

Development Strategies for Educational Travel at Xuzhou Museum in the Background of Cultural and Tourism Integration

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Abstract: “Promoting tourism through culture and highlighting culture through tourism” is an important concept for promoting the integrated development of cultural tourism in the new era. Museums, rich in historical and cultural resources, serve not only as vital windows showcasing the ancient and modern aspects of a city as well as its regional characteristics, but also as indispensable educational resources for educational travel. By presenting regional cultural characteristics, museum educational travel effectively enhances students’ comprehensive qualities and fulfills its cultural and tourism educational functions. This paper discusses the development strategies for educational travel at Xuzhou Museum in the context of cultural and tourism integration, considering aspects such as the resource advantages of Xuzhou Museum, opportunities for educational travel, and challenges faced in educational travel.

Keywords: Cultural and tourism integration; Museums; Educational travel; Xuzhou Museum

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1. Introduction

“Culture is the soul of tourism, and tourism is the carrier of culture”^[1]. Culture enriches the connotations and forms of tourism and serves as the foundation for enhancing core competitiveness. By reshaping cultural resources through tourism, people can activate culture and enhance its appeal. As a vital platform for displaying human cultural and natural heritage, museums connect a city’s past with its future, playing an irreplaceable role in exploring urban cultural heritage and disseminating regional culture. The “Guidelines on Promoting the Reform and Development of Museums” explicitly state: “We should leverage the educational functions of museums, support their participation in students’ research and practical activities, and encourage museums to become important carriers for students’ research and practice. We should optimize dissemination services and fully harness the role of museums in integrating culture and tourism and promoting cultural consumption.” Museums possess two core competitive elements: rich collections and cultural platforms^[2]. Research-based travel represents a new

form of tourism transformation, combining “research-based learning with travel experiences” to cultivate students’ innovative spirit and practical abilities, serving as a new avenue for quality education for young people^[3]. Better integrating museum education with school education is more conducive to preserving historical and cultural heritage and enhancing students’ comprehensive qualities. The Xuzhou Museum is a “National Research and Practice Base for Primary and Secondary School Students” and an important repository of historical and cultural heritage. Against the backdrop of integrating culture and tourism in the new era, it is particularly important to explore the resource advantages, opportunities, development status, and challenges faced by research-based travel in Xuzhou. By proposing corresponding development strategies for research-based travel, we aim to promote the sustained and healthy development of research-based travel in Xuzhou and contribute to the deepening of youth education and cultural heritage innovation.

2. Xuzhou Museum: Resource advantages, opportunities, and challenges in educational travel

The Xuzhou Museum is located in Xuzhou City, Jiangsu Province, which is the birthplace of the Han Dynasty culture and boasts a profound cultural heritage of the Han era. As a national first-class museum, a national educational practice base for primary and secondary school students, a national civilized unit, a patriotism education base in Jiangsu Province and Xuzhou City, and an outstanding national base for popularizing humanities and social sciences, the Xuzhou Museum is a comprehensive institution dedicated to the excavation, display, preservation, collection, and research of historical artifacts in Xuzhou. The museum comprises four parts: the ruins of the Western Han Dynasty quarry, the Qing Dynasty Qianlong Palace, the exhibition building, and the tomb of the King of Pengcheng in the Eastern Han Dynasty. It is a comprehensive museum featuring Han culture and integrating ancient ruins, ancient architecture, and ancient tombs. The Xuzhou Museum boasts abundant resources and a complete collection system, showcasing the rich Han culture of Xuzhou and highlighting its unique historical and cultural heritage.

2.1. Resource advantages of the Xuzhou Museum

2.1.1. Abundant collection resources

The Xuzhou Museum comprises four parts: the ruins of the Western Han Dynasty quarry, the Qing Dynasty Qianlong Palace, the exhibition building, and the tomb of the King of Pengcheng in the Eastern Han Dynasty. It is a comprehensive museum featuring Han culture and integrating ancient ruins, ancient architecture, and ancient tombs. The museum boasts abundant resources and a complete collection system, primarily including categories such as ceramics, jade artifacts, terracotta figurines, gold and silver artifacts, bronze and iron artifacts, seals, calligraphy and paintings, and miscellaneous items.

2.1.2. Superior geographical location

The Xuzhou Museum is situated in the heart of Xuzhou City, Jiangsu Province. Xuzhou is the birthplace of Han Dynasty culture, boasting a profound cultural heritage. Adjacent to Shandong and Anhui provinces, Xuzhou enjoys excellent transportation links, with an airport, high-speed rail, and subway system, making travel convenient by both car and public transportation. The museum is surrounded by lush, tree-lined parks, offering visitors the opportunity to take a leisurely stroll and enjoy the natural scenery after their museum visit.

2.2. Opportunities and advantages for study Travel at the Xuzhou Museum

2.2.1. National and local policy support

Both the national and local governments place great emphasis on study travel to museums. The state has introduced a series of policies to encourage museums to carry out educational activities, and the local government of Xuzhou also supports the Xuzhou Museum in organizing study travel programs. The Xuzhou Museum has been successfully selected as a “National Study and Practice Education Camp for Primary and Secondary School Students”, and its “Study Travel at the Xuzhou Museum” program was included in the Top 100 Cultural Heritage Tourism Cases in China for 2022. The “14th Five-Year Plan” for the development of the Xuzhou Museum proposes the implementation of a “Museum+” strategy to carry out educational and practical activities.

2.2.2. Access to multi-themed study and education bases

Leveraging its advantageous resources, such as Xuzhou’s Han culture, military culture, culinary culture, and historical heritage, the Xuzhou Museum has developed a range of themed educational tourism routes, including those focused on Han culture studies, historical culture, military culture, and etiquette culture studies. These products enable young people to experience and learn through travel, to gain cognition and appreciation through real-life scenarios, and to enhance their character, willpower, and knowledge during their journeys.

2.3. Current status of educational travel at the Xuzhou Museum

2.3.1. Diverse activity design

The Xuzhou Museum offers a variety of educational theme activities tailored to students of different age groups, such as national defense science popularization, intangible cultural heritage lacquer fan making, and intangible cultural heritage paper cutting. These activities are not only educational but also engaging and interactive. Special courses like “Extended Classes at the Museum” and “Science Laboratories at the Museum” allow students to continue exploring and learning after school hours, broadening the boundaries of their education.

2.3.2. Inter-school and international collaboration

The Xuzhou Museum collaborates with schools to conduct “Extended Classes at the Museum” activities, encouraging students to visit the museum. Activities are organized by class, with students first touring the exhibition halls and then attending academic lectures or interactive experiences in the lecture hall. Additionally, the museum has released a series of online micro-lectures, such as “The Story of Ancient Chinese Thinker Confucius” and “Chinese Seasons: The Twenty-Four Solar Terms”, which have been viewed live by primary and secondary school students in four sessions. Young people have also participated in online tours of Xuzhou’s scenic spots through the ClassIn platform. This collaborative model allows students to personally experience the charm of museums, enhancing the practicality and intuitiveness of learning. In terms of international cooperation, through exhibitions and educational activities, such as the “Immortal Jade Armor: Exquisite Cultural Relics of the Han Dynasty in China” exhibition, the diversity and inclusiveness of Chinese culture are showcased, which helps promote cultural exchange and understanding internationally.

2.4. Challenges faced by study tours at Xuzhou Museum

2.4.1. Shortage of interdisciplinary talents in museums

Study tour instructors are direct disseminators of culture and representatives of the museum’s image. Xuzhou Museum has mobilized its in-house commentators, educators, volunteers, experts, and scholars to participate in

the development of museum educational resources and trial lectures to refine course content. However, there is a lack of relevant professionals, such as curriculum design talents, operations management talents, and high-end planning talents, which results in many study tour services being unable to be provided normally to students. Xuzhou Museum currently lacks a dedicated study tour reception and management team and has not established a specialized study tour department, a situation that significantly adversely affects the overall quality of study tour activities.

2.4.2. Insufficient new media technology

Although the museum is equipped with various guided tour methods, including manual guided tours, online guided tours, and audio guide devices, the information content conveyed by these methods is highly similar and lacks differentiation and in-depth exploration tailored to different audience groups. During study tours, students not only expect to gain superficial knowledge of Han culture through guided tours but also yearn for in-depth interactive experiences and personalized learning paths. However, the current application of new media technologies fails to fully meet this demand, as the content of guided tours lacks sufficient appeal and educational depth, thereby limiting students' study tour experiences. Additionally, the Xuzhou Museum falls short in its promotion and outreach on new media platforms, failing to fully leverage emerging channels such as social media and short videos to expand its influence. As a result, public awareness and engagement with the museum remain low.

2.4.3. Safety concerns

Study tours at museums are typical group activities specifically designed for students, a unique demographic, making it crucial to ensure the safety of such events. However, the study tours at the Xuzhou Museum are still in their infancy, with many aspects requiring optimization, including the provision of professional guidance, rational allocation of personnel, improvement of hardware facilities, establishment of a safety management system, and formulation of emergency response plans.

2.4.4. Lack of study tour routes

The Xuzhou Museum, as a repository of rich historical and cultural resources, holds immense potential for study tours. However, it currently faces a significant challenge in the form of a lack of diverse study tour routes. The limited number of routes primarily focuses on in-museum exhibit displays and explanations, lacking diversity and depth, and failing to meet the diverse needs of teachers and students. The design lacks innovation, with fixed procedures that struggle to stimulate students' interest. Furthermore, the museum has not fully utilized the resources of the surrounding scenic spots and lacks joint development with other cultural sites, thereby limiting the breadth and depth of study tour activities.

2.4.5. Lack of a sound market mechanism for museum-based educational travel

In the process of fulfilling its cultural and educational functions, Xuzhou Museum employs relatively monotonous promotional methods, resulting in low popularity among contemporary students and limiting the development and value realization of its educational travel programs. Therefore, Xuzhou Museum needs to actively innovate, expand its promotional channels, and fully leverage internet marketing tools to attract more visitors to gain a deeper understanding of its historical and cultural essence. As a public welfare museum, Xuzhou Museum faces a contradiction between public welfare and commercialism in educational travel, lacking a sound market mechanism for such travel. This contradiction makes it difficult to allocate benefits reasonably and hinders the standardized

development of educational travel at Xuzhou Museum. It is necessary to implement more standardized management and establish a sound market mechanism for educational travel at Xuzhou Museum to achieve a balance between public welfare and commercialism.

3. Development strategies for educational travel at Xuzhou Museum in the context of cultural and tourism integration

3.1. Cultivating educational travel talents and enhancing professional guidance

Cultivating talents for educational travel, especially in the field of museum-based educational travel, is a comprehensive task that integrates tourism, education, and professional skills, requiring the cultivation of compound talents with multifaceted abilities and knowledge. In response to the challenges faced by Xuzhou Museum in cultivating educational travel talents, it should focus on enhancing participants' cultural literacy and deepening their understanding of culture and its connotations. Xuzhou Museum needs to establish close cooperative relationships with schools, educational institutions, etc., to jointly construct a talent cultivation system for educational travel. This collaboration should transcend traditional knowledge transmission and instead focus on the cultivation of practical abilities. Through joint research and learning activities between schools and museums, future research and learning instructors can learn in practice how to integrate cultural and tourism elements, innovate interpretation and presentation methods, and convey the cultural connotations of museums more vividly and engagingly. During the cultivation process, emphasis should also be placed on a deep understanding of culture and its connotations. As an important vehicle for cultural inheritance and display, museums' research and learning activities should not only showcase cultural relics themselves but also uncover their historical backgrounds, cultural connotations, and social values. Therefore, research and learning instructors need to possess rich historical and cultural knowledge, enabling them to guide students in delving deeply into the stories behind cultural relics, experiencing the charm of culture, and enhancing their cultural literacy. To improve the quality and effectiveness of research and learning trips, Xuzhou Museum should actively recruit and cultivate talents in curriculum design, operations management, and high-end planning to refine the service system for research and learning trips. These individuals should not only possess solid professional knowledge but also innovative thinking and practical abilities, enabling them to design targeted research and learning courses and activities based on the needs of different schools and students, ensuring that research and learning trips are both enjoyable and educational. Museums and schools should jointly explore the establishment of a "dual-qualified" teaching staff, comprising teachers who possess both teaching abilities and the capacity to lead research and learning activities. The construction of such a teaching staff facilitates the deep integration of education and tourism, allowing students to both acquire knowledge and enjoy the pleasures of travel during research and learning trips, thereby comprehensively enhancing their cultural literacy and overall abilities.

3.2. New media technologies enhance the experiential aspect of educational travel

Traditional educational travel methods, such as conventional visits and lectures, often lack sufficient appeal. New media technologies offer opportunities for innovative development in this area. Museums can leverage cutting-edge technologies like VR (Virtual Reality) and AR (Augmented Reality) to deeply digitize their collections and create immersive educational experiences. These technologies not only build emotional bridges between cultural artifacts and audiences through multidimensional elements such as color, sound, and imagery, allowing viewers to feel as if they are traveling through time and engaging in profound dialogues with the artifacts, but they also fully

mobilize the emotions and thoughts of the audience, enabling them to explore history and understand the cultural connotations behind the artifacts through a blend of learning and play. Through new media technologies, museums can vividly and intuitively present the historical stories, craftsmanship techniques, and social contexts behind cultural artifacts to the audience, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural values and spiritual pursuits embodied in these artifacts while appreciating them, thereby enhancing their cultural literacy.

3.3. Collaborate with multiple parties to establish a long-term cooperation mechanism

Educational travel is an off-campus educational model where schools organize students to travel collectively for study purposes. Given the characteristics of students' ages and mental development, as well as the unique nature of organizing educational travel, ensuring students' safety is of utmost importance during such trips, in addition to providing for their dietary needs, rest, and education. Study travel involves multiple entities, including the government, schools, society, travel agencies, and study travel bases. The process of study travel requires support from various departments such as education, culture and tourism, public security, transportation, market supervision, emergency management, and fire protection. To ensure the smooth progress of study travel, different entities involved should share resources and collaborate closely. It is essential to establish a long-term cooperation mechanism involving multiple parties, with the education administrative department taking the lead, schools responsible for instructional design, museums responsible for introducing their collection resources, and study travel institutions responsible for organization and route development. On the basis of cooperation, the rights and responsibilities of each party should be defined. In strict accordance with industry standards and considering the situation of study travel in Jiangsu Province, unified implementation standards, evaluation mechanisms, laws and regulations, and supervision systems for study travel should be formulated to form a joint supervisory force and strengthen the organizational leadership and supervision of the study travel process.

3.4. Integrate resources from multiple sources to create high-quality study travel routes

Currently, many study travel bases in Xuzhou seldom actively cooperate to achieve large-scale and clustered development. To create high-quality study travel routes centered around the Xuzhou Museum, the government can take the lead in planning, while each study travel base actively seeks cross-sectoral cooperation to integrate study travel resources in Xuzhou and create systematic and international study travel routes. Regarding the positioning of the Han Culture Research and Study Base at the Xuzhou Museum, it can collaborate with nearby sites such as Xima Terrace and Hubu Hill to develop practical research and study themes. Additionally, it can integrate with premium research and study routes. For the historical positioning of the Xuzhou Museum, it can form a research and study route centered on patriotism education and historical and cultural education in conjunction with the Huaihai Campaign Memorial Hall research and study base. The Xuzhou Museum, along with the Xuzhou Folk Museum, the Huaihai Campaign Memorial Hall, and other research and tourism bases, can be linked together to enable visitors to experience ancient culture, intangible cultural heritage, and revolutionary (red) tourism all at once, achieving a diverse cultural tourism experience. It can also collaborate with other research and study bases to create distinctive "museum+" research and travel itineraries with different themes.

3.5. Establish and improve the market mechanism for museum research and travel

In the context of cultural and tourism integration, the market for museum research and travel presents development opportunities. As an important vehicle for cultural heritage, museum research and travel projects are not merely

about displaying artifacts and historical events but also about interpreting and disseminating the profound cultural connotations behind them, making them a significant force in the future cultural and tourism market^[4]. In terms of marketing strategies, the Xuzhou Museum's research and travel market should fully leverage a combination of online and offline approaches to achieve precise marketing. Firstly, the museum's research and travel programs should utilize internet technology to achieve precise resource matching, catering to the unique needs of different participants. For example, establish a dedicated section for educational travel, regularly release relevant information, and provide participation links. Meanwhile, build an information service platform that integrates cultural tourism and actively promotes educational travel projects through emerging media channels such as Xiaohongshu and Weibo. Offline, the museum organizes various experiential activities, such as knowledge lectures and handicraft-making sessions, allowing participants to personally experience the charm of culture and deepen their understanding of its connotations. Additionally, Xuzhou Museum needs to strengthen close cooperation with various stakeholders by entrusting sales to social partners such as educational institutions and travel agencies, enabling the museum itself to focus more on its core functions of social education and cultural dissemination.

4. Conclusion

In the context of the integration of culture and tourism, Xuzhou Museum still needs improvement in terms of educational travel. The development of educational travel at Xuzhou Museum requires the joint efforts and support of the entire society. By implementing strategies such as strengthening talent cultivation, creating high-quality educational travel routes, and improving the market mechanism for museum educational travel, people can not only promote the standardized and professional development of educational travel at Xuzhou Museum but also provide teenagers with richer and more diverse educational travel experiences, fostering the inheritance and innovative development of history and culture.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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