The Research on the Impact of the Integration of Cultural Tourism on the Professional Competence Requirements of Tourism Practitioners

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Abstract: *With the deep integration and development of the cultural and tourism industries, the professional competence requirements for tourism practitioners have gradually shifted from a focus on technical skills to a broader emphasis on comprehensive qualities. The integration of cultural tourism demands that practitioners not only possess traditional skills, but also demonstrate strong cross-cultural understanding, communication and expression abilities, innovation and adaptability, service awareness, and professional competence. This paper begins by examining the professional competence requirements of tourism practitioners in the context of cultural tourism integration, discussing the adjustment of competence structures and the impact of cultural awareness enhancement on practitioners. It analyzes the new demands placed on practitioners in areas such as value guidance, strengthening of responsibility, and innovation-driven approaches. The paper also proposes specific pathways for improving the professional competence of tourism practitioners, including the establishment of cross-cultural training mechanisms, optimization of vocational education curricula, construction of innovation incentive systems, and strengthening practical learning. By systematically enhancing the professional competence of tourism practitioners, the paper aims to promote the high-quality development of cultural tourism, better meeting the increasingly diversified and personalized needs of tourists.*

Keywords: *Cultural tourism integration; tourism practitioners; professional competence; cross-cultural understanding; innovation ability; service awareness*

Introduction

With the growing demand for cultural experiences from tourists, cultural tourism has evolved from being merely a sightseeing activity to an important means of cultural communication and experience. This integration has raised the professional competence requirements for tourism practitioners, as mere language skills and service techniques can no longer meet the diverse demands of cultural tourism in the current environment. Instead, tourism practitioners are required to have a higher level of cross-cultural understanding, communication and expression skills, as well as innovation and adaptability, to provide tourists with more in-depth and personalized cultural experiences. In this context, researching the impact of cultural tourism integration on the professional competence of tourism practitioners is of great significance. On one hand, it can provide guidance for tourism enterprises and educational institutions, helping them effectively train high-quality practitioners who meet industry standards. On the other hand, it contributes to enhancing the role of tourism in cultural transmission and preservation, promoting the efficient integration and sustainable development of cultural and tourism resources.

1. Specific Requirements for the Professional Competence of Tourism Practitioners in the Context of Cultural Tourism Integration

1.1 Cross-Cultural Understanding Ability

Cross-cultural understanding ability is a core competence that tourism practitioners should possess in the context of cultural tourism integration. In the face of tourists from different countries and cultural backgrounds, tourism practitioners must not only be familiar with basic knowledge of different cultures but also be able to accurately understand tourists' cultural preferences, customs, and psychological needs during the service process. This helps avoid misunderstandings that could negatively impact the tourist experience. Enhancing cross-cultural understanding enables practitioners to flexibly adjust their service

methods in cross-cultural exchanges, thereby increasing tourists' cultural identification and satisfaction. Additionally, tourism practitioners should possess a global perspective, paying attention to cultural trends in different countries and regions, which enhances their cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural adaptability. This requires not only language skills but also the accumulation of cross-cultural training and practical experience to develop cultural empathy and keen observation, improving tolerance and respect for different cultural values[1].

1.2 Communication and Expression Ability

Effective communication and expression ability is fundamental to ensuring high-quality service for tourism practitioners. The integration of cultural tourism requires practitioners to communicate fluently in cross-cultural contexts, conveying information accurately while creating a positive interaction atmosphere. Tourism practitioners must be able to express themselves in a clear, concise, and approachable manner, while incorporating cultural knowledge into their communication to help tourists better understand and appreciate the local cultural features. Communication is not limited to verbal exchanges but also includes non-verbal communication, such as body language and facial expressions.Through diverse forms of expression, practitioners can make tourists feel respected and cared for. Additionally, in communication and collaboration with team members, tourism practitioners need to demonstrate good teamwork spirit and communication coordination skills to ensure service continuity and consistency. Comprehensive communication and expression abilities can effectively foster trust between practitioners and tourists, laying a solid foundation for a high-quality cultural tourism experience.

1.3 Innovation and Flexibility Ability

The rapid development of cultural tourism integration demands that tourism practitioners possess innovation and flexibility to respond to the complex and ever-changing market demands and service scenarios. First, innovation ability is crucial for practitioners to stand out in the competitive market. It requires them to continuously update their service concepts and content, explore and present the cultural connotations of tourism projects, and offer personalized and customized cultural tourism experiences through creative planning. Flexibility, on the other hand, enables practitioners to remain calm and make quick decisions in emergency situations, ensuring service stability and continuity. For example, when tourists show interest in a particular culture or activity during a visit, tourism practitioners should be able to quickly adjust the itinerary to meet tourists' personalized needs, thereby increasing service satisfaction. Innovation and flexibility not only enhance the tourist experience but also contribute to the sustainable development of cultural tourism[2].

1.4 Service Awareness and Professional Competence

Service awareness and professional competence are basic requirements for cultural tourism practitioners, reflecting the core values of the service industry. In the context of cultural tourism integration, service awareness goes beyond passively meeting tourists' needs; it involves actively uncovering deeper needs and offering personalized and meticulous services. This requires tourism practitioners to have a strong sense of responsibility and dedication, placing tourists' experiences at the center and providing warm and thoughtful service. Professional competence is reflected in practitioners' mastery of cultural knowledge, attention to service details, and strict adherence to service standards. Tourism practitioners need to possess extensive professional knowledge to accurately convey cultural information and provide accurate guiding explanations. At the same time, good professional ethics and conduct are essential components of professional competence, ensuring that practitioners treat every tourist with honesty, integrity, and professionalism during service. Enhancing service awareness and professional competence helps practitioners establish a positive professional image, thereby strengthening the overall competitiveness of cultural tourism.

2. The Impact of Cultural Tourism Integration on the Professional Competence of Tourism Practitioners

2.1 Adjustment of Professional Competence Structure

The deepening integration of cultural tourism has led to a systematic adjustment in the professional competence structure of tourism practitioners. The shift from traditional skill-oriented competence to a more comprehensive structure, which balances cultural literacy and interdisciplinary abilities, has

become a new professional competence requirement. In the past, the core competencies of tourism practitioners primarily focused on language skills, service techniques, and etiquette knowledge, with services often limited to introducing scenic spots, conveying basic information, and performing simple reception duties. However, with the continuous development of cultural tourism, the core competitiveness of the tourism industry has shifted from basic service functions to more complex tasks such as cultural communication and creative planning. This structural shift not only requires practitioners to possess professional language skills but also demands higher levels of cultural sensitivity and creativity[3].

In the new professional competence structure, tourism practitioners are required to have the ability to engage in cross-cultural communication and cultural interpretation to effectively interact with tourists based on their cultural backgrounds. At the same time, creativity and planning abilities have gradually become essential qualities for practitioners. They need to offer tourists more unique and personalized cultural tourism experiences through innovative cultural activities and tourism projects.

Furthermore, social responsibility has become an important component of this structure. With the growing societal focus on sustainable development, tourism practitioners must recognize their significant role in promoting cultural heritage, protecting natural resources, and contributing to local economic development. Overall, the adjustment of professional competence structures requires practitioners to possess multidisciplinary capabilities, enabling them to take on multiple roles as cultural communicators, creative planners, and social responsibility advocates in the process of cultural tourism integration.

2.2 Enhancement of Cultural Awareness

Cultural tourism integration has significantly enhanced the cultural awareness of tourism practitioners, transforming them from mere service providers to active practitioners of cultural self-awareness and cultural dissemination. With the continuous development of cultural tourism, tourism practitioners need to pay more attention to the uniqueness of local cultures and the value of cultural transmission in their professional practices. In this context, the enhancement of cultural awareness has become an essential component of the core competencies of tourism practitioners.

First, the strengthening of cultural awareness encourages practitioners to place greater emphasis on the in-depth exploration and dissemination of local cultures. In their daily work, tourism practitioners must not only master basic knowledge of local culture but also understand the cultural connotations, values, and historical background, which enhances the accuracy and depth of their cultural interpretations. When interacting with tourists, practitioners need to provide personalized cultural insights and services based on the cultural backgrounds and interests of different tourists, avoiding misunderstandings and conflicts arising from cultural differences. By enhancing cultural awareness, tourism practitioners are better equipped to address the challenges posed by cultural diversity in a globalized context, promoting cultural exchange and understanding[4].

Secondly, the enhancement of cultural awareness also leads tourism practitioners to recognize the social value of culture. Cultural tourism is not just about entertainment and leisure; it carries profound significance for cultural exchange and preservation. Tourism practitioners should recognize the importance of their work in promoting cultural identity, deepening tourists' understanding of local history and culture, and advancing the global spread of culture. In their service processes, practitioners should actively incorporate the concepts of cultural inclusion and symbiosis, respect tourists' cultural habits and beliefs, and showcase the diversity and charm of local culture, thus enhancing tourists' sense of cultural identity and belonging.

Finally, the enhancement of cultural awareness has driven the comprehensive development of tourism practitioners' professional competence. Practitioners not only possess stronger cultural interpretation abilities but are also able to more effectively mobilize and integrate cultural resources, designing cultural experiences that meet tourists' needs. For example, developing culturally distinctive tourism products or organizing locally characteristic cultural activities can attract tourists from various cultural backgrounds, increasing the value of the tourism experience. The enhancement of cultural awareness has organically combined practitioners' service capabilities and cultural dissemination abilities, further improving the overall level of cultural tourism services.

2.3 Guidance of Values and Strengthening of Responsibility

Cultural tourism integration has played an active guiding role in shaping the values and cultivating

the sense of responsibility of tourism practitioners, while simultaneously enhancing their professional competencies. As carriers of cultural communication and social education, cultural tourism has made tourism practitioners more aware of their roles and responsibilities in cultural identity and value transmission. With the deepening of cultural tourism, practitioners gradually internalize respect and recognition for local culture in their professional activities, incorporating core socialist values, a sense of social responsibility, and collectivism into their daily service work. This guidance of values gradually permeates through various forms. For instance, when practitioners explain local cultural history and preservation achievements, they use rich cultural stories and emotional expressions to enhance tourists' sense of social responsibility and cultural identity, encouraging them to cherish the continuity and development of cultural heritage.

Meanwhile, the strengthening of responsibility also requires practitioners to strictly adhere to professional ethical standards, making tourists' interests and safety the top priority. This sense of responsibility is reflected not only in service details but also in practitioners' thoughts and practices regarding the sustainable development of the industry. Through careful planning, high-quality service, and cultural communication, practitioners aim to integrate the development of cultural tourism with environmental protection, resource conservation, and cultural heritage preservation, promoting the sustainable development of cultural tourism. Through the practice of cultural tourism integration, tourism practitioners gradually develop a professional identity and sense of responsibility as "cultural communicators," actively assuming the responsibility of promoting cultural heritage and enhancing social harmony, thus improving their professional competence and social value.

2.4 Innovation-Driven Professional Competence Requirements

Cultural tourism integration has driven an innovation-driven transformation in the professional competence requirements of tourism practitioners, giving rise to emerging competence needs. Cultural tourism integration is not only an upgrade of the traditional tourism industry but also an extension and expansion of the cultural creative industry in the new context. In this setting, practitioners are required to possess strong innovative awareness and capabilities, using creative planning, cultural storytelling, and digital methods to enhance the appeal and enjoyment of cultural experiences. For example, practitioners can use virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) technologies to provide immersive experiences for tourists or use social media to promote culturally distinctive tourism projects, expanding cultural influence.

At the same time, innovation-driven professional competence requires practitioners to have keen market insights and the ability to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge to meet the changing market demands and explore new service models and content. In the context of cultural tourism integration, innovation-driven professional competence not only enhances the competitiveness of practitioners but also provides a driving force for the high-quality development of cultural tourism.

3. Paths to Enhancing the Professional Competence of Tourism Practitioners

3.1 Establishing a Cross-Cultural Training Mechanism

The establishment of a cross-cultural training mechanism is one of the key paths to enhancing the professional competence of tourism practitioners. In the context of cultural tourism integration, tourism practitioners not only need to understand their own national culture deeply but must also possess the ability to communicate and serve effectively with tourists from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, it is crucial to build a comprehensive cross-cultural training system.

First, the training content should include cross-cultural communication skills, cultural adaptability, and cultural conflict management, helping practitioners understand and respect the diversity and differences of various cultures, thereby avoiding cultural misunderstandings and conflicts. Based on this foundation, situational simulation training can be conducted using real-life cases to improve practitioners' response capabilities. Second, the training mechanism should emphasize the combination of theory and practice, regularly organizing lectures and discussions with experts and scholars in the cultural tourism industry to update practitioners' cultural knowledge. Additionally, opportunities for overseas exchange and learning should be provided to enhance practitioners' cross-cultural understanding and global perspective through practical experiences[5].

3.2 Optimizing Vocational Education Curriculum

Optimizing vocational education curricula is a fundamental measure to enhance the professional competence of tourism practitioners. Traditional tourism vocational education primarily focuses on language skills, service procedures, and basic tourism knowledge. However, under the integration of cultural tourism, curriculum content and teaching methods need to be comprehensively optimized to meet the higher demands of practitioners in the new context.

First, vocational education curricula should incorporate more content related to cultural tourism, such as cultural heritage protection, cultural exchange and communication, and tourism creative design, to enhance practitioners' cultural awareness and innovation. Second, the curriculum design should align with practical work needs, emphasizing practicality and operability. For example, project-based courses can guide students in designing and planning cross-cultural tourism products, fostering their cultural sensitivity and interdisciplinary integration abilities. Third, teaching methods should focus on interactivity and participation, using diverse teaching formats such as case analysis, group discussions, and role-playing, to help students understand the complexity and diversity of cultural tourism through practical experience.

3.3 Establishing an Innovation Incentive Mechanism

Establishing an innovation incentive mechanism is an important means of motivating tourism practitioners to actively improve their professional competence. As cultural tourism integration deepens, the industry has higher expectations for practitioners' innovation capabilities. Therefore, governments, businesses, and industry organizations should establish effective incentive mechanisms to encourage practitioners to continuously pursue innovation and breakthroughs in their professional development[6].

First, the incentive mechanism can encourage innovation by establishing innovation awards and selecting outstanding cultural tourism projects, motivating practitioners to innovate in areas such as cultural creativity and service models. This not only stimulates practitioners' creativity but also promotes the diversification and personalization of cultural tourism products and services, driving industry innovation. Second, the incentive mechanism should be linked to practitioners' career growth, offering training and professional development opportunities. For example, offering promotion opportunities, salary rewards, and opportunities for domestic and international learning and exchange for outstanding performers can strengthen their sense of professional belonging and motivation for development. Additionally, the innovation incentive mechanism should also focus on practitioners' sense of social responsibility, encouraging them to actively take on the responsibility of cultural communication in promoting cultural tourism, thereby advancing the sustainable development of the industry.

3.4 Strengthening Practical Learning and Exchange Cooperation

Strengthening practical learning and exchange cooperation is an effective path to enhancing the professional competence of tourism practitioners. The integration of cultural tourism requires practitioners to have strong practical abilities and a collaborative spirit across industries and cultures. Therefore, increasing practical opportunities and promoting cooperation and exchange within and outside the industry has become an important way to enhance practitioners' professional competence.

First, tourism enterprises should strengthen cooperation with higher education institutions and vocational training organizations to promote a joint training mechanism through regular internships and social practice activities, helping practitioners closely integrate theoretical knowledge with practical work. Second, cross-enterprise and cross-industry exchange and cooperation within the industry are also crucial. For example, the tourism industry can establish long-term partnerships with fields such as cultural arts, creative industries, and museums, collaboratively planning and implementing cultural tourism projects to enhance practitioners' interdisciplinary work capabilities. Furthermore, international exchange and cooperation are important ways to enhance practitioners' professional competence. By hosting international cultural tourism forums, tourism exchange programs, and other activities, practitioners can better understand global cultural tourism development trends, broaden their international perspective, and improve their service capabilities in a global cultural context.

Conclusion

The integration of cultural tourism has raised higher demands for the professional competence of

tourism practitioners. The analysis shows that practitioners need to comprehensively enhance their cross-cultural understanding, communication skills, innovative service capabilities, and sense of responsibility. The demand for cultural tourism has driven a structural adjustment in the professional competence of practitioners, combining traditional skills with modern qualities, which has become the key to improving the service quality in the tourism industry. Future research can develop more detailed indicator systems to measure the effectiveness of the professional competence development of practitioners, thereby improving the standardization and quality of cultural tourism services.

Fund Project

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