

# The Examination of the Educational Value of Study Tours from the Perspective of "Double Reduction" Policy--A Case Study of Middle Schools in Zhoushan City

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**Abstract:** Study tour is part of the comprehensive practical course of middle schools, is the organic combination of in-school education and out-of-school education, and an innovative move from knowledge transfer to quality education in the transformation of China's basic education. With the landing of the "Double Reduction" policy in 2021, the market for study tours has also seen significant changes. Based on the analysis of the opportunities and challenges brought by the "double reduction" policy, the article re-exams the fundamental significance of study tours, educational value, and puts forward corresponding suggestions for the problems existing in the study tour market in Zhoushan City, hoping to promote high-quality education and standardized development of study tours and deepen the cognition of the educational value for the general public at the same time.

## 1. Current situation of study tours in Zhoushan city

Study tours are off-campus educational activities combining research studies and travel experiences organized by schools in accordance with regional characteristics, students' age characteristics and the needs of the teaching content of various disciplines for students to go out of the campus through group travel, centralized accommodation. Study tours have become popular avenues to engage in learning outside traditional classroom settings, offering students the space for learning through immersion in living contexts, realities and struggles on-going on the ground. [1] Even some students in the Singapore came to China as a tour of study. [2]2021 In July 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the General Office of the State Council (GOH of the CPC Central Committee and the GOH of the State Council) issued the Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework for Students in Compulsory Education and the Burden of Out-of-School Training. The "Double Reduction" policy was officially implemented. On this occasion, as a bridge connecting school education and out-of-school education, some changes have appeared on study tour market. Since February 2013, when the General Office of the State Council issued the Outline of National Leisure Tourism (2013-2020), which put forward the idea of "gradually implementing study tours for primary and secondary school students", study tours designed for young people have gradually taken shape. Many regions in China have tried to carry out study tours as an important part of

quality education. With the carrying forward of curriculum reform and the promotion of quality education, from January 28th to 30th, 2016, take quality education practice school as a platform, the city began to organize and carry out study tours, such as the implementation of summer and winter study activities. Under the "double reduction" policy, a new wave of burden reduction emerged in primary and secondary schools. Since the "Double Reduction", students have more free time after school, coupled with the central government's decision of promoting the overall health condition of students in recent years, study tours vigorously went into viral, primary and secondary school's demands to study tours is growing day by day. The national study travel industry is booming, and Zhoushan City has also shown a new development trend.

Study tours have been commended for bridging the gap between theory and practice by experiential learning or learning by doing (Howard and Gulawani, 2014 ). [3]Through the interview with Mr. Hu Enping, the political education director of Dinghai No. 5 Middle School, it was known that Zhoushan City Middle Schools mostly cooperate with travel agencies and study tour practice bases to host study tours. Zhoushan City has more than 30 study tour agencies and such institutions have undertaken a high frequency of study tours in recent years, developed tour routes with regional characteristics, and vigorously promoted related study tour products. As of September 22, data from Zhoushan Daily shows that Zhoushan City has 2 national primary and middle school students' research and study education practice bases, 3 primary and middle school students' research and study education practice bases in Zhejiang Province, 1 primary and middle school students' research and study education

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practice camps in Zhejiang Province, and more than 10 primary and middle school students' education practice bases in Zhoushan City, and there are more than 10 development of the "Island Encounter". Zhoushan also developed many high-quality routes for study tours, like "the adventure of the island of Dongju Island study tour" "farmer metamorphosis" farming experience 1-day camp, "Bamboo Hill - hero's road" teenagers patriotic education tour.

According to the study tour product division on "study tour service specification", study bases are divided into 5 types, including knowledge popularization, nature viewing, experience investigation, inspirational development and cultural recreation[4] The program is relatively concise and practically operable. According to the above criteria, taking into account the actual development of study bases in Zhoushan City, as of February 2021, there are 12 study bases and 2 campgrounds above the municipal level in Zhoushan City after data collection and field checking.

In terms of the spatial distribution of Zhoushan City's study tour bases, they are concentrated in Zhoushan City's main island area (Dinghai District) and Putuo District, while Shengsi County and Daishan County are more sparsely distributed.

Zhoushan City has developed core products of study tours such as marine culture study tours, ecological and nature study tours, island geology exploration study tours, Zhoushan Islands non-heritage study tours, etc., forming a study tour system with diverse types, staggered development and unique island characteristics. From the type of Zhoushan City study tour base, the knowledge of popular science is relatively more, and the culture and recreation is relatively less.

(1) Type of popular knowledge and science. Zhoushan City has the largest number of such bases, mainly including various types of museums, science and technology centers, theme exhibitions, zoos, botanical gardens, historical and cultural heritages, industrial projects, scientific research sites and so on. This type of base is mainly aimed at popularizing and spreading specific knowledge, with a strong historical and local sense. For example, Zhoushan Museum, selected Zhoushan's characteristics of the marine natural landscape and the corresponding marine culture, Buddhist culture and set up three major exhibition halls, has a high educational significance as well as ornamental. According to the analysis of the survey related to a total of 14 bases, respectively, Zhoushan Museum, Maa Museum, Xu Zhengguo Museum, Zhejiang Ocean University - Museum of Marine Biology, Dinghai Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum, the Museum of Marine Stone Appreciation, the China Lighthouse Museum, the China Typhoon Museum, the Chinese Museum of Coastal Defense, Lanxiu Museum, Putuo District Museum, China Marine Fisheries Museum, Buddhist Museum in Putuo Mountain, five craftsmen Museum.

(2) Type of natural ornamental. It mainly includes natural resources such as mountains, rivers, lakes and seas. located in the northeast of Zhejiang Province, east of the East China Sea, Zhoushan has a subtropical monsoon climate and unique marine ecological and geographical

resources. The special geographic location and oceanic subtropical monsoon climate have created a rich variety of natural landscapes, with two national scenic areas, namely Putuo Mountain and Shengsi Islands, and two provincial scenic areas, namely Daishan mountain and Peach Blossom Island. What's more, there are 6 scenic areas regarded as highest level in China, namely, Putuo Mountain, Zhujiajian mountain, Zhoushan Peach Blossom Island, Zhoushan Shengsi Islands, Zhoushan International Aquatic City, Nandong Art Gallery.

(3) Type of experience and investigation. It refers to resources such as farms, practice bases, summer camps and so on. Influenced by the rural revitalization policy, the development of this type of study base is speed up. For example, agricultural bases such as Xinguo Labor Practice Base in Xincheng, Xiangnong Garden in Maa, and Xinqingnong Agricultural Products Base, which display advanced agricultural technology and provide a platform for agricultural experience, are committed to cultivating primary and secondary school students' manipulative ability and thinking ability, and encouraging students to get rid of the shackles of books and liberate their minds.

(4) Type of inspiration. Mainly includes patriotic education bases, university campuses, military camps. Zhoushan "lighthouse" patriotic study and practice education base belongs to this type of base.

(5) Culture and recreation. Mainly includes all kinds of theme parks, film and television city and other resources. In Zhoushan City, the number of such bases is relatively small.

The Zhoushan Municipal Bureau of Culture, Advertising, Tourism and Sports (hereinafter referred to as "The Bureau ") and the bases under the jurisdiction of The Bureau have been focusing on the development of Zhoushan's study tours at a wide range of levels from various perspectives. Zhoushan City currently has more than 30 study tour agencies, and such agencies have maintained a high frequency of study tour activities in recent years, developed some fine study tour routes with regional characteristics, and vigorously promoted related study tour products. The Bureau focuses on cultivating the skills of study tutors. In order to further strengthen the construction of talented tourism team and comprehensively improve the working ability and service quality of tour guides and interpreters of county's attractions and scenic spot, Bureau's official website released the news in December 2020 that Shengsi County's Bureau of Culture, Advertising, Tourism and Sports would join hands with the Tourism and Health Vocational College of the Zhejiang Zhoushan Islands New Area to tailor-make a five-day quality enhancement training. The training adopted a combination of theoretical teaching and on-site explanation. Through this training, the trainees further consolidated their theoretical knowledge, opened up their horizons, and communicated deeply with their peers.

From 2018 to 2022, in order to solidly promote school study tour activities and develop meaningful and valuable study tour courses suitable for the practical experience of primary and secondary school students, Zhoushan Quality Education Practice School for Primary and Secondary Schools has repeatedly organized school-based research

and training activities. It effectively improves teachers' understanding of concept of tour tutors, enhances teachers' study tutor implementation techniques, and provides strong technical support for school's education brand construction. Since 2019, study tour has become the main work of Zhoushan Quality Education Practice School for Primary and Secondary Schools. Since 2020, in order to effectively promote the development of school study tour courses, exploit the social benefits of study tour bases, Zhoushan Quality Education Practice School for Primary and Secondary Schools is committed to exploring the development of research travel implementation mechanism, to provide a standardized strategy for study tours.

Zhoushan Museum focuses on the educational needs of elementary school students, compiling the corresponding study tour manual. Zhoushan Museum make full use of the collection of cultural relics resources and carefully designed to write the "Zhoushan Museum of elementary school students study manual (beautiful home - Zhoushan natural resources)", providing directional guidance for elementary school students to carry out research study, enriching the Zhoushan Museum's distinctive education system.

Under the guidance of the concept of "tourism + education", Zhoushan City is relying on scenic spots, historical relics, island non-heritages, patriotic education bases, museums, beautiful villages, small towns to vigorously carry out the construction of study bases, but there are still major problems in the process of its construction.

## **2. Problem of study tour: fragmented organization of study tour activities and vague themes**

The Zhoushan study tour system has the problem of fragmented and random activity arrangements and vague themes. When the study tour is a part of school education but not a traditional classroom, the curricularization and rigor of its activity arrangement is crucial but tend to be neglected. According to Gagne's information processing learning theory, there are internal and external conditions for learning, both of which are critical to learning effectiveness. In the learning process of intellectual skills (a kind of cognitive activity carried out in the human brain with the help of internal language, such as silent reading, mental arithmetic, writing, observing and analyzing, etc.) and cognitive strategies, meaningful back-and-forth relationships can promote effective encoding, which is an important external condition. However, many schools in Zhoushan City only have unclear purposes and themes when arranging activities for study tours, which led to random and scattered arrangements of travel sessions with no clear educational significance. To give a simple example, a middle school in Zhoushan organized a study trip for students to Zhan Mao, Gan Shiao. The detailed arrangements are as follow:

### **Case 1: "Labor Education" Study Tour**

In order to establish the concept of labor education for students, a middle school in Zhoushan organized a study

trip, hoping that children would take nature and society as school and promote ideological education. The school led the students to Zhan Mao. First, arranged simulated military training for students in order to achieve the purpose of inheriting patriotic spirit and practice their force of will. In the afternoon, arranged barbecue activities for the students in order to achieve the purpose of culinary demonstration.

This school's study trip activities were arranged in a single and monotonous way, and the content was thin; the patriotic education did not fit the theme of "labor education", while the "cooking demonstration" activity could only be regarded as a reunion and recreation activity, which did not achieve the purpose of labor education. The two activities are meaningless back-and-forth relationship, no clear theme, neither "learning" nor "research". Students can not grasp the educational purpose of the study trip, therefore can not learn in this activity. However, some schools organize study tours with colorful arrangements and logical links, as illustrated by an example of a study tour in a middle school in Putuo District:

Case 2: Putuo "set up the dream of blue ocean, feel the charm of intangible cultural heritage" study tour

In order to enable students to experience Zhoushan marine sentiment, heritage intangible cultural heritage, a middle school in Putuo organized a one-day study trip and sent students to Dongsha Ancient Town. The seventh graders of the school first went to Dong Sha Ancient Town to search for the heritage of the ancient town and admire the architecture of Ming and Qing Dynasty. Next, they went to the Marine Fisheries Museum to learn about marine culture and familiarize themselves with fishery work. After that, they went to Jin Weiyang Memorial Hall to commemorate the history of the Communist Party and recollect the heroic deeds. Finally, the children experienced Zhoushan City's characteristic non-legacy culture, such as handmade fishing rope knots, horse lanterns, dragon dances, gongs and drums, weaving nets, etc., and ended the day's journey with laughter.

The school's study trip with the themes of "marine culture" and "intangible cultural heritage" has successfully integrated behaviorist learning theory, which is based on programmed instruction (programmed instruction refers to breaking down the knowledge of each subject into a series of knowledge items according to their intrinsic logical connection, connecting and deepening these knowledge items, and then letting the students learn each item of knowledge one by one and giving them reinforcement in time, so that the students can finally master the knowledge they have learned.). Therefore, the study tour is more likely to deepen students' impressions and is a meaningful part of learning.

The study tour curriculum still faces the challenge of not being sufficiently attuned to the developmental needs of students. The process of adolescent growth is a process of socialization. The process has two distinctive features, one is experience and the other is group, and both are indispensable. This conceptual law emphasizes that experience and group are not blind. Nowadays, study tour activities are arranged in a fragmented and random status, which does not meet the needs of students. Many schools rely on study tour products developed by tour agency. The

design process of these products may be more inclined to the diversity of content and attractiveness to students, but whether they can largely meet the developmental requirements of students needs to be further deliberated and verified. The combination of "study" and "tour" is the original intention of the school-based curriculum, but many schools are abandoning the meaning of "study" in the implementation of the process and regard it only as a trip, and the curriculum has fallen into the "emphasis on travel rather than education", making it difficult to achieve the expected goals and failing to achieve the purpose of study.

From the viewpoint of cognitive development theory, at different stages of students' physical and mental development, their cognitive ability and cognitive level are characterized by stages and individual differences. In terms of improving students' cognitive ability, the curriculum content and teaching methods in the teaching process should be suitable for the cognitive development characteristics of students. As an important support in the process of students' cognitive construction, the contextual experience in the process of study and research travel can effectively bridge the difference between students' actual cognition and expected cognition in study tours and deepen students' understanding and cognition to a specific region; taking students' cognitive development characteristics as the guide, focusing on the design of curriculum content and changing the traditional teaching methods can help deepen students' cognitive identity in the process of study and research activities. Therefore, more attention should be paid to the combination of content and contextual design rather than pure activity organization in the design of study tours.

Study tours are a fast-growing format for outbound education and provide exciting experiential learning opportunities for students in the creative industries disciplines. Learning opportunities for students in the creative industries disciplines. [5]Study tours should pay close attention to the quality control of study products, clarify the theme of study tours, standardize the teaching design of study courses, and facilitate the promotion and practice of study tours. The practice of study tours is to transform quality social resources into curriculum resources, foster children's comprehensive ability of independent development, practice and innovation, cultivate sound personality and strong physique so that basic education can cultivate a new man of the times with ideals, skills and commitment.

### 3. Concluding remarks

Through an in-depth study of primary and secondary school study travel in Zhoushan City, this paper reveals and analyzes the mechanism of its activities at the micro level, and moreover conducts a pedagogical review of study travel in the region at the macro level, pointing out the disconnection between practice and the original intention. This not only helps to improve the Zhoushan primary and secondary school study tour system, but also provides experience and inspiration for the development of study tours nationwide. In the context of promoting

"double reduction", deepening quality education, and responding to the strategy of "strengthening the country with talents", this paper and related research will provide useful reference for the future development of education, contribute to the cultivation of a new generation of talents with comprehensive qualities, and promote the cause of Chinese education to new heights. This paper and related research will provide useful reference for the future development of education, contribute to the cultivation of a new generation of talents with comprehensive quality, and promote China's education.

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