation, the intercultural interactions, and the overall view of stakeholders. Out of the 116 questionnaires that were sent out, 90 valid observations (Baksi & Sanyal, 2024)^[4] were received that passed the sample calculator (<https://www.calculator.net/>) requirements, which Jamovi statistical software required, entailed the use of adequate data to conduct rigorous hypothesis testing and allowed large generalisation.

Data analyses

Before the data analysis, researchers screened the data using Jamovi (v2.7.13.0) statistical software (Bartlett & Charles, 2022) [5]. Researchers used Q-Q plots to examine the normality and reliability of outliers and to exclude cases that showed

significant bias. Consequently, I removed 26 responses, and the further analyses were done with 90 valid observations (A. S. Singh & Masuku, 2014) [23].

Sample Characteristics

Table 1: demographic and operational characteristics of the sample (n = 90).

Variable	Category	Male (N=68) (75.56%)	Female (N=22) (24.44%)	Total (%)	Cumulative (%)
Age (Years)	Under 25	2	1	3.33	3.33
	25–34	16	1	18.89	22.22
	35–44	14	5	21.11	43.33
	45–54	17	11	31.11	74.44
	Above 55	19	4	25.56	100.00
Education Level	Secondary & below	4	6	11.11	11.11
	Higher Secondary	14	3	18.89	30.00
	Graduate	31	8	43.33	73.33
	Postgraduate & above	19	5	26.67	100.00
Average Annual Income (₹)	<50,000	15	9	26.67	26.67
	50,000 - 1,00,000	18	5	25.56	52.22
	1,00,001 - 5,00,000	31	6	41.11	93.33
	>5,00,000	4	2	6.67	100.00

Sample Characteristics of surveyed data

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents by gender. The majority of participants were middle-aged or elderly, indicating the participation of experienced stakeholders. The sample population is highly educated, with most holding postgraduate or postdoctoral degrees. Income distribution data shows that most respondents fall into the middle-income bracket. While male participants were more numerous overall, women were particularly represented among well-educated and economically active stakeholders.

Reliability and Validity

Table 2: Reliability analyses

Scale Reliability Statistics			
Scale	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Scale	3.88	0.441	0.852

The tool showed a great deal of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.852$), which is more than satisfactory; the average of the scores (3.88) is another indicator that the tool can be used in future correlational and regression studies.

Multicollinearity check

Table 3: Collinearity statistics

Assumption checks		
Collinearity statistics		
	VIF	Tolerance
EB Total	1.42	0.702
GS Total	1.47	0.682
CE Total	1.25	0.803
MS Total	1.59	0.631

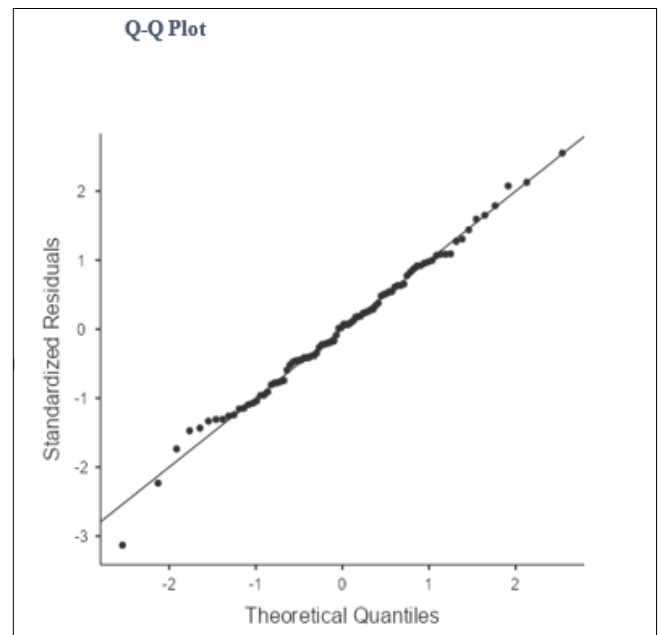


Fig 2: Normality check by Q-Q Plot

The regression diagnosis demonstrated the satisfaction of the basic assumptions. The variance inflation factors vary between 1.25 and 1.59, the tolerances are above 0.20, which refers to the lack of multicollinearity; Shapiro-Wilk did not show any significant deviation, $p = 0.919$, which was also supported by Q-Q plots; no outliers that could significantly influence the results were identified, which is confirmed by the value of Cook distance (Osman *et al.*, 2023) [19].

Correlation analysis: Table 4 presents a correlation matrix that examines the bivariate relationship between the five perceptual constructs.

Table 4: Correlation result

Correlation Matrix						
		EB Total	GS Total	CE Total	MS Total	OP Total
EB Total	Pearson's r	—				
	df	—				
	p-value	—				
	95% CI Upper	—				
	95% CI Lower	—				
GS Total	Pearson's r	0.331**	—			
	df	88	—			
	p-value	0.001	—			
	95% CI Upper	0.504	—			
	95% CI Lower	0.133	—			
CE Total	Pearson's r	0.435***	0.18	—		
	df	88	88	—		
	p-value	<.001	0.09	—		
	95% CI Upper	0.589	0.373	—		
	95% CI Lower	0.251	-0.028	—		
MS Total	Pearson's r	0.413***	0.553***	0.257*	—	
	df	88	88	88	—	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	0.014	—	
	95% CI Upper	0.571	0.682	0.441	—	
	95% CI Lower	0.225	0.39	0.053	—	
OP Total	Pearson's r	0.203	0.337**	0.097	0.376***	—
	df	88	88	88	88	—
	p-value	0.055	0.001	0.363	<.001	—
	95% CI Upper	0.394	0.508	0.298	0.541	—
	95% CI Lower	-0.004	0.139	-0.112	0.183	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Correlation analysis showed that there were significant positive correlations between all the research variables. This reflects the convergence of homestay stakeholders' perceptions on different variables under the scheme of homestay tourism.

Hypotheses interpretation

H₀₁: *There is no significant perception of homestay owners towards all four dimensions (economic benefits, government support, cultural exchange, and marketing support) of the homestay scheme.*

Owing to the p-values of all variables are lower than the significance level ($p < 0.05$), we reject the null hypothesis H₀₁ and accept the alternative hypothesis "which shows a significant perception of homestay owners towards all four dimensions (economic benefit, government support, cultural exchange, and marketing support) of the homestay scheme" due to statistically strong evidences (EB-GS: $r = 0.331$, $p = .001$; EB-CE: $r = 0.435$, $p = .001$; EB-MS: $r = 0.413$, $p = .014$; GS-MS: $r = .553$, $p = .001$; CE-MS: $r = .257$, $p = 0.014$).

H₀₂: *There is no significant relationship between four-dimensional perception and the overall perception of homestay owners.*

The null hypothesis H₀₂ is partially rejected for government support ($r = 0.337$, $p = .001$) and marketing support ($r = 0.376$, $p = .001$), but not for economic benefits (EB: $r = 0.203$, $p = .055$) and cultural exchange (CE: $r = 0.097$, $p = .363$). This means that government support (GS) and marketing support (MS)

influence homestay owners' overall perceptions. While economic benefits (EB) and cultural exchange (CE) have no substantial influence on the overall perception of homestay owners in the region.

H₀₃: *There is no strong predictor from any dimensional perception of the overall perception of the homestay scheme.*

Here, GS ($r = 0.337$, $p = 0.001$) and MS ($r = 0.376$, $p = 0.001$) dimensions are found statistically significant, so we reject the null hypothesis H₀₃ that is "There is no strong predictor from any dimensional perception of the overall perception of the homestay scheme." And we can say that government support (GS) and marketing support (MS) are strong predictors that influence the overall perception of the stakeholders of the homestay scheme in the region.

The research findings confirm a multidimensional, interdependent cognitive model in which government and market support are central to the formation of prevailing viewpoints, while economic interests and cultural exchange have an indirect influence.

Multiple regression (linear regression)

A multiple linear regression analysis was performed to examine the impact of economic benefits (EB), government support (GS), cultural exchange (CE), and marketing support (MS) on the overall perception of the homestay stakeholders ($N = 90$).

Table 5: Model Fit

Model fit measures						Overall model test			
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	AIC	RMSE	F	df1	df2	p
1	0.408	0.167	0.127	383	1.91	4.25	4	85	0.003

The regression model was statistically significant, $F(4,85) = 4.25$, $p = 0.003$, with $R = 0.408$, $R^2 = 0.167$ (the predictors explain about 16.7 per cent of the variance), and adjusted $R^2 = 0.127$. A value of RMSE of 1.91 indicates a good fit. Omnibus Type III, ANOVA used to show that marketing support (MS) was the only significant predictor ($F = 4.47$, $p = 0.037$). Statistically insignificant were economic benefits (EB, $p = 0.709$), government support (GS, $p = 0.136$), and cultural exchanges (CE, $p = 0.839$). Regression analysis proved the existence of a positive impact of MS on OP Total ($b = 0.173$, $t = 2.114$, $p = 0.040$; $b = 0.264$). EB, GS, and CE were not significant ($p > 0.05$). The most intercept obtained in the model ($p < 0.001$).

Result discussion

The regression analysis demonstrated a significant, but not strong fit, which was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.167$). The most significant predictor of the homestay owner perceptions became marketing support (MS), $b = 0.173$, $p = 0.040$, bivariate $b = 0.376$, $p = 0.001$. This highlights the direct impact of MS on occupancy rates, revenue sustainability, and sustainability during seasonal tourism in Garwal, Uttarakhand. Policies must be optimised in areas such as year-round promotions, digital promotions, brand promotion, and bookings in remote areas in the region.

Economic benefits (EB) showed a positive correlation with cultural exchange (CE) and marketing support (MS), but lacked independent predictive power, which may be explained by seasonality factors and infrastructural limitations (Times of India, 2025). Government support (GS) is positive, but not significant in the regression, which is positively associated with the overall perception of homestay owners. Cultural exchange (CE) is associated only with economic benefits (EB), but not with overall perceptions, so this is only an important but not a determining variable in the model.

To conclude, it is possible to note that marketing support (MS) is the leading source of perceptions in the case of Garwal homestays, and playing the supporting role with economic benefits (EB), govt. support (GS), and cultural exchange (CE). Targeted marketing improvements will have the most significant impact on the perception of owners and scheme success in the region.

Conclusion

This study is conducted on the perception of the Uttarakhand Garhwal homestay owners under the homestay scheme concludes that Marketing Support (MS), is the only statistically significant predictor ($b = 0.264$, $p = 0.040$) in an economical model ($R^2 = 0.167$, $p = 0.003$) that mediates the effects of economic benefits (EB), government support (GS), and cultural exchanges (CE).

The findings also confirm the holistic approach of the stakeholder theory to demand-driven feasibility, and the encouragement of the policymaker to undertake portal integration (<https://uttarastays.com>), digital branding, simplified registration process, and off-season diversification (Baksi & Sanyal, 2024). Although the study had some limitations, such as language barriers and a small sample size ($n = 90$). It is reasonable to conduct longitudinal and hybrid approach studies in regions such as Garwal and Uttarakhand in the future, which could deepen these observations and define market support as a template for sustainable homestay tourism.

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