

Research on the Talent Cultivation Pathways for Coastal Tourism in Jiangmen City

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area strategy and the high-quality development of the marine economy, coastal tourism has become an important driver for industrial upgrading and urban image enhancement in Jiangmen City. The high-quality development of the coastal tourism industry relies on a well-structured, high-quality workforce that can adapt to the evolving demands of industrial transformation. Taking the current development of Jiangmen's coastal tourism industry as the research focus, this paper analyzes the characteristics of talent demand and the current situation of talent supply, systematically examines the major problems existing in the talent cultivation system for coastal tourism in Jiangmen, and further proposes a multi-level, industry–education integrated and collaboratively promoted talent cultivation pathway. The study argues that by optimizing higher and vocational education systems, deepening government–industry–university collaboration mechanisms, improving continuing education and in-service training systems, and strengthening policy support mechanisms, the systematicness and effectiveness of coastal tourism talent cultivation in Jiangmen can be comprehensively enhanced, thereby providing solid human resource support for the high-quality development of regional coastal tourism.

Keywords

Jiangmen City; coastal tourism; talent cultivation; industry–education integration; high-quality development

1. Introduction

General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized at the eighth collective study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee that it is necessary to develop the marine economy, protect the marine ecological environment, and accelerate the building of China into a maritime power. (Xi, J.2013) providing strategic guidance for coastal regions to promote the high-quality development of marine-related industries. Coastal tourism, as an important form of tourism based on marine resources, coastal landscapes, and marine culture, is characterized by strong resource dependence, high industrial linkage, and significant comprehensive driving

effects, and it plays an increasingly important role in promoting regional economic growth, optimizing industrial structures, and enhancing urban images. With the continuous advancement of China's maritime power strategy and the integration of culture and tourism, the strategic position of coastal tourism in regional economic development has become increasingly prominent.

Jiangmen City is located on the western bank of the Pearl River Estuary in Guangdong Province and is endowed with abundant coastal resources, including high-quality coastal tourism assets such as the Chuan Shan Archipelago and Yinhu Bay, providing a solid foundation for the development of coastal tourism and coastal sports tourism. In recent years, Jiangmen has continuously increased investment in coastal tourism development, and coastal tourism has gradually become an important component of the local tourism industry. However, from the perspective of industrial practice, Jiangmen's coastal tourism still faces challenges such as a relatively low level of professionalization, homogeneous tourism products, and insufficient service quality. One of the fundamental constraints lies in the shortage of high-quality and compound coastal tourism professionals. Existing studies have indicated that sports tourism professionals constitute the backbone driving the development of the sports tourism industry (Shao Rurong & Pan Jincheng, 2019). Compared with the practical requirements of the transformation and upgrading of the coastal tourism industry, the current talent cultivation system in Jiangmen still shows evident gaps in terms of program design, competency structure, and practice orientation.

Against this backdrop, a systematic study of the talent cultivation pathways for coastal tourism in Jiangmen City, with an in-depth analysis of talent demand characteristics and the current state of talent training, is of significant theoretical value and practical significance for enhancing regional tourism competitiveness and promoting the high-quality development of the coastal tourism industry.

2. Development of Coastal Tourism and Talent Demand in Jiangmen City

2.1. Overview of the Development of Jiangmen's Coastal Tourism Industry

Amid the continuous advancement of socioeconomic development, consumption structures have been steadily optimized and upgraded, and tourism has become an indispensable driver of economic growth in China's national economy. In this context, the importance of vigorously developing sports tourism has become increasingly evident (General Administration of Sport of China [GASC], 2021). In recent years, Jiangmen City has capitalized on its abundant marine resources and distinctive overseas Chinese cultural heritage, continuously intensifying efforts in coastal tourism development. A tourism product system centered on island sightseeing, coastal leisure and resort tourism, and marine cultural experiences has

gradually taken shape. Coastal tourism has become an important component of Jiangmen's tourism industry, playing a positive role in promoting employment and stimulating the development of related industries.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of overall development, Jiangmen's coastal tourism remains at a critical stage of transition from resource-driven growth to quality-driven development. This transformation has placed higher demands on the professionalization, refinement, and branding of the industry, thereby generating an increasing need for high-quality talent with competencies in tourism planning, brand operation, smart tourism applications, ecological and environmental protection, and high-end service management.

2.2. Characteristics of Talent Demand in Coastal Tourism

In light of the structure and operational characteristics of the coastal tourism industry chain, the demand for coastal tourism talent in Jiangmen City demonstrates pronounced diversity and complexity. On the one hand, industrial development requires compound managerial professionals equipped with expertise in tourism management and marketing who are capable of engaging in planning, project design, and operational management. On the other hand, it also necessitates technical and skilled personnel who are familiar with marine ecological environments, island tourism operations, and tourism service processes, in order to support the implementation and daily operation of coastal tourism projects.

Moreover, with the continuous integration and upgrading of coastal tourism formats, higher requirements have been placed on the competency structure of relevant positions. In addition to fundamental tourism service and management capabilities, practitioners are increasingly expected to possess strong awareness of marine ecological protection, cross-cultural communication skills, and digital technology application abilities, so as to adapt to the development of smart tourism and the diversification of tourist source markets. At the level of employment orientation, coastal tourism enterprises place greater emphasis on practical experience, professional ethics, and job adaptability, showing a clear preference for "job-ready" and "application-oriented" talent capable of rapid integration into specific positions, which further underscores the importance of a practice-oriented approach in meeting the talent demands of Jiangmen's coastal tourism industry.

3. Current Situation and Challenges of Coastal Sports Tourism Talent Cultivation in Jiangmen City

3.1. Domestic and International Models of Talent Cultivation in Coastal Sports Tourism

Owing to the early development and relatively mature industrial systems of coastal sports tourism in Europe and the United States, a comparatively well-established talent cultivation model has been formed. Its core characteristics are reflected

primarily in interdisciplinary integration, practice orientation, and industry collaboration. These countries generally rely on disciplines such as sports science, tourism management, and marine-related studies to construct interdisciplinary and compound training systems. Universities commonly offer majors or specialized tracks in sports tourism, sports management, and leisure and tourism management, systematically incorporating courses on water sports management, event organization, coastal resource conservation, and risk and safety management into their curricula. Through mechanisms such as the “dual-mentor system,” university–enterprise joint training, and credit-based internships, students’ practical training in real industrial environments is significantly strengthened, thereby enhancing their job adaptability and professional competence. At the same time, strong emphasis is placed on industry standards and professional qualification certification, gradually forming a closed-loop talent cultivation system that closely links education, industry, and employment.

In contrast, coastal sports tourism in China, as an emerging field arising from the integration of sports and tourism, remains largely in an exploratory stage with regard to talent cultivation. At present, talent training mainly relies on the extended development of programs in leisure sports, social sports guidance and management at sports universities, as well as tourism management programs at tourism-oriented institutions. Although some coastal regions and cities with relatively advanced sports tourism development have begun to explore compound talent cultivation models characterized by the integration of “sports skills + tourism services + operational management” through specialized tracks, modular curricula, and pilot programs of industry–education integration, the overall professional system has yet to mature, and the level of systematicness and standardization in talent cultivation still requires further improvement.

3.2. Current Talent Cultivation Model for Coastal Sports Tourism in Jiangmen City

At present, the cultivation of coastal sports tourism talent in Jiangmen City mainly depends on local universities, vocational institutions, and social training systems, exhibiting an overall pattern characterized by “dependence-based” and “fragmented” development. At the level of formal academic education, an independent major or a systematic training orientation centered on coastal sports tourism has yet to be established. Relevant talent is largely sourced from traditional majors such as tourism management, hotel management, physical education, and social sports. The curricula of these programs are primarily oriented toward general tourism management or basic sports education, with limited content specifically targeting coastal sports tourism, which is often delivered in a scattered manner through elective courses or practical activities.

At the level of vocational education and social training, talent cultivation is mainly concentrated on water sports skill training, tourism service skills, and short-term

job training programs, with an emphasis on operational skills and service standards. However, training related to higher-level competencies—such as event operation, product planning, brand promotion, safety management, and industrial integration—remains relatively weak. Overall, the existing talent cultivation model in Jiangmen is primarily aimed at meeting the needs of basic operational positions and has not yet formed a comprehensive, full-industry-chain talent training system covering planning, organization, operation, and integrated management. Consequently, a noticeable gap remains between the current talent cultivation system and the practical requirements of the transformation and upgrading of the coastal sports tourism industry.

3.3. Problems in the Talent Cultivation System for Coastal Sports Tourism in Jiangmen City

The talent cultivation system for coastal sports tourism in Jiangmen City is still at an initial and exploratory stage, with relatively limited levels of systematization and specialization. The professional positioning of talent cultivation remains insufficiently clear and continues to rely heavily on traditional tourism- or sports-related majors. A systematic training framework centered on coastal sports tourism with a distinct industrial orientation has yet to be established, resulting in a certain mismatch between talent supply and the actual needs of industrial development. In the cultivation process, the depth of industry–education integration is relatively limited. Practical teaching is mainly conducted through short-term internships and skill-based training, while opportunities for students to participate in real coastal sports tourism projects and event operations remain inadequate, thereby constraining the enhancement of practical competence and overall professional quality.

At the same time, the existing cultivation model places greater emphasis on basic service skills and operational abilities, while paying insufficient attention to the development of compound and high-level talent that integrates sports expertise, tourism operation capabilities, coastal safety management, and market development skills. This limitation makes it difficult to effectively support the industry's transition toward greater professionalization, branding, and high-quality development. In addition, mechanisms for continuing education, professional qualification certification, and in-service capacity building remain underdeveloped, and the industry lacks clearly defined career development pathways for practitioners. Compared with mature international talent cultivation systems for coastal sports tourism, Jiangmen still exhibits evident gaps in curriculum design, practical training models, and alignment with industry standards, which collectively constrain the structural optimization and sustainable development of the coastal sports tourism talent pool.

4 Construction of Talent Cultivation Pathways for Coastal Tourism in Jiangmen City

4.1. Optimizing a Multi-level Talent Cultivation System

Against the backdrop of the continuous professionalization and high-quality development of the coastal tourism industry, Jiangmen City needs to systematically optimize its multi-level talent cultivation system based on the overall demands of the coastal tourism industry chain. It is necessary to establish an interconnected and coordinated talent cultivation framework encompassing undergraduate education, higher vocational education, and skills training, so as to achieve differentiated and precise talent supply.

At the undergraduate level, the focus should be placed on cultivating mid- and high-level talent with compound knowledge structures and comprehensive management capabilities. By promoting interdisciplinary integration among sports, tourism, and marine economy-related disciplines, universities should establish specialized courses or training tracks with distinctive characteristics of coastal sports tourism, strengthening students' systematic competencies in industrial planning, project design, marketing, event organization, and brand operation, thereby providing managerial and planning-oriented talent support for the development of the coastal tourism industry.

At the level of higher vocational education, greater emphasis should be placed on practice orientation and job relevance. Centered on frontline positions such as water sports services, coastal leisure project operation, event execution, safety assurance, and tourism reception, vocational institutions should optimize curriculum structures and increase the proportion of practical training. Through university-enterprise cooperation, work-integrated learning, and order-based training models, the cultivation of technically skilled personnel with strong operational capabilities and sound professional ethics should be prioritized.

At the level of social training and continuing education, flexible and diversified training mechanisms should be established for existing practitioners and potential labor forces, with a focus on enhancing specialized skills and service capacities. Through short-term training programs, vocational skill level certification, and position-oriented competency improvement courses, continuous efforts should be made to strengthen abilities in water sports safety management, event service standards, and emergency response. By effectively linking undergraduate education, vocational education, and social training, a coastal tourism talent cultivation system characterized by clear hierarchy, rational structure, and coordinated development can be gradually formed, providing solid human resource support for the sustained and healthy development of Jiangmen's coastal tourism industry.

4.2. Deepening Industry-Education Integration and Strengthening University-Government-Enterprise Collaboration

Establishing a stable mechanism for industry–education integration through government guidance, university–enterprise cooperation, and industry participation is a key measure for improving the quality of talent cultivation and its alignment with industrial needs. Full play should be given to the government’s guiding role in top-level design and resource coordination. Through policy support, platform construction, and institutional innovation, long-term and stable cooperative relationships among universities, vocational colleges, coastal tourism enterprises, and industry organizations should be promoted, thereby forming a multi-stakeholder and collaboratively driven industry–education integration mechanism.

In practice, universities and vocational institutions should be encouraged to actively engage with key coastal tourism enterprises and sports tourism projects, jointly establishing off-campus training bases that integrate teaching, training, and practical application. Real industrial scenarios such as coastal sports tourism operations, water sports services, and event organization and management should be introduced into the teaching process to achieve effective alignment between educational content and job requirements. At the same time, curriculum systems and teaching standards should be jointly developed by universities and enterprises, incorporating enterprise competency requirements, industry norms, and the latest development trends into course design to enhance the relevance and forward-looking nature of talent cultivation. In addition, enterprise professionals can be invited to participate in teaching and practical guidance, with innovative training models such as “dual-mentor systems” and “project-based learning” explored to enable students to improve their practical abilities and professional qualities through participation in real projects. Through the coordinated efforts of government guidance, university–enterprise cooperation, and industry participation, deep integration among the education chain, talent chain, and industrial chain can be gradually realized, providing strong human resource support for the high-quality development of coastal tourism in Jiangmen City.

4.3. Emphasizing Coastal Tourism Characteristics and the Cultivation of Compound Competencies

Against the backdrop of the continuous enrichment of the coastal tourism industry and the ongoing integration of diverse business formats, talent cultivation for coastal tourism in Jiangmen should place greater emphasis on coastal characteristics and the development of compound competencies, with the aim of enhancing talent adaptability and long-term development potential. In curriculum system construction, it is necessary to integrate distinctive content such as marine culture, island tourism operation, coastal sports project management, coastal ecological protection, and sustainable development, in accordance with Jiangmen’s marine resource endowment and the practical needs of coastal tourism development. This approach will help students develop a comprehensive

understanding of the operational mechanisms and distinctive values of the coastal tourism industry.

At the same time, traditional single-discipline training models should be transcended by promoting the cross-integration of courses in sports, tourism, management, and information technology, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness and forward-looking nature of talent cultivation. In terms of competency development, in response to trends in smart tourism and digital cultural tourism, greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening students' capabilities in digital platform operation, tourism data analysis, new media marketing, and smart service applications, so as to improve their adaptability to emerging technologies and new business formats. Moreover, through project-based teaching, innovation-oriented practice, and scenario simulation, students' innovative awareness and problem-solving abilities should be reinforced, encouraging active participation in coastal tourism product design, event planning, and experiential project innovation. In addition, given the diverse source markets served by coastal tourism, greater attention should be paid to cultivating students' intercultural communication skills and service awareness, thereby enhancing their international perspective and professional competence. By organically integrating the distinctive characteristics of coastal tourism with the cultivation of compound competencies, the transformation of Jiangmen's coastal tourism talent from single-skill-oriented personnel to high-quality, versatile professionals can be effectively promoted, better serving the industry's high-quality development goals.

4.4. Improving the Continuing Education and Vocational Training System

Improving the continuing education and vocational training system is a crucial component in enhancing the overall quality of coastal tourism talent in Jiangmen City and ensuring the stability of the talent workforce. A multi-level and modular continuing education system should be systematically established for in-service practitioners, focusing on key areas such as coastal tourism service standards, coastal sports project operation, water sports safety management, event organization, and emergency response. Through short-term intensive training programs, specialized skill enhancement courses, and blended online-offline training approaches, the professional knowledge structure and vocational skill levels of practitioners can be continuously updated and improved.

At the same time, efforts should be made to promote the effective alignment of professional qualification certification and skill level accreditation with industry job requirements, guiding practitioners to achieve competency improvement and career advancement through standardized certification pathways. On this basis, coastal tourism enterprises should be encouraged to establish internal training systems that organically integrate job training, skill assessment, and career promotion, thereby institutionalizing and normalizing training practices. This approach can

enhance employees' sense of professional identity and belonging to both enterprises and the industry. Continuous improvement of the continuing education and vocational training system will not only contribute to raising the overall service quality and professionalization level of coastal tourism practitioners in Jiangmen but also help consolidate the talent foundation for industrial development and strengthen the stability and sustainability of the talent workforce.

4.5. Improving Policy Support and Talent Attraction Mechanisms

Strengthening policy support and talent attraction mechanisms is an important foundation for enhancing the effectiveness of talent cultivation and boosting regional competitiveness. At the strategic level, the government should increase support for the cultivation and aggregation of coastal tourism talent by improving targeted support policies and forming a coordinated policy system encompassing financial investment, platform development, and public service guarantee, thereby creating a favorable institutional environment for talent cultivation and introduction.

In practice, a special development fund for coastal tourism talent can be established to prioritize support for distinctive program development in universities and vocational colleges, the construction of practical training bases, and industry–education integration projects. At the same time, social capital should be guided to participate in the construction of talent cultivation platforms, improving the overall efficiency of resource allocation. In terms of talent attraction, more targeted recruitment policies should be formulated for urgently needed fields such as coastal sports tourism planning, event operation, brand promotion, smart tourism, and ecological protection. Through diversified approaches including project-based recruitment, flexible talent introduction, and team-based recruitment, high-level and urgently needed professionals can be attracted to Jiangmen for innovation, entrepreneurship, and long-term development.

In addition, the talent service environment should be continuously optimized by providing supporting measures in housing security, children's education, medical services, and career development support, while improving incentive and evaluation mechanisms to enhance talents' sense of achievement and belonging. Through the coordinated advancement of policy support and talent attraction initiatives, a talent agglomeration effect can be gradually formed, providing solid human resource support for the sustainable development of Jiangmen's coastal tourism industry.

5. Conclusion

Under the background of the strategy of building China into a maritime power and the deep integration of culture and tourism, coastal tourism has become an important pillar for the transformation and upgrading of Jiangmen's tourism industry. However, the insufficient supply of high-quality and compound talent remains a key factor constraining its high-quality development. Through a

systematic analysis of the current development of coastal tourism in Jiangmen, the characteristics of talent demand, and the existing talent cultivation system, it is evident that notable shortcomings persist in areas such as professional systems, industry–education integration, competency structures, and policy support.

Therefore, it is necessary to take industrial demand as the guiding principle, construct a multi-level and well-connected talent cultivation system, deepen university–government–enterprise collaboration and industry–education integration, emphasize the distinctive characteristics of coastal tourism and the cultivation of compound competencies, and improve continuing education, vocational training, and talent attraction policies. By promoting the transformation of talent cultivation from a fragmented approach to a systematic one, and from single-skill orientation to high-quality compound development, a solid human resource foundation can be established to support the sustainable development and overall competitiveness of Jiangmen’s coastal tourism industry.

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