

Research on Teaching Reform of the Travel Agency Management Course in Application-Oriented Undergraduate Colleges

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Abstract: This paper focuses on teaching reform in travel agency management courses at applied undergraduate institutions. It first analyzes existing issues in current course instruction, including the disconnect between teaching content and practical needs, monotonous teaching methods, and weak practical training components. The necessity of educational reform is then discussed, emphasizing its significance in cultivating industry-ready professionals for the travel agency sector. Specific reform strategies are proposed across four dimensions: curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, practical training, and assessment mechanisms. Finally, the paper outlines anticipated outcomes to provide valuable references for improving teaching quality and nurturing high-caliber professionals who can meet evolving industry demands.

Keywords: Application-oriented undergraduate institutions; Travel agency management curriculum; Teaching reform; Practical teaching; Applied talents

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1. Introduction

With the booming development of China's tourism industry, travel agencies, as a crucial component of the tourism sector, are experiencing growing demand for professional talent ^[1]. Applied undergraduate institutions bear the responsibility of cultivating practical professionals for society ^[2]. As one of the core courses in tourism management programs, the quality of travel agency management instruction directly determines students' ability to excel in travel agency-related roles. However, current teaching practices in this course at applied undergraduate institutions face multiple challenges that fail to meet industry demands. Therefore, implementing pedagogical reforms in this curriculum holds significant practical importance.

2. Teaching status and problems of travel agency management in application-oriented undergraduate colleges

2.1. Disconnection between curriculum and industry needs

Travel agency management courses in some institutions suffer from outdated content that fails to keep pace with the tourism industry's rapid evolution^[3]. Specifically, textbooks contain case studies and theoretical frameworks that starkly contrast with real-world operations in the sector. This disconnect makes classroom knowledge difficult to apply in actual work scenarios. For instance, marketing strategies described in textbooks often fail to meet modern market demands, as traditional approaches have become obsolete. Meanwhile, discussions on emerging digital marketing and social media strategies remain insufficient, failing to reflect current industry trends. Such misalignment between curriculum and practical needs not only undermines students' learning outcomes but also limits their career competitiveness in the future.

2.2. Monotonous teaching methods

In current travel agency management courses, traditional teacher-centered lecture-based instruction remains dominant^[4]. Specifically, instructors primarily focus on one-way theoretical indoctrination through rigid teaching patterns—delivering content from start to finish while students remain passive recipients, lacking opportunities for active participation in classroom discussions or critical thinking. This singular approach not only fails to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm but also restricts cognitive development, hindering the cultivation of innovative thinking and practical operational skills. Over time, students may find the course content tedious and unengaging, ultimately compromising learning outcomes and failing to achieve the goal of developing high-caliber professionals in travel agency management.

2.3. Weak practical teaching components

Travel agency management is a highly practical discipline, yet many applied undergraduate institutions currently lack adequate practical training programs^[5]. On one hand, the insufficient scheduling of hands-on sessions leaves students without enough time for real-world practice. On the other hand, underdeveloped training bases and superficial collaborations with travel agencies prevent students from experiencing authentic business operations, resulting in significantly diminished practical learning outcomes.

2.4. Unreasonable assessment methods

The current evaluation system primarily relies on final exams, focusing on assessing students' theoretical knowledge while neglecting the evaluation of practical skills and comprehensive qualities. This approach tends to encourage rote memorization, resulting in students lacking both understanding and application of knowledge. Consequently, it fails to comprehensively reflect students' learning progress and practical capabilities.

3. The necessity of teaching reform of travel agency management in application-oriented undergraduate colleges

3.1. Addressing the urgent needs of industry development

With the continuous dynamic changes in the tourism market and increasingly fierce competition, the travel agency sector has raised its standards for high-quality professionals. Applied undergraduate institutions must not only ensure students acquire systematic theoretical knowledge but also emphasize cultivating practical

skills, innovative thinking, and efficient teamwork capabilities. By thoroughly implementing teaching reforms, optimizing curriculum design and instructional methods, educational content can better align with the actual demands of the travel agency industry. This approach effectively nurtures high-caliber applied professionals who meet the pressing needs of industry development.

3.2. The imperative to enhance teaching quality

To achieve comprehensive educational improvement, pedagogical reform has become essential. This initiative effectively breaks free from the constraints of traditional teaching models by actively integrating advanced educational philosophies and diversified methodologies. Such reforms significantly stimulate students' learning interest while fully mobilizing their enthusiasm and proactive engagement. Furthermore, through targeted enhancements in practical training components, students can not only gain a deeper understanding and mastery of acquired knowledge and skills in authentic learning environments, but also witness substantial improvements in overall teaching quality. This ensures that educational activities become more efficient and productive.

3.3. The pressing need to boost student employment

Graduates from applied undergraduate institutions primarily enter the travel agency sector and related tourism enterprises. To better meet this employment demand, schools must implement comprehensive teaching reforms. These reforms aim to holistically enhance students' practical skills and professional competencies, ensuring they can swiftly adapt to workplace requirements upon entering the workforce. This approach not only significantly strengthens graduates' employability but also effectively broadens their career pathways, creating more job opportunities that help them stand out in today's competitive job market.

4. Teaching reform strategies of travel agency management curriculum in application-oriented undergraduate colleges

4.1. Optimizing teaching content

Closely track the latest developments in the tourism industry to ensure timely updates in teaching materials. Systematically integrate key elements such as cutting-edge industry trends, current policies and regulations, and advanced management concepts into the teaching process. For instance, incorporate detailed content on emerging business areas like smart tourism and customized travel services to help students comprehensively understand and master the latest industry developments. Additionally, actively integrate various teaching resources beyond traditional textbooks, including industry reports, classic case studies, high-quality video materials, and other formats that align with course content to enrich and expand instructional materials. Simultaneously, closely aligns with the actual operations and specific needs of local travel agencies to develop school-based textbooks. This ensures teaching content not only maintains theoretical depth but also demonstrates strong practicality and applicability, thereby better meeting students' learning requirements and future career development needs.

4.2. Innovative teaching methods

Educators actively introduce and implement case-based teaching methods by carefully selecting representative real-world travel agency operation cases to facilitate in-depth analysis and lively discussions among students. Through immersive case learning, students not only gain an intuitive understanding of core theories and

practical methods in travel agency management but also sharpen their critical thinking through simulated real-world scenarios. The application of case teaching has significantly enhanced students' ability to analyze complex issues and solve practical problems. Additionally, educators vigorously promote project-based learning by breaking down the rich content of travel agency management courses into specific project tasks, guiding students to tackle them through group collaboration. During project implementation, students experience firsthand market research, product design, marketing planning, and other processes. This hands-on training greatly strengthens their practical operational skills and team spirit. Meanwhile, modern information technology is fully utilized to conduct blended online-offline teaching. Platforms like MOOCs and Yu Classroom provide students with abundant and diverse learning resources, breaking time and space constraints to enable self-directed learning anytime, anywhere. Building on this foundation, traditional offline classroom teaching combines with face-to-face interactions and detailed guidance from instructors, creating a complementary online-offline synergy that effectively enhances overall teaching effectiveness.

4.3. Enhancing practical education

To comprehensively improve students' hands-on capabilities, schools should significantly increase practical teaching hours and scientifically organize all related components, ensuring these sessions account for at least one-third of total instructional time. This enhanced practical model allows students to experience travel agency operations firsthand, thereby continuously refining their professional skills through real-world practice. Additionally, schools should strengthen the development of practical training bases by collaborating closely with major travel agencies to establish stable, high-quality facilities. Specifically, institutions could co-develop detailed internship plans with agencies, systematically arranging field-based training where students learn through simulated work environments. Schools should also regularly invite agency executives and key personnel for specialized lectures and on-site guidance, providing diverse practical opportunities. To further develop students' adaptability, schools may conduct simulation-based training using travel management software, creating a realistic operational environment on campus. In this simulated setting, students can engage in comprehensive tasks including tourism product design, itinerary pricing, and group reception management. Through such immersive practice, they effectively enhance both operational skills and crisis response capabilities.

4.4. Reforming assessment methods

To comprehensively and objectively evaluate students' learning outcomes, educators advocate adopting diversified assessment approaches that holistically assess both learning processes and results. While traditional final exams remain crucial, their single-form evaluation system fails to fully reflect students' practical capabilities. Educators propose incorporating multiple assessment components into the evaluation framework, including regular assignment completion, classroom participation, practical project performance, and contributions in group discussions. These diversified methods enable more comprehensive assessments of students' academic progress and real-world competencies. Notably, greater emphasis should be placed on evaluating practical skills through appropriately increased weighting in assessments. As practice serves as the sole criterion for testing truth, students' practical abilities directly impact their future career development. Therefore, incorporating practical project completion as a key assessment indicator proves essential. For instance, internship performance at travel agencies, achievements in simulated practical training, and

participation in various hands-on activities should all be included in evaluations to ensure fairness and comprehensiveness. Through these reforms, educators aim to authentically reflect students' learning outcomes while motivating well-rounded development.

5. Expected effects of reform

5.1. Significantly enhancing students' learning engagement and outcomes

By systematically refining course content and innovating teaching methodologies, educators transform instruction into dynamic and engaging experiences that effectively stimulate students' interest. In this immersive learning environment, students actively participate with heightened enthusiasm, thereby gaining deeper mastery of travel agency management knowledge and practical skills through hands-on practice. This approach ultimately achieves remarkable improvements in learning outcomes.

5.2. Significantly enhancing students' practical competence and comprehensive professional qualities

By systematically strengthening practical training components, this approach ensures students gain substantial hands-on experience and growth opportunities through real-world operations, effectively boosting their practical skills and overall professional competence. Through this cultivation model, graduates will be well-prepared to swiftly adapt to various job requirements in travel agencies. Armed with solid professional knowledge and proficient operational skills, they will make positive and impactful contributions to the sustainable development and business innovation of travel agencies.

5.3. Enhancing teachers' teaching competence and professional development

As educational reforms deepen, higher demands are placed on teachers' instructional capabilities and professional expertise. This necessitates continuous learning and self-improvement, requiring educators to actively update their knowledge systems and teaching methodologies to meet modern educational needs, thereby significantly elevating their teaching proficiency and professional standards. Through practical implementation of these reforms, teachers accumulate diverse teaching experiences by experimenting with innovative pedagogical approaches. These accumulated experiences not only enhance current teaching effectiveness but also establish a solid foundation for future career growth, enabling educators to sustain their professional impact in the field of education and contribute to cultivating more outstanding talents.

5.4. Actively promote in-depth collaboration and extensive exchanges between schools and travel agencies

By meticulously establishing and maintaining practical teaching bases, along with continuously strengthening comprehensive cooperation with travel agencies, the bond between schools and travel agencies has been significantly enhanced. On this foundation, both parties can not only engage in deeper and more substantive exchanges and collaborations in key areas such as cultivating high-quality talents, developing distinctive courses, and conducting cutting-edge research partnerships, but also effectively integrate their respective advantageous resources. Together, they can explore innovative cooperation models to truly achieve resource sharing, complementary strengths, and mutual benefits. This establishes a solid foundation for the long-term development of both parties.

6. Conclusions

The curriculum reform of travel agency management courses in applied undergraduate institutions is an essential requirement to adapt to industry development and enhance teaching quality. By optimizing course content, innovating teaching methods, strengthening practical training, and reforming assessment approaches, educators can address existing issues in current instruction, improve educational standards, and cultivate more application-oriented professionals who meet the demands of the travel agency industry. During this reform process, it requires collaborative efforts from schools, faculty, and students to continuously explore and implement practical solutions, thereby achieving better reform outcomes.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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