

Exploring a New Chinese Model of Tourism and Hospitality Education: Lessons Learned from American Counterparts

Jin-lin WU¹, Zong-qing ZHOU², Hong-bin XIE³ and Fei CHENG³

¹Department of Tourism, Minjiang University, China

²College of Hospitality Management, Niagara University, USA

³Institute of Tourism Research, Fujian Normal University, China

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Abstract. College-enterprise cooperation has become one of the important modes of tourism management education in colleges and universities of China. This article probed on experiences of college-enterprise cooperation in tourism colleges of America, and then presented the situation of college-enterprise cooperation in tourism college of China, and further analyzed its main reasons. Referring to the experiences of America, this article discussed personnel training modes which conform to both the international popular training practices and Chinese characteristics in order to train tourism talents.

Introduction

College-enterprise cooperation is a kind of "win-win" cooperative mode for colleges and enterprises to train talents, which means the students acquire their theoretical knowledge in college and practical experiences in enterprise, meanwhile the colleges and enterprises share common human resources and information. At present, the cooperation between colleges and enterprises has become one of the important modes for training professional talents of tourism management in colleges of China.

Compared to America, which have rich experiences on college-enterprise cooperation, the tourism education in China started later with problems about the depth of college-enterprise cooperation and the modes of training students' comprehensive ability. There has been increasing contradiction between the shortage of supply and growing demand for talents in tourism sectors. Common questions between tourism industry and education in China are how to realize the localization of international experience, how to carry out personnel training modes in the college-enterprise cooperation, and how to cultivate talents with rich professional knowledge, strong operation ability and high professional quality. Therefore, we will try to learn from America and probe on a new path for personnel training in college-enterprise cooperation with Chinese characteristics.

Method and Cases

In order to compare China and America's teaching modes of college-enterprise cooperation, we try to get information from three sources. Firstly, find the papers or articles about tourism education in China and America through Online-libraries; Secondly, visit tourism college of Niagara University and tourism college of Minjiang University in China to check their teaching planning and course arrangement in order to make a comparison, because these two colleges are all vocational-oriented and they are on same scale; Thirdly, interview the faculties and teaching secretaries of these two colleges to know about its tourism education and also interview alumnus who have graduated from two colleges and now working in the hotels. They are all helpful and provide us information about hotel employment situation.

Results

Experiences about Colleges-Enterprise Cooperation of Tourism Management Education in America

School Condition. America attaches great importance to tourism education in college. The federal or state government give essential support in policy and economy. Besides, private institution, industry association, Non-profit organization and college alumni give more help in funding, student employment and academic seminars. Taken college of hospitality, Niagara University as example, through annual "Alumni association" activities organized by the college, the alumni provide college with funds for professional development, and introduce beneficial practices or business ideas about tourism industry as well as build bridge for the student employment.

Market Environment. The mature tourism market is premise of cooperation between enterprises and tourism college. America pays more attention to the initiative of enterprise in terms of tourism personal training during the college-enterprise cooperation, and the tourism enterprise fully participate in the process of college running, even invest to establish tourism college. For example, Hilton Hotel Corporation cooperates with Houston University in order to invest and establish Hilton Hotel Management College. Tourism enterprise consciously helps college to carry on the plan of personal training and optimize distribution of education resources, while colleges also take the initiative to employ tourism enterprise managers as college counselors, who usually introduce enterprise cultural background and developing prospect to students and guide their employments in annual activity named "Entrepreneurs on the classroom stage ". As well, colleges carry out researches according to what the tourism enterprise need, so as to keep in touch with tourism enterprises in terms of theoretical guidance and talents output. Therefore, it formed close college-enterprise cooperation. .

Training Objective and Course System. The tourism colleges in America, which carry on training mode of college-enterprise cooperation. will set specific training objectives according to the requirements of hospitality employment. For example, Cornell hotel management college, whose objectives are to provide industry elites or leaders, has social responsibility and can provide superior service in hospitality industry all over the world in the 21st century, through paying attention to the training of basic skills on hotel management for undergraduate students .

The colleges of tourism management together with enterprise administrations in America carefully design training programs. Their course system is composed of core courses, elective courses, compulsory elective courses, optional courses and practice courses. Although the majors and training objectives are different, which bring about various courses arrangement among colleges or universities, the subjects of courses are quite extensive, including economics, management science, law, psychology, accounting, finance and so on. The teachers in the tourism colleges provide the students with various opportunities of case studies or group discussion as well as social practice which are important in the whole course system in order to ensure students to accumulate the theoretical knowledge and practical skills at the same time.

Teaching Mode and Content. The first-class equipment for teaching and practicing in most tourism colleges or universities in America increase the enjoyment and intuition of teaching, and this advantage not only ensure student to work at once both in internship or after employment, but also shorten the training process. Some colleges have special research center to encourage students to participate in research, thus provide the tourism industry with creative talents. In addition, the teachers also bring the feedback questions from enterprise into classes, and edit these questions into teaching contents so as to train students to solve the actual problems of enterprise management. In short, the tourism colleges or universities carry out teaching geared to the needs of enterprises or market, and pay attention to the theoretical, practical and innovative abilities of the students, and play the role of forecast and industry guidance for the student employment.

Teaching Staff Structure. In America, most of teachers in the tourism colleges have ever worked in the tourism industry or department. Taking the college of hotel management in Cornell University as an example, the teaching staff is composed of two parts, full-time teacher and

part-time teachers, and the former is more than the later. The part-time teachers are always professor, expert or leader of certain field, and they have rich experiences in practice, and also have information about the tourism industrial situation, while most of the full-time teachers who take position in industrial sectors or offices of tourism management would like to bring new information into the classroom. In addition, the college will regularly invite visiting professors to the campus to give academic lecture or organize science activities.

Evaluation Method. There are many kinds of evaluation methods to assess learning progress of the students in tourism colleges in America. Besides a closed-book test, presentation in class, course paper, case analysis homework and course practices are credited to the total score of the students for a course, which will. Tourism education in America attach great importance to practice training, and most of the colleges have to require students to graduate with "Internship" in order to get a diploma.

Although there are some differences between China and America in aspect of national system, social and economic, cultural and educational field, the experiences of America's education are worthy of learning.

Problems in College-Enterprise Cooperation of Tourism Management Education in China

Symbolic Cooperation Involving Many Stakeholders. College-enterprise cooperation always involve many stakeholders such as the government, industry, enterprise, school, student and so on. Government, as public benefactor and beneficiaries, should support college-enterprise cooperation with policy and specific projects fund; Industrial association, as an enterprise coordinator, should be responsible for coordinating the conflicts of all stakeholders; School and enterprise, as definite participants, should play the active and initiative role, meanwhile supervise and urge government and industry association; Students, as beneficiaries, should participate actively in internship or social practice to understand the significance and purpose of the college-enterprise cooperation from the overall perspective. However, tourism college-enterprise cooperation in China spontaneously began between colleges and enterprises with loose collaboration which is characteristic of "fund from enterprise, employees from the school", so government and industry administration departments seldom involve in the cooperation. According to this simple cooperation mode, students are regarded as the "arranged" objectives, which are difficult to show their initiative and creativity.

Cooperation with Different Purposes and Insufficient Attention to Students. Whether it is the government, enterprise, industry association or college, the goal of their cooperation is to train the talents that meet the market and enterprise's demand, therefore, students become inevitably the focused attention of all stakeholders. However, in China, some college-enterprise cooperation projects are only the signboard of colleges to recruit students or the platform to complete their teaching task, even a shortcut for tourism enterprises to obtain high-quality and cheap employees. Students are difficult to obtain the opportunity to practice at administration positions in the learning process. On the contrary, they can only be engaged in those simple and repetitive works such as waiter or waitress in the practice process, which is not helpful for the students to acquire the ability to solve practical problems and to be competent administration in the enterprise. It eventually leads to poor training effect, or even result in the loss of talents.

Inadequate Bi-qualified Teachers and Poor Teaching Resources. Professional teachers are not enough to satisfy with the higher education of tourism management in China which started in 1980s. At that time, in order to meet the need of running college, the students in tourism management school were always educated by other professional teachers from geography, history, foreign language and Chinese literature, except that a few teachers were imported or returned from overseas after they graduated from the professional school of tourism management. Besides, the teachers were lack of practical experience, since those who had either tourism management professional background or any other usually became teachers as soon as they graduated from the colleges. Because of lacking of practical experience, they are inevitably scripted in teaching and

attached importance to theory instead of practice. At present, many colleges often invite entrepreneurs to give lectures instead of teaching course systematically.

Insufficient Education Fund Causing Obsolete Teaching Equipment. Traditionally, Chinese education is funded by the government, however, there is a large gap between the governmental fund allocation and the actual needs. The enterprises attach great importance to their economic interest because of lacking social responsibility and long-term development perspective, they are unwilling or escaping to invest on the college-enterprise cooperation as much as possible. Therefore, this situation eventually causes that funding become major restriction for running tourism colleges. Due to insufficient financial resources on education that paying for staff salaries and office equipment, in addition to extensive use of resource, the fund for purchasing laboratory equipment is already stretched thin by the reality. Thus, colleges are unable to purchase advanced teaching equipment and to build proper training venues. As a result, the equipment of tourism colleges in China is obsolete, and the quality and efficiency of school-running is far less than that of the colleges in developed countries.

Arranged Practice and Internship in the College Causing Ineffective Training. After more than ten years, Chinese college-enterprise cooperation has cultivated and trained a number of talents for the tourism enterprises. However, we found that in fact there is a big gap between the expectation of tourism industry and the quality of the graduates trained by this mode. Graduates can only be engaged in front-line service work of the enterprise, which is difficult to support and use them efficiently, thus leads to the loss of talents from enterprise. One of the deep reasons for this phenomenon is the immaturity of college-enterprise cooperation. The college arranges every detail of practice and internship for student, so the students have no chance to choose the right internships and they are bored of staying at current position. Another reason for this phenomenon is less-than-ideal talent training effect. All these make the enterprises think that the cost outweigh the benefit which spoil the enthusiasm of cooperation between the enterprise and college.

Comparing with America' college-enterprise cooperation on tourism education, we checked the problems of college-enterprise cooperation of Chinese tourism education. Here we discussed the reasons for these problems.

Most of Chinese colleges are completely governed by the educational administration, so they have no sufficient autonomy of college-running. Moreover, the industry administration departments are not active in college-enterprise cooperation for talents training, so supports from administrative departments in terms of economic and policy are not enough. Within the limitation of inflexible education system, college and enterprise are difficult to decide the mode and content of cooperation, which impedes the mechanism of college-enterprise cooperation.

The motivation of domestic and international enterprises to participate in cooperation depends on weighing between benefits and cost. It is obvious that colleges will benefit from college-enterprise cooperation, while main difficulty is that enterprises are lack of motivation to participate in talents cultivation. Besides constraints of inflexible educational system, there are many other important reasons for enterprises inactive in college-enterprise cooperation, such as, the low-threshold employment of tourism industry, the infant stage of tourism enterprises, the immaturity of college internal management system and serious brain-drain problem of graduates. As the stakeholder of talent demand, the tourism enterprises only concern about recruiting graduates who fit the employment instead of the cultivation of tourism talents in colleges.

Conclusion

By learning from America, checking our problems and reasons on college-enterprise cooperation, here we put forward the strategy for innovating talent training path of college-enterprise cooperation.

To Arouse the Enthusiasm of All Stakeholders with Common Interests

The success of the college-enterprise cooperation lies in that the stakeholders can find common of interests through cooperation. For students, college-enterprise cooperation is beneficial for them

to apply the school theories into practice. In addition, students can also be funded with tuition fees by the employer and can be employed after graduation, even can acquire supper employment position. For colleges, they can grasp the situation of market and talent demand from college-enterprise cooperation enterprise to develop tourism discipline according to the requirement of the tourism industry. It is beneficial for the colleges to use the wisdom of tourism enterprises to create high quality team of teachers, to train superb talents with better theoretical knowledge and skill, thus to increase the employment rate. At the same time, it can save teaching staff and the construction cost of practice place, so that the colleges would acquire ultimately competitive advantage. For tourism enterprises, the college-enterprise cooperation is conducive to recruiting high-quality talents, and getting help of scientific research, so as to support the long-term development of enterprises. When the students are in enterprises for business internships during their school holidays and other spare time, they help enterprises solve the shortage of manpower. Meanwhile, the enterprises can retain and use the students efficiently through "mentoring", training, investing and careful guidance, therefore, the students can be competent in the grass-roots management positions. For the education administrative department, the college-enterprise cooperation is beneficial to solve the shortage of financial allocation, to help them to access objectives of training talents or constructing the colleges or universities with the help of tourism industry investment. For the country, the college-enterprise cooperation can provide talents to enhance the tourism development.

To Change the Idea of Running School and Take Tourism Industry Demand as Guidance. Since the tourism education has vocational characteristics, the cultivation of tourism talents must be oriented by industrial demand. However, some tourism colleges in mainland China still continue to take the traditional education mode, ignoring the vocational characteristics of tourism higher education and putting emphasis on talent quantity rather than quality, which cause the education resources waste, therefore, the prerequisites for the realization of college-enterprise cooperation is referring to education experience of America, changing the idea of running school, focusing on the business and market demand instead of seizing the source of students and striving for discipline status. Tourism colleges should identify the school running orientation and position, which need adapt to present situation and characteristics, and carry out opened-mode tourism education in order to face up to the tourism enterprises and market.

Transposition Considerations to Achieve Multi-win among College, Enterprise and Government. To achieve college-enterprise cooperation, the stakeholders should not only consider their own interests. For example, the administrative department should provide policy support for school and enterprise, and bring sponsorship and donation into the educational investment system through tax incentives by referring to the donation practices of America, and open the official channels for enterprise to fund college; while school can provide re-educational opportunities for employee, considering enterprise comprehensive level of human resources; the enterprises should respect intellectual rights of school to ensure students have better practice treatment as well as practice quality.

Student Oriented, Give Full Play to the Subjective Initiative of Students. Students are usually regarded as receptors of school-enterprise cooperation, so they passively accept arrangements from school or enterprises. However, in order to carry on the college-enterprise cooperation and talent training, the most important thing is to clarify the focus of cooperation, and give full play to their subjective initiative. For example, student's desire should be considered when he or she chooses profession or internships and their advice should valued during teaching. The virtuous circle from teaching them knowledge to awaking their thinking should be set up.

To Form the System of Cooperation Mechanism by College-Enterprise Discussion

College-enterprise cooperation is not only to invest in construction of practice places for enterprises, to organize students to visit companies at the end of school, but also it is a talent training system, which involves several links such as designing the personal training program, cultivating teaching staff and arranging teaching, internships, employment practices and so on.

To Design the Talent Training System through College-Enterprise Discussion. In terms of both talent training objectives and the curriculum system setting, the tourism colleges should communicate with the enterprises extensively. Firstly, according to the information of enterprise and market, talent training objective should be set in line with human-centered orientation, theory-practice combination and working-learning integration, as well as industry needs; Secondly, the professional courses should be closely around the need of enterprises administration and the demand of talents. At the same time, basic elective courses and professional elective courses are necessary for students' humanistic quality training and providing opportunities for students to continue their education in a certain field; Last but not least, the pattern of "separation between learning and practice" must be broken in order to achieve the integration of theory and practice, that is, training objects are both students and prospective employees of tourism enterprises.

To Develop the Teaching Staff through College-Enterprise Cooperation. The teaching staff is important insurance for the quality of tourism personal training, and it is also the most valuable resource of tourism education in our country at present. To create first-class teaching staff by learning successful experience from America, we must take the way of "going out, come in" as mode of college enterprise cooperation. On one hand, the college should encourage teachers to take position in enterprise and participate in management activities so as to know about the industry situation, and to improve the practice ability. On the other hand, the college should hire staff that has both practical experience and theoretical basis from tourism enterprises as school part-time job, so that their practical ability can be changed into the classroom knowledge. In addition, college should regularly invite experts and scholars or business executives to give lectures in school and to provide real, fresh, effective industry information and management cases for students.

To Construct Laboratory or the Practice Place by College Enterprise Cooperation. Compared with the traditional tourism education, practice teaching is one of the features of college-enterprise cooperation, including classroom practice, on-campus practice and off-campus practice. Classroom practice refers to the students actively participate in class discussions, completing the assignments, etc. On-campus practice refers to the students practice in the simulation rooms, restaurants, or simulated guide training rooms which are set up in the school. Off-campus practice mainly refers to the student practice in enterprise and participate in various social activities, etc. Classroom practice need high-tech teaching equipment, perfect database information, while on-campus or off-campus practice requires practice place. As to college-enterprise cooperation, college generally is responsible for providing teaching equipment and database, while the enterprise is responsible for the construction of laboratory, and provide training base. Therefore, enterprise takes more responsibilities in the process of co-constructing the laboratory or the practice place, college could reward enterprises with the talents or scientific research.

Although the mode of college-enterprise cooperation in the tourism talent training will encounter restriction, such as education system, social, economic, cultural and educational level, all obstacles are temporal, because college-enterprise cooperation is the development law of tourism education. What we should do is to learn from international advanced experiences, to analyze the constraints of the mode Chinese college-enterprise cooperation, foster strengths and circumvent weaknesses, create tourism talents training mode which is either conforming to common international practices or to Chinese characteristics of cooperation.

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