

Received: January 20, 2017

Revision received: May 14, 2018

Accepted: May 22, 2018

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DOI 10.12738/estp.2018.6.289 • December 2018 • 18(6) • 3769-3776

*Research Article*

## Research and Innovation on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools in Tourism Education\*

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### Abstract

With the rapid development of economy, people's demands for tourism cultural life have been increasing, and the Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools (CFCRS) in tourism education has also developed rapidly following the prosperity of tourism. This kind of school-running model has also experienced a difficult process of adjustment while invigorating the traditional education in China. In order to facilitate the development of CFCRS in tourism education, this paper studies the CFCRS model of tourism education, finding that in China's current CFCRS of tourism education, there exist the problems of conflicting teaching concepts and unreasonable professional curriculum design. Then, in response to these existing problems, the systematic suggestions for optimizing existing education models were proposed, such as strengthening government review, integrating the school-running concepts of both parties, and establishing an effective evaluation system etc.

### Keywords

Tourism Education • Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools (CFCRS) • Study Abroad

\* This work was supported by Start-up Research Fund for Talented Scholars of Inner Mongolia Normal University; Topic name: Discussion of Bilingual Teaching on course of Tourism Management; Project Leader: Chen Yan; grant number: YJRC12055.

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Since the reform and opening up, along with the development of economic globalization, China's economy has also developed rapidly. Also, China has made more exchanges with countries around the world in terms of economy, culture etc. after joining the WTO (Echtner & Jamal, 1997). Such development trend and exchange intensity require a large number of talented people with an international vision. As a result, the number of international students has increased rapidly in recent years, and a large number of CFCRS has emerged.

As a subdivision of education, tourism education has shown great vitality with the development of Chinese-foreign education. However, due to the comprehensiveness and linkage of tourism (Benckendorff & Zehrer, 2013), tourism teaching has certain particularities compared with other majors, which leads to a certain confusion state in the CFCRS model, and the cooperative advantages have not been exhibited. In order to improve the quality of cooperative education and tourism talents, this paper conducts analysis for studying the existing education model and proposes innovative solutions.

## **Research Basis**

### **Tourism development status**

Along with the improvement of people's demand for tourism cultural life, China's tourism industry has shown a rapid development trend. Tourism has become a new economic growth point for China's tertiary industry (Benckendorff, 2009), and demands for high-quality tourism professional talents are increasing greatly. At the same time, with the development of economic globalization, international exchanges have become more frequent, which puts higher requirements on tourism professional talents in terms of language, cultural knowledge and ways of thinking. In this context, Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools in tourism education came into being.

### **Education internationalization and Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools**

The development of economic globalization has promoted the exchange and cooperation of cultures and educations around the world. Countries around the world have paid more attention to the influence of their higher education in the global education market (Singh, 2014). Cooperative education usually is the school-running model to enrol the domestic citizens as the training objects based on the cooperation between foreign educational institutions and domestic institutions. With the internationalization of education, China's cooperative education model has developed rapidly (Ying & Xiao, 2012). However, there are few related studies on Chinese-foreign cooperation of tourism education.

## **China's CFCRS in Tourism Education**

### **Basic conditions for tourism education major**

In 2017, a total of 608 colleges and universities in China opened undergraduate majors in tourism, including tourism management and hotel management; 1,086 colleges offered higher vocational education, including

tourism management and scenic development etc.; 947 secondary vocational schools offered tourism related majors, as shown in Figure 1.

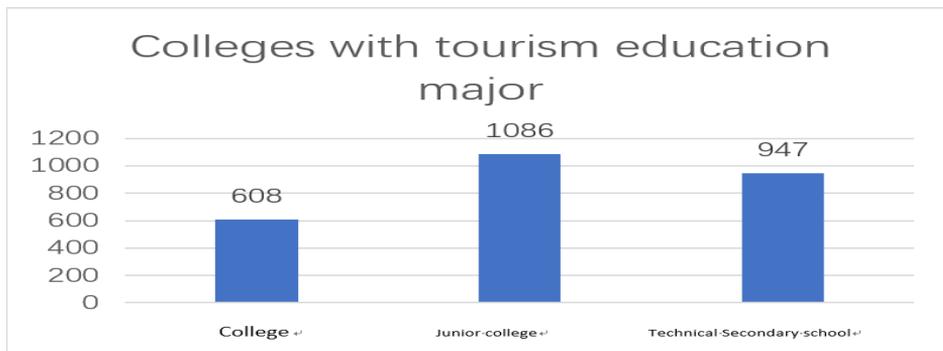


Figure 1. Development of Tourism Education Specialized Schools in China in 2017.

**CFCRS in tourism education**

At present, China’s tourism industry has formed a complete industrial chain (Song, Dwyer, Li & Cao, 2012), so the universities should set up different disciplines, such as history, culture, aesthetics, etc. to make balanced and comprehensive knowledge education for the students, when conducting tourism education. In addition, due to the characteristics of the tourism industry, the universities are required to open a large number of practical courses for students. For this, the CFCRS model of tourism education has different characteristics. According to different standards, the Chinese-foreign cooperation can be divided into different types (Table 1).

Table 1  
Types of Chinese-foreign Cooperation in Tourism Education in China

Mode	Characteristic
Pattern of fusion	Introduce the other side's textbooks and teaching methods, employ the other side's teachers to give lectures, and send our teachers for further study.
Graft type	Students study in semesters at home and abroad, offering courses, credits, diplomas and degrees to each other.
Loose type	We employ foreign teachers to give lectures. Our teachers go abroad to study, learn from foreign experience, and students go abroad for short-term study, internship and other means to achieve teaching and international results.

China’s typical Chinese-foreign cooperative project in tourism education major are as follows:

**Tianjin Business School** Tianjin Business School, Tianjin University of Commerce (TJUC) has cooperated with the Florida International University (FIU) in United States to introduce advanced educational concepts, teaching contents and management experience of the tourism management profession into China, and to build advanced teaching and experimental hardware facilities. Its training objective is to train the students with high quality and business ability. Tianjin Business School is responsible for enrolment and lower grade curriculum development/teaching; the FIU is for teaching design, senior curriculum development and teacher development.

**Chinese-French Tourism College of Guangzhou University** In 2002, Guangzhou University established the Chinese-French Tourism College with the support of the Chinese and French governments, including tourism management, exhibition, business travel and other majors. The professional related courses for the first and second grade students are mainly the basic knowledge of tourism, and in the third and fourth grade, students can choose a major according to their own interests. The professional curriculum is systematic, and the language of learning is French. The students can voluntarily choose a professional direction, which provides a solid foundation for cultivating international talents. Each year, the college provides excellent students with the opportunity to study in France and expand their international horizons.

### **Problems in school-running and the inspiration of foreign teaching**

Due to the mutual promoting between education and economy, the developed countries are often more mature and advanced in education than developing countries. As a developing country, China's cooperation in running tourism education is still in a disorderly state, and there exist some problems. Therefore, this paper conducts analysis for the related problems and also the enlightenment brought by foreign teaching to us.

#### **Problems with CFCRS in Tourism Education**

**Professional courses and training objectives** In the process of cooperative education, there often exists the problem that the school directly introduces the textbooks of the cooperative university, but without making screening or redesign according to the quality of students and the cultural background of our country, resulting in poor connectivity of the introduced professional courses. In addition, China often has a big difference in teaching philosophy from the cooperative countries, e.g., the elimination rate of foreign universities is very high, while both students and parents in domestic universities have the impression that they can graduate smoothly once entering university. Therefore, the both parties of CFCRS often have conflicts and contradictions in the training target setting and training mode selection.

**Weak supervision and evaluation system** Foreign teachers hired by Chinese-foreign cooperative school often do not have the qualifications of teachers or have not engaged in the tourism industry. They teach more like foreign language teachers. The management of foreign teachers in schools is also more chaotic. The school has not set up effective assessment methods to conduct an effective and comprehensive evaluation of educational resources, including human resources and organizations. In addition, when students complete their studies at home and continue to study abroad, there are certain difficulties in the management of students, so that personal injury or property damage caused by poor management sometimes occurs.

#### **Inspiration of foreign teaching**

**The United States:** Along with the development of the US economy, the United States attaches great importance to the cultivation of various types of talents. As early as the 1980s, the United States had launched

a multinational education cooperation project. In order to ensure the continuity and stability of international cooperation, the United States formulated related laws and regulations, such as the US News and Education Exchange Act and the International Education Law.

**United Kingdom:** The UK attaches great importance to educational cooperation with foreign countries. The UK government regards education internationalization as an important part of its education strategy. With the rise and development of China’s economy, the UK has introduced various preferential policies to expand the Chinese education market. In addition to the cooperation projects already under way, the UK will also carry out cooperative projects such as pre-university training in various stages of bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree.

**Japan:** Japan’s economic development is inseparable from the government’s vigorous investment in education. The Japanese government has put great emphasis on education. In the 1980s, the Japanese government started to promote the internationalization of higher education by expanding the number of foreign students and teachers. It strongly encourages academic exchanges between Japanese students and overseas students. Besides, the university often employs well-known scholars from around the world to teach and also provide opportunities for students to study abroad.

### Innovation and optimization of CFCRS model

In view of the existing problems in the tourism teaching model, the following innovations and optimization suggestions were proposed. The framework structure is shown in Figure 2.

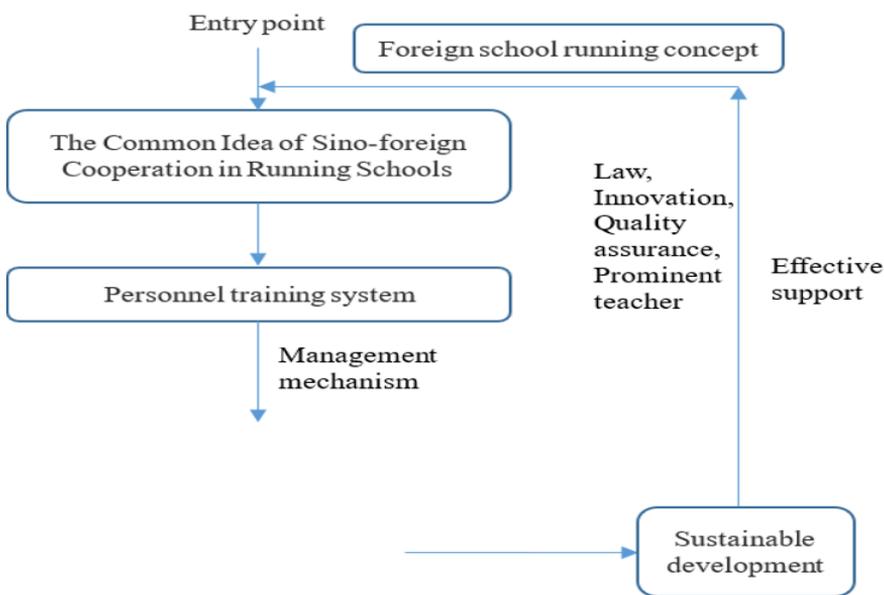


Figure 2. Optimizing the Structure of Chinese-foreign Cooperation in School-running in Tourism Education

### **Integrating the school-running concept**

The school-running concept is a school's orientation in talent cultivation according to the characteristics and history of running a school, as well as the national cultural background and policy guidelines. The concept plays a guiding role in running a school, and it is of great significance to the cultivation of talents. Since CF CRS is carried out jointly by Chinese and foreign parties with different historical and cultural backgrounds and economic development levels, there is often a conflict in the school-running concept. However, the location of cooperative education is in China. Therefore, the two partners should aim to cultivate tourism talents meeting international needs based on the needs of China's tourism industry, and promote China's tourism development. For this, they should carry out curriculum design, implement teaching plans, and train talents in a targeted manner. In order to achieve this goal, both partners need to integrate the concept of running a school. The Chinese side hopes to use the advanced foreign education methods for improving the talent quality and the teaching level; the foreign side wants to realize capital and technology output and expand its international influence through cooperation in running schools. Thus, the partners can use this as an entry point to form a mutually accepted school-running concept.

### **Adjusting management mechanism**

As China's influence on the international economy and politics is growing, lots of foreign parties hope to cooperate in running schools in China. In order to ensure the quality of running a school, strict review must be conducted on it, including its qualifications for establishing tourism education, and student internship conditions etc.

For cooperative schools, the school should conduct targeted management of teachers and students, and establish a reasonable and effective teaching evaluation system, e.g., a special project management organization is set up to manage students' life, classroom learning, and class practice etc. and ensure their safety and learning effects. For students studying abroad, they can be managed through the Internet. For foreign teachers, considering their local educational background, they should be allowed to adopt different teaching methods than domestic teachers without violating the teaching objectives. In addition, the government can set up a supervisory management organization to supervise and conduct random checks on the school's work, and the introduction of public supervision is also an effective means of promoting the quality of school education.

### **Improving the student training system**

The objective of CF CRS in tourism Education is to improve the comprehensive strength of the school and cultivate a large number of talents with an international vision. In terms of talent training, schools should set relevant courses fully in line with the cooperation objectives, and improve the practicality of the courses. In the process of bilingual teaching, in order to ensure the learning effect, the school can introduce bilingual classes from the beginning of enrolment, and increase bilingual teaching courses year by year. The selection of

professional courses should fully consider the characteristics of the tourism industry by combining the theory of tourism professional with the practical operation, and set up relevant courses in international education. Schools should also improve the evaluation system and combine evaluations of different dimensions, such as schools and enterprises etc., to objectively and fairly evaluate the student quality and the school education level.

### **Sustainable development and promotion**

The smooth running of any activity must be guaranteed by the law. In accordance with the actual social development and educational activities, China should introduce relevant laws and regulations, to standardize and upgrade CFCRS. In addition, in the process of cooperation, the school should pay more attention to the learning exchange about similar projects at home and abroad, learning from each other, and making continuous progress. Meanwhile, it should also actively introduce talents, establish effective talent reward and training mechanisms, for continuously improving the faculty.

## **Conclusions**

With the rapid development of the tourism industry, the demand for talents has been increasing greatly, and there is a huge gap in tourism professional talents with an international vision. In view of the problems existing in CFCRS in tourism education, this paper conducts the related targeted analysis, and then proposes some innovative optimization suggestions:

In the CFCRS of tourism education, there exist the problems, such as the conflicts of both parties in teaching philosophy, unreasonable professional curriculum, lack of effective student and teacher supervision system, and teaching effectiveness evaluation system;

In the process of cooperation in running schools, the two parties can form a highly integrated school-running concept by fully considering the original intention of running a school; make curriculum design and textbook selection according to the actual needs of the society, and establish a sound and effective evaluation system; establish an effective teacher training mechanism to ensure the effect of talent training;

The government should strengthen reviewing the institutes with the willingness to cooperate, and in accordance with the actual development of the society, introduce corresponding policies and regulations, to standardize and guarantee cooperation in running schools.

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