On the Construction of the Basic Platform for the Cultivation of Smart Tourism Talents in China

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Abstract. Smart tourism is the trend of the development of the tourism industry. However, the professional talent training about smart tourist in the current domestic class cannot satisfy the needs of its development. The Establishment of the basic platform for smart tourism talents training, including the tourism practical teaching link, the textbook compiling of the smart tourism, the faculty construction, and the talent training plan of smart tourism etc., is lagging the needs of its development. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the "smart" direction of school-enterprise cooperation, enrich the "smart" resources of tourism textbooks, improve the "smart" level of teachers, and optimize the "smart" program of talent training, so as to lay a solid foundation for the cultivation of smart tourism talents in Chinese higher education.

1. Introduction

Smart tourism is the use of the new technology and methods like artificial intelligence, cloud computing, Internet of things, big data and so on, through the Internet and its terminals, to actively collect, classify, process, and disseminate the information about tourism economy, activities, and tourists. It also helps the tourism decision-making groups and individuals timely formulate and implement the tourism policies. The smart tourism can optimize the tourism activities and supplies, guide the tourism planning, and strengthen market supervision, etc. It also can assist the tourism enterprises in a timely manner to optimize the strategy of management, market development, resource allocation and integration, as well as the tourists to reasonably arrange the work and improve the experience, so as to realize the convenience, efficiency, intelligence, standardization and unification between tourism and its service and tourism decision-making. [1]

In recent years, China's smart tourism has been greatly developed and has gradually become the biggest trend of China's tourism development in the new era. According to statistics, 33 Chinese cities had been selected as national-level "smart tourism pilot cities" by 2018. According to the strategy survey from Accenture, for the group, aged from 25 to 39 years old, whose income is more than 6000 yuan, and the people who get the bachelor degree or above, more than half of them regard the travel as their interests. [2] Especially, the young people who are experienced in the "intelligent" tools has become the main force of the tourism market. Intellectualization which has become the mode of their living standard and the way of tourism consumption, profoundly influence the tourism consumption behavior of the tourists around them. That is one of the important reasons for the development of smart tourism.

The application of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, Internet of things has dramatically changed the whole industry chain. The bankruptcy liquidation of Thomas Cook Group, a travel agency with one-hundred-year history, and the successful border-crossing integration of American Express have fully showed trend of intellectualization is unstoppable. The application of new technology, such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, Internet of things, big data and so on, will create more new
tourism business model. For example, OTA (Online Travel Agency) will continually be transformed into OTP (Online Travel Platform) and UGC (user-generated Content) and other modes. People will have less or no longer rely on the traditional travel agencies for their tourism activities in the future, because the smart tourism will bring more possibilities for development and border-crossing integration for tourism. The rapid development of "smart tourism" needs a large number of "smart talents". Therefore, the most important thing is to lay a solid foundation for the cultivation of smart tourism talents in colleges and universities like setting up the basic platform for teaching practice, materials, professional teachers and talent training programs.

2. The Basic Literacy for Smart Tourism Talents

2.1 Higher Literacy of Information Technology

Smart tourism, which is based on the latest information technology and uses the new ideas and method of smart tourism to meet the new needs of tourism development and tourism activities, is the advanced stage of tourism informatization. Therefore, the information technology literacy of tourism talents, especially the requirements of "smart" thinking and "smart" concept, has been greatly improved. According to the information literacy competence standard of higher education proposed by the American Library Association and the requirements of the smart tourism development, smart tourism talents should have the following "smart" literacies: technical capacity of collecting, obtaining, screening, processing and using information; Proficiency in the application of Internet of things, cloud computing, mobile communication and other technologies to efficiently obtain the tourism information and guide tourism practical activities; Ability of analyzing and making use of tourism information for decision-making consultation, such as intelligent tourism marketing and management, intelligent design and combination of tourism products, etc. [3]

2.2 Broad Multidisciplinary Knowledge

Smart tourism talents are not only to master the traditional knowledge and skills of tourism science like management, economics, sociology, marketing and so on, but also to possess the ability to provide personalized and intelligent service. Especially, they need to be able to use the Internet, big data and cloud computing technology to collect and process, information whenever and wherever possible. They are demanded to timely find and grasp the personalized needs, tourist market scale and the consumption level and preference change, new market dynamics and trends of tourism. They also need to get the real-time tourism knowledge of demand-supply situation and in a timely manner to adjust and coordinate the contradiction. So all of these require travel professionals to change service concept, establish "smart" thinking, and apply the smart means to offer the convenient, smart and all-round services in or out of the tourism field; to create, find and develop a new market opportunity for tourism enterprises; to provide convincing decision-making consultation basis for travel decision-making management department, etc.

2.3 Ability to Apply New Media Technology

The new media technology has broken the barriers of medium and blurred the boundaries between geographical and administrative, and even between communicators and recipients. The intelligent terminal media like the mobile phone, tablet computer, and anything to wear in the age of smart tourism had occupied the important position of the wisdom tourism spread. The tourism industry has developed from the stage of widespread use of traditional elite media to the personal media stage which is full application of the new media technology. The tourism communities and their members prefer to use the new media technology to share tourism experience, send tourism message, guide tourist behavior, shape a new type of tourism cluster preferences and fashion, etc. Tourism community has become the most important "data access" for tourism decision management and product design, tourism
enterprise marketing and market development. The tourism practitioners should not only master new media technology and its application, but also have the ability to integrate into the community and guide it. [4]

3. Main Problems of the Basic Platform of Cultivating Smart Tourism Talents

3.1 The Practice Teaching Lags Behind the Development Demand of Smart Tourism

At present, the practice teaching of tourism management in many colleges and universities still stays in the traditional post practice mode, and lacks the exploration consciousness of the new business state such as smart tourism. That is, the focus of the traditional "Service Skills", such as the exercise of "diet, residence, going out, traveling, purchase and entertainment", has created a large number of service-oriented talents. This inertia of such personnel training has not been reversed, but the development of the tourism is more and more dependent on the emerging technical means and thinking, especially the Internet +, EPC network, cloud computing, big data technology and its application and so on supported by the computer technology, will be an important standard to measure the comprehensive quality of the tourism talents in the future. The ability to set up relevant theoretical courses such as computer and smart tourism, not to mention the reform and innovation of practice. [5]

3.2 Textbook Compilation Lags Behind the Development Demand of Smart Tourism

First, tourism e-commerce, tourism information and other teaching materials lack of new ideas, tourism network marketing, electronic commerce of distribution system and other outdated content is still popular. The old textbook which was used many years ago is still the mainstream, but smart tourism teaching materials compiled by Ministry of Education of China and its administrative branch are relatively rare. Second, the pertinence and professionalism of the use of teaching materials are still difficult to meet the needs of the training of tourism professionals. Most colleges and universities have paid attention to the necessity of the development of smart tourism, and gradually began to try to collate and use the relevant teaching materials. However, they either put too much emphasis on smart and ignore tourism, such as paying attention to the learning of computer languages like python, but out of touch with the application of tourism, or carry out the teaching of old tourism teaching materials and their contents under the guise of smartness.

3.3 The Cultivation of Faculty Lags Behind the Development Demand of Smart Tourism

Under the influence of the traditional concept, many colleges and universities do not pay much attention to the construction of tourism faculties. First, the phenomenon of "aging" and tourism specialization in the faculties is serious so that the faculties lack in the sense of urgency and crisis about the ever-changing smart tourism. The statistics show that the ratio of undergraduate students to teachers in 37 tourism colleges was constantly rising in the past ten years, which means the growth of the new teachers was far behind the growth of the professional students; at the same time, these new teachers have no computer or smart-related professional background, and are still dominated by geography, tourism, etc. In addition, women account for the vast majority of these new faculties, and many of them are insulated from the computer or intelligence. Second, the guidance of faculties’ team construction is insufficient. Exchange activities, scientific research activities, teaching and research activities and so on, which were carried out by departments and organizations such as the National Tourism Education Management and Steering Committee are not enough and excellent. The related subjects and research support of smart tourism are also relatively inadequate.

3.4 The Talents Training Program Lags Behind the Development Demand of Smart Tourism

Many tourism colleges and universities are seriously restricted by the rules formulated by the traditional talent training program. In a total of about 170 credits, in addition to general education
courses, professional compulsory courses, degree courses, practice, graduation thesis, comprehensive quality credits and other compulsory parts, the credits that can also be removed from the teaching and practice of smart tourism courses are very limited so that the smart element is difficult to improve. But with the development of information technology and Internet technology, the degree of intersection between tourism subject and smart, computer application, Internet and cloud computing is increasing day by day. Also, its demand for smart tourism is more diversified and deeper and its knowledge system and application fields are becoming more abundant and perfect. If the tourism specialty cannot adjust the curriculum and teaching module in time, break through the bottleneck and bravely adjust the talent training plan in the direction of smartness, the lag of smart tourism talents and teaching faculties’ construction will rapidly evolve into the survival crisis of tourism specialty. [6]

4. Suggestions on Basic Platform Construction for Smart Tourism Talents Cultivation

4.1 Strengthen the “Smart” Cooperation Between Colleges and Enterprises

It isn’t new for colleges to cooperate with enterprises and to combine production with education. However, the natural advantages of combining education and the market can supplement the practical teaching in college education. Cooperation between colleges and enterprises is very flexible. Therefore, such cooperation should be of high priority in the reform of practical teaching in smart tourism. Tourism colleges should attach more importance to cooperation between colleges and enterprises in practical teaching, especially in the training of technological and applied talents. Tourism colleges should reposition the practical teaching aims and the responsibilities and duties of colleges and enterprises as well as innovate and update the cooperation mode according to the new demand of development trend in smart tourism.

To achieve a win-win result, on the one hand, college teachers with their advantages in intelligence, scientific research and practice can conduct enough research and theoretical work for the innovation and decision-making of enterprises, which promotes the scientific and steady development of the enterprises. On the other hand, colleges should positively explore the mode in which entrepreneurs give lectures to students while students have classes in smart tourism enterprises and scenic spots. Meanwhile, colleges and enterprises can jointly initiate smart tourism enterprises and programs as well as establish smart tourism business incubator base for college students, which enable the students to improve their smart tourism ability in a real business environment and provide a full range of channels and financial support for students’ ability training. The enterprises should consider the responsibilities of the cultivation of smart tourism talents and allow college students to experience a true smart tourism environment. There will be a benign circle in which the colleges and enterprises jointly cultivate future top-notch talents in smart tourism through the interactive sharing of advantages between colleges and enterprises.

4.2 Enrich the “Smart” Resources of Tourism Teaching Materials

Education is to a nation as the teaching materials to education. Smart tourism education materials are the basis and foundation of the cultivation of smart tourism talents. Teaching focuses on passing on knowledge based on teaching materials. Teaching materials not only define the task of teachers to teach, but also define the task of students to learn. Teaching needs a set of standards, principles, goals and demands. Teaching emphasizes more on scientific knowledge and principles rather than arts and freedom. Therefore, high-standard teaching materials play a more important role than excellent teachers. High-standard teaching materials are the keys to ensure the educational results in colleges.

The compilation, selection and use of smart tourism teaching materials should be cautious as teaching materials not only manifest the curriculum standards but also stand for the professional wisdom and academic level of numerous experts and scholars. Teaching materials are the essence of academic subjects and the efforts of scholars. Different from common reading materials, teaching
materials are specially written based on the aims of education and the physical and mental development pattern and cognitive characteristics of students. Hence, smart tourism teaching materials which should be authoritative, highly targeted and applicable. The smart tourism teaching materials should not only symbolize the essence of academic subjects but also reflect the latest development of the subject. At the same time, the smart tourism teaching materials should not only focus on reality, especially the law of student growth and teaching development, but also deeply integrate "wisdom" and "tourism". Smart tourism teaching materials and resources should be developed customized.

4.3 Improve the "Smart" Level of the Faculty

To cultivate highly qualified smart tourism talents, it is a must to build a batch of high-level smart tourism faculty. Faculties who work for the smart tourism major should update their own professional knowledge to meet the demand of the industry in accordance with times. Firstly, faculties should renew their knowledge consciously and unceasingly and master the newest theories and practical skills on smart tourism to ensure the coherence of teaching and demand. Secondly, faculties of traditional tourism should get more training in the college or out of the college. Faculties are supposed to enter the enterprises to do research or take certain positions in order to understand more about the enterprises and the industry requirements. In this way, faculties will be able to conduct proper adjustment to curricular arrangement and teaching instruction and provide more diversified teaching methods. Thirdly, new faculties who are acquainted with the technology and application of cloud computing, big data and internet, which makes the smart tourism faculties more integrate and modernized. All the above efforts are for the purpose of labor optimization, mutual learning and mutual development of teaching and research.

4.4 Optimize the “Smart” Talent Cultivation Program

Smart tourism merges the information communication technology with tourism, which requires the staff to master relevant smart tourism technology whether working in the fields of smart service, management or marketing. Tourism colleges should thoroughly study the smart tourism talent cultivation program, especially curriculum arrangement. Instead of arranging courses on the basis of faculties and positions, tourism colleges should arrange courses based on requirements and set positions based on courses in accordance with smart tourism. At the same time, tourism colleges may rearrange faculties who are unable to teach smart tourism courses, which generate a sense of urgency and crisis to the faculties. By doing so, tourism colleges will better improve the faculty’s levels and ensure the implementation of smart tourism talent cultivation program, which enable the students improve their smart tourism skills through a scientific, rational, standard and sustainable curricular arrangement and teaching module.

As to the establishment of smart tourism talent cultivation program and teaching reform, tourism colleges should reduce the credit points of traditional courses as far as possible. Meanwhile, teaching models should be changed into online courses or the combination of online and offline courses. Faculties and students are encouraged to jointly create online courses and comprehensive courses. Precisely, in the first place, smart tourism courses should be increased. The cultivation and training of smart tourism thinking and concept should be strengthened. In the second place, reform and innovation of smart tourism curriculum should be conducted such as diversities in faculties, teaching environment and teaching methods. Finally, following closely to the development trend of smart tourism, faculties should introduce the latest development and examples in tourism and attach more importance to the application of smart tourism.
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