

Article

Research on the Integrated Development Path of Hainan Cultural Tourism Resources and Quality-Oriented Education against the Backdrop of the Free Trade Port

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Abstract: The construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port has entered a phase of high-quality advancement, creating a mutually reinforcing opportunity for the upgrading of the cultural tourism industry and the practical education reform of quality-oriented education. Cultural tourism resources embody diverse educational values, including ecological popularization, revolutionary ideological-political education, intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education, and marine labor education. Concurrently, quality-oriented education provides a curriculum-based and standardized orientation for the sustainable development of these cultural tourism resources. The in-depth integration of these two domains is a crucial approach to fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and promoting the comprehensive transformation and upgrading of Hainan's cultural tourism industry. Based on the latest industry statistics and existing academic research, this paper systematically reviews the practical foundation for integrating Hainan's cultural tourism resources with quality-oriented education. Furthermore, it critically analyzes the primary challenges hindering this integration, including the inadequate educational transformation of existing resources, weak inter-departmental coordination, severe product homogenization, and a notable shortage of professional talents. In light of the unique policy advantages provided by the Free Trade Port, this study proposes optimized developmental pathways across five key dimensions: resource integration, mechanism building, product innovation, talent cultivation, and the establishment of a robust support system. Ultimately, these strategic recommendations aim to offer practical references and actionable insights for the coordinated, long-term development of both the education and tourism sectors in Hainan.

Keywords: free trade port; cultural tourism; quality education; study tour; integrated development

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1. Introduction

With the comprehensive implementation of The Overall Plan for the Construction of Hainan Free Trade Port, the cultural tourism industry has emerged as a cornerstone of Hainan's modern service sector. Study tours and practical education programs targeting primary and secondary school students have gained prominence as pivotal drivers of quality-oriented education reform. The integration of cultural tourism resources with quality-oriented education initiatives serves to broaden educational scenarios through tourism platforms [1, 2]. This approach enhances the intrinsic value of cultural tourism products by embedding educational elements, thereby achieving a synergistic relationship where education is seamlessly integrated into tourism, and tourism is simultaneously advanced through educational frameworks. Such dual empowerment fosters innovation and sustainable development in both sectors, creating a dynamic interplay that benefits students, educators, and the tourism industry alike.

Extensive research has been conducted domestically on the intersection of education and tourism. From the perspective of public cultural services, study tour programs offered by institutions such as libraries often face challenges including insufficient resource

integration, excessive homogenization, the absence of robust evaluation systems, and weak collaboration mechanisms. Addressing these issues requires the establishment of multi-stakeholder cooperation frameworks and the promotion of standardized practices. From an industrial chain perspective, study tours, as an emerging sector, lack a fully developed mechanism for aligning industry and education, which hampers their potential for high-quality growth. A deeply integrated ecosystem is essential, one that fosters mutual demand, complementarity, and interaction among government entities, vocational colleges, enterprises, and schools. In the context of Hainan, the homogenization of study tour products remains a significant concern. Innovative approaches, such as leveraging artificial intelligence to enhance study tourism and developing programs centered on Li ethnic intangible cultural heritage, offer promising pathways for differentiation and enrichment. Additionally, exploring Hainan's unique natural and cultural heritage in greater depth can serve as a catalyst for upgrading study tourism offerings [3, 4]. By systematically analyzing relevant data and policy frameworks, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the current state, challenges, and optimized strategies for integration, offering valuable theoretical and practical insights for advancing the field.

2. Current Status of the Integrated Development of Hainan Cultural Tourism Resources and Quality-Oriented Education

2.1. Rich Endowment of Cultural Tourism Resources Laying a Foundation for Diversified Integration

Hainan possesses a diverse array of cultural tourism resources, encompassing tropical oceans, lush tropical rainforests, the rich traditions of the Li and Miao ethnic groups, revolutionary heritage sites, and the dynamic showcases of the Free Trade Port development. These resources provide a robust foundation for integrating cultural tourism with quality-oriented education. The province features a significant number of A-level tourist attractions, as well as numerous national, provincial, and municipal intangible cultural heritage items. These include practices such as Li brocade weaving, coconut carving, and Danzhou folk songs, which can be effectively transformed into curriculum resources for aesthetic and labor education. Such integration not only enriches the educational experience but also ensures the preservation and promotion of traditional cultural practices. Additionally, the establishment of study tour bases at various levels, including national and provincial, further supports the development of education programs that leverage these cultural assets. These bases serve as platforms for experiential learning, allowing students to engage directly with the region's unique cultural and natural heritage [5].

The Free Trade Port initiative has significantly contributed to the growth and modernization of Hainan's cultural tourism market. This development has created a fertile environment for the integration of education and tourism [6]. According to recent data, the province experienced a substantial increase in tourist numbers, receiving over 97 million visitors in 2024, which marked an 8% year-on-year growth. Correspondingly, total tourism revenue reached 204.014 billion yuan, reflecting a 12.5% increase compared to the previous year. This expanding market offers extensive opportunities for the development of educational tourism programs. By aligning educational initiatives with the booming tourism sector, Hainan can create innovative programs that cater to both domestic and international audiences. These programs can include immersive cultural experiences, environmental education in tropical rainforests, and hands-on activities related to local crafts and traditions. The synergy between the Free Trade Port's economic advancements and the cultural tourism sector ensures a sustainable model for integrating education with tourism, fostering both economic growth and cultural preservation.

2.2. Improved Policy Framework and Favorable Environment for Integrated Development

In recent years, Hainan has introduced a series of supportive policies aimed at fostering the integrated development of culture, tourism, and education. Among these

initiatives, twelve departments, including the Hainan Provincial Department of Education, have collaborated to issue comprehensive implementation guidelines for promoting study tours tailored to primary and secondary school students. These guidelines emphasize the importance of leveraging local cultural and tourism resources to design engaging and educational curricula [5, 7]. Furthermore, they advocate for the establishment of a robust tripartite cooperation framework that connects schools, designated study tour bases, and enterprises to ensure effective execution and resource sharing. This approach seeks to create a sustainable model for experiential learning that aligns with regional development goals.

Pilot programs have been initiated in several key cities and counties across Hainan, including Haikou, Sanya, Qionghai, and Danzhou. These programs feature diverse demonstration projects designed to highlight the unique cultural, ecological, and ideological attributes of each region. For instance, Sanya has developed marine science popularization study tours, while Qionghai offers ideological-political study tours centered on the historical legacy of the Red Detachment of Women. Similarly, Wuzhishan provides tropical rainforest ecological study tours, and Lingshui focuses on immersive experiences with Li-Miao intangible cultural heritage. Collectively, these initiatives represent a development model that is guided by supportive policies, actively driven by market participation, and systematically implemented through educational institutions [5, 8]. This integrated approach not only enriches the learning experiences of students but also contributes to the preservation and promotion of local cultural and natural resources.

2.3. Steady Growth of the Study Tour Market with Limited Integration Depth

Public information from the Hainan Provincial Department of Education and the Hainan Provincial Department of Tourism, Culture, Radio, Television, and Sports highlights that study tours for primary and secondary school students have become a regular activity across the province. These tours increasingly incorporate practical activities, aiming to provide students with immersive experiences. However, despite the innovation in study tour products, particularly those focusing on the Li ethnic intangible cultural heritage, the current offerings often emphasize tourism over educational depth. This imbalance results in a lack of targeted curricula that could better integrate learning objectives. Common challenges identified in the study tour market include insufficient development of meaningful content, weak coordination among stakeholders, and the absence of comprehensive evaluation systems to assess the effectiveness of these programs. Most study tours continue to focus on scenic sightseeing and basic guided tours, which limits their educational potential. There is a notable shortage of curriculum-based, project-based, and inquiry-based programs that could foster deeper engagement and learning. Cultural tourism institutions frequently treat study tours as an extension of conventional tourism, with minimal attention to curriculum design. This approach fails to meet the integrated educational requirements encompassing moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education for primary and secondary students. Consequently, the integration of educational and tourism elements remains superficial, highlighting the need for more robust program development and coordination [9, 10].

3. Practical Challenges in Integrating Hainan Cultural Tourism Resources with Quality-Oriented Education

3.1. Fragmented Cultural Tourism Resources and Low Efficiency of Educational Transformation

Hainan's cultural tourism resources are distributed across diverse regions, including coastal marine tourism, central ecological and folk customs, and eastern revolutionary culture. However, the lack of unified provincial-level planning has resulted in fragmented resource management, limiting the efficiency of educational transformation. Study tour services offered by public cultural institutions often face challenges such as inadequate resource integration, severe homogenization, and the absence of comprehensive evaluation systems. These issues hinder the effective utilization of resource advantages to enhance educational outcomes. Currently, most scenic spots and educational bases

provide only basic interpretation services, which fail to cater to the distinct cognitive needs of primary, junior high, and senior high students. Furthermore, high-quality resources, such as marine science popularization, intangible cultural heritage preservation, and revolutionary culture, remain underutilized in the development of standardized quality-oriented education curricula. This gap prevents the transformation of these resources into impactful educational programs. To address these challenges, it is essential to establish tiered curricula tailored to different age groups and cognitive levels, ensuring that students can fully engage with and benefit from the rich cultural and scientific heritage of Hainan. Additionally, integrating these resources into a cohesive framework could significantly enhance their educational value and contribute to the broader goals of quality-oriented education.

3.2. Inadequate Cross-Departmental Coordination and Barriers to Integrated Governance

Education, culture and tourism, market regulation, finance, and other departments operate under distinct management systems, each with unique priorities and objectives. For instance, the education sector emphasizes safety management and the effectiveness of educational programs, while the culture and tourism sector focuses on maximizing industrial revenue and expanding market scale. Despite the interconnected nature of these sectors, a comprehensive communication and coordination mechanism between departments remains underdeveloped. Establishing a deeply integrated industry-education framework requires a thorough understanding of the core needs of the study tour industry from an industrial chain perspective. Such integration would facilitate collaboration among government entities, educational institutions, enterprises, and primary and secondary schools. Currently, only a limited number of cities and counties, such as Haikou and Sanya, have implemented joint meeting systems that bridge education, culture, and tourism sectors [11, 12]. In most regions, schools independently collaborate with travel agencies, which often leads to significant challenges. These include insufficient verification of base qualifications, inadequate safety management protocols, and inconsistent curriculum quality. Addressing these issues necessitates a unified governance model that aligns the objectives of all stakeholders, ensuring that study tours are both safe and educationally enriching while contributing to the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

3.3. Severe Homogenization of Study Tour Products and Weak Quality-Oriented Education Orientation

Current study tour products in Hainan predominantly focus on three main categories: marine sightseeing, revolutionary site visits, and folk custom experiences [13, 14]. This narrow scope has led to significant homogenization, limiting the diversity and innovation required to cater to varying educational needs across different age groups and learning stages. The lack of tiered design for primary and secondary school students undermines the ability of these programs to address core literacy development goals effectively. Furthermore, these study tours often suffer from inadequate connotation construction, poor coordination among stakeholders, and the absence of comprehensive evaluation systems. Most offerings fail to incorporate clear curriculum objectives, structured practical tasks, or robust assessment mechanisms, which are essential for aligning educational activities with broader pedagogical goals. As a result, these programs remain heavily tourism-centric, with minimal integration of educational attributes. This deficiency hampers their capacity to fulfill the fundamental mission of fostering virtue and cultivating well-rounded individuals through education, highlighting the urgent need for reform and innovation in this sector.

3.4. Shortage of Interdisciplinary Professional Talents and Weak Industrial Support Capacity

The integration of education and tourism necessitates the development of interdisciplinary talents who possess expertise in areas such as curriculum design, study tour instruction, safety management, and cultural tourism operations [15]. Data from the Hainan Provincial Department of Tourism, Culture, Radio, Television, and Sports

indicates that the majority of study tour practitioners in Hainan are traditional tour guides or base interpreters. However, there is a notable lack of professionals with qualifications in pedagogy, curriculum design, and study tour teaching. The emergence of AI-enabled study tourism further amplifies the need for practitioners to possess advanced digital literacy and curriculum development skills. Despite this growing demand, local universities in Hainan have yet to establish comprehensive interdisciplinary training programs that integrate cultural tourism and teacher education. This gap in educational infrastructure has resulted in a significant shortage of reserve talents capable of addressing the evolving needs of the study tourism industry. Strengthening industrial support and fostering collaboration between academia and tourism enterprises are essential steps to mitigate these challenges and ensure sustainable development in this sector.

3.5. Imperfect Safety and Evaluation Systems and Insufficient Incentives for School Participation

Study tours inherently involve various safety risks, including those related to transportation, outdoor activities, and personnel management. In Hainan, the absence of a unified provincial standard for safety management, emergency response protocols, and comprehensive insurance coverage exacerbates these challenges. Schools, concerned about potential safety liabilities, often opt for short-distance, low-risk sightseeing tours, which significantly restrict the scope and depth of practical educational activities. Furthermore, many study tour programs lack a robust understanding of their educational significance, with limited focus on enriching their content and objectives [15]. The absence of a standardized evaluation system for study tour education further complicates efforts to measure and quantify their educational outcomes. This deficiency not only undermines the perceived value of such programs but also diminishes the willingness of schools and educational bases to engage in deeper, more meaningful collaborations. Addressing these gaps is essential to fostering a safer, more effective, and widely accepted framework for study tours in the region.

4. Integrated Development Paths under the Free Trade Port Initiative

4.1. Coordinate Provincial Cultural Tourism Resources and Advance Curriculum-Based Educational Transformation

Leveraging the Free Trade Port's comprehensive planning advantages, it is essential to integrate diverse resources such as marine ecology, tropical rainforests, revolutionary culture, Li-Miao intangible cultural heritage, and Free Trade Port on-site assets to create a provincial study tour resource map. This approach facilitates the transformation of public cultural resources into educational tools, enabling the development of tiered curricula tailored to different educational stages. By systematically organizing these resources, educators can ensure that students gain exposure to a wide range of cultural and ecological experiences, fostering a deeper understanding of their environment and heritage. The integration of these elements into educational frameworks not only enhances learning outcomes but also promotes sustainable utilization of cultural tourism resources. This strategy underscores the importance of aligning educational initiatives with regional development goals, ensuring that the Free Trade Port's unique offerings are effectively utilized to support academic growth and cultural preservation.

For primary school students, the focus should be on engaging activities that emphasize fun experiences, ecological perception, and labor practice, fostering curiosity and hands-on learning. Junior high school curricula can build on this foundation by introducing scientific inquiry, cultural awareness, and revolutionary ideological-political education, encouraging critical thinking and a deeper appreciation of historical and cultural contexts. Senior high school programs should emphasize project-based research, investigations into national conditions related to the Free Trade Port, and innovative practices, preparing students for higher-level academic and professional challenges. Resources such as the Sanya Marine Protected Area, Wuzhishan Tropical Rainforest, and key Free Trade Port parks should be systematically converted into standardized, quality-

oriented educational curricula. This transformation ensures that cultural tourism resources are effectively utilized to enhance educational outcomes, while also contributing to the broader goal of integrating regional development with academic advancement.

4.2. Strengthen Cross-Departmental Coordination and Enhance Free Trade Port Policy Support

Establishing a regular provincial coordination mechanism is essential for fostering collaboration among key departments such as education, culture and tourism, finance, market regulation, and emergency management. This approach aims to create a cohesive framework that integrates government, universities, enterprises, and primary and secondary schools into a unified system. By promoting a mutually beneficial and interactive model of industry-education integration, stakeholders can work together to enhance the quality and accessibility of study tour programs. Targeted support policies should be introduced to facilitate the construction of study tour bases, the development of innovative curricula, and the training of qualified instructors. Additionally, operational costs can be reduced through the implementation of tax incentives and special subsidies, thereby encouraging broader participation. Uniform standards for study tour base access, curriculum review, and safety management must be established to ensure consistency and quality. A base registration and curriculum approval system should be implemented to streamline processes and maintain oversight. Public schools are encouraged to collaborate with cultural tourism enterprises and study tour bases to develop shared practice platforms. This approach will help eliminate departmental barriers, promote resource sharing, and ensure joint responsibility and synchronized supervision across all stakeholders.

4.3. Innovate Tiered Study Tour Product System and Highlight Quality-Oriented Education Core

Focused on achieving the goal of "simultaneous development of five educations," the study tour product system is designed to emphasize quality-oriented education. Five distinctive product lines have been developed, including revolutionary ideological-political study tours, marine science popularization study tours, ecological labor study tours, intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education study tours, and Free Trade Port national condition study tours. By integrating advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, study tourism programs can provide adolescents with engaging and interactive experiences through immersive activities. This approach transitions from traditional sightseeing to more dynamic project-based and inquiry-based learning methodologies. Participants are equipped with study tour manuals, practical tasks, and opportunities to present their achievements, fostering deeper engagement and understanding. A comprehensive evaluation system is established to assess both processes and outcomes, ensuring that moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and labor education goals are clearly defined for each stage of the program. This innovative framework aims to truly realize the concept of education through tourism, creating meaningful and impactful learning experiences for students.

4.4. Optimize Interdisciplinary Talent Training and Solidify Human Resource Support

To enhance the quality and effectiveness of study tour education, it is essential to provide specialized training for key personnel such as in-service tour guides, base staff, and primary and secondary school teachers. This training should focus on study tour curriculum design, foundational pedagogy, and safety emergency management, ensuring that these professionals are well-equipped to handle diverse educational scenarios. Furthermore, implementing a certification system for study tour instructors will standardize qualifications and elevate professional standards across the industry. Concurrently, local universities, including Hainan University, Hainan Normal University, and Hainan College of Vocation and Technology, should be encouraged to establish interdisciplinary majors such as cultural tourism education and study tour management. These programs will cultivate a new generation of professionals with expertise tailored to

the evolving needs of the study tour sector. Additionally, leveraging the Free Trade Port talent introduction policy can attract high-quality professionals from other provinces, thereby optimizing the talent structure within the industry and fostering sustainable development in study tour education [16].

4.5. Establish a Standardized Support System and Mitigate Practical Risks

To enhance the safety and effectiveness of study tours, it is essential to establish unified provincial standards for safety management, transportation support, and emergency response planning [13]. This includes the creation of a standardized safety rating system for study tour bases, which would provide a clear framework for assessing and mitigating risks. Additionally, implementing a unified insurance mechanism specifically tailored for study tours can significantly reduce safety concerns for schools, ensuring that risks are addressed proactively. Leveraging the digital development advantages of the Free Trade Port, a provincial online study tour service platform can be developed to integrate multiple functionalities. These functionalities may include course reservation systems, access to pre-study materials, submission of achievements, and feedback mechanisms for evaluation. Such a platform would not only streamline the study tour process but also expand its accessibility, enabling more primary and secondary school students to benefit from these educational experiences. By addressing practical risks and improving operational efficiency, study tours can achieve broader coverage and greater educational impact.

5. Conclusion

The construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port presents significant opportunities for the integration of cultural tourism resources with quality-oriented education, driven by favorable policies, expanding markets, and abundant resources. This integration represents not only a strategic direction for the modernization and diversification of the cultural tourism industry but also an innovative pathway for enhancing practical quality-oriented education. However, despite these advantages, Hainan faces persistent challenges that hinder its progress. These include the fragmentation of resources, which limits cohesive development; insufficient coordination among departments, leading to inefficiencies; the prevalence of homogenized products that fail to meet diverse consumer demands; a shortage of skilled professionals to drive innovation and implementation; and inadequate support systems that undermine sustainable growth. Addressing these issues is critical to unlocking the full potential of this integration and ensuring its long-term success.

To overcome these challenges and fully capitalize on the opportunities presented by the Free Trade Port, Hainan must adopt a comprehensive and strategic approach. This involves leveraging its unique positioning as a Free Trade Port to establish a robust foundation for resource integration, ensuring that cultural tourism assets are utilized effectively and cohesively. Mechanism building should serve as a critical guarantee, fostering inter-departmental collaboration and streamlining processes to enhance efficiency. The development of innovative curriculum products must be prioritized, positioning them as the core drivers of educational transformation. Simultaneously, a strong emphasis on talent cultivation is essential, as a skilled workforce will provide the necessary support for sustained growth. Furthermore, the establishment of comprehensive safety systems must be treated as a non-negotiable bottom line to ensure the well-being of all stakeholders. By implementing these measures, Hainan can promote the educational transformation of its cultural tourism resources, enabling the practical application of quality-oriented education. This will facilitate the creation of a long-term, mutually beneficial model that empowers both education and tourism. Such a model will not only accelerate the high-quality development of Hainan's cultural tourism industry but also advance the fundamental goal of fostering virtue through education. Ultimately, this approach will inject fresh momentum into the coordinated development of cultural

and educational sectors, as well as modern service industries, within the Free Trade Port framework.

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