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Original Paper

Research on the Construction of Aesthetic Education Courses for Tourism Management Major in Local Undergraduate Colleges: A Case Study of A University

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Abstract

This article explores the construction of aesthetic education courses for tourism management majors in local undergraduate colleges, using A university as an example. The opening points out that in the context of changes in the socio-economic and tourism markets, it is urgent for this major to carry out the construction of aesthetic education courses. Next, introduce the overview of A University and its tourism management major, and elaborate on its practices in curriculum system, teaching, faculty, resource construction, and other aspects. Simultaneously analyze the existing issues of curriculum design, teaching objectives, and professional integration, and propose suggestions for optimizing courses, clarifying objectives, and strengthening integration to enhance the quality of talent cultivation and social competitiveness.

Keywords

Local undergraduate institutions, Tourism Management major, Construction of aesthetic education curriculum, A university

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the social economy, people's spiritual and cultural needs continue to rise, and the importance of aesthetic education in the national education system is becoming increasingly prominent (Spivak, 2013). The Party and the state attach great importance to the work of aesthetic education and have successively issued policy documents to promote its development and popularization, such as the "Opinions on Strengthening and Improving the Work of Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era" issued in 2020, which elevated aesthetic education to the level of national education strategy (Tao & Tao, 2024).

At the same time, the tourism consumption market is constantly changing, and tourists have higher expectations for the quality and connotation of their tourism experience. The current tourism activities are no longer limited to simple sightseeing, but pay more attention to cultural connotations, artistic aesthetics, and personalized experiences. This means that practitioners in the tourism industry need to have a keen aesthetic perception, good appreciation, and certain creative abilities to provide tourists with products and services that combine beauty and cultural heritage. In this context, it is urgent for local undergraduate tourism management majors to carry out the construction of aesthetic education courses, which is of great significance for improving the quality of talent cultivation and social competitiveness.

2. Practice of Aesthetic Education Course Construction in Tourism Management Major of A University

2.1 Overview of A University

A University is in B City, Hubei Province, China. It is a full-time undergraduate institution sponsored by the People's Government of Hubei Province. It belongs to the normal university category and is also a multi-disciplinary university with a relatively complete range of disciplines, including economics, law, education, culture, history, science, engineering, agriculture, medicine, management, and arts. As of October 2023, the school has a campus area of 2012 acres, with South Campus, North Campus, East Campus, and West Campus; There are 1191 full-time teachers and 19414 full-time students. The school has 20 teaching colleges, offering 70 undergraduate majors, and also admits Master of Education students. In the main ranking of the 2024 Soft Science China University Rankings, A University ranks around 350th.

The tourism management major of A university continues to grow with the development of the school. Relying on the overall disciplinary resources and teaching strength of the school, it provides students with rich learning resources and practical opportunities and is committed to cultivating professional talents that meet the development needs of the tourism industry. This major is at the undergraduate level and belongs to the business administration category of management studies. It aims to cultivate advanced specialized talents who master the knowledge of tourism management and can engage in tourism management work in various levels of tourism administrative departments, tourism enterprises and institutions. Students mainly learn the basic theories and knowledge of tourism management, receive basic training in tourism management, and possess the basic ability to analyze and solve problems. Its main disciplines are economics and business management, with main courses covering multiple areas such as tourism consumer behavior, tourism planning and development, tourism economics, and tourism marketing. It also includes practical teaching activities such as tourism resource internships, professional apprenticeships, and professional internships. The professional study period is four years, and upon graduation, a bachelor’s degree in management will be awarded.

2.2 Construction of Aesthetic Education Curriculum System for Tourism Management Major in A

University

2.2.1 Principles of Curriculum Design

The curriculum of tourism management major follows multiple important principles(Fidgeon, 2010). The principle of scientificity requires that courses be designed based on the characteristics and development laws of tourism management disciplines, covering various aspects such as general education, subject foundations, professional courses, and comprehensive practice, forming a complete knowledge system. For example, mathematics courses in subject foundation courses can provide a foundation for scientific analysis of tourism phenomena. The principle of systematicity is reflected in the curriculum starting from the goal of talent cultivation, interrelated and progressive, gradually improving students' knowledge and skills from basic courses to professional courses and then to practical courses. The principle of targeting is to set courses that cater to the needs and job characteristics of tourism management profession, such as tour guide business, which can cultivate practical operational skills. The principle of innovation emphasizes the cultivation of students' innovative consciousness and ability, and adapts to industry development through the addition of emerging courses and innovative teaching methods. The principle of comprehensive development emphasizes the all-round development of students' morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor skills, and enhances their overall quality through the establishment of courses such as ideological and political education, physical education, and aesthetic education.

2.2.2 Course Structure

The curriculum structure of tourism management major includes different modules. The public basic aesthetic education courses include university physical education and health, aesthetic education and art education, etc. College sports and health enhance students' physical fitness, cultivate exercise habits and healthy lifestyles; Art education and aesthetic education enhance aesthetic literacy and artistic cultivation, laying the foundation for students' comprehensive development and promoting overall quality improvement together with other courses. The core aesthetic education courses of the major cover tourism culture, tourism etiquette, etc. Tourism culture studies enable students to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural connotations of tourism and enhance their cultural heritage and aesthetic abilities; Tourism etiquette cultivates service etiquette norms and literacy, which are interrelated. Tourism culture provides cultural support for tourism etiquette, and tourism etiquette is the external manifestation of tourism culture. Expanding aesthetic education courses includes elective courses such as bartending, tea art, pastry baking, exhibition planning and management, expanding students' knowledge and skill areas, cultivating diverse interests and strengths, complementing professional core courses, enriching students' learning choices, enhancing comprehensive quality and competitiveness, and injecting new vitality into the development of the tourism industry.

2.3 Teaching Content and Methods of Aesthetic Education Course for Tourism Management Major in A

University

2.3.1 Content of Courses

In the subject specific courses and comprehensive practical courses of tourism management, some courses cleverly integrate aesthetic education elements, closely combining aesthetic education with professional knowledge teaching, and enriching the teaching connotation. Taking the course of "Tourism Reception Industry" as an example, this course emphasizes the integration of aesthetic elements. In terms of teaching content arrangement, starting from the introduction of tourism reception industry, students are guided to understand the relationship between tourism reception industry and modern service industry, as well as its basic characteristics and classification and other professional knowledge. When it comes to specific business management content, such as hotel reception business management, scenic spot reception business management, etc., it not only emphasizes the standardization of business operations, but also focuses on cultivating students' ability to shape and convey beauty in the service process. For example, when explaining hotel reception services, it is mentioned how hotel environment layout, service staff demeanor, and other aspects can bring a sense of beauty to tourists, so that students understand that high-quality reception services are not only to meet the basic needs of tourists, but also to create a beautiful experience for tourists, including visual comfort and humanistic care during the service process, thus integrating aesthetic education into various aspects of tourism reception services.

2.3.2 Teaching Method

In the teaching of tourism management related courses, various effective teaching methods are widely used to better achieve teaching objectives and integrate aesthetic elements. The case teaching method plays a significant role in multiple courses. For example, in the teaching of the tourism folk culture unit of "Tourism Culture", teachers introduce folk customs cases from old Beijing, old Shanghai and other places. After careful analysis, students can not only deeply understand the professional knowledge of folk culture, but also directly feel its unique aesthetic charm, enhancing their grasp of the aesthetic characteristics of folk culture. The practical teaching method is also quite prominent. Taking the hotel reception business management teaching in "Tourism Reception Industry" as an example, teachers arrange students to observe or intern in hotels on site, allowing students to experience the reception process, observe the hotel environment layout and service personnel details in the actual environment, deeply understand how to create beautiful experiences in reception services, and achieve a close combination of theory and practical operation. The project driven teaching method is equally important. In the course of "Tourism Marketing", teachers assign project tasks such as designing tourism product marketing plans, and students are divided into groups to implement them. They conceptualize the plans from an aesthetic perspective, such as designing promotional posters that consider aesthetic factors, planning marketing activities that emphasize novelty and fun, while enhancing marketing abilities and cultivating innovative thinking and aesthetic practice skills.

2.3.3 Construction of Teaching Staff for Aesthetic Education Courses in Tourism Management Major of

A University

2.3.3.1 Current Situation of Teaching Staff

There are a total of 10 teachers in the aesthetic education course of Tourism Management major in A university. From the perspective of educational structure, the proportion of master's students is the highest, with a total of 7 students and 3 doctoral students. The distribution of professional titles is relatively balanced, with 4 lecturers, 2 other intermediate level teachers, 2 unrated teachers, and 1 associate professor and 1 professor each. The age structure shows that teachers are mainly concentrated between the ages of 30 and 48, with the highest number of teachers aged 38 (2) and 1 each in other age groups. Overall, the teaching staff is mainly composed of middle-aged and young teachers with higher educational levels and reasonable distribution of professional titles.

2.3.3.2 Teacher Training and Introduction

A university has taken multiple measures to strengthen the construction of the teaching staff for aesthetic education courses. Firstly, by introducing highly educated talents (such as doctoral students) to enhance the overall academic level of the teaching staff. Secondly, encourage teachers to participate in academic exchanges and training to update teaching concepts and methods. In addition, through talent introduction policies, teachers with overseas educational backgrounds have been attracted (such as PhDs from Korea's Peicai University and Japan's Momoyama Gakuin University), enriching the international perspective of the teaching staff. These measures have effectively improved the quality of the teaching staff and provided strong support for the high-quality development of aesthetic education courses.

2.4 Construction of Teaching Resources for Aesthetic Education Courses in Tourism Management Major of A University

2.4.1 Teaching Materials

In the process of constructing aesthetic education courses in tourism management, the teaching resource system is becoming increasingly perfect, covering high-quality courses, MOOCs, planned textbooks, and other aspects. At present, one MOOC project for "Introduction to Hotel Management" has been approved, and in the past three years, the teaching and research department has edited and published 10 professional textbooks. The school has transformed its internal curriculum based on its actual situation, reasonably arranging 20% to 50% of teaching time for students to engage in online self-learning, and organically combining it with offline teaching to carry out flipped classroom and blended learning, achieving a deep integration of "online student research and offline teacher guidance". It is committed to creating a blended "golden course" that integrates online courses with the school's classroom teaching, emphasizing the integration of aesthetic education content and improving students' aesthetic literacy. At the same time, actively building rich online course resources, covering course introductions, teacher teams, and other aspects, to provide support for aesthetic education teaching. In addition to building our own online teaching resources, we will fully utilize online "golden courses" for school-based transformation, advocate for a blended learning reform based on the application of

national high-quality online open courses, recognize about 60 first-class blended courses online and offline, and comprehensively assist in improving the quality of aesthetic education teaching in the tourism management profession.

2.4.2 Construction of Practical Teaching Base

The tourism management professional experimental and practical education platform includes multiple different types of bases, aiming to provide students with comprehensive practical education. The types of bases include national level scientific research institutions, provincial experimental teaching demonstration centers, school level internship and training demonstration bases, school level key research bases for humanities and social sciences, school level discipline teams, and school level scientific research platforms. The functions of these bases cover multiple aspects, including economic management and entrepreneurship experiments, innovation and entrepreneurship internships and training for college students, tourism economy and cultural research, geological resource protection and development research, integrated development strategy research of red tourism, and geological resource and environmental research. Through these platforms, students can not only enhance their professional skills, but also experience the influence of aesthetic education in practice, cultivate comprehensive qualities and innovative abilities.

2.4.3 Construction of Information Technology Teaching Resources

The Tourism Teaching and Research Office relies on the complete teaching equipment of the college, with 8 laboratories including Tourism Virtual Laboratory, Tour Guide Simulation Laboratory, Digital Teaching Laboratory, Physical Etiquette Laboratory, Bartending Laboratory, Tea Art Training Room, Baking Training Room, GIS Laboratory, and Measurement and Land Planning and Utilization Laboratory, which can fully meet the needs of aesthetic education and teaching.

3. Practice of Aesthetic Education Course Construction in Tourism Management Major of A University

3.1 Analysis of the Problems in the Construction of Aesthetic Education Courses for Tourism Management Major in A University

3.1.1 There Are Obvious Deficiencies in the Curriculum of Aesthetic Education

Only one compulsory course, 'Art Education and Aesthetic Education', lacks a rich and diverse curriculum system. Students majoring in tourism management will have a wide range of aesthetic requirements in their future work, involving various tourism scenes such as nature and humanities. A single course cannot enable students to fully explore various art forms such as music, dance, film, and television, which is difficult to meet their diverse aesthetic needs in tourism resource development, tourism product design, and other work. It also limits students' ability to explore aesthetic education knowledge based on personal interests, which is not conducive to personalized development and professional competence improvement.

3.1.2 The Problem of Missing Teaching Objectives in Aesthetic Education Courses Is Prominent

At present, in the aesthetic education courses of tourism management majors, there is a lack of clear definition of the aesthetic ability standards that students should achieve, which leads to confusion in their grasp of aesthetic perception and appreciation skills; In terms of improving artistic literacy, there is no clear requirement for artistic knowledge and skills closely related to tourism management, and students do not know which direction to strive towards; In terms of cultivating emotional attitudes, there is a lack of goal guidance. This series of problems results in students being unable to effectively transform their love for beauty into a driving force for providing high-quality services and spreading culture when facing tourism work, which seriously affects their comprehensive development of professional abilities and professional qualities.

3.1.3 There Is a Lack of Integration between Aesthetic Education Courses and Majors

There are gaps in the aesthetic teaching of tourism resources in many existing courses, which makes it difficult for students to deeply explore the aesthetic value contained in tourism resources; In the process of designing and developing tourism products, the insufficient integration of aesthetic education directly leads to the lack of aesthetic qualities that can attract tourists in the products designed by students; In the tourism service sector, due to a disconnect from aesthetic needs, students often overlook tourists' expectations for beauty and are unable to create a comprehensive and high-quality tourism experience for them. The above-mentioned problems seriously affect the practicality and effectiveness of tourism management education.

4. Suggestions for the Construction of Aesthetic Education Courses in Tourism Management Major of A University

4.1 Optimize Course Offerings

Enrich the types of courses, in addition to the existing compulsory courses of "aesthetic education and art education", add a series of diversified elective courses of aesthetic education. For example, offering courses such as "Music Appreciation", "Fundamentals of Painting", "Photography Art", "Dance Appreciation", "Film and Television Aesthetics", etc., allows students to make independent choices based on their own interests and aesthetic tendencies, and broaden their aesthetic horizons (Yu & Jiang, 2022). At the same time, characteristic aesthetic education courses closely integrated with tourism management majors, such as "Tourism Landscape Aesthetics" and "Tourism Cultural Creative Design", are established to deeply analyze tourism resources from an aesthetic perspective and cultivate students' ability to apply aesthetic education knowledge to professional practice. Reasonably arrange the credits and hours of courses, ensure that students have sufficient time to systematically study aesthetic education knowledge, build a sound aesthetic education curriculum system, meet students' diverse learning needs, and enhance their comprehensive aesthetic literacy (Wang, 2022).

4.2 Clarify Teaching Objectives

Develop clear, specific, and targeted teaching objectives for aesthetic education courses(Ebrahiminia, Zanganeh Motlagh, Jafarian Yasar, & Mohammadi Naeeni, 2020). In terms of aesthetic ability, it is

explicitly required that students can proficiently grasp the aesthetic points of different types of tourism resources, accurately perceive and deeply understand the aesthetic values contained therein, possess a high level of aesthetic appreciation ability, and be able to conduct aesthetic evaluations of tourism products and services from a professional perspective (Han, 2022). For artistic literacy, it is stipulated that students should master certain artistic skills, such as basic painting and photography skills for the production of tourism promotional materials, mastery of artistic design principles for creative design of tourism products, etc. (Leonido, Pereira, Mendes, Rodrigues, & Morgado, 2023); At the same time, accumulate rich artistic knowledge and understand the characteristics and development trends of different art forms. In terms of emotional attitude, cultivate students' love and pursuit of beauty, so that they can actively spread and create beauty in tourism work, establish correct aesthetic values, enhance cultural confidence, provide high-quality services to tourists with enthusiasm and sincerity, and convey the charm of tourism culture (Onofrichuk, Sidorova, Poland, & Ukraine, 2017).

4.3 Strengthen Integration with the Profession

Deeply promote the organic integration of aesthetic education courses and various aspects of tourism management majors (Zhao, 2016). In terms of teaching content, integrate aesthetic education knowledge comprehensively into professional courses such as tourism resource development, tourism product design, and tourism services (Muzyka et al., 2021). For example, in the course of "Tourism Resources", the content of analyzing the aesthetic characteristics of tourism resources should be added to guide students to evaluate the value of resources from an aesthetic perspective; In the course of "Tourism Product Design", integrating artistic design principles and aesthetic standards, students are trained to design more attractive and aesthetically valuable tourism products. In the practical teaching stage, students are arranged to participate in landscape design of tourist attractions, planning of tourism promotion activities, and other projects, so that students can apply aesthetic education knowledge to enhance the aesthetic quality of tourism services in practical operations. By establishing a practice base that integrates professional and aesthetic education, more practical opportunities are provided for students to exercise their ability to combine aesthetic education with their major in real scenarios, achieving the coordinated development of aesthetic education and tourism management (Shih & Practice, 2020).

5. Discussion

The case of A university shows that local universities should establish a comprehensive educational concept in the construction of aesthetic education courses, recognizing that aesthetic education is not only the imparting of art, but also an important way to cultivate students' comprehensive literacy, innovation ability, and cultural confidence. Local universities need to combine their own professional characteristics, strengthen the deep integration of aesthetic education courses and professional courses, optimize teaching content and methods, improve the quality and pertinence of teaching resources, in order to meet the diverse needs of students (Tigert & Leider, 2022).

At the same time, local universities should strengthen communication and cooperation, share experiences and lessons learned in the construction of aesthetic education courses, and jointly explore aesthetic education models that are suitable for the characteristics of local university students. By improving the aesthetic education curriculum system and enhancing the quality of aesthetic education teaching, local universities can cultivate more competitive and adaptable professional talents to meet the diverse development needs of society, injecting new vitality into local culture and economic development. This is not only the goal of constructing aesthetic education courses for tourism management majors in A university, but also a common pursuit of all local universities in the field of aesthetic education, in order to achieve the comprehensiveness and timeliness of higher education in talent cultivation.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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