

Impact of Study Travel on Teenagers' Spiritual Growth

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Abstract: This article explores the impact of educational travel on the mental development of young people. In the digital era, young individuals confront challenges like virtual social dependency. Educational travel, with its practical nature, offers a broad learning space for young people. It not only enriches their knowledge and sharpens their skills but also cultivates a sense of duty and understanding among young individuals. Educational travel plays a pivotal role in the mental growth of young individuals, particularly in realms like culture confidence, social responsibility, and resilience. However, the educational travel market currently encounters obstacles, including unclear educational objectives, lack of diversity in content, and insufficient safety precautions. To foster its healthy growth, the article proposes refining strategies, such as enhancing the design of 'educational' courses, establishing robust support systems, and refining policy and resource allocation mechanisms. These measures aim to achieve the educational goal of integrating knowledge with action, cultivating young people who are both culturally rich and innovative. The author emphasizes that educational travel should not be seen merely as a form of leisure or tourism for young people, but rather as an important educational platform that contributes to their overall development. By participating in educational travel, young people can experience different cultures, environments, and ways of life firsthand, which helps broaden their horizons and enhance their cultural awareness. Additionally, educational travel provides young people with opportunities to engage in practical activities, tackle problems, and cooperate with peers, thus nurturing their innovative thinking and team collaboration skills.

1. Introduction

In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and widespread digital connectivity, the mental and spiritual development of teenagers faces unprecedented challenges, including virtual social dependency and diminished face-to-face communication skills. Against this backdrop, educational travel, also known as study travel, has emerged as a vital educational platform that offers young individuals a unique opportunity to engage with diverse cultures, environments, and ways of life beyond the confines of traditional classroom settings. This paper explores the profound impact of educational travel on the spiritual growth of teenagers, highlighting its role in fostering cultural confidence, social responsibility, resilience, and self-cognition. By analyzing the current state of the educational travel market, identifying key challenges, and proposing strategic optimizations, this study aims to contribute to the sustainable development of educational travel as

an effective means of nurturing well-rounded, culturally aware, and innovative young citizens. The educational significance of study travel in the contemporary era is profound, as it not only broadens students' horizons and cultivates their spiritual growth but also enhances their practical skills and cultural awareness.

2. The significance of study travel in the era and the value of spiritual cultivation

2.1 Policy-driven

In 2016, the Ministry of Education, along with ten other departments, jointly issued the 'Opinions on Promoting Study Tours for Primary and Secondary School Students,' highlighting the significance of study tours and fostering their healthy and swift development. Locally, initiatives such as the 'Ronghui Future' project in Qufu and study tours focusing on intangible cultural heritage in Xuancheng have commenced. Through collaboration with school media, both parties can harness their respective strengths to align with current trends and demands. The development of tourism not only enriches the cultural content and enhances the quality of scenic areas but also achieves a dual success in cultural and economic benefits, as evidenced by various cases where tourism has been a significant driver of economic growth and cultural enrichment.

2.2 Adolescent mental dilemmas

Today, virtual social platforms, while offering instant and convenient communication, lack genuine emotional exchanges and the richness of body language interactions. Digital content, including games, short videos, and social media, is crafted with precision to be addictive, often lacking the immediate 'thrill' found in real-life interactions. The widespread use of digital devices like smartphones and tablets allows teenagers to access the virtual world anytime, anywhere. This results in teenagers spending excessive amounts of time. Teens immersed in the digital world often find it challenging to concentrate and focus on tasks in real life. An over-reliance on digital devices and virtual social interactions tends to make teenagers more introverted and less adept at articulating themselves in real life, thereby diminishing their capacity for face-to-face communication. Virtual experiences in the digital realm may obscure teenagers' perception of real life, potentially sparking a desire to flee from reality.

Study tours break the limitations of traditional education by offering students a broader learning space and richer experiences through their 'disengagement' and 'practicality.' These tours not only augment students' knowledge and skills but also nurture their sense of responsibility, empathy, problem-solving prowess, and various other comprehensive abilities. Additionally, they promote cultural heritage and exchange.

3. The role of study travel in enhancing the spirit of teenagers

3.1 Cultivation of cultural confidence and national identity

Liu Jinghan elucidates the role of educational travel in nurturing cultural confidence and national identity by dissecting its interactive facets across three dimensions: product engagement, interpersonal exchanges, and service dynamics. Grounded in the theory of emotional evaluation, she constructs a theoretical model that integrates the interactive aspects of educational travel experiences, awe emotions, and national identity. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, she delves into how the mechanism of national identity education functions within the framework of educational travel, thereby enhancing empirical research on educational travel in China[1].

Regarding types, intangible cultural heritage educational travel enables young people to gain a deeper appreciation of the unique allure of intangible cultural heritage through personal experiences and interactions. Historical and cultural educational travel helps young people understand and explore the depth and breadth of Chinese culture by visiting its historical sites and museums. Red cultural educational travel, achieved by visiting revolutionary historical sites and red cultural landmarks, ignites young people's patriotic sentiments and strengthens their national identity. Folk culture experiences allow young people to gain a deeper understanding of the history and culture of different ethnic groups, enhancing their cultural identity. For example, through visits to the Three Confucian Sites and the Six Arts Experience, young people can gain a deeper appreciation of the profound heritage of Confucian culture, thereby enhancing their reverence for Chinese culture. Such on-site visits and experiential activities not only broaden young people's knowledge horizons but also strengthen their cultural self-confidence. By visiting the historic site of Southwest Associated University and the Anti-Japanese War Memorial, young people can gain a deeper insight into the significant contributions made by Southwest Associated University during the Anti-Japanese War, enhancing their patriotic sentiments and fostering a stronger sense of national identity.

3.2 Cultivating social responsibility and teamwork abilities

Regarding the development of social responsibility and teamwork skills through educational travel, Wang Yingying, based on the motivations and influencing factors of educational travel, and considering the current status of educational travel resources in Nanjing, proposed five major themes for educational travel: "Leisure and Resort Theme Journey-Savoring the Scenery of Jinling, Enjoying Nature and Mind," "Beautiful Countryside Theme Journey-Experiencing Rural Culture, Supporting Rural Revitalization," "Cultural Experience Theme Journey-Exploring the Ancient Capital of Six Dynasties, Unveiling Historical Mysteries," "Cultural and Educational Science Theme Journey-Visiting Famous Schools in Jiangnan, Soaring with Ambition," and "Red Revolution Theme Journey-Inheriting Revolutionary Spirit, Building the Backbone of China" [2]. Additionally, the "Young Pioneers Tour Guide" project in Xuancheng enables young people to visit local revolutionary memorial halls, martyrs' cemeteries, and other red education bases, gaining a profound understanding of the profound revolutionary history. Through training in tour guiding skills, they become Young Pioneers Tour Guides who narrate revolutionary history and heroic deeds at these bases, enhancing their communication skills and confidence through interaction with visitors. By personally immersing themselves in the telling of red stories, young people further strengthen their sense of mission and deepen their commitment to social responsibility. Educational travel offers young people a wealth of practical opportunities through specific activities. It not only deepens their understanding of society and culture, but also nurtures their sense of social responsibility and enhances their teamwork skills via team collaboration and volunteer activities. Through these experiences, young people can better grow into responsible, loving, and capable citizens of society.

3.3 Resilience and self-cognition development

Regarding the resilience and self-awareness development in educational travel, Weishanina emphasizes in her article "The Quiet Rise of 'Cave Exploration Craze': Can 'Niche Educational Travel' Expand Tourism Horizons Post-Pandemic?" that resilience among today's youth is generally lacking. "In the process of exploration, the dark environment mirrors the uncertainties of life, where courage and resilience are essential to navigate through the unknown. Teenagers need this process of exploration and challenge to gain the courage and strong character to overcome difficulties [3]. In the educational activities in Xishuangbanna, teenagers, under the guidance of professional

mentors, learn skills such as building shelters, starting fires, and cooking outdoors. They also participate in activities like crossing tropical rainforests, learning to navigate by direction, find water sources, and identify edible plants. Through these activities, teenagers learn to solve problems with limited resources, enhancing their confidence and independence. This not only boosts their resilience and problem-solving skills but also helps them better understand themselves, strengthen cultural identity, and improve psychological resilience through cultural experiences and psychological adjustment training. This comprehensive educational experience lays a solid foundation for the all-round development of teenagers."

4. The current problems and challenges faced by study travel

Regarding the issues and challenges faced by current educational travel, Wang Dan points out that many educational travel products on the market emphasize 'travel' over 'learning,' a phenomenon that provokes deep reflection[4]. Chen Chunling notes that the current educational travel market faces several issues, including unclear positioning of entities, low product quality, a shortage of professional talent, and an underdeveloped supervision and evaluation system[5]. These issues can be broadly categorized as follows: categorized into four areas: vague educational goals, severe content homogenization, inadequate safety measures, and uneven resource distribution

4.1 The educational goal is vague: the phenomenon of "traveling but not learning" is prominent

The core of educational travel lies in 'study and research,' yet some projects fall into the trap of 'travel without learning.' Contrary to some luxury study tours that prioritize sightseeing without a systematic course design or clear educational objectives, a well-structured educational travel program emphasizes comprehensive learning experiences, integrating knowledge, skills, and values to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of the destinations. Educational tours often fail to offer comprehensive insights into the historical and cultural significance of famous scenic spots, leading to superficial experiences for students. This not only squanders educational resources but also fails to achieve the desired educational outcomes. In the current educational landscape, the absence of standardized regulatory frameworks has led to inconsistencies, enabling certain institutions to potentially misrepresent 'tourism' activities as 'study and research'.

4.2 Serious homogenization of content persists, characterized by a notable lack of in-depth experience

The content of current study tours has become strikingly uniform, with numerous projects centered around repetitive historical visits, thereby lacking the depth of immersive experiences. Certain intangible cultural heritage (ICH) study tours merely scratch the surface, confined to basic handicrafts such as paper cutting and pottery, without exploring the profound cultural significance and intricate skill inheritance embedded within these traditions. Study tour organizations often lack innovation, frequently imitating popular projects, which results in a monotonous content. Some regions lack diverse study resources, making it challenging to develop a variety of study tours.

4.3 Insufficient security measures: the absence of an emergency plan

Study tours, with a large number of minors involved, make safety a paramount concern. Yet, some study tour organizations fail to meet safety standards, lacking comprehensive emergency plans and effective risk management strategies for younger participants. Certain activities occur in

mountainous or remote regions, where essential safety facilities and emergency equipment are scarce, hindering prompt response to emergencies. To reduce costs, some organizations have curtailed their investment in safety facilities and emergency preparedness, gency equipment. This not only endangers student safety but also poses a threat to the sustainable development of study tours.

4.4 Uneven resource distribution: Students from impoverished areas face limited opportunities to participate

The unequal allocation of resources for educational travel stands as a prominent issue, leaving students in impoverished regions with scant opportunities to engage in such endeavors. Take, for example, schools nestled in the mountainous areas of Yunnan, which, owing to their constrained economic circumstances, find it arduous to arrange educational travel for their students, whereas urban schools boast ample resources and myriad opportunities. The uneven distribution of educational resources not only impedes the widespread adoption and advancement of educational travel but also significantly affects students' overall development and educational equity. Educational resources are concentrated mainly in cities and developed regions, depriving impoverished areas of the essential institutions and facilities required for educational travel. This imbalance not only exacerbates the educational divide between urban and rural zones but also hinders the balanced progression of educational travel.

5. Optimization path of enhancing the function of study travel spirit

5.1 Strengthen the design of "educational" courses

The design of study tours should be developed in layers based on the characteristics and educational goals of students at different age levels to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the educational content. Primary school students are in the early stages of cognitive development and are naturally curious about their surroundings. Therefore, study tours should focus on local culture and customs, guiding students to understand their hometown's cultural and natural environment. For example, the Four Treasures of the Study experience in Xuancheng permits students to craft Xuan paper and Xuan brushes from scratch, immersing themselves in the allure and depth of traditional Chinese culture. The Jingting Mountain poetry workshop, facilitated by on-site visits, empowers students to appreciate poetry amidst nature, fostering a deeper connection with their hometown's cultural heritage. Given their heightened cognitive abilities and expanded perspectives, middle school students can benefit greatly from study tours that emphasize provincial and national contexts, thereby further broadening expanding their knowledge and broadening their horizons. For instance, ecological research activities conducted in Hainan enable students to gain a deeper insight into the local ecological environment and the conservation measures implemented there. The 'traditional culture + party spirit education' integrated course in Qufu, through visits to cultural sites such as the Confucian Temple and the Confucian Mansion, combines party spirit education, allowing students to enhance their sense of social responsibility and mission while experiencing traditional culture.

Study tours serve not merely to acquire knowledge, but also to nurture the mind and uplift the spirit. Therefore, it is essential to integrate a reflection mechanism into the study tour process. Urge students to chronicle their observations, reflections, and emotions throughout the tour, systematically arranging their insights and puzzles in writing. This functions both as a testament to personal growth and as a vital foundation for teachers to comprehend students' learning advancements. After the study tour, organize group debates, such as discussions on the value of Confucianism in modern society following the ' Digital Confucian Temple 'AR experience.

Engaging in debate activities has been shown to significantly stimulate students' intellectual vitality, as evidenced by research indicating that these activities enhance critical thinking, logical reasoning, and communication skills.

5.2 Build a support system for "base line teachers"

Research and study bases are crucial for educational travel, and their standardized construction is essential to ensure the quality of these activities. Drawing on the Xuancheng model, a diversified system of research and study bases has been developed in Xuancheng, integrating museums, intangible cultural heritage workshops, and ecological parks. Museums provide historical and cultural knowledge, intangible cultural heritage workshops allow students to experience traditional crafts firsthand, and ecological parks offer students a chance to appreciate the beauty of nature. This diversified construction model of research and study bases offers students an abundance of learning resources. Research and study bases should establish unified construction standards, covering facilities, equipment, safety measures, and faculty allocation. Professional tour guides and safety managers should be provided to ensure the safety of students and enhance their learning experience during the research and study process.

Study tour designs must emphasize high-quality, thematic routes, showcasing unique attributes while steering clear of content redundancy. Yunnan has diversified its study tour offerings by centering on themes like geological exploration in Shilin, biological discovery in Xishuangbanna, and medical heritage at Lanmao Memorial Hall. The geological exploration in Shilin helps students understand geological principles; the biological exploration in Xishuangbanna allows students to experience the appreciation of biodiversity; meanwhile, the medical culture exhibition at the Lanmao Memorial Hall offers profound insights into the history and culture of traditional Chinese medicine. These routes ought to be tailored according to students' ages and educational objectives, ensuring both practicality and scientific validity. Furthermore, the design of these routes should prioritize the depth and diversity of experiences, steering clear of superficiality.

Study mentors are pivotal in educational tours, their expertise directly influencing tour effectiveness. A certification system for 'study guidance mentors' has been established to provide professional training and assessment for these mentors. Certified mentors possess vast educational experience and specialized knowledge, empowering them to provide top-notch guidance to students. Regular efforts should be undertaken to bolster the mentor team. Through standardized training and communication activities, the professional ability and teaching skills of mentors can be improved.

5.3 Improve the policy and resource guarantee mechanism

Financial support is pivotal to the sustainable growth of educational travel. The government should bolster its commitment to educational travel by enhancing financial support for initiatives like the Tourism Education Fund, which aims to empower rural women through vocational training and entrepreneurship, thereby fostering local employment and alleviating social issues. Furthermore, enterprises and social organizations are urged to financially contribute to educational travel via donations and various other avenues. Moreover, policies should be enacted to decrease or waive fees for students from underprivileged backgrounds, thereby guaranteeing access for all students. Participate in educational travel activities.

Study tours, involving numerous minors participating in various activities, necessitate stringent safety assurances. Prior to the commencement of any educational activity, it is imperative to submit comprehensive safety plans and measures to the education department for review and record-keeping, ensuring the well-being of all participants. These measures should cover emergency response to sudden weather changes, medical emergencies, and emergency evacuations, ensuring

timely action in emergencies. Comprehensive insurance coverage is essential: students must be thoroughly insured, covering accidents and other unforeseen events. Ensure their safety during the study tour.

A comprehensive evaluation system is crucial for ensuring the quality of educational tours. Students' performance during these tours should be incorporated into their comprehensive quality records, functioning as a pivotal aspect of their overall evaluation. Yunnan Province uses a checklist-based evaluation method to quantitatively assess students' performance in educational tours. This includes self-assessment by students, evaluations from teachers, and feedback from parents. Through this multi-faceted evaluation, a comprehensive grasp of students' achievements and development throughout educational tours is attainable.

6. Conclusion

Towards a new ecological education of "unity of knowledge and action". Study tours, through cultural immersion, challenge and response, and collective coexistence, serve as an effective platform for enhancing the spiritual development of young people. These tours not merely broaden the intellectual horizons of young people but also nurture their sense of duty, compassion, analytical thinking, and a myriad of other essential attributes, thereby fostering cultural preservation and interchange. In the future, the development of study tours should focus on technological empowerment, international perspectives, and educational equity. By leveraging VR, AR, and other cutting-edge technologies to vividly recreate historical scenes, we can significantly enrich and elevate the study tour experience. To institutionalize study tour programs effectively, we should draw upon successful international experiences, such as those from the United States' National Park educational trips, European cultural tours, and Japan's traditional study tours, which emphasize practical learning, cultural immersion, and educational outcomes. and To ensure that rural students have the opportunity to participate in study tours, it is essential to establish mechanisms such as 'study vouchers', as evidenced by the positive impact of educational vouchers on increasing the desire of rural students to attend high school, as detailed in the study conducted in Hebei and Shaanxi provinces, thereby promoting educational equity. The ultimate value of study tours lies in nurturing the spiritual roots of young people through 'walking classrooms,' fostering new generations with both cultural depth and innovation. This requires us to continuously explore and refine the models and mechanisms of study tours in practice, ensuring their sustainable and healthy development, and contributing to the all-round development of young people.

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