

The Exploration and Countermeasures of Young People's Weak Awareness of Marine Culture in the New Era

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Abstract: China possesses a vast maritime area and a long-standing oceanic history. Marine culture is not only an integral part of Chinese civilization but also a crucial pillar supporting the country's social and economic framework. At present, countries worldwide recognize the marine economy as the "blue engine" of economic growth and have prioritized the cultivation of marine-related talents. Western developed nations, in particular, emphasize fostering widespread marine cultural awareness among their populations. However, in China, young people's awareness of maritime culture remains relatively weak, which poses significant challenges to advancing the national strategy of maritime power. The underlying causes primarily include insufficient attention to marine culture education, the lack of structured marine education programs within schools, and the limited scope of popularization efforts. Therefore, to enhance young people's understanding and appreciation of marine culture, it is essential to strengthen marine culture education and implement policies effectively through comprehensive planning and adequate funding. Additionally, advancing theoretical research on marine culture and innovating methods of public engagement, education, and communication are critical to cultivating high-quality marine talents who can support the successful implementation of the maritime power strategy.

Keywords: marine culture; maritime awareness; marine education; talent cultivation; national strategy

1. Introduction

Marine culture is defined as the culture related to the ocean, encompassing the knowledge and utilization of the ocean itself as well as the spiritual, behavioral, social, and material life connotations created by the ocean [1]. As a major maritime nation, China possesses a territorial sea area of 380,000 square kilometers and a maritime land area of 3 million square kilometers. This vast maritime domain has historically influenced the economic, social, and cultural development of the nation, giving rise to rich maritime traditions, coastal community practices, and marine-related technological innovations. To achieve effective development and scientific utilization of the ocean, it is essential to focus on the study and research of marine culture, not only as a theoretical discipline but also as a practical guide for sustainable marine economic development, resource management, and environmental protection.

In the contemporary era, the importance of cultivating marine awareness among young people has become increasingly evident. Young generations are not only the future workforce but also the key participants in the implementation of national maritime strategies. Their understanding of marine culture directly affects the development of marine industries, the advancement of marine science and technology, and the preservation of marine ecological systems. However, there remain significant gaps in marine cultural education in schools, public awareness campaigns, and societal

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engagement, which can hinder the development of a strong maritime identity and limit the pool of skilled professionals needed for marine governance and innovation.

Therefore, strengthening marine culture education requires a multi-faceted approach. It involves integrating marine knowledge into formal education curricula, expanding public outreach programs, and promoting research on marine culture theory and practice. Furthermore, innovative methods of communication, such as interactive learning platforms, marine-themed competitions, and experiential educational activities, can enhance young people's engagement and interest. By fostering comprehensive marine literacy, society can cultivate high-quality talents capable of contributing to the sustainable development of marine resources and supporting the national strategy of maritime power.

2. Significance and Role of Marine Culture on National Prosperity

2.1. Historical Dimension of Marine Culture

China's marine culture has a long and profound history, playing a pivotal role in promoting the development of the marine economy and enhancing the nation's comprehensive strength. The Maritime Silk Road serves as a prime example of this influence. Originating during the Qin and Han Dynasties, developing through the Sui Dynasty, and reaching its peak in the Tang and Song Dynasties, the Maritime Silk Road exemplifies the integration of navigation, trade, and cultural exchange. The advanced navigation techniques nurtured by marine culture became essential for facilitating economic exchanges and cultural interactions between the East and the West.

During the Tang and Song Dynasties, the national strength of China's feudal society was at its zenith. Sophisticated navigation technology enabled China to export silk, tea, porcelain, and other commodities worldwide, establishing a global reputation for Chinese products. This period marked a stage where marine culture directly supported both economic prosperity and international influence. Conversely, in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, restrictive maritime policies, including prohibitions on maritime movement, hindered exchanges of scientific knowledge and industrial technology with the West, contributing to the decline of China's industrial advancement and weakening its overall national strength [2].

2.2. Marine Awareness and National Development in Modern China

The historical experience of maritime engagement has provided lessons for modern China. During the period of the new democratic revolution, national leaders recognized the strategic importance of sea power. They emphasized that shifts in global power and national strength often hinge more on maritime capabilities than on land forces. This insight laid the foundation for subsequent policies and strategies aimed at enhancing China's maritime capabilities.

Following the founding of the People's Republic of China, national leaders have consistently emphasized the importance of marine defense and marine economic development. Policies and strategic visions have underscored both the defensive and economic functions of the maritime domain, framing the development of marine capabilities as essential for national security, economic growth, and technological advancement.

2.3. Contemporary Significance of Marine Culture

In the present era, China is undertaking the dual mission of realizing the "two centenary goals" and promoting the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Contemporary development and global positioning increasingly rely on the ocean, making marine culture and knowledge more important than ever. Understanding and managing the ocean, promoting maritime construction, and cultivating advanced marine

talent are critical for sustaining economic growth, safeguarding national interests, and enhancing international influence [3].

The development of marine undertakings and the construction of a maritime power are indispensable pathways for national rejuvenation. Advanced marine culture forms the foundation for nurturing high-quality talents who possess strong marine awareness and the capability to support strategic initiatives. By fostering a robust understanding of marine culture, society ensures the cultivation of professionals capable of integrating maritime knowledge with practical economic, technological, and governance objectives, thereby securing long-term national prosperity.

3. Analysis of the Causes of Young People 'S Weak Awareness of Marine Culture

3.1. Insufficient Attention to Marine Culture

China is historically a traditional agricultural country, and the cultural concept of "emphasizing land and despising sea" has been deeply rooted over centuries. This perception stems from historical and cultural legacies, resulting in a lack of awareness and attention to marine culture at the ideological and societal levels [4]. Consequently, marine culture education has not been given sufficient priority in national planning. Institutional mechanisms for marine education remain incomplete, and supporting policies are often fragmented or inadequately implemented. As a result, local initiatives in marine culture education and public outreach face significant limitations, which manifest as superficial coverage, narrow scope, lack of modernity and technological integration, and monotonous forms of educational and publicity activities. This lack of strategic emphasis on marine culture restricts the cultivation of broad societal awareness and undermines the development of a maritime consciousness among young people.

3.2. Lack of Marine Culture Education in Schools

Within China's current education system, marine culture education is not offered as a distinct and structured subject. Relevant content is often scattered across other courses, without a clear position in the overall knowledge framework. Moreover, the number of institutions specializing in marine studies is limited, and the pool of qualified teachers in marine culture education remains weak. Advanced educational concepts and systematic theoretical frameworks centered on marine culture are largely absent. Consequently, young people are unable to receive comprehensive, structured education in marine culture, leaving them with limited understanding of basic ocean knowledge and terminology.

The lack of school-based education directly affects young people's maritime awareness. Surveys indicate that only 56.8% of respondents were aware that China possesses approximately 3 million square kilometers of maritime territory [4]. These statistics reveal the substantial gap in formal marine culture education within schools, highlighting the urgent need for systemic integration of marine content into the curriculum. Without such education, it is difficult for youth to develop a sense of the ocean's significance, let alone form concepts related to sea power and national maritime strategy.

3.3. The Popularization of Marine Culture Education Is Narrow

From a geographic perspective, marine culture education in China remains heavily concentrated in economically developed coastal regions, while inland areas have received minimal attention. This uneven distribution results in low quality and weak awareness of marine culture among inland youth. In terms of content, existing educational efforts often focus on basic concepts and foundational knowledge, leaving gaps in cultivating broader perspectives on marine culture. The current approach lacks strategic vision and is not closely aligned with national maritime development goals or the broader maritime power strategy.

By contrast, Western developed countries have historically implemented marine education at an early stage and achieved deeper societal penetration. For instance, Japan established "Ocean Day" as a national statutory holiday in 1996 to foster marine awareness across all demographics. In 2004, the United States introduced the "Ocean Action Plan," emphasizing the expansion of marine education beyond schools through aquariums, museums, and other public venues. These examples illustrate how comprehensive, systematic, and widely accessible marine education can cultivate national maritime awareness, demonstrating a clear gap between China and other maritime powers in both strategy and execution.

3.4. Additional Factors Affecting Youth Awareness

Beyond institutional and curricular limitations, other factors further contribute to weak awareness among young people. Media and public communication channels focusing on marine culture are limited, reducing opportunities for youth to engage with marine issues in daily life. Urbanization and lifestyle shifts have also weakened the connection between inland youth and the ocean, making marine topics less relatable and less prominent in public consciousness. Furthermore, rapid technological and industrial development has shifted societal attention toward land-based economic activities, inadvertently reducing the perceived importance of marine education and oceanic awareness.

Addressing these factors requires a holistic strategy that integrates formal education, public outreach, media engagement, and cultural initiatives to ensure that marine culture becomes an accessible and compelling part of young people's cognitive and experiential environment.

4. Countermeasures to Enhance Young People 'S Awareness of Marine Culture

The ocean covers approximately 71% of the Earth's surface. It not only connects all continents but also serves as the primary channel for international trade and economic exchanges, forming a crucial component of the global marine economic system. In recent years, the economic value and strategic significance of the ocean have been increasingly recognized by countries worldwide, and its role in promoting global economic development has gained broad international acknowledgment. In 2018, the total output value of the global marine economy exceeded \$2 trillion, and it is projected to triple by 2030, with an average annual growth rate of 3.45%. The marine economy has become deeply integrated into the national economic systems of major world powers, providing essential support for economic and social development. As China is currently the world's second-largest economy, the largest trading nation in goods, and the second-largest foreign investor, building a maritime power is indispensable for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Consequently, enhancing young people's awareness of marine culture is crucial for establishing a solid foundation of talent to support the long-term implementation of the maritime power strategy.

4.1. Do a Good Job in Overall Planning and Policy, Financial Security

To effectively cultivate young people's marine cultural awareness, the issue must be elevated to a strategic national priority. Relevant governmental departments should closely integrate the national marine development strategy, scientifically formulate comprehensive development plans for marine education, and implement structured programs for marine culture education. Core contents should include China's rich traditional marine culture, maritime territorial rights, and the historical and contemporary significance of the Maritime Silk Road. Educational initiatives should be carried out in a systematic, step-by-step manner to ensure continuity and depth.

At the same time, government investment and policy support should be strengthened. Adequate funding and supportive policies are essential for ensuring the

implementation of marine culture education initiatives, promoting innovative teaching methods, developing educational resources, and supporting research programs. By providing a strong material and policy foundation, the government can ensure that marine culture education reaches a broad audience and achieves tangible impact.

4.2. Strengthen the Study of Marine Culture Theory

The study of marine culture theory is critical for guiding practical education efforts. In China, research on marine culture remains fragmented, and many theoretical gaps persist. To address this, coordinated research efforts from academic institutions, government agencies, and cultural organizations should be mobilized to systematically study the origins, evolution, and development trajectory of Chinese marine culture.

Key areas of focus should include analyzing historical development patterns, identifying practical challenges in promoting marine culture, and examining the relationship between marine culture and national strategy. By clarifying the value orientation, implementation pathways, and development strategies of marine culture within the framework of the maritime power strategy, theoretical research can provide a solid foundation for curriculum design, policy formulation, and public engagement initiatives. This process will also contribute to building a coherent and systematic body of knowledge that informs education, research, and practical applications.

4.3. Innovative Publicity, Education and Communication Methods

Effective cultivation of marine awareness among youth requires diverse and engaging educational approaches. Activities such as marine history film exhibitions, cultural exhibitions, knowledge competitions, marine defense simulations, and hands-on ocean experiences can immerse young people in marine-related topics, fostering awareness of marine resources, marine economy, maritime defense, and oceanic space.

Modern communication technologies and social media platforms, including WeChat, Weibo, and short video applications, provide powerful tools for enhancing engagement. These platforms offer high penetration rates, rapid information dissemination, and interactive opportunities, making them ideal channels for conveying marine knowledge and highlighting current marine issues. By integrating online and offline educational efforts, creating interactive experiences, and leveraging multimedia resources, marine culture education can be delivered in a comprehensive and engaging manner.

Furthermore, educational content should extend beyond traditional knowledge to include emerging topics such as ocean conservation, marine biotechnology, maritime law, and global marine governance. Cross-disciplinary approaches that connect marine culture with economics, technology, and environmental science can broaden young people's perspectives, cultivate critical thinking, and inspire innovative contributions to the national maritime strategy. Through these multi-dimensional efforts, young people's awareness of marine culture can be significantly enhanced, laying a foundation for a future workforce that is both knowledgeable and passionate about China's maritime development.

5. Discussion

The preceding analysis demonstrates that marine culture plays a pivotal role in shaping national strength, economic development, and the cultivation of talent essential for implementing the maritime power strategy. Historically, China's rich marine culture facilitated the flourishing of the Maritime Silk Road, supported global trade, and contributed to technological advancement. However, periods of maritime restriction in the Ming and Qing Dynasties illustrate the detrimental consequences of neglecting marine engagement, as technological and industrial development lagged behind other nations. This historical perspective underscores the strategic importance of fostering a strong maritime awareness within society, particularly among young generations.

In contemporary China, the combination of weak institutional support, limited school-based education, and uneven popularization of marine culture has resulted in a noticeable gap in youth awareness. The insufficient attention to marine culture at both ideological and policy levels, coupled with fragmented educational approaches, restricts the ability of young people to develop a comprehensive understanding of the ocean's economic, ecological, and strategic significance. Geographic disparities further exacerbate this issue, as coastal regions receive concentrated attention while inland areas remain largely underserved.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-dimensional approach. Effective measures include strengthening overall planning and policy support, increasing financial investment, enhancing theoretical research, and innovating publicity and educational methods. Integrating traditional and modern marine knowledge, promoting interactive and cross-disciplinary learning, and leveraging digital media platforms can stimulate interest and engagement among young people. Such efforts not only cultivate marine awareness but also build a foundation of high-quality talent capable of contributing to national maritime development.

Furthermore, international experiences provide valuable lessons. Countries such as Japan and the United States have successfully promoted marine education through legislation, public holidays, and integration with cultural and scientific institutions, resulting in deeper societal awareness and engagement. Comparing these models with China's current practice highlights the potential benefits of early, systematic, and multi-channel approaches in shaping a generation with strong maritime literacy.

6. Conclusion

Marine culture is a fundamental component of national development, linking historical heritage, economic growth, technological advancement, and strategic capacity. This study has examined the significance of marine culture in China from multiple dimensions, including its historical contributions, contemporary relevance, and the current challenges in cultivating young people's awareness. Historically, China's maritime engagement, exemplified by the Maritime Silk Road, facilitated trade, technological innovation, and cultural exchange, highlighting the integral role of marine culture in national prosperity. Periods of maritime restriction, conversely, underscore the risks associated with neglecting oceanic development and awareness.

In the present era, the ocean has become a key driver of economic growth and a vital strategic resource. Despite its importance, young people's awareness of marine culture in China remains relatively weak due to insufficient policy support, limited school-based education, and narrow popularization, particularly in inland regions. This gap poses challenges for the development of a talent pool capable of supporting the national strategy of maritime power. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates strategic planning, policy and financial support, theoretical research, and innovative educational methods. Engaging young people through diverse educational activities, cross-disciplinary learning, and modern communication platforms is essential for fostering broad-based marine literacy and cultivating high-quality talent.

International experiences demonstrate that systematic, multi-channel approaches to marine education can significantly enhance societal awareness and engagement. By learning from these practices and adapting them to the Chinese context, it is possible to strengthen national marine culture, promote sustainable development of marine resources, and support the long-term realization of China's maritime strategy.

In conclusion, enhancing young people's awareness of marine culture is not only an educational and cultural goal but also a strategic necessity for national prosperity. Through coordinated efforts in policy, research, education, and public engagement, China can cultivate a generation of knowledgeable, skilled, and proactive individuals capable of

advancing the country's maritime ambitions, ensuring sustainable economic development, and contributing to the great rejuvenation of the nation.

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