

Research on the Construction of International Consumption Center City from the Perspective of Innovative Talents —Taking Haikou City as an Example

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Abstract: This article focuses on the perspective of innovative talents and explores the development path for Haikou City to become an international consumer city. By analyzing the crucial role of innovative talents in building an international consumer center, and considering Haikou's advantages in policy and resources, as well as the current talent situation and challenges faced during the construction process, the article proposes strategies from multiple dimensions, including the introduction, cultivation, motivation, and optimization of the talent development environment. The aim is to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for Haikou to accelerate the construction of an international consumer center and achieve high-quality economic development.

Keywords: Innovative talents; International consumer city center; Haikou city; Talent strategy

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1. Introduction

In the context of economic globalization and consumption upgrades, international consumer cities, as key nodes that connect domestic and foreign markets, lead consumption trends and drive economic growth, and play a crucial role. In July 2021, the State Council approved Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou, and Chongqing to lead the development of international consumer cities ^[1]. This strategic move underscores the country's strong emphasis on the development of the consumption sector. Haikou City, as the capital of Hainan Province, has significant potential for becoming an international consumer city, thanks to the policy advantages of the Hainan Free Trade Port, its unique tourism resources, and its advantageous geographical location ^[2].

Innovative talents are the core driving force behind urban development. For the construction of an international consumer center city, these talents can introduce new concepts, technologies, and business models,

fostering innovation in consumption scenarios, building strong consumer brands, and enhancing the consumption environment ^[3-4]. This, in turn, boosts the city's international competitiveness and appeal to consumers. Studying Haikou's international consumer center city construction from the perspective of innovative talents can help uncover the intrinsic connection between talent and urban development, explore more targeted and effective construction paths, and help Haikou stand out on the global consumer stage ^[5].

2. The importance of innovative talents to the construction of an international consumer center city

2.1. Promote consumption innovation and upgrading

Innovative talents can keenly identify new trends and demands in the consumer market, driving consumption innovation through innovative product design, service models, and marketing strategies ^[6]. For instance, in Haikou's tourism sector, these talents can develop tourism products that blend local cultural elements with modern technology, such as VR historical and cultural tours and smart coastal resort services ^[7]. These offerings meet consumers' demand for personalized and high-quality travel experiences, thereby promoting the upgrade of tourism consumption. In the commercial retail sector, innovative talents introduce new sales models like unmanned retail and live-streaming sales, enhancing shopping convenience and fun, stimulating consumer purchasing desire, and driving the innovative development of retail consumption ^[8-9].

2.2. Help build international consumer brands

Brand building is a crucial component in the development of international consumer centers. Innovative talents possess unique skills in brand planning and promotion, enabling them to deeply explore the cultural essence of Haikou and integrate it into brand development, thereby creating local consumer brands with international influence ^[10]. For instance, leveraging Hainan's tropical agricultural products, innovative talents can position, design packaging, and promote these local specialties to create internationally recognized green and healthy food brands ^[11]. Additionally, by leveraging their international perspective and business negotiation skills, innovative talents can attract more international brands to Haikou, thereby enhancing the city's brand presence and consumer appeal ^[12].

2.3. Optimize the consumption environment and services

A favorable consumption environment and high-quality services are key indicators of an international consumer city. Innovative talents play a crucial role in enhancing the consumption environment ^[13]. They can leverage technologies like big data and artificial intelligence to improve the intelligent management of consumption venues, as well as enhance infrastructure services such as transportation, parking, and payment systems ^[14]. For example, smart traffic systems can optimize traffic flow around tourist attractions, and mobile payment technology can make shopping more convenient. In terms of service, innovative talents can introduce advanced international service concepts and management models, train service staff, and improve service quality and international standards, providing consumers with a more comfortable, convenient, and efficient experience ^[15].

2.4. Promote industrial integration and coordinated development

The development of international consumer cities involves multiple sectors, including tourism, commerce, culture, and finance, requiring coordinated development across these sectors. Innovative talents possess interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, enabling them to break down barriers between industries and foster integrated innovation ^[16]. For instance,

in Haikou City, innovative talents can drive the integration of tourism, culture, and commerce, creating culturally distinctive commercial districts, organizing tourism and cultural festivals, and organically combining tourism, shopping, and cultural experiences. This approach forms new consumption growth points and enhances the city's overall competitiveness in the consumer market ^[17].

3. Analysis of the current situation of Haikou city in building an international consumer city and the demand for innovative talents

3.1. The current situation of Haikou city in building an international consumer center city

3.1.1. Significant policy advantages

As the construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port advances, Haikou City has benefited from a series of preferential policies. These include the continuous optimization of the duty-free shopping policy, increased tax-free shopping quotas, and a wider range of products, all of which have significantly boosted the consumer market. In 2024, customs supervised a total of 30.94 billion yuan in Hainan's duty-free shopping, with 5.683 million shoppers and 33.082 million items purchased, highlighting Haikou's significant contribution to duty-free shopping ^[18–19]. Additionally, policies such as relaxed market access and tax incentives have attracted numerous domestic and foreign enterprises to invest in Haikou's consumer sector, laying a solid policy foundation for the development of an international consumption center city.

3.1.2. Expansion of consumer market

In recent years, the consumer market in Haikou has seen continuous growth. In 2023, the city's total retail sales of consumer goods reached 109.3 billion yuan, marking a 9% increase from the previous year. The city welcomed 23.95 million visitors, generating a tourism revenue of 38.6 billion yuan, representing increases of 28% and 31%, respectively. Key drivers of this growth include tourism consumption, duty-free shopping, and the integration of cultural, sports, tourism, commerce, and exhibition activities. For instance, by promoting Haikou's image as a New Year's Eve City and hosting events like the Hunan TV Mango TV New Year's Eve Gala, the city organized over 200 performances in 2023. Among these, 15 large-scale commercial performances attracted more than 10,000 attendees, drawing 380,000 visitors and generating 1.78 billion yuan in tourism revenue, significantly boosting the prosperity of the consumer market ^[20].

3.1.3. Increasing variety of consumption formats

Haikou City is actively promoting the innovation of consumer formats. In addition to traditional sectors like tourism, shopping, and dining, new consumer formats are constantly emerging. For instance, the sports + tourism model centered on sailing and the cultural street + tourism model in the northern part of Haidian Creek, which integrates cultural and commercial elements, offer new consumer experiences to both residents and visitors. Meanwhile, new consumption models such as cross-border e-commerce and live-streaming e-commerce are rapidly developing. New consumption scenes, including the China-Japan-Korea consumption zone e-commerce experience center, are continuously emerging, enriching the consumer market's offerings.

3.2. Demand for innovative talents in Haikou's construction of an international consumer city

3.2.1. Tourism consumption field

There is a need for innovative talents who can design innovative tourism products and excel in marketing and

promotion. These talents should be capable of developing unique and appealing tourism products, such as high-end vacation packages and cultural experience tours, and promoting them through international marketing channels to attract more international tourists. Additionally, there is a need for innovative talents in tourism service management to enhance the quality and efficiency of tourism services, meeting the diverse needs of international tourists.

3.2.2. Duty-free shopping area

There is a need for innovative talents proficient in international trade, cross-border e-commerce, brand operations, and management. These individuals should be able to understand the dynamics of the international goods market, optimize the categories and structure of duty-free products, and enhance the operational efficiency and service quality of duty-free stores. Additionally, there is a demand for talents with innovative thinking and the ability to integrate different industries, particularly in the integration of duty-free shopping with other sectors, to promote new models such as duty-free + tourism and duty-free + culture.

3.2.3. Integration of culture, tourism, and business exhibitions

Innovative talents are needed who possess a range of skills, including cultural and creative planning, event organization and operation, business management, and marketing. They should be capable of organizing and hosting cultural and sports events, as well as commercial exhibitions with international influence, to promote the deep integration of industries such as culture, sports, tourism, and trade. For example, organizing international music festivals, international sports events, and international consumer goods expos requires a professional team for planning, organizing, and operating these events.

3.2.4. Digital consumption

With the widespread application of digital technology in the consumer sector, there is a growing need for innovative talents skilled in big data, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT). These talents can enhance the intelligence of consumer scenarios, conduct precise marketing, and optimize consumer experiences by leveraging these technologies. For instance, big data analysis can help businesses gain insights into consumer shopping behaviors and preferences, providing them with accurate market information to achieve personalized recommendations and marketing strategies. Additionally, AI technology can be used to develop intelligent customer service and shopping guidance features, thereby improving service efficiency and quality.

4. The current situation and existing problems of innovative talents in Haikou City

4.1. Insufficient number of innovative talents

Compared to first-tier cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, Haikou City has a relatively smaller number of innovative talents. According to relevant statistics, the number of innovative talents per 10,000 people in Haikou is significantly lower than the national average for developed cities. In key sectors such as tourism, commerce, and culture, the shortage of innovative talents is particularly pronounced, making it difficult to meet the rapid development needs of building an international consumer center city. For example, there is a lack of experienced and skilled innovative talents in developing high-end tourism products and managing international brands, which hinders the innovative development of these industries.

4.2. Unreasonable talent structure

In terms of the professional structure of talents, Haikou City's innovative talents are mainly concentrated in traditional sectors such as tourism services and trade circulation. However, there is a relative shortage of talent in emerging industries and cutting-edge technologies, such as the digital economy, artificial intelligence, and cultural and creative design. Regarding the talent hierarchy, there is a lack of high-level innovative talents and leading figures, and there is a shortage of internationally influential industry experts and entrepreneurs. This imbalanced talent structure makes it challenging for Haikou City to establish a competitive edge in emerging consumption sectors and high-end consumer markets during its development as an international consumption center city.

4.3. Limited talent attraction

Haikou City faces numerous challenges in attracting innovative talent. Firstly, compared to first-tier cities, Haikou's economic development, industrial support, and job opportunities are relatively limited, making it less attractive to innovative talents. Many outstanding innovative talents prefer to work and develop in more economically advanced cities with more development opportunities. Secondly, Haikou's talent policies fall short in terms of the extent of incentives, coverage, and implementation effectiveness, failing to meet the diverse needs of innovative talents. For instance, policies regarding housing, children's education, and medical care are not sufficiently robust, which affects the sense of belonging and stability of these talents.

4.4. The talent training system is not perfect

Hainan City's higher education and vocational education face several challenges in fostering innovative talent. The curriculum of universities is not closely aligned with market demands, and some courses are outdated, lacking practical components, which results in students lacking innovation and practical skills. Vocational education lags behind, with a lack of high-quality training institutions that can effectively connect with the industry, making it difficult to meet the demand for skilled and innovative professionals from businesses. Moreover, enterprises do not fully leverage their role in talent development, lacking a robust internal training system and career advancement mechanisms, which hinders employee career growth and innovation enthusiasm.

5. Construction strategies of Haikou international consumption center city from the perspective of innovative talents

5.1. Strengthen the introduction of innovative talents

5.1.1. Formulate targeted talent introduction policies

To meet the industrial needs of Haikou city's international consumer center city construction, the government will formulate attractive talent introduction policies. For innovative talents in key areas such as tourism, duty-free shopping, the integration of culture, sports, tourism, commerce, and exhibitions, and digital consumption, the government will provide policy support, including tax incentives, housing subsidies, and talent apartments. For instance, high-level innovative talents introduced will receive a certain period of personal income tax reduction; new talents will be provided with 3 to 5 years of talent apartment rental services to address their housing needs. Additionally, a special fund for talent introduction will be established to reward units and individuals who excel in talent introduction efforts.

5.1.2. Expand channels for talent introduction

Strengthen cooperation with domestic and international universities and research institutions, establish talent liaison stations, and regularly organize job fairs and project matchmaking events to attract outstanding graduates and high-end talents to develop in Haikou. Actively participate in international talent exchange activities, leveraging the open platform of the Hainan Free Trade Port to attract globally-oriented and innovative talents from around the world. Additionally, encourage enterprises to introduce urgently needed innovative talents through headhunting companies and talent intermediaries, and provide financial subsidies to enterprises that successfully attract such talents.

5.2. Strengthen the training of innovative talents

5.2.1. Optimize the setting of disciplines and majors in colleges and universities

To guide universities in Haikou City to adjust and optimize their academic programs based on the needs of building an international consumption hub. Enhance the development of majors in tourism management, international trade, and cultural creativity, and introduce new majors such as digital economy, artificial intelligence, and cross-border e-commerce to cultivate innovative talents that meet market demands. Additionally, encourage universities to collaborate with enterprises in talent development, establish internship and training bases, and enable students to enhance their innovation and practical skills through hands-on experience.

5.2.2. Improve the vocational education system

Increase investment in vocational education and develop a number of high-level vocational colleges and training institutions. Based on industry needs, offer courses in tourism services, business operations, cultural arts, and other related vocational skills to cultivate skilled and innovative talents. Establish a vocational qualification certification system, providing subsidies and rewards to those who have obtained relevant certificates through vocational skills training. Additionally, encourage companies to conduct internal training to enhance employees' professional skills and innovation capabilities, and provide policy support and financial incentives to companies that show significant results in their training programs.

5.3. Establish an incentive mechanism for innovative talents

5.3.1. Improve the compensation incentive system

Encourage enterprises to establish a performance-oriented compensation system, offering appropriate remuneration based on work performance and contributions of innovative talents. Talents who achieve outstanding results in technological innovation, product innovation, and business model innovation should be given substantial bonuses and equity incentives. Additionally, the government can establish an innovation talent reward fund to recognize and reward innovative talents who have made significant contributions to the development of Haikou as an international consumption center, thereby enhancing their social status and sense of honor.

5.3.2. Provide good career development space

Enterprises should provide a broad career development space for innovative talents and establish a comprehensive talent promotion mechanism and career development plan. They should encourage these talents to participate in major projects and innovation activities, granting them full autonomy and decision-making power. The government can facilitate talent exchange by organizing various academic seminars, industry forums, and other events, providing opportunities for innovative talents to learn, exchange ideas, and showcase their achievements,

thereby promoting their professional growth and development.

5.4. Optimize the development environment for innovative talents

5.4.1. Improve infrastructure and public services

Increase investment in urban infrastructure to improve transportation, communication, education, and healthcare, thereby enhancing the quality of life and livability in cities. Optimize the allocation of public service resources to improve the quality of education and healthcare, providing high-quality educational and medical services for innovative talents and their families. For example, by introducing high-quality educational resources from both domestic and international sources, building international schools and hospitals to meet the diverse needs of talent.

5.4.2. Create an atmosphere for innovation and entrepreneurship

The government should enhance its support and guidance for innovation and entrepreneurship by establishing incubation bases and co-working spaces. These facilities will offer one-stop services, including entrepreneurial venues, financial support, and technical services, to innovative talents. The government should also organize innovation and entrepreneurship competitions, training sessions, and other activities to ignite the passion for innovation and entrepreneurship among talents. Additionally, it is crucial to strengthen intellectual property protection, improve relevant laws and regulations, and create a fair competitive market environment to provide robust support for the innovative activities of talented individuals.

6. Conclusion

Innovative talents are the core driving force behind Haikou's efforts to become an international consumer city. They play an indispensable role in promoting consumption innovation, brand building, environmental optimization, and industrial integration. While Haikou has made some progress in this area, it still faces challenges such as a shortage of innovative talents, an unreasonable structure, limited appeal, and an incomplete training system. By intensifying the recruitment of innovative talents, enhancing talent development, establishing incentive mechanisms, and optimizing the talent development environment, Haikou can attract and retain more innovative talents, providing a solid foundation for its international consumer city construction. In the future, Haikou should continue to emphasize the importance of innovative talents, continuously improve talent policies and measures, fully leverage its talent advantages, accelerate the pace of international consumer city construction, enhance the city's international competitiveness and influence, and contribute more to the development of the Hainan Free Trade Port and China's high-quality economic growth.

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