

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL EXPLORATION OF THE CLASSIFICATION-BASED CULTIVATION MODEL FOR TOURISM MARKETING TALENTS IN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract: With the rapid development of the tourism industry, the demand for highly skilled tourism marketing talents is continually increasing, particularly in ethnic regions and areas with distinct cultural characteristics in China. How universities can effectively cultivate professionals to meet market needs has become critical. This paper, based on the current supply and demand of tourism marketing talents and considering the characteristics of students in ethnic universities, proposes an innovative classification-based talent cultivation model. This model categorizes students into three types: technical, managerial, and academic, according to their comprehensive qualities, interests, and career plans. The aim is to enhance their professional competence, practical skills, and research abilities. Furthermore, this paper discusses the approaches of this classification-based model, including admission assessments, curriculum design, mentorship, the integration of theory and practice, diversified evaluation systems, and flexible cultivation approaches. The study concludes that the classification-based model effectively meets the diverse needs of the tourism market and provides new ideas for educational reform in universities.

Keywords: Tourism marketing talents; Classification-based cultivation model; Ethnic universities; Technical talents; managerial talents; Academic talents; Approach

1 INTRODUCTION

With the widespread development of higher education and the ongoing progress of the economy, higher education has become a crucial component of national talent cultivation. However, due to disparities in regional economic development, resource allocation, and educational resources, the development of higher education in China has shown significant imbalances, and the diversity of the student population has become increasingly evident [1]. To meet the personalized educational needs of different students, higher education institutions must actively explore and integrate classification-based talent cultivation models, maximizing students' potential.

As key institutions for cultivating skilled professionals, universities need to recognize that traditional education models often fail to address the diverse needs of students. Against this backdrop, exploring talent cultivation models that can adapt to diverse needs has become a critical task in university teaching practices [2]. Through a classification-based model, universities can implement personalized educational plans tailored to specific categories of students, providing more targeted guidance and support [3]. Compared to traditional "one-size-fits-all" models, classification-based cultivation better meets the individual needs of students, thus improving their autonomy and enthusiasm for learning and optimizing the effectiveness of educational practices. Therefore, this paper aims to provide theoretical references and practical insights into applying a classification-based model for cultivating tourism marketing talents in universities.

2 REVIEW OF THEORIES AND PRACTICES IN THE CLASSIFICATION-BASED CULTIVATION OF TOURISM MARKETING TALENTS

2.1 Literature Review

A talent cultivation model refers to the systematic educational practice employed by higher education institutions, under the guidance of specific educational philosophies, to meet societal and economic development needs by scientifically organizing teaching content, processes, and methods. Its purpose is to cultivate students' comprehensive qualities and professional abilities. The model encompasses educational objectives, content, methods, approaches, and evaluation systems, reflecting educators' comprehensive planning and strategic implementation of talent cultivation goals, pathways, and methodologies. In academic research, domestic scholars have dedicated themselves to exploring the reform and development of application-oriented talent cultivation models suitable for local contexts. For example, Zhang Shixian and Li Yongping (2010) provided a macro perspective, emphasizing practical research on understanding and constructing application-oriented talent cultivation models within the context of mass higher education [4]. Yang Mengbei and Wang Shaoyuan (2020) analyzed the outcomes of talent cultivation model reforms from the perspective of local application-oriented universities. They noted that cultivating application-oriented talents has become a widespread consensus among transforming universities. Key factors to achieving this goal include curriculum design, the introduction of innovative teaching methods, the construction of dual-qualification teaching teams, and the

improvement of management and evaluation systems [5]. Huang Mingyue (2020), after reviewing the literature on application-oriented talent cultivation models in local undergraduate institutions over the past decade, pointed out that while China has placed great emphasis on cultivating application-oriented talents, local universities face issues of "convergence" and "homogeneity" in implementation. She noted that the cultivation of application-oriented talents in domestic local universities is still in its early stages, with insufficient theoretical research, unclear positioning, and vague goals, preventing the formation of a systematic educational theory. Furthermore, she highlighted limitations in research methodologies and the fact that most research subjects have focused on the perspectives of management and universities, with little attention given to students, enterprises, and societal participation [6].

Upon examining the existing research on talent cultivation in universities, we find that these studies not only cover reports on the development of higher education law and reflections on talent cultivation goals but also include critical evaluations of talent cultivation, intrinsic development, and classification-based assessment, as well as talent cultivation strategies from a tiered classification perspective. For example, Shi Qiheng (2020), in the 20-year development report on the "Higher Education Law of the People's Republic of China," emphasized the crucial role of this law in coordinating the development of higher education nationwide. However, he also pointed out shortcomings in its operational effectiveness [7], highlighting the need for further systemic structural adjustments in higher education in the future. Yan Jiahong (2003) conducted a historical analysis and reflection on the classification of talent cultivation goals in higher education, stressing the importance of establishing scientifically sound talent cultivation goals to improve educational quality [8]. Yuan Yimin (2023) offered critical reflections on current buzzwords in the field of higher education, proposing a reevaluation of the quality connotations behind these terms and the construction of a five-dimensional quality system to effectively implement the fundamental task of moral education, thus contributing to the high-quality development of higher education [9]. Lu Yi, Shi Jinghuan, and He Xuebing (2018) proposed a classification system and characteristics for China's elite innovative talent cultivation models. Their theoretical matrix encompasses various elite innovative talent cultivation models in China's higher education system, showcasing the diversity and heterogeneity of China's higher education [10].

While studies specifically addressing the cultivation of tourism marketing talents are relatively scarce, they reflect initial explorations by educators and researchers to improve educational quality and adapt to market needs. These studies focus not only on curriculum reform and teaching methods but also on innovations in classification-based talent cultivation models, as well as the challenges and opportunities posed by the development of modern tourism marketing. For instance, Tian Qiaoli (2015) emphasized the importance of cultivating application-oriented tourism talents and, using the "Tourism Marketing" course as an example, proposed reform methods such as modular teaching, curriculum integration, and interdisciplinary approaches [11]. This demonstrates the increasing focus on practical, application-oriented teaching methods in tourism education and the need for interdisciplinary learning environments. Huang Xiubo (2022) focused on the challenges and solutions faced by undergraduate tourism management education in application-oriented universities, analyzing issues such as discipline positioning, professional identity, teaching quality, and employment prospects while proposing possible solutions [12]. This research highlights the challenges faced by tourism education in adapting to societal and market demands and the urgent need for innovative educational models.

2.2 Practices of Talent Cultivation Models in Domestic and Foreign Universities

Globally, especially in European countries, the education sector has conducted extensive practical explorations into cultivating application-oriented talents, including tourism marketing professionals, and has developed several widely applied and referenced cultivation models. These models share common characteristics, such as emphasizing the integration of theory and practice and focusing on vocational abilities as the core objective of talent cultivation. Four typical models are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 Four Typical Talent Cultivation Models Abroad

Model	Description
CBE Talent Cultivation Model	This model is widely applied in developed countries such as Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The Competency-Based Education (CBE) model focuses on competency development, emphasizing the design of teaching methods and systems centered around vocational skills to meet the specific needs of industries.
Germany's Dual System	Germany's dual education system integrates enterprise-based practical training with school-based theoretical education, aiming to cultivate highly skilled technical professionals. This model combines students' hands-on work experience in companies with theoretical learning in schools, achieving seamless integration between education and vocational practice, and fostering deep collaboration between schools and enterprises [13].
Japan's Industry-Management-Academia Collaboration	Japan's model combines the resources and strengths of enterprises, management, and educational institutions to jointly cultivate application-oriented talents. Through close cooperation among industry, management, and academia, this practical education model provides students with extensive internships, practical opportunities, and curricula closely aligned with industry needs.
UK's "Sandwich" Model	The "Sandwich" model in the United Kingdom adopts a "theory-practice-theory" cyclical teaching approach. Students study theoretical knowledge at school while simultaneously interning at companies, before returning to school to further deepen their theoretical studies.

This model effectively enhances students' vocational competencies and comprehensive applied skills.

2.3 Evaluation of Research and Practices in Talent Cultivation Models in Domestic and Foreign Universities

The research and practice of talent cultivation models in universities reveal the complexity and diversity of educational reforms, while also reflecting the growing global demand for high-quality education. From the research progress, domestic and international scholars have conducted in-depth analyses and discussions, proposing diversified educational models and strategies aimed at better adapting to the needs of economic and social development and promoting the comprehensive improvement of students' qualities. Specifically, research has emphasized the systematic design and innovation of educational goals, content, methods, and evaluation systems, with a focus on application-oriented talent cultivation models, reflecting educators' deep consideration of talent cultivation goals, pathways, and methods.

At the practical level, experiences from multiple countries have shown that the integration of theory and practice, the core status of vocational abilities, and the deep cooperation between universities and enterprises are key factors in improving the quality and effectiveness of education. For example, models like the CBE (Competency-Based Education), Germany's "dual system" model, Japan's industry-management-academia collaboration, and the UK's "Sandwich" model have been successfully implemented in their respective countries and regions, effectively enhancing students' vocational skills and comprehensive competencies. These successful practices offer valuable insights and lessons for China's higher education, particularly in strengthening the integration of theory and practice and advancing university-enterprise cooperation.

However, due to differences in national conditions, systems, student populations, and faculty resources, foreign talent cultivation models may not entirely suit the actual situation of Chinese universities. In particular, regarding the classification-based cultivation model for tourism marketing talents, there is still a lack of systematic and in-depth research in China's academic community. Therefore, while learning from foreign experiences, Chinese universities need to innovate talent cultivation models and educational strategies that are tailored to the country's specific circumstances.

3 THE CHANGING NEEDS OF TOURISM MARKETING TALENT CULTIVATION AND THE DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CLASSIFICATION-BASED MODEL

Against the backdrop of rapidly developing network technology, the expanding coverage of the internet, and the widespread application of big data, the "online" marketing model in the tourism market has risen swiftly [14]. The continuous emergence of social e-commerce and cross-border e-commerce has posed both challenges and opportunities for traditional tourism marketing models. The changes in the current needs for tourism marketing talent cultivation can be analyzed from two perspectives.

3.1 Changes in the Needs of Tourism Marketing Talent Cultivation

3.1.1 General development trends in the tourism market

With the aid of online data, choosing tourist destinations, planning travel routes, and arranging travel affairs have become routine behaviors for modern consumers. The widespread application of the Internet has not only changed the business model of the tourism market but has also restructured resource allocation patterns. Increasingly, tourism marketing strategies rely on the Internet, and the demand for online marketing and customer service personnel has significantly risen [15]. Driven by the wave of innovation and entrepreneurship, new technological reforms and the construction of business models have stimulated an urgent demand for innovative marketing talents. Faced with an overwhelming amount of information, the tourism market requires marketing professionals who are capable of processing data and possess digital literacy [16].

3.1.2 Changes in tourism enterprise operations and management

According to statistical data, digital marketing talents in the tourism market aged between 21 and 30 account for more than 70%, with those born in the 1990s and 2000s becoming the driving force behind digital marketing in the tourism sector [17]. As the usage rate of mobile communication continues to rise, consumer behaviors on mobile platforms are increasing, especially among the post-90s and post-95s generations. These younger individuals are quicker to accept new ideas and acquire new knowledge and skills, becoming the backbone of Internet applications. In this context, many tourism enterprises have started to propose and experiment with new marketing models, such as content marketing, community marketing, and scarcity marketing. Compared to traditional talent cultivation models, tourism enterprises no longer limit their hiring standards to practical work experience but place greater emphasis on applicants' innovation capabilities, advanced marketing concepts, and market responsiveness [18]. In general, tourism enterprises now require employees who possess innovative thinking, market sensitivity, and a strong awareness of marketing innovation.

3.2 Distinct Characteristics of the Classification-Based Talent Cultivation Model

The classification-based talent cultivation model is an innovative educational model designed to cater to the diverse backgrounds of university students. Through this model, students can select personalized educational programs based

on their learning abilities and educational backgrounds, allowing them to achieve better learning outcomes.

The application of this model is characterized by three distinct features:

3.2.1 Flexibility

The classification-based talent cultivation model can flexibly adjust educational practices according to students' learning abilities and backgrounds, ensuring that they receive the most suitable educational content and methods. As a result, this model can be widely applied across different student groups, providing each student with direct and effective educational support [5].

3.2.2 Personalization

In this model, students can fully communicate with teachers and choose the level and category that best aligns with their individual needs, receiving personalized educational services. This stimulates students' enthusiasm for learning and enhances educational outcomes [6].

3.2.3 Efficiency

Educational programs and methods are designed according to students' actual learning abilities and educational backgrounds, enabling them to master professional knowledge and skills more quickly, thereby improving the efficiency and quality of learning and practice. This also enhances students' sense of accomplishment while helping them tap into their potential to achieve maximum results [7].

4 EXPLORATION OF THE APPROACHES FOR THE CLASSIFICATION-BASED CULTIVATION MODEL OF TOURISM MARKETING TALENTS IN CHINESE UNIVERSITIES

With the rapid development of the tourism industry, the demand for tourism marketing talents has become increasingly diversified. For different types of universities, the cultivation models for tourism marketing talents need to be scientifically planned based on the characteristics of students, regional cultural backgrounds, and market demands.

4.1 Admission Assessment and Layered Management

4.1.1 Admission assessment

Considering the diversity of university students, particularly in ethnic universities where there are significant differences in students' academic backgrounds, language proficiency, and career aspirations, universities need to design a comprehensive admission assessment system when implementing the classification-based cultivation model. Through entrance exams, interviews, and questionnaires, students' academic foundations, logical thinking abilities, cultural understanding, and career development goals should be assessed. The evaluation results will serve as an important basis for student classification and provide scientific support for subsequent cultivation pathways.

4.1.2 Layered management

Based on the results of the admission assessment, students can be divided into three categories: technical, managerial, and academic. Technical students mainly possess practical operational abilities and are suited for positions such as market research and product design. Managerial students excel in organization and leadership, making them suitable for managerial roles in tourism enterprises or management departments. Academic students, showing strong research capabilities, may pursue academic research or policy analysis in the future. Universities should implement differentiated management in curriculum design, teaching methods, and resource allocation according to the different characteristics of each student group, ensuring that every student follows a suitable cultivation pathway.

4.2 Differentiated Curriculum Design

4.2.1 Technical students

The curriculum for technical students should focus on practical training and skill development. Courses such as Market Research Practicum and Digital Marketing Technology Applications can help students gain hands-on experience, enabling them to take on roles such as market researchers or product development specialists in tourism enterprises upon graduation. Practical courses should be combined with theoretical studies to ensure that students possess core skills in areas like digital marketing and tourism product development.

Table 2 Differentiated Curriculum Design for Technical Students

Skill Category	Curriculum	Assessment Method
Market Analysis Skills	<i>Market Research and Forecasting</i>	Design a market research questionnaire
	<i>Basics of Economics</i>	Participate in a market research competition
	<i>Market Research Practicum</i>	
Product Promotion Skills	<i>Market Research EPR Simulation Software</i>	University-industry joint practice
	<i>Customer Relations</i>	Write a promotion plan
Marketing Strategy Skills	<i>Sales and Negotiation</i>	Develop a marketing plan
	<i>Marketing Planning</i>	Participate in a marketing planning competition
	<i>Brand Management</i>	

Marketing Management Skills	<i>Advertising Practices</i> <i>Enterprise Management</i> <i>Information Processing</i> <i>Financial Management</i> <i>Website Operation</i>	University-industry cooperative competition Enterprise management simulation Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition University-industry joint practice
Online Marketing Skills	<i>Digital Marketing Technology Applications</i> <i>Short Video Production</i>	On-the-job internship Internship report Presentation competition

4.2.2 Managerial students

The career paths for managerial students include middle and senior management positions in tourism enterprises, such as marketing managers or regional supervisors. To develop their management capabilities, the curriculum should include theoretical courses such as Marketing Management, Strategic Management, and Organizational Behavior. Additionally, combining enterprise management training with case studies will help students develop team management and decision-making skills. For tourism enterprises in ethnic regions, cross-cultural management courses should be added to enhance students' management abilities in multicultural settings.

4.2.3 Academic students

For academic students, the focus is on theoretical learning and improving research capabilities. Courses should cover topics like Advanced Marketing Theory, Tourism Economics, and Ethnic Cultural Studies, providing a strong theoretical foundation for students who may pursue tourism culture research or policy analysis in the future. Academic students should also be given opportunities to participate in research projects to help them enhance their research abilities and achieve academic breakthroughs, preparing them for careers in academic or policy research.

4.3 Personalized Guidance and the Mentorship System

4.3.1 Mentorship for technical students

Mentors for technical students should focus on guiding them in practical projects and activities, such as market research or tourism product design competitions. Based on students' abilities and interests, mentors can help them plan their career paths and recommend relevant internship opportunities, ensuring that students continuously improve their skills through practice and are prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation.

4.3.2 Mentorship for managerial students

Mentors for managerial students should have rich experience in enterprise management and be able to guide students through management internships and team projects. Through the mentorship system, students can not only enhance their management skills but also leverage their mentor's industry connections to participate in real business projects, gaining valuable management experience.

4.3.3 Mentorship for academic students

Mentors for academic students should have a strong academic background and be able to design scientific research plans for students and offer opportunities to participate in research projects. Through guidance on thesis writing and participation in academic seminars, mentors help students gradually accumulate academic achievements, laying the foundation for future careers in academic research or policy analysis.

4.4 Diversified Evaluation System

4.4.1 Evaluation system for technical students

The evaluation of technical students should focus on assessing their practical abilities, including their performance in real projects, mastery of skills, and feedback from internships. Through multidimensional practical assessments, the evaluation system ensures that students are equipped with the skills needed to enter the workforce directly after graduation.

4.4.2 Evaluation system for managerial students

The evaluation of managerial students should focus on their leadership abilities, teamwork, and innovative thinking, particularly in management training scenarios. By assessing the completion of actual projects, the evaluation system comprehensively examines students' management potential.

4.4.3 Evaluation System for Academic Students

The evaluation of academic students should be based primarily on their academic achievements, with a focus on the quality of their theses, progress in research projects, and participation in academic activities. Through academic reviews and publication records, the evaluation system ensures that students possess the ability to pursue further studies or engage in academic work.

5 CONCLUSION

This paper examines the construction and implementation of a classification-based cultivation model for tourism marketing talents, focusing on the characteristics of students in ethnic universities. The proposed model categorizes

students into three types—technical, managerial, and academic—and explores the specific approaches for each category. The study shows that the classification-based cultivation model is better suited to meet the diverse talent needs of the current tourism market, providing new ideas for improving the quality of tourism marketing talent cultivation in universities.

Through the analysis of the classification-based model, we draw the following conclusions and suggestions: Firstly, universities should strengthen the admission assessment mechanisms to ensure that students are reasonably classified according to their interests, abilities, and career plans. Secondly, the emphasis on practical teaching should be increased by enhancing cooperation between universities and enterprises, as well as by establishing internship and practical training programs to improve the practical skills of technical and managerial talents. Additionally, universities should focus on cultivating research capabilities and expanding academic horizons for academic students, encouraging them to participate in research projects and academic exchanges. Different cultivation goals should be supported with personalized guidance and curriculum design to ensure that students can smoothly adapt to their future career paths after graduation.

Looking forward to the future, with the continued growth of the global tourism industry and the digital transformation, the demand for tourism marketing talents will become more diverse and specialized. Universities should further optimize the classification-based cultivation model, keeping pace with industry development trends, particularly by strengthening the cultivation of talents in digital tourism marketing and smart tourism. Ethnic universities, in particular, can leverage their regional cultural advantages to cultivate tourism marketing talents with cultural sensitivity and global perspectives, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the global tourism market. The continuous refinement and promotion of the classification-based cultivation model will provide valuable insights and references for the innovation and high-quality development of global tourism education in the future.

COMPETING INTERESTS

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