

# Thoughts on the High-Quality Development of Tourism Education in the Digital Economy

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**Abstract:** The vigorous development of the digital economy has put forward new requirements for the high-quality development of tourism. Based on an analysis of the characteristics and connotations of the "digital economy" and "high-quality development of tourism education", this study expounds the new requirements of the "digital economy" and "high-quality development" for tourism talents, and puts forward countermeasures and suggestions including strengthening research on tourism disciplines and tourism talents, promoting the coordinated development of tourism education and the tourism industry, and enhancing the construction of teaching staff under the background of the digital economy.

**Keywords:** Digital Economy; Tourism Education; High-Quality Development

## 1. Introduction

With the improvement of people's living standards and their aspiration for a better life, tourism has become a common need of the people for a better life. As the leading industry among the five major happiness industries, tourism has shown increasingly strengthened capacity in industrial driving, cross-border integration and business development. Its comprehensive driving effect on the steady and sound economic development has become more prominent, further consolidating its status and role as a strategic pillar industry of the national economy.

At present, the digital economy with the Internet and big data at its core is developing rapidly, integrating into all fields and the whole process of economic and social development. It has become a strong engine for the development of the tourism industry and also pointed out the direction for the reform of tourism education and the cultivation of tourism talents. The high-quality development of tourism relies on

the support of high-quality tourism talents. Accurately grasping the new changes and new requirements of the "digital economy" and "high-quality tourism development" for tourism education is of far-reaching significance for exploring new paths of tourism talent cultivation suitable for the current stage of China.

## 2. Characteristics and Connotations of the "Digital Economy" and "High-Quality Development of Tourism Education"

### 2.1 Characteristics and Connotations of the "Digital Economy"

First, data has become the core production factor of economic activities, reshaping the logic of value creation. The essential characteristic of the digital economy lies in establishing data as a key production factor on par with land, labor, capital, and technology. It breaks through the constraints of scarcity and competitiveness inherent in traditional production factors, and possesses unique attributes such as replicability, sharability, unlimited supply, and non-depletion. In the process of economic operation, through technical processing including collection, cleaning, modeling, and analysis, data enables the precise matching and optimal allocation of various production factors, driving the transformation of value creation from the traditional "factor-driven" model to a "data-driven" one. Under the digital economy, the deep integration of data and the real economy empowers all links of production, distribution, circulation, and consumption, improving total factor productivity. Data itself can be processed and transformed into independent digital products and services, fostering new growth points of value and forming the core logic of value creation in the digital economy.

Second, digital technology constitutes the core driving force of the economy, leading industrial iteration and upgrading. Supported by a new

generation of information technology as the infrastructure, the digital economy has formed a technology cluster represented by the Internet, big data, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, block chain, and the Internet of Things, featuring high innovation, high penetration, and rapid iteration.

Rather than being confined to specific industries or fields, digital technology, as a general-purpose technology, runs through all sectors of the modern economy. It has spawned new business forms and models such as platform economy, sharing economy, digital trade, and intelligent manufacturing, while also deeply penetrating traditional industries including agriculture, industry, and services. It realizes the digital transformation of industries through process reengineering, model innovation, and efficiency improvement. The continuous innovation and wide application of digital technology have not only restructured industrial organization and industrial chains, but also promoted the iteration of the industrial system toward intelligence, efficiency, and green development, becoming the core driving force for sustained economic growth.

Third, the digital economy takes integrated innovation and open interconnection as its operational form, building a symbiotic economic ecosystem. The digital economy has broken the temporal-spatial restrictions and industrial barriers of the traditional economy, presenting the operational characteristics of strong integration, extensive connectivity, and high coordination. Its core connotation is the formation of an open, interconnected, coordinated, and symbiotic economic ecosystem. The digital economy achieves the mutual promotion of "digital industrialization" and "industrial digitalization." It is based on the development of the digital industry, while empowering traditional industries through digital technology, promoting in-depth integrated innovation across industries and fields, and forming an integrated development pattern of "digital + physical economy." Relying on cyberspace, the digital economy has constructed a borderless field for economic activities, facilitating efficient linkage among upstream and downstream industrial chains, across regions and among different entities, and breaking the geographical restrictions and institutional barriers of resource allocation. From the perspective of coordination, through

platform-based and ecological organizational forms, the digital economy integrates various market entities, technological resources, and service elements, forming a coordination mechanism of complementary advantages, risk sharing, and benefit sharing. It has shaped a flexible, efficient, inclusive, and shared new mode of economic operation, demonstrating the core connotation of the digital economy: openness, inclusiveness, coordination, and symbiosis.

## **2.2 Characteristics and Connotations of "High-Quality Development of Tourism Education"**

First, high-quality development of tourism education is an inevitable requirement for high-quality development of tourism. As the tourism industry transforms from traditional resource-dependence to innovation-driven growth and shifts from scale expansion to quality improvement, its core competitiveness is no longer confined to hardware facilities and traffic data, but relies strongly on a large number of high-quality tourism professionals. Only when high-quality tourism education cultivates interdisciplinary talents with professional competence, excellent service awareness, professional dedication and innovative ability can it effectively support the high-quality development of the tourism industry, enabling tourism to exert greater value in boosting the economy, promoting exchanges, enriching people's lives and inheriting culture.

Second, high-quality development of tourism education serves as an effective driver for the innovative development of the tourism industry.

With the further advancement of the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, the implementation of the innovation-driven development strategy has injected new momentum into the tourism industry and raised new requirements for the high-quality development of both the tourism sector and tourism education. High-quality development of tourism education must adhere to innovation-driven approaches, covering educational concepts, school-running models, specialty setup, talent-training approaches and teaching modes. Only through reform and innovation can we achieve new development of higher quality, higher efficiency, greater openness and better coordination, and continuously cultivate high-quality tourism

talents with innovative spirit and ability.

Third, the core of high-quality development of tourism education is to achieve a high degree of matching between the supply and demand of tourism talents. As a comprehensive economic industry involving economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits, the tourism industry chain covers aviation, railway and road transportation, insurance, environmental management, public facility management, accommodation, catering and other related industries. To achieve high-quality development, tourism education needs to promote the organic connection of the education chain, talent chain, industrial chain and innovation chain, and realize the all-round integration of structural factors between the supply side of tourism talent training and the demand side of the tourism industry. This will cultivate a large number of high-quality innovative tourism talents and interdisciplinary technical-skilled talents who can adapt to the future development of the tourism industry, thus achieving a close match between talent supply and demand.

### **3. New Requirements for Tourism Talents under the "Digital Economy" and "High-Quality Development"**

From the demand side, China's tourism consumption demand is shifting from a low-level pattern to high-quality and diversified consumption, and from focusing on sightseeing to a combination of sightseeing and leisure vacation. Meanwhile, the new round of scientific and technological revolution has accelerated the transformation and upgrading of the tourism industry toward digitalization, networking and intelligence, boosted the integrated development of online and offline tourism products and services, and also fostered new tourism forms such as micro-tourism, camping tourism, cloud tourism and cloud performances. Against this background, the "digital economy" and "high-quality development of tourism" have put forward new requirements for tourism talents.

#### **3.1 Innovative Tourism Talents**

As innovation-driven development injects new momentum into China's tourism industry, the sector has witnessed integrated development and continuous innovation in business forms, service modes and consumption patterns, leading to an overall upgrade of tourism products and services. To adapt to these changes, the quality and

competency structure of tourism practitioners must be improved accordingly. The high-quality development of tourism requires a large number of talents with innovative awareness, spirit, thinking and ability. Innovative tourism talents should not only have a strong sense of innovation, but also possess critical thinking and integrated innovation capabilities. They are expected to integrate multidisciplinary knowledge and apply it in practice, so as to promote the upgrading of tourism formats and services and create new value for tourists.

#### **3.2 Digital Tourism Talents**

The digital economy has become a major engine of China's economic and social growth. Deep integration of digital technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things and cloud computing with the real economy has fostered a host of new industries and business models. At present, digitalization is accelerating its penetration into the tourism industry and has become a new driving force for industrial integration and innovation. As all industries are undergoing digital transformation, there is an urgent demand for talents with digital thinking, which poses new requirements for tourism education and talent development. Digital tourism talents should have digital thinking, internet awareness and solid digital literacy, especially data analysis and processing capabilities, as well as the ability to apply and innovate digital technologies. Accelerating the cultivation of digital tourism talents will strengthen the human capital supporting the digital tourism industry and boost its high-quality development.

#### **3.3 Professional Tourism Talents**

Against the background of high-quality tourism development, tourists have become more mature in consumption behavior and have higher requirements for experiential tourism services. Personalized, customized, diversified and differentiated tourism demand has become the new normal. In response, the tourism industry has launched highly experiential and interactive customized tourism products for different groups. To adapt to these changes, tourism education should focus on cultivating professional tourism talents with solid professional knowledge and practical skills. By building a tourism education system featuring school-enterprise cooperation, integration of industry and education,

combination of work and study, and unity of knowledge and practice, a group of highly skilled tourism professionals can be cultivated.

### 3.4 Interdisciplinary Tourism Talents

At present, tourism is integrated and developed collaboratively with culture, technology, education, transportation, sports, industry, agriculture, forestry, medicine and other fields, forming a new pattern of multi-industry integration. Through cross-border integration, tourism is interconnected with other industries, while different sectors within tourism are also merging with each other. This has given rise to various new business forms under the models of "Tourism +" and "+ Tourism", putting forward new requirements for the high-quality development of tourism education. Interdisciplinary tourism talents are proficient in professional expertise while mastering interdisciplinary knowledge. They can integrate knowledge from multiple fields, apply comprehensive abilities to solve practical problems, and drive the innovative development of the tourism industry.

### 3.5 International Tourism Talents

Tourism is an important window for a country's international exchanges, with distinctive openness and internationalization. The education and training of tourism talents should not only emphasize professional knowledge and skills, but also target high-quality talents with an international vision. International tourism talents have diversified learning abilities and excellent cross-cultural communication skills. They take the initiative to learn international knowledge, understand international rules, and uphold international awareness and values. In practice, they can actively promote international cultural exchanges and cultural export, and develop high-level personalized and innovative products in line with international standards.

## 4. Countermeasures and Suggestions for the High-Quality Development of Tourism Education in the Digital Economy

Against the backdrop of the digital economy, the high-quality development of the tourism industry has raised new demands and requirements for talents. It has become the historical mission of high-quality tourism education to strengthen the cultivation of urgently needed talents in the tourism sector, as well as talents for new

technologies and new business forms, and accelerate the development of a high-quality tourism talent team.

### 4.1 Strengthen Research on Tourism Disciplines and Tourism Talents

The core of high-quality development in tourism education lies in achieving effective connection and organic integration between functions such as tourism talent cultivation and research services with the development of the modern tourism industry system, providing comprehensive intellectual, technological and talent support, and promoting the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

Firstly, efforts should be made to strengthen research in tourism disciplines and accelerate the construction of an advanced theoretical system for the development of modern tourism. As a new and interdisciplinary field, tourism studies covers a wide range of content, involving economics, management, history, geography, sociology, art, marketing and other disciplines. The current tourism discipline is not sufficiently mature in terms of theoretical concepts, structural system, and especially practical application.

1. Strengthen Research on Basic Tourism Theories, Focusing on Theoretical Construction and Research Paradigms of the Tourism Discipline, so as to Achieve Major Breakthroughs in the Disciplinary System and Research Paradigms of Tourism.

2. Strengthen Applied Research on Tourism Theories, Especially Research Related to National Development Strategies. Innovate Tourism Theories, Research Methods, Knowledge and Technologies, so as to Build a Theoretical System for the Development of Emerging Tourism Industries.

3. Strengthen Research on the Application of Digital Technologies in Tourism. At Present, the New Generation of Information Technologies Represented by Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Internet of Things and Cloud Computing Are Driving a New Round of Scientific and Technological Revolution and Industrial Transformation. Only by Strengthening Research on the Application of Scientific and Technological Innovations in Tourism Can We Strongly Support the High-quality Development of the Tourism Industry.

Secondly, we should strengthen research on tourism talents and accelerate the top-level

design of tourism talent cultivation. Higher education undertakes the important mission of comprehensively improving the quality of independent talent cultivation, striving to foster top innovative talents, and serving the national innovation-driven development strategy.

1. Strengthen Research on the Supply and Demand of Tourism Talents. Integrate Think Tank Resources to Establish Databases for the Supply and Demand of Tourism Talents, Carry out Dynamic Analysis and Scientific Forecasting, so as to Provide a Scientific Decision-making Basis and Support for the Training Specifications of Various Tourism Talents.
2. Strengthen Research on the Orientation and Pathways of Tourism Talent Cultivation. Conduct In-depth Studies on the Scale, Quality, Specifications and Training Pathways of Tourism Talents at All Levels and of All Types, so as to Continuously Improve the Matching Degree between the Supply Side of Tourism Talent Training and the Demand Side of Tourism Development, and Solve the Structural Contradiction between the Supply and Demand of Tourism Talents.

#### **4.2 Promoting the Coordinated Development of Tourism Education and Tourism Industry**

The integration of industry and education, as well as the integration of science and education, represents the inevitable path to achieve high-quality development of tourism education. It is also the essential approach to cultivate digital, international, innovative, professional and interdisciplinary tourism talents.

Firstly, in line with the development trend of the tourism industry, we should deepen the demand-oriented supply-side structural reform of tourism talent cultivation.

1. Strengthen Research on the Development Trend of the Tourism Industry, Grasp the Regional Tourism Industry Trend and the Scale and Quality of Demand for Tourism Talents, and Establish a Sound Development Mechanism That Matches the Supply and Demand of Tourism Talent Cultivation.
2. Accelerate the Cultivation of Talents in Short Supply in the Tourism Industry. While Speeding up the Digital and Intelligent Transformation of Traditional Tourism Majors, We Should Launch New Majors Such as the Development and Application of New Tourism Technologies to Meet the Demand for Urgently Needed Tourism Talents.

3. Increase Efforts to Cultivate Innovative, Professional and Interdisciplinary Tourism Talents, Adapt to the Changing Demand of the Tourism Market for Talents, and Enhance Students' Employment Competitiveness and Future Career Development Potential.

Secondly, we should deepen the integration of industry and education and the integration of science and education, build a school-enterprise dual education mechanism, and improve the industrial adaptability of tourism talent cultivation.

1. Strengthen Top-level Design and Institutional Innovation, Especially the Institutional Design and Innovation for the Integration of Industry and Education and the Integration of Science and Education. Establish and Optimize the School-enterprise Dual Education Mechanism, and Explore Talent Training Models Oriented to the Needs of Tourism Enterprises.

2. Deepen Industry-university-research Cooperation, Clarify the Cooperation Models and Contents for the Integration of Industry and Education and the Integration of Science and Education. Promote the Integrated Development of Schools and Enterprises in Specialty Construction, Curriculum Development, Textbook Compilation, Scientific and Technological Development, Social Training, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, so as to Form a Complete Logical Chain for the Integration of Industry and Education and the Integration of Science and Education.

#### **4.3 Strengthening the Construction of Teaching Staff**

Building a high-quality tourism teaching team with solid theoretical foundation, strong research capacity and proficient practical skills is the top priority for the high-quality development of tourism education. Strengthening teachers' theoretical foundation, teaching, research and practical abilities to promote the development of high-level tourism teachers is particularly critical for cultivating innovative, professional, interdisciplinary and digital tourism talents, and serves as the key to achieving high-quality development in tourism education. The digital economy has put forward new requirements for tourism teachers' theoretical level, research capacity and practical skills, making it necessary to cultivate a group of professional teachers who are proficient in both digital technology and tourism.

Firstly, strengthen institutional development. Colleges and universities should formulate systems for teacher recruitment, selection, training, assessment and incentive mechanisms in light of regional tourism economic development and their own actual conditions, and strengthen the introduction of teachers in shortage majors and high-skilled talents.

Secondly, formulate tourism teacher training and development programs based on regional tourism economic development, combined with the layout of tourism majors, talent structure and actual needs of the institution. Promote two-way talent flow between universities and enterprises to improve the teaching and practical abilities of full-time teachers and the teaching competence of part-time teachers from enterprises. Employ senior technical personnel from enterprises as industrial mentors, and build digital tourism teaching teams.

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