

Research on the Connection Between the Curriculum Design of Tourism Management and Industry Demand

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Abstract: *With the rapid development of China's tourism industry, the cultivation of talents in tourism management has become particularly important. This paper aims to explore the alignment between the curriculum settings of tourism management majors in Chinese universities and the demands of the industry. Through analyzing the current status of curriculum settings in universities and considering the characteristics of the tourism industry's demand for talents, suggestions for optimizing curriculum settings are proposed. Taking a university as an example, this paper conducts empirical research to analyze the alignment between curriculum settings and industry demands, and predicts the implementation effects of improvement plans. The study finds that the curriculum settings of tourism management majors in universities should focus more on practicality and applicability, strengthen connections with the industry, and cultivate more high-quality talents that meet the needs of the industry.*

Keywords: Tourism Management; Curriculum Setting; Industry Demand; Alignment Research; University Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, China's tourism industry has flourished and become an important pillar industry of the national economy. With the continuous expansion of the tourism market and the increasing demands of consumers for tourism experiences, the demand for professional talents in the tourism industry is also growing. As the cradle of talent cultivation, universities' curriculum settings for tourism management majors are directly related to the quality of talent cultivation and the satisfaction of industry demands. Therefore, starting from the current situation of curriculum settings for tourism management majors in universities and combining the actual needs of the tourism industry, this paper explores how to achieve effective alignment between curriculum settings and industry demands, aiming to provide a useful reference for educational reform in tourism management majors in universities.

2. CURRENT STATUS OF CURRICULUM SETTING FOR TOURISM MANAGEMENT MAJORS IN CHINESE UNIVERSITIES

2.1 Overview of Curriculum Settings

The curriculum settings for tourism management majors in Chinese universities have formed a relatively complete system in recent years. Here is a detailed analysis of the curriculum settings:

Firstly, from the perspective of course structure, tourism management courses typically cover the basic theoretical knowledge of tourism studies, such as Introduction to Tourism, Tourism Geography, and Tourism Marketing. These courses provide students with a basic understanding and theoretical framework of the tourism industry. Additionally, there are professional courses targeting different areas within the tourism industry, such as Tour Guide Business, Travel Agency Management, and Hotel Management. These courses aim to deepen students' understanding of various subdivisions within the tourism industry.

Secondly, regarding the content of the courses, the curriculum settings for tourism management majors in universities emphasize the combination of theory and practice. Besides traditional classroom teaching, many universities have introduced teaching methods such as case analysis, field trips, and practical training to help students apply theoretical knowledge to practice. This teaching mode not only enhances students' practical abilities but also lays a solid foundation for their future career development.

Furthermore, from the perspective of course updates and development, with the rapid development and changes in the tourism industry, the curriculum settings for tourism management majors in universities are constantly being updated and improved. Some universities regularly revise their teaching plans and introduce new course content and teaching methods to ensure close integration between teaching and industry development. This dynamically updated curriculum setting mode helps students to keep up with the latest trends and developments in the tourism industry.

Overall, the curriculum settings for tourism management majors in Chinese universities have formed a relatively complete system that focuses on both basic theoretical knowledge and practical ability training, while also being able to update course content in accordance with industry developments. However, there are still some problems and challenges, such as outdated course content and weak practical teaching links, which require continuous improvement and perfection in future teaching.

To illustrate the problem more specifically, we can refer to some data. For example, according to a statistical analysis of 69 universities in China that offer tourism majors, the number of management courses in tourism management majors has reached 141, and the number of economics courses has reached 68. These data reflect the prominent theoretical characteristics of tourism management courses. However, this may also imply that in some cases, the curriculum may be too focused on theory and ignore the importance of practical operations. Therefore, universities need to balance the proportion of theory and practice when setting up courses to ensure comprehensive student development.

2.2 Characteristics and Issues of the Curriculum

The current curriculum for tourism management majors in Chinese universities is characterized by several aspects. Firstly, theoretical courses account for a large proportion, enabling students to build a solid theoretical foundation. Secondly, some universities have begun to integrate theory with practice by adding courses with strong practical components. However, there are also notable issues that cannot be ignored. One major problem is the disconnect between the curriculum and the actual demands of the tourism industry. Some course content is outdated and fails to reflect new developments in the industry promptly. Additionally, the practical teaching aspect is weak, and students lack sufficient hands-on opportunities, making it difficult for them to quickly adapt to the work environment after entering the workplace. To address these issues, it is recommended that universities place more emphasis on aligning their curriculum with industry demands, strengthen practical teaching, enhance students' practical skills, and regularly update course content to ensure close integration between teaching and industry developments.

3. ANALYSIS OF TALENT DEMAND IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

3.1 Current Situation and Trends of Tourism Development

In recent years, the tourism industry has shown rapid development, becoming one of the important driving forces for global economic growth. With the improvement of people's living standards and the increase in leisure time, travel has transformed from being a luxury to a consumer good, and more and more people choose to travel to relax and broaden their horizons. In this context, the scale and scope of the tourism industry continue to expand, evolving from traditional sightseeing tours to diversified options such as deep tours and themed tours. Meanwhile, the integration of digitalization and smart technology has significantly improved the service quality and efficiency of the tourism industry. In the future, with the recovery of the global economy and further differentiation of consumer demand, the tourism industry will become more personalized and customized, placing higher demands on the professional quality and service capabilities of practitioners.

3.2 Characteristics of Talent Demand in the Tourism Industry

The tourism industry's demand for talent is characterized by diversity and professionalism. Diversity is reflected in the fact that tourism business involves various fields such as hotels, restaurants, tour guides, and marketing, and each field has different talent requirements. Professionalism is manifested in the increasing demand for professionals with specialized knowledge and skills as the tourism market becomes more segmented and specialized. Especially under the trend of digitization and personalized services, the tourism industry urgently needs talents who master modern information technology and possess innovative thinking and service awareness.

3.3 Specific Requirements of the Tourism Industry for Tourism Management Professionals

The tourism industry has various requirements for tourism management professionals. Firstly, in terms of skills, apart from basic tourism business knowledge and operational skills, strong communication skills and cross-cultural communication abilities are needed to adapt to the needs of tourists from different countries and regions. Secondly, regarding quality, tourism management talents should possess a high level of service awareness and professional ethics, sincerely and enthusiastically providing services to tourists. Additionally, innovation, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities are essential. Finally, although it is not an absolute requirement, talents with relevant work experience can often adapt to their positions faster and better serve tourists. Overall, the tourism industry has comprehensive requirements for tourism management professionals, demanding solid professional knowledge and skills, good professional quality, and practical experience.

4. RESEARCH ON THE ALIGNMENT OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT CURRICULUM IN UNIVERSITIES WITH INDUSTRY DEMAND

4.1 Analysis of the Correlation between Curriculum and Industry Needs

In tourism management education in higher education institutions, the correlation between curriculum design and industry needs is crucial. This correlation manifests in the close integration of course content with actual job requirements and the synchronous updating of educational philosophies with industry trends. On one hand, a reasonable curriculum ensures that students acquire the professional knowledge and skills required by the industry, laying a solid foundation for their future career development. On the other hand, as the tourism industry continues to evolve, the curriculum of tourism management majors in universities also needs to keep pace with the times, adjusting and optimizing in a timely manner to adapt to the new demands of the industry for talent. Through in-depth analysis of the correlation between curriculum design and industry needs, universities can more targetedly cultivate high-quality talents that meet the actual demands of the tourism industry.

4.2 Comparative Analysis and Reference Value of Tourism Management Curriculum in Domestic and Foreign Universities

Significant differences and commonalities can be found in the curriculum design of tourism management majors in domestic and foreign universities. Through comparative analysis, we can not only gain insights into teaching philosophies and practices under different educational systems and cultural backgrounds but also identify their respective strengths and weaknesses. Foreign universities often place greater emphasis on practical application, with flexible and diverse curriculum designs that are closely integrated with industry trends and market demands. In contrast, domestic universities have a deep accumulation of theoretical teaching but still have room for improvement in practical skill training and industry adaptability. Therefore, drawing on advanced foreign teaching models and curriculum design concepts, combined with domestic realities, is of great significance for optimizing the structure of China's tourism management curriculum and improving the quality of education. Through such comparisons and references, we can better achieve a seamless connection between university education and industry needs, cultivating high-quality tourism management talents who possess both a solid theoretical foundation and practical operational skills.

4.3 Optimization Suggestions and Practical Paths for the Curriculum of Tourism Management in Universities

When considering the optimization of the tourism management curriculum in universities, we propose the following detailed suggestions.

Firstly, it is imperative to introduce more practical courses closely related to the industry, such as tourism project planning and scenic area operation and management. These courses are designed to enhance students' practical skills, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary abilities to excel in the field. Secondly, strengthening school-enterprise cooperation is crucial. Regularly organizing students to participate in corporate internships provides them with an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of industry operations. This practical experience not only fosters their problem-solving abilities but also bridges the gap between academic learning and real-world applications. Furthermore, inviting industry experts to campus through lectures, workshops, and other formats exposes students to the forefront of industry knowledge and trends. This interaction with professionals from the field enriches the learning experience and prepares students for the ever-changing landscape of the tourism

industry. Lastly, establishing a comprehensive course evaluation and feedback mechanism is essential. This system allows for timely adjustments to course content, ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of the educational material. By continuously assessing and adapting the curriculum, universities can maintain the timeliness and pertinence of their teaching, thus better aligning with the needs of the tourism industry. Through these practical and feasible optimization measures, we can drive the continuous improvement and development of the tourism management curriculum in universities. This, in turn, will enable universities to more effectively meet the demands of the tourism industry for qualified talent. The optimization of the tourism management curriculum in universities requires a multifaceted approach that includes the introduction of practical courses, enhanced school-enterprise cooperation, engagement with industry experts, and a robust course evaluation system. By implementing these strategies, universities can ensure that their tourism management programs remain relevant, up-to-date, and responsive to the evolving needs of the tourism industry.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper delves deeply into the optimization of the curriculum for tourism management programs in universities, presenting practical suggestions and implementation paths. By introducing practical courses closely related to the industry, strengthening school-enterprise cooperation, inviting industry experts to campus, and establishing a comprehensive course evaluation and feedback mechanism, the teaching quality of tourism management can be effectively improved, cultivating professionals who better meet the needs of the industry. The implementation of these optimization measures not only helps to enhance students' practical skills and deep understanding of the industry but also ensures the timeliness and pertinence of education and teaching, thereby promoting the sustained development of the profession.

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