

Research on the Training Mode of New Tourism Talents under the Background of Hainan Free Trade Port

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Abstract:

This paper focuses on the Hainan Free Trade Port context, delving into the talent cultivation model for new tourism formats. By reviewing the current development status of Hainan's new tourism formats, it clarifies the characteristics of the current demand for such talents and identifies issues in the current talent cultivation process. At the same time, drawing on successful experiences both domestically and internationally, it proposes optimized strategies for cultivating talents in new tourism formats that fit Hainan's reality. The aim is to provide talent support and theoretical references for the sustainable development of Hainan's free trade port tourism industry.

Keywords:

Hainan Free Trade Port
New tourism forms
Talent training mode

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1. Introduction

The construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port has brought unprecedented opportunities for the development of Hainan's tourism industry. Leveraging unique policy advantages, the vitality of Hainan's tourism consumption market has been effectively stimulated, with new forms of tourism emerging like mushrooms after rain^[1]. New business models such as duty-free shopping, yacht tours, medical tourism, and red tourism not only enrich Hainan's tourism product offerings but also inject new vitality into the high-quality development of Hainan's tourism sector^[2]. However, with the rapid development of these new tourism sectors, the shortage of talent has

become increasingly prominent, becoming a significant bottleneck that constrains further upgrades in Hainan's tourism industry^[3]. In this context, conducting in-depth research on talent cultivation models for new tourism sectors under the backdrop of the Hainan Free Trade Port holds extremely important practical significance^[4].

2. Development status of new tourism forms in Hainan

2.1. Duty-free shopping

Since the implementation of the duty-free policy for Hainan's outlying islands, the islanders have continuously

expanded the policy benefits. The duty-free allowance for departing travelers has been increased from 5,000 yuan to 100,000 yuan, with over 45 categories of goods available. New facilitation measures such as “buy and take” and “guaranteed take” have also been introduced. World-class commercial complexes like Sanya International Duty-Free City and Haikou International Duty-Free City have been successively completed. In 2024, Haikou Customs supervised a total of 30.94 billion yuan in Hainan’s out-of-island duty-free shopping, making Hainan an important destination for attracting overseas consumption back to the mainland ^[5,6].

2.2. Yacht tourism and cultural tourism complex

Hainan promotes the development of the yacht industry through institutional innovation, streamlining registration procedures, allowing foreign yachts to enter and exit freely on a temporary basis, and implementing a “zero-tariff” policy for importing recreational equipment. These measures have accelerated the rise of cultural and tourism complexes such as Atlantis and Hainan Flower Island ^[7]. These complexes integrate various tourism elements, offering visitors a rich and diverse travel experience ^[8].

Hainan Free Trade Port policies provide tax incentives and customs facilitation support for the yacht industry ^[9]. Multiple international yacht marinas have been built in Sanya and other areas, such as the Sanya Hongzhou International Yacht Club and the Lingshui Qing Shui Bay Yacht Club, with continuously improving berthing capacity and supporting services ^[10]. In 2024, the number of registered yachts in Hainan exceeded 2,000, with over a million people going out to sea annually, and the yacht tourism market size reached several billion yuan. Product innovation and experience upgrades offer diversified services, including yacht rentals, offshore weddings, business receptions, diving tours, and sea fishing experiences, catering to various customer needs. Themed routes like “Exploring the Xisha Islands” and “Touring Hainan Island” combine island resort and cultural experience elements to extend visitors’ stay ^[11]. Smart upgrades include the introduction of intelligent management systems at some yacht marinas, enabling online booking, electronic customs clearance, real-time monitoring, and other functions to enhance operational

efficiency ^[12].

Hainan boasts unique marine resources, favorable climate conditions, and the benefits of free trade port policies, leading to robust demand for yacht tourism, particularly in the high-end market ^[13]. However, issues such as the need for improved infrastructure (like cruise home ports), a shortage of specialized talent, and significant seasonal fluctuations (with peak seasons concentrated in winter) constrain the industry’s large-scale development ^[13].

2.3. Medical tourism

Hainan’s medical tourism leverages the free trade port policy and tropical island resources to form an industrial cluster centered around the Boao Lecheng International Medical Tourism Pilot Zone ^[14]. Through special policies, international cooperation, and comprehensive services, it has created an innovative “medical + tourism” model, becoming a new global landmark for medical tourism. Hainan has launched a pilot program for an international medical tourism zone, with Boao Lecheng introducing over 300 types of international innovative drugs and medical devices. The number of medical tourists grows by an average of 40% annually, gradually forming a new tourism industry characterized by high-end medical services ^[15].

Core strengths and policy support: As China’s only “medical special zone,” the Boao Lecheng International Medical Tourism Pilot Area enjoys four special policies: “special medical practice, special research, special operation, and special international medical exchange” ^[16]. This ensures that medical technology, equipment, and drugs are in sync with international advanced levels. The country’s first regional real-world data platform has facilitated the accelerated approval of 21 products for market entry, with 3 being included in the national medical insurance directory. It allows the use of innovative drugs and medical devices not yet available domestically, having cumulatively introduced 464 overseas drugs and devices, benefiting over 110,000 people ^[17].

Resource endowment and industrial clusters, with an average annual temperature of 24 °C in the natural environment, abundant negative oxygen ions, and PM2.5 levels consistently below 10, provide a natural advantage for health and wellness. Industrial layout,

forming a medical pattern led by top domestic public hospitals such as Ruijin and Huaxi, with international brand specialties as highlights, covering seven distinctive specialties, including oncology and rare diseases. Market size, in 2024, received 413,700 medical tourists, a year-on-year increase of 36.8%, with the average expenditure per member of international medical tourism groups exceeding 12,000 yuan^[18].

2.4. Red tourism and intangible cultural heritage tourism

Hainan has upgraded the quality of red landmarks such as the Qiongya Revolutionary Base Site and the Hainan Island Liberation Crossing-the-Sea Campaign Memorial, launching 10 red tourism routes including “Retracing the Red Army’s Path in Qiongya”^[19]. In 2023, the number of visitors to red tourism sites exceeded 12 million. Meanwhile, intangible cultural heritage projects like the Li ethnic group’s traditional dyeing and embroidery techniques and Danzhou vocal tuning have been integrated into scenic areas, hotels, and homestays. The Hainan Betel Nut Valley Li and Miao Cultural Tourism Area in Baoting County has developed a series of intangible cultural heritage study courses, creating employment opportunities for over 2,000 villagers.

2.5. Green tourism and exhibition and competition tourism

Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park has launched green tourism routes such as rainforest hiking and bird-watching photography. The island’s circular tourist road connects 12 coastal cities and counties, with 40 rest stops laid out along the way. In addition, the hosting of major events like the Boao Forum for Asia and the China International Consumer Goods Expo has enhanced Hainan’s international visibility, attracting a large number of domestic and international tourists^[20].

3. Characteristics of talent demand for new tourism forms

3.1. Composite knowledge structure

The new tourism industry involves multiple fields, such as duty-free shopping, which encompasses knowledge of international trade and marketing; yacht tourism, which

includes ship management and navigation technology; and medical tourism, which pertains to medicine and health management. Therefore, professionals in the new tourism industry need to have a comprehensive knowledge structure, capable of meeting the demands of different sectors.

3.2. Digital literacy

With the wide application of digital technology in tourism, new forms of tourism have put forward higher requirements for the digital literacy of talents. Talents need to possess digital development thinking, digital management concepts, digital analytical literacy and digital innovation ability, and be able to use digital technology to improve the quality of tourism services and management efficiency.

3.3. International perspective

The construction of Hainan Free Trade Port has continuously improved the internationalization degree of Hainan’s tourism industry. Talents in new tourism forms need to have an international perspective, be familiar with the rules and cultural differences of the international tourism market, and be able to effectively communicate and exchange with international tourists.

3.4. Innovation and service consciousness

The development of new tourism formats requires continuous innovation to meet the increasingly diverse needs of tourists. Therefore, talents in these new tourism sectors need to have an innovative mindset and be capable of developing distinctive tourism products and services. At the same time, the essence of the tourism industry is a service-oriented sector, so professionals must possess excellent service awareness to provide high-quality travel experiences for tourists.

4. Problems existing in the training of talents for new tourism forms in Hainan

4.1. Insufficient total talent

Although Hainan has cultivated a large number of tourism talents through projects such as “busy work and light study”, the total number of talents is still unable to meet the market demand with the rapid development of new

tourism forms. Especially in the peak season of tourism, the shortage of talents is more prominent, and there is a phenomenon of “labor shortage.”

4.2. Unreasonable talent structure

From the perspective of educational background, most employees in Hainan’s tourism industry have an associate degree or lower, indicating a relatively low overall educational level that fails to meet the demand for high-quality talent in new tourism sectors. In terms of professional structure, there are relatively more traditional tourism professionals, while there is a relative shortage of talents in emerging fields such as yacht tourism, medical tourism, and digital cultural tourism.

4.3. Imperfect training system

Currently, the talent cultivation system for new tourism formats in Hainan is still underdeveloped, with issues such as unclear training objectives, unreasonable course settings, and outdated teaching methods. The integration of academic education with the market demand for cultural and tourism services is insufficient, leading to a common emphasis on theory over practice, which results in weak practical skills among students. Additionally, there is a lack of teachers who have both solid theoretical foundations and industry experience, making it difficult to cultivate versatile talents that meet market needs.

4.4. The talent attraction and retention mechanism needs to be optimized

Although Hainan has introduced a series of talent attraction policies, there are still some issues in the actual implementation process, such as inadequate policy promotion and incomplete supporting services, leading to unsatisfactory results in attracting talent. Moreover, the cost of living in Hainan is relatively high, while salaries in the tourism industry are relatively low, which also affects the retention of talent.

5. Experience of cultivating talents for new forms of tourism at home and abroad

5.1. Foreign experience

Taking Switzerland as an example, its hotel management

education enjoys a prestigious reputation worldwide. Swiss hotel management schools emphasize practical teaching and maintain close cooperation with the hotel industry. Students have the opportunity to participate in actual hotel operations during their studies, accumulating rich practical experience. At the same time, the curriculum of Swiss hotel management education is flexible, focusing on cultivating students’ comprehensive qualities and international perspectives, enabling them to meet the needs of hotel work in different countries and regions. In contrast, the United States places great emphasis on the integration of industry, academia, and research in tourism education. Universities have established close partnerships with tourism companies and research institutions. Universities provide technical support and talent cultivation for businesses, while businesses offer practical platforms and research topics for universities. Research institutions provide theoretical guidance and policy recommendations for the development of the tourism industry. This model of integration among industry, academia, and research promotes the coordinated development of tourism education and the tourism industry.

5.2. Domestic experience

Some developed tourist regions in China, such as Shanghai and Hangzhou, have accumulated rich experience in cultivating new tourism talents. By hosting international tourism talent summits and other events, Shanghai has attracted a large number of outstanding tourism professionals from home and abroad. At the same time, universities and vocational schools in Shanghai actively collaborate with tourism enterprises to conduct order-based training, tailoring talent development programs according to corporate needs, thereby enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of talent cultivation.

Hangzhou focuses on the cultivation of digital cultural and tourism talents. By establishing digital cultural and tourism industrial parks, it has attracted several digital cultural and tourism enterprises, providing a broad development space for these talents. At the same time, universities and training institutions in Hangzhou offer a series of courses related to digital cultural and tourism, nurturing a group of tourism professionals with digital literacy.

6. The optimization strategy of talent training mode for new tourism forms in Hainan

6.1. Improve the talent training system

Clarify the training objectives, in line with the development needs of new tourism formats in Hainan, to define the training goals for talents in these new tourism sectors. Cultivate high-quality tourism professionals with a composite knowledge structure, digital literacy, an international perspective, and innovative service awareness. Optimize course settings based on the training objectives, enhancing the proportion of emerging tourism specialty courses such as yacht tourism, medical tourism, and digital cultural tourism. At the same time, emphasize the practicality and cutting-edge nature of course content, updating teaching materials regularly to ensure students stay abreast of the latest industry knowledge and technologies.

Innovate teaching methods, adopt diverse approaches such as case studies, project-based learning, and practical training to boost students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning. Enhance the practical component of education by establishing off-campus internship bases, providing students with opportunities to participate in the actual operations of new tourism sectors, thereby improving their ability to solve problems independently. Strengthen faculty development by recruiting and nurturing teachers with rich industry experience and solid theoretical foundations, encouraging them to engage in real projects at tourism companies to enhance their practical teaching skills. Additionally, invite experts and managers from tourism enterprises to give lectures at schools, sharing the latest industry trends and practical experiences.

6.2. Innovation of talent attraction and retention mechanism

Increase efforts to attract talent, further improve preferential policies for attracting talent, intensify policy promotion, and enhance awareness and appeal of these policies. Actively participate in domestic and international job fairs to attract outstanding talents in new tourism sectors from home and abroad to work and start businesses in Hainan. At the same time, utilize platforms such as "migratory bird" talent workstations to attract high-level talents to Hainan for short-term work and

project collaborations.

Optimize the environment for retaining talents, improve the salary and treatment of the tourism industry, and improve the working and living conditions of talents. Strengthen the service guarantee for talents, solve the worries of children's education and housing. Create a good atmosphere for innovation and entrepreneurship, and provide a broad development space and platform for talents.

6.3. Deepening school-enterprise cooperation

Establish a long-term mechanism for school-enterprise cooperation. The government, universities, and enterprises should jointly establish a long-term mechanism for school-enterprise cooperation, clarifying the rights and obligations of all parties, enhancing communication and coordination to ensure the smooth implementation of school-enterprise cooperation. Implement order-based training, where universities provide targeted talent delivery to enterprises based on their needs. Enterprises participate in the entire process of talent cultivation, from curriculum design, teaching content to practical training, all of which are jointly developed by enterprises and universities, enhancing the relevance and adaptability of talent cultivation. Jointly build training bases, where universities and enterprises collaborate to create training bases that offer students practical teaching platforms while also providing technology research and development and talent training services for enterprises. Training bases can conduct simulations and practical teaching of new tourism business models, improving students' practical skills and innovation capabilities.

6.4. Improve the talent evaluation system

Establish a diversified evaluation standard, breaking away from the traditional focus on academic credentials and seniority. Develop a multifaceted talent assessment system that emphasizes practical abilities and performance. The evaluation criteria should cover multiple aspects such as knowledge level, practical skills, innovation capabilities, and service awareness, providing a comprehensive and objective assessment of an individual's overall qualities. Smooth out the channels for professional title applications, further expanding the scope of title evaluations. Remove barriers such as household registration, region, identity,

archives, and personnel relationships to facilitate the application process for various talents. Simplify the title review procedures to enhance efficiency and provide support for career development.

7. Conclusion

The construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port has opened up vast space for the development of new tourism formats, and the growth of these new formats cannot do without the support of high-quality talent. By improving the talent cultivation system, innovating mechanisms for

attracting and retaining talent, deepening cooperation between schools and enterprises, and perfecting the talent evaluation system, we can effectively optimize the talent cultivation model for Hainan's new tourism formats, providing strong talent guarantees for the sustainable development of Hainan's tourism industry. In future development, Hainan should keep pace with the trends in the tourism sector, continuously innovate talent cultivation models to meet the demands of new tourism formats, and promote the high-quality development of Hainan's free trade port tourism industry.

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