The Effect on Teaching Quality Improvement of China’s Tourism Higher Vocational Education from the UNWTO TedQual Certification—Take the Tourism School of Chengdu Polytechnic as an Example

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Abstract. This thesis takes the tourism school of Chengdu Polytechnic accepting the UNWTO TedQual Certification as an example. By taking UNWTO TedQual Certification as a standard and the spirit of assessment and reform, assessment and construction as the main thought, we work hard to promote the teaching quality of tourism majors, furthermore, to cultivate the interdisciplinary tourism talents who can not only serve local tourist economy but also have international perspectives.

Introduction

The purpose of vocational education is to foster high-skilled talents for our society. Chengdu Polytechnic, as a higher vocational college organized by Chengdu Municipal Government, must take cultivating tourism elites who can not only serve the local economy but also adapt to the international development as the primary objective. The Tourism College of Chengdu Polytechnic has adopted the international certification standards on the basis of the evaluation criteria of the Ministry of Education, to certificate and improve the teaching quality of every major, so as to enhance the teaching quality of Tourism Higher Vocational Education.

Great Contradiction between the Cultivation Quality of Tourism Talents and the Talents Requirements of Local Economy

At present, with the upgrade of people’ consumption and transitional economies, China's tourism industry is being ushered to a best opportunity for development. So that, more strict requirements are given to the tourism talents, consequently, the contradiction between the cultivation quality of tourism talents and the rapid development of the tourism industry become more prominent. In 2015, "the National Tourism Administration, Ministry of Education on the issuance of" accelerating the development of guidance for vocational education of modern tourism "notice" clearly states: "there is a gap between Vocational education and the requirements of tourism, the professional layout and structure are not reasonable, school-enterprise cooperation is not deep enough, the international level is not high, so the school security needs to be strengthened, and the teaching quality needs to be improved."
Located in Chengdu city, Chengdu Polytechnic is a vocational college which serves the local industrial development. Chengdu is a member of the City Tourism Alliance, and the city has an increasing demand for international tourism industry talent with the upgrading and international transformation of tourism industry. As a vocational tourism college whose mission is to serve the local economy, we should strive to cultivate tourism professionals who are qualified to serve the local industry and adapt to the international conditions. To accommodate the development of the tourism industry, Chengdu Polytechnic enhances the quality of personnel training, improve teaching quality, introduces UNWTO-TedQual to benchmark “Evaluation Index System about Talents Cultivation in Higher Vocational Colleges” carried out by the Ministry of Education. Also, the college conduct diagnostic assessments to the tourism industry, establish a dynamic operation mechanism through constantly diagnosis and improvements, so as to spiral upward talent training quality.

Overview on the World Tourism Organization Quality Certificate

Overview on the United Nations World Tourism Organization

United Nation World Tourism Organization (Abbreviation: UNWTO) is an inter-governmental international organizations as well as a leading international organization in the field of tourism. With a purpose of promoting and developing the tourism industry, the UNWTO is conducive to the economic growth, mutual understanding between nations and peace and prosperity. The United Nations World Tourism Organization Education Quality Certificate (hereinafter referred to as UNWTO- TedQual) is a quality certification issued by the United Nations World Tourism Organization. It is a quality certificate with the sole international standard of tourism education, training and research projects, which aims at improving the quality of tourism quality, training and research projects. The evaluation criteria include the following aspects: 1. evaluating the effectiveness of teaching system. 2. Assessing the fitness between the actual teaching system and the tourism industry 3. Assessing students’ recognition for teaching system. Evaluation criteria are generally applicable to any organizations. The diagram of the UNWTO-TedQual certification system standard is as follows:

![Diagram of UNWTO-TedQual certification system standard](image)

Figure 1. UNWTO-TedQual certification system standard.
World Tourism Organization Certification Program

The certification process for UNWTO-TedQual is very rigorous, including request for information, pre-registration, entering the auditing process, and audit and certification.

The Content of Certification for World Tourism Organization

The evaluation index of UNWTO-TedQual consists of Chengdu Polytechnic vision assessment, assessment of students' education, assessment of majors' teaching system, evaluation of teachers, assessment of infrastructure and administrative management.

UNWTO-TedQual pays great attention to the process and details. It holds the view that the promotion of teaching quality starts form detecting problems, which followed by the focus on how to solve the problem. Thus the contrast and data change can be adjusted. However, it is not only the examination data that is important, but also emphasizes the process of completion. In the last part of inspection, evaluation experts would conduct one-to-one conversations with the school’s management, logistics department, Office of Official Administration, Student Affair Office, Office of Supervision, representatives of school-enterprise cooperation, teachers and graduate students. All the conversations are confidential and the results can be reflected in the process. In fact, the process of accepting quality certification from the World Tourism Organization is actually a quality control process, in which problems can be recognized and solved, so that the status quo can be changed, thereby achieving the purpose of enhancing the quality of personnel training.

The Promotion on Vocational College by World Tourism Organization’s Quality Certification

Depending on the authoritative third-party evaluation mechanism to effectively solve the problems existing in the not well-developed education. According to the "Decision on Accelerating the Development of Modern Vocational Education" issued by the State Council in 2014: vocational education should be oriented to train billions of high-quality technical workers and skilled personnel, which makes it important to improve the quality of personnel training and strengthen supervision. Relying on a high level and international compatible third-party evaluation agency, the application of UNWTO-TedQual is to establish a diversified and comprehensible evaluation system for education.

Six majors under tourism in Vocational Polytechnic have applied the educational quality certificate. After undergoing a rigorous on-site audit and information-searching, all the six majors have passed the quality certificate. At the same time, the experts clearly stated several problems faced by the vocational college, that is, teachers haven’t totally received international training; some teachers’ oral English are not good; students should widen their international horizon; and there is a certain gap between China and some developed countries in terms of curriculum and teaching methods. To solve the problems above, the six majors have analyzed the development plan for each major under the Learning and Teaching Council, and have made some improvement correspondingly.

For example, professional teacher spend the summer vacation to take part in state-level elite-teacher training and certification exams held by Ministry of Education.

After passing the quality certification of UNWTO-TedQual, the six majors can be benefitted of the shared resources from WTO, thus enhancing the professional reputation and building the confidence of teachers and students. As a result, the international level of the six major is promoted apparently.
According to statistics, within the six majors, the numbers of oversea employment takes thirty percentages of the total graduates. What’s more the oversea internship also grows year by year. Therefore, students international horizon has been widened, leading to high recognition for their alma mater. Besides this, teachers from hotel management major, which is a national elite major, all received the training in American Hotel & Lodging Association, and got certificates which are acknowledged worldwide. In addition, Chengdu Polytechnic also corporate with famous universities abroad, inviting well-known experts in the tourism industry to carry out "International Course Week" and other activities on a regular basis. By conducting a series of activities, Chengdu Polytechnic improves students’ international level of employment, promotes teachers’ teaching ability and diversifies the college’s international curriculum.

**Benchmarking UNWTO-TedQual Standard to Construct a Diagnosis and Improvement Mechanism toward the Teaching Quality of Tourism Specialty.** With global trend of the tourism industry, the specialty teaching quality and the personnel training quality of tourism vocational college should meet the international requirements, for current domestic and local standards of tourism industry cannot meet the trend of internationalization of tourism education. To improve the teaching quality of tourism major, we need to build a specialized standard system of tourism meeting the international standards to diagnose the quality of teaching.

Based on its own industrial and regional positioning, Chengdu Polytechnic diagnoses the quality of teaching by taking the industrial upgrading of tourism and the international transformation of Chengdu as an opportunity, the professional authority of tourism—the quality requirements of the United Nations World Tourism Organization as an object, and by importing the certification standards which can reflect the idea of international tourism, to build a professional map containing local, industrial, domestic and international tourism. The measure adopted have enhanced the teaching quality and international level of tourism. Since the day of applying for certification, every major of tourism has made full preparations, the running achievement of which has been tested with the contents and standard involved in UNWTO-TedQual. All of the staff and students make efforts under the vision and mission, which are ultimately formed after discussions and brainstorming of the tourism school. The most conspicuous feature of UNWTO-TedQual is student-centered, in which all authentications focuses on students’ talent cultivating. In addition, after being certificated, the school of tourism put the rationality, continuity and validity of the teaching system into an important position, to optimize the teaching system. Finally, to improve the education quality through the evaluation and improvement of teachers.

The effectiveness of diagnosing and improving the practice has been proved by every major’s passing UNWTO-TedQual. This school use the certification mode to find problems of education quality, and after that establish an effective diagnosis mechanism. The mode used can be a good reference for tourism specialty of domestic vocational colleges to diagnose and improve the teaching quality.

**Centering on “One Belt One Role” Strategy to Cultivate the Interdisciplinary Tourism Talents Who Can Not Only Serve Local Tourist Economy But Also Have International Perspectives.** In the year of 2015, “Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road” was jointly issued by National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China. The document systematically describes the
overall strategic vision and preliminary planning of “one belt one road” strategy. Chengdu, an important economic, educational, cultural and financial center of southwestern China, is specially referred to as “Inland Open Highland”. Chengdu Polytechnic is a vocational college of service supported by Chengdu municipal government. On the one hand, Chengdu Polytechnic aims to cultivate talents serving the local economy, tourism scenic spots with Chengdu characteristic, star hotels and airlines. On the other, under the background of “one belt one road” strategy of China, how to improve the employability and international level of graduates becomes a new task. After applying UNWTO TedQual, we can compensate the drawback that this is no quality evaluation for the cultivation of professional talents. Only when we know the weakness of tourism majors in terms of international employment, international further study, international view, and international curriculum, can we construct a tourism-specific talents-cultivating mode which can comprehensively serve the local economy and develop internationally. We intend to realize the vision and mission “to be education leaders of Chinese western tourism, and to cultivate sophisticated tourism icon ”, to form a talent-cultivating mode which combines the international features and local economy.

In conclusion, the author holds the view that it is of great importance to improve the talent-cultivating quality of tourism colleges through UNWTO TedQual. Tourism colleges can find problems through UNWTO TedQual, and they can find good ways to solve the problems after diagnosing. With continuous benchmarking improvement, we can improve the talent-cultivating quality and cultivate the interdisciplinary talents who can not only serve local economy but also realize internationalization.

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