



A Study on the Problems and Countermeasures of Curriculum Construction of Study Travel in China

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Abstract

In 2013, the General Office of the State Council released the first policy related to study travel, The research on study travel has been attracted attention by scholars, and it has been recognized that the educational value of study travel can be achieved through study travel courses. So far, the research mainly focused on study travel courses. In this study, it analyzed 178 articles related to study travel courses in China from 2019 to 2021 collected in China national knowledge infrastructure (CNKI), and found that the current research mainly focused on the development of curriculum, the design of curriculum schemes, and the mechanism of curriculum construction. Through the analysis of these articles, it found that the curriculum construction of study travel lacked scientificity and systematicness leading to these problems existing in the implementation of study travel courses. In the future, the curriculum construction of study travel should be improved and supported by three aspects in terms of the improvement of study travel policy, the construction of curriculum system of study travel including the determination of curriculum objectives, the development of curriculum resources, implementation of curriculum and the formulation of curriculum evaluation system, and the establishment of school-social-family support system of study travel in china.

Keywords: *Study Travel, Curriculum Construction, Problems, Countermeasures*

1. Introduction

Study travel has come into being under the background of curriculum reform mainly for basic education, the implementation of quality-oriented education and the completion of the fundamental task of moral-oriented education, which is to cultivate the core competencies and values for Chinese students' development. Meanwhile, study travel is the product of policy. It has attracted extensive attention by scholars since it was proposed for the first time in this policy, *Notice on the national tourism and leisure outline (2013-2020)*, released by the General Office of the State Council[GOSC] (2013) . In this policy, it proposed that study should be carried out for primary and secondary school students step by step for the first time. Soon

afterwards, the release of some important policies have had a profound impact on study travel, especially study travel courses, which mainly refer to two types of policies in terms of study travel and the curriculum reform. Among these policies, *Opinions on promoting study travel for primary and secondary school students* is the most important and profound policy

As the research outcome of the following project: The research on highlighting the unity of knowledge and practice, and promote the practice teaching in colleges and universities —— Taking the field practice teaching of geography study travel as an example (Project number: JYJG20200221) released by Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China [MEPRC] et al. (2016) , which is first policy named after study travel. In order to standardize the study travel, the Former China National Tourism Administration [FCNTA](2016) released the policy, *Service specification for study travel*, which stipulated the industry standard of study travel. With the promotion of curriculum reform, MEPRC (2017) released the policy, *Guiding outline of comprehensive practical activities course in primary and middle schools*, which is related to the study travel course. The above policies indicated the importance of study travel, which also play a guiding role in the implementation of study travel and its curriculum construction.

At present, there are some achievements in the implementation of study travel, while there are a series of problems in the process, which are difficult to solve, especially the implementation of study travel courses. Curriculum is the main approach to implement study travel. However, due to the diversified curriculum objectives, comprehensive subject content, practical operation and developmental evaluation mechanism, there are many difficulties in the curriculum construction of study travel. Now there are some problems in the curriculum construction of study travel, such as unclear objectives, single organizational form, insufficient teachers, imperfect guarantee mechanism and evaluation mechanism and so on, which have made the study travel course lack of scientific design, which have further led to the mere formality of the implementation of study travel and the poor educational effect. Therefore, it is urgent to solve the above problems, which is the purpose of the research to put some countermeasures to improve the curriculum construction of study travel.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Curriculum Reform with Policy Released in China

In order to promote quality-oriented education and moral-oriented education, China has gone through eight curriculum reforms since 1949, and the new round of curriculum reform has continued since 1999. And curriculum reform of comprehensive practical activity is an important starting point of the new round of curriculum reform. MEPRC (2001) released the policy, *Outline of basic education curriculum reform (for trial implementation)*. The policy clearly stated that comprehensive practical activity should be set up from primary school to high school as a compulsory course. And the policy, *Guiding outline of comprehensive practical activity curriculum in primary and middle schools*, released by MEPRC (2017) further specified the curriculum nature of comprehensive practical activity, which is a compulsory course stipulated in the national compulsory education and ordinary high school curriculum plan and set alongside the subject curriculum, and it's an important part of the

curriculum system of basic education. In addition, the policy put forward the overall goals that students should have the awareness and ability to perceive and approval of values, take responsibilities, solve problems, innovate and so on, as while as the specific objectives corresponding to the overall goals at each education stage in terms of primary school, junior middle school and senior high school. In addition, the main approaches of comprehensive practical activity include investigation and exploration, social service, design and production, and professional experience.

The curriculum objectives of study travel are in line with the comprehensive practical activity, and the implementation approaches of study travel are very similar to the comprehensive practical activity. Therefore, study travel is taken into consideration in the scope of curriculum reform of comprehensive practical activity, so as to promote the realization of the goals of curriculum reform. Correspondingly, there are some policies of study travel released by the government to promote the implementation and development of study travel. This policy, *Opinions on promoting study travel for primary and secondary school students*, stated that study travel should be integrated into the school education and teaching plans, and taken into consideration with comprehensive practical activity courses (MEPRC, et al., 2016). In addition, it clearly stipulated the main tasks as following, to incorporate study travel into the teaching plans of primary and secondary schools, to strengthen the construction of study bases, to standardize the organization and management, and to improve the financing mechanism, establish a safety responsibility system. Furthermore, this policy, *Service specification for study travel*, designated the industry standard of study travel, which is to standardize the service process and improve the service quality of study travel, so as to guide and promote the healthy development of study travel (FCNTA, 2016). To sum up, the curriculum reform of basic education is the entry point for the implementation of quality-oriented education and the completion of the fundamental task of moral-oriented education, and the curriculum reform of comprehensive practical activity is an important starting point. Meanwhile, study travel is an important approach to promote the curriculum reform of comprehensive practical activities.

2.2 The Connotation of Study Travel

Since GOSC(2013) issued the policy, *Notice on national tourism and leisure outline (2013-2020)*, study travel has caused extensive research in academics. The first to bear the brunt is the research on the connotation, nature, and orientation study travel. In terms of the connotation, the research mainly related to the broad and narrow sense of study travel in the tourism department and the education department. Zhu (2014) pointed out:

In a broad sense, study travel refers to special travel for the purpose of research and inquiry learning, that is, it is a cultural tourism activity in which tourists temporarily leave their permanent residence and go to other places for the sake of cultural knowledge. In a narrow sense, study travel refers to the off-campus investigation activities organized by school and participated by students, with the main purpose of learning knowledge, understanding society and cultivating personality. (as cited in Yang, 2014)

In the tourism industry, scholars usually adopt a broad definition, which is clearly defined in the policy, *Service specification for study travel*, as following (FCNTA, 2016):

Study travel is a kind of educational tourism activity that takes primary and middle school students as the main objects, collective travel life as the carrier, improving students' quality as teaching purpose, which is to carry out experiential education and research-based learning relying on social resources such as tourism attraction. (Terms and Definitions, para.1)

In the Education field, scholars generally adopt a narrow definition, which is clearly stipulated in the policy, *Opinions on promoting study travel for primary and secondary school students*, as following (MEPRC,et al.,2016):

Study travel is an off-campus educational activity which is organized and arranged by education departments and schools in a planned way. It is a combination of research learning and travel experience through centralized travel and centralized accommodation. It is an innovative form of school education and off-campus education, and an important content of education and teaching, and an effective way of comprehensive practical education. (Significance, para.1)

At present, there is no unified regulation on the connotation of study travel, and the above two kinks are generally recognized. As this research is based on the field of education, so it adopts a narrow connotation.

2.3 The Value of Study Travel

Mentioned in the above policies, the comprehensive practical activity course is taken as the compulsory curriculum (MEPRC, 2017), and study travel should be taken into consideration with the comprehensive practical activity course (MEPRC, 2016). Thus, some scholars have pointed out that study travel is a compulsory curriculum, which belongs to a part of a comprehensive practical course, which should be set up side by side with other subject courses, and complement each other. However, the above policies didn't clearly define the nature of study travel. Therefore, there are scarcely primary and secondary schools that implement the study travel course in strict accordance with those policies. But scholars generally recognize the value of practice education for study travel. Wang (2017) pointed out that study travel is a major innovation in the talent training mode for the basic education in China, which is of great guiding significance to promote the education and teaching reform in primary and secondary schools, and promote primary and secondary school students with all-round development. Duan (2019) pointed out that study travel is of great significance to cultivate all disciplines' core literacy, core competencies and values for students' development, and complete the fundamental task of moral-oriented education, meanwhile cultivate socialist builders and successors with all-round development in terms of morality, intelligence, physique, aesthetics and labor capacity.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Method and Technology

Based on the research purpose of this study, it adopts the qualitative research method, text analysis. This study has analyzed the articles related to curriculum construction of study travel using a combination of text statistics and contents analysis. Furthermore, this study adopts the technology of document research to collect data, as well as the software provided by CNKI to analyze data that conduct the text statistics of the articles retrieved.

3.2 Literature Collection

As of October 2021, the literature was searched in the total database of CNKI. Firstly, the ambiguous retrieval conditions are as following: subject% = 'study travel course' or title% = 'study travel course' or title = xls ('study travel course ') or v_ subject = xls('study travel course '), a total of 2211 articles were retrieved. On this basis, a secondary retrieval is carried out, and the retrieval conditions are as follows: ((main theme = 'curriculum development') or (main theme = 'study travel curriculum') or (main theme = 'curriculum design') or (main theme = 'scheme design') or (main theme = 'development and implementation') or (main theme = 'activity curriculum') or (main theme = 'curriculum')) and ((year = '2021') or (year = '2020') or (year = '2019')), a total of 178 articles were retrieved that used for the analysis with texts statistics. Furthermore, this research analyzed the titles and abstracts of 178 articles retrieved, and then excluded those articles that had nothing to do with curriculum construction and primary and secondary school students. Finally, 158 articles were selected for content analysis.

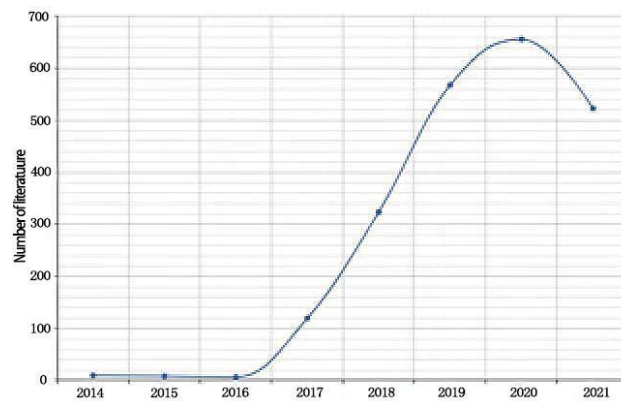
4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Texts Statistics Analysis Related to Curriculum Construction of Study Travel

4.1.1 Increasing Research Trend in China

This study adopts the analysis software provided by CNKI to conduct the text statistics of the 178 retrieved articles related to curriculum construction of study travel whose analysis results are as follows. In terms of the research trend, it is increasing. A total of 2211 articles were retrieved based on the ambiguous retrieval conditions, and the annual trend of the retrieved articles is shown in Figure1. According to the number of articles retrieved, it shows that the curriculum construction of study travel has been caused by research since 2014, which is in accordance with the policy release of study travel. Furthermore, the relevant research shows an increasing trend from 2016. According to the result of secondary retrieval, among 178 articles retrieved, there are 43 articles in 2019, 70 articles in 2020, 65 articles in 2021, which also shows an increasing research trend.

Figure 1 Annual trend of the publication related to study travel course

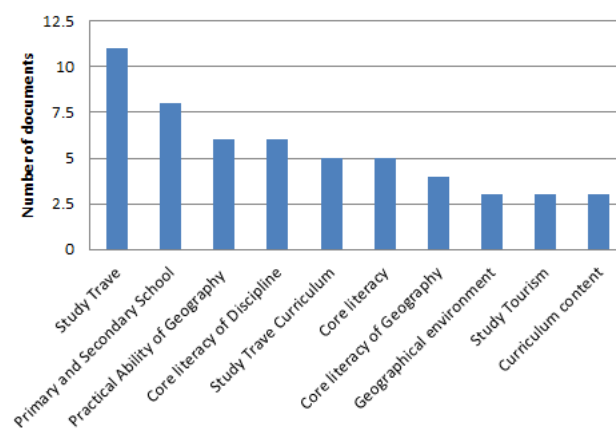


Source: China national knowledge infrastructure

4.1.2 Main Research Field Concentrated on Basic Education and Geography Discipline

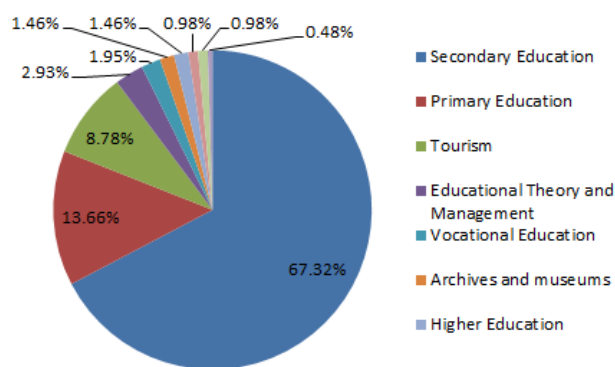
The themes of articles mainly distribute in the fields of primary and secondary schools, as well as geography discipline. Among the top-10 themes, primary and secondary school students rank second, and there are three themes in geography in terms of geographical practical ability, geographical core literacy and geographical environment as shown in Figure2. In addition, according to the top-10 discipline distribution, it is known that the study travel courses are mainly concentrated in secondary education and primary education accounting for a total of 80.98%, as shown in Figure3. To sum up, the research field of study travel courses is concentrated in primary and secondary schools especially geography discipline. Furthermore, the geography discipline concentrated on the geographical core quality, especially the geographical practical ability. The above shows that geography discipline has disciplinary advantages over other disciplines to carry out study travel.

Figure 2 Top-10 themes distribution of the publication related to study travel course



Source: China national knowledge infrastructure

Figure 3 Top-10 discipline distribution of publication related to study travel course

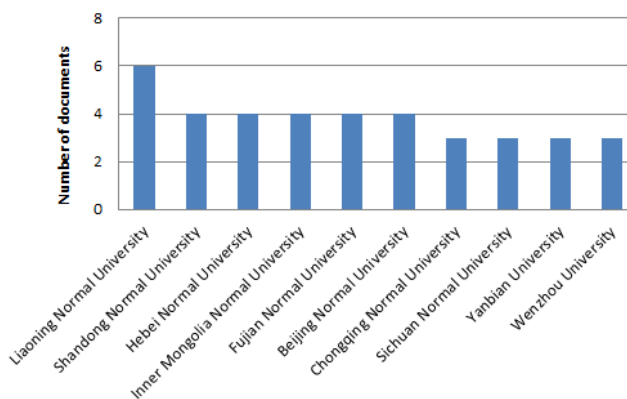


Source: China national knowledge infrastructure

4.1.3 Scattered Research Outcomes Concentrated on Colleges and universities in China

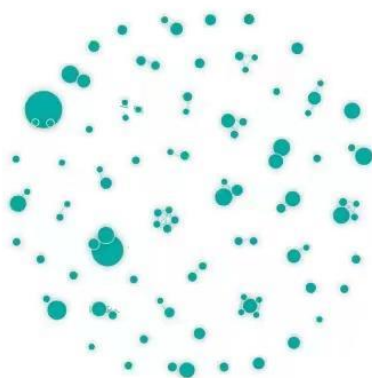
At present, the research on curriculum construction of study travel is as the main research field, there are some research outcomes. According to the top-10 distribution of research institutions, it is known that the research outcomes are concentrated in colleges and universities as shown in Figure4. However, there is little cooperation-research between the authors of research institutions, mainly independent-research, as shown in Figure5. Moreover, there is rarely cross-citation among the research outcomes, and there are a few articles cited, and there is no leading core article, so it is impossible to judge the research trend in this field, as shown in Figure6. To sum up, the research institutions lack cooperation, research outcomes are scattered, and there is no centralized and obvious research direction.

Figure 4 Top-10 Institutions distribution of publication related to study travel course



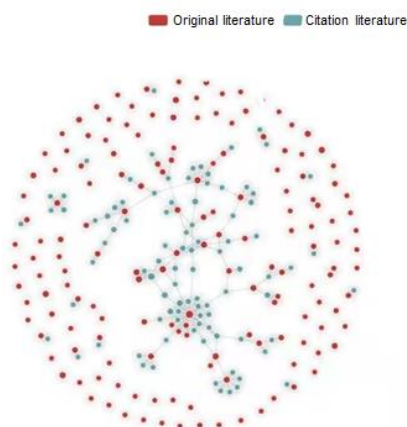
Source: China national knowledge infrastructure

Figure 5 Author collaboration distribution of publication related to study travel course



Source: China national knowledge infrastructure

Figure 6 Cross-citation distribution of publication related to study travel course



Source: China national knowledge infrastructure

4.2 Content Analysis Related to Curriculum Construction of Study Travel

4.2.1 Curriculum Construction Mainly Based on Core Literacy

Under the background of vigorously advocating the cultivation of core literacy in the field of basic education in China, the following are the focus of the curriculum construction of study travel, which are the core competencies and values for Chinese students' development, especially geographical core literacy mainly referring to the geographical practical ability. The curriculum construction of study travel is mainly based on specific disciplines for curriculum development and design. Given the nature of geography discipline, geography discipline has its own absolute advantages over other disciplines for the curriculum construction of study travel. The typical characteristics of study travel courses based on geography discipline are extremely practical, operational, and rational. Long et al. (2021) relied on the resources of Beipanjiang Grand Canyon to formulate the curriculum objectives closely around the geographical core literacy, select the curriculum content, design the curriculum activities, and

take the geographical core literacy as the main evaluation standard finally. This process of curriculum design is rigorous and complete; the curriculum contents are abundant, which possess strong maneuverability and generalization. Therefore, the effective approach of curriculum construction of study travel is to combine study travel with specific disciplines, and organically incorporate it into the daily education and teaching plans in the primary and secondary schools, so as to give full play to the value in practice education of study travel.

4.2.2 Research Outcomes Tend to the Scheme Design of Study Travel

Before 2019, the research on the curriculum construction of study travel is mainly the curriculum development and scheme design based on specific themes or resources. After 2019, this kind of research still accounts for a large proportion. This kind of research has the following characteristics. First of all, these research outcomes have some enlightenment for other curriculum construction of study travel based on other themes or resources, but whose generalization and maneuverability are poor. Li et al. (2020) aimed at the theme, "Qianshan Xiushui", that relied on the resource, Qianlingshan Park, formulated the curriculum objectives, selected the curriculum content, and designed the curriculum implementation and the evaluation method. Although the curriculum implementation and the evaluation method of this study are highly operational, and there is a great reference value, the whole research outcome has not risen to the theoretical level. Therefore, the above research outcome tends to the scheme design of study travel about the theme, "Qianshan Xiushui".

Secondly, there are some research outcomes that mainly focus on the description of the characteristics of specific resources, and the value of curriculum development for the education, while the part of curriculum design is only simply stated. This kind of curriculum resources mainly include, for example, the educational value of natural ecological resources for the cultivation of environmental awareness (Chen &Li, 2021), and the educational value of Red Cultural resources for the cultivation of ideological and moral quality (He, 2021), as well as the educational value of Chinese excellent traditional culture for the cultivation of ideology and personality (Zhao, 2020). Li & Cui (2020) elaborated the resource characteristics of Fangchuan scenic spot in a large length in the scheme design of study travel, while the implementation and evaluation of the course is more inclined to the sequence of this course. This kind of research outcomes accounts for the vast majority proportion in the overall research outcomes on curriculum construction of study travel.

4.2.3 Weak Theoretical Basic and Incomplete Process

The above has mentioned that the research outcomes of curriculum construction of study travel tend to the scheme design. The main reason is that those research outcomes have not risen to the theoretical level. Furthermore, it hasn't formed its own theory system of curriculum construction of study travel based on its own characteristics, and the theoretical basis is weak, which lead to the incomplete process of most curriculum construction. Xu &Yuan (2021) relied on the local geographical resources and integrated geographic information technology to design the study travel course related to local geography in terms of preparation for study travel, and objectives, methods as well as contents of study travel, and finally evaluated the effect of study travel. Chen (2020) explored the curriculum development of study travel of

junior high school history based on the historical and cultural characteristics of Shenzhen in terms of pre-trip preparation, in-trip exploration and post-trip development. The above research outcomes haven't been based on the relevant theories of curriculum construction, but just developed and designed these study travel courses based on their own subjective cognition. Due to the lack of theoretical basis, this kind of research outcomes are poorly organized, and lack practical content. Moreover, there are lots of such research outcomes in the curriculum construction of study travel.

In addition, a part of the research on the curriculum construction of study travel is based on relevant theories that mainly draw lessons from Tyler's principle, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. Based on Tyler's principle, it constructed the study travel course in terms of the formulation of curriculum objectives, the selection of curriculum content, the implementation of curriculum and the evaluation of curriculum. However, the vast majority of scholars did not deeply grasp the connotation and extension of Tyler's principle in the process of curriculum construction of study travel, and just constructed a seemingly complete study travel course from the above four aspects. And it failed to put forward the theoretical framework of curriculum construction of study travel. At the same time, a few research outcomes are based on other theories, such as PBL teaching model (Wang & Xiong, 2019) and ADDIE model (Gao, 2019) to design the study travel course, but the theoretical application is relatively simple. The weak theoretical basic and incomplete process of curriculum construction of study travel make the status that there are a lot of research outcomes while hardly core outcome, which hardly lead the development of curriculum construction of study travel.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 To Improve the Study Travel Policy in China

Study travel policy is the most important guidance for the smooth promotion and implementation of study travel in China. The research boom in study travel began with the release of study travel policy in 2013, which indicates that the policy plays an important role in the curriculum construction of study travel. However, at present, the curriculum construction of study travel is facing with the great dilemma that the study travel policy is insufficient, which leads to the lack of authority guidance in curriculum construction specifically in terms of the determination of curriculum objective, the selection of curriculum content, the implementation of curriculum, and the evaluation of curriculum effect that are all the key point of the curriculum construction of study travel. Now the curriculum construction of study travel is facing some problems in terms of the unclear objectives, single organizational form, insufficient teachers, imperfect guarantee mechanism and evaluation mechanism and so on. Although these released policies have provided the guidance for the curriculum construction of study travel, it is difficult to find specific guidance and solutions to solve the above problems fundamentally. Therefore, it's urgent to improve the study travel policy. First of all, it's urgent to clearly stipulate the nature, orientation and objectives of study travel in policy. Secondly, it's urgent to clearly stipulate the approach to implement study travel in policy. Based on the present policy and the research outcomes, curriculum construction is the

best approach. Thirdly, it's urgent to provide specific provisions and guidelines on the safeguard conditions for the curriculum construction of study travel in policy.

5.2 To Construct the Curriculum System of Study Travel

According to the current status and research outcomes of study travel, the curriculum construction of study travel is an important approach to realize the scientization and standardization of study travel and give play to the role of study travel in practical education. At the same time, it is also an inevitable way to ensure that the field of education plays a leading role in study travel. While the curriculum construction of study travel is facing many difficulties in terms of the difficulty to determine the curriculum objectives, implement curriculum and evaluate the curriculum effect. In order to solve these problems, it's urgent to realize the scientization of the study travel course based on the relevant theory basic, Tyler's principle adopted by this research (Luo&Zhang, 2021 as cited in Ralph W.Tyler,1949). The countermeasures are put forward as follows.

5.2.1 To Define the Curriculum Objective

In all various provinces and autonomous regions, the education departments and schools show different attitudes toward study travel, mainly negative even inactive. The root is that the curriculum's nature and objective are vague. And the curriculum objectives are the key important premise and reference for the implementation and evaluation of the study travel course. Although the above policies have mentioned the great significance of study travel for the implementation of quality-oriented education, the completion of the fundamental task of moral-oriented education, as well as the growth and development of students, it's necessary to stipulate the specific objectives of study travel for school education and teaching, especially for curriculum construction. On the basis, it's necessary to define the curriculum objectives for the implementation and evaluation of study travel courses.

5.2.2 To Develop the Curriculum Resources

Compared with other disciplines, study travel course travel has its own characteristics, which strongly relies on various natural and human resources. Therefore, the development of resources is a key point for the curriculum construction of study travel, otherwise it is impossible to implement study travel courses. Moreover, the development of curriculum resources for study travel is mainly the construction of study bases and camps, which is mainly operated by market and lack of strict supervision and management. At present, the number of study bases and camps is still insufficient, and the quality of study travel bases and camps is uneven, which directly affects the curriculum effect of study travel courses. Now it's also urgent to construct sufficient study travel bases and camps that have to meet the strict standard by the government, which ensure the curriculum construction of study travel. In addition, a study tutor is an important guarantee resource for the curriculum construction of study travel. At present, there is an urgent need for a large number of specialized study tutors who meet the industry norms and professional requirements, while there are huge shortages of study tutors and there is no authority institution and department to cultivate study tutors. Therefore, it's urgent to cultivate study tutors that meet the industry standard, which is led by an authority government department.

5.2.3 To Implement Study Travel Course

The curriculum construction of study travel has been stipulated in policy and received recognition generally in China, while the implementation of study travel course is facing lots of difficulties and obstructions mentioned above. The above has mentioned, "take overall consideration with comprehensive practical activity courses" in policy, so the implementation of study travel courses can learn from the comprehensive practical activity course. Due to the current situation of basic education in China, the implementation of comprehensive practical activity courses is difficult. Therefore, the implementation of a study travel course needs to be based on its own characteristics. In addition, now schools are faced with quite heavy teaching tasks, and haven't no better idea to organize and implement study travel courses. As a result, the vast majority of schools choose to entrust tourism agencies to implement study travel courses, which leads to the transfer of the domination position to tourism institutions, that is, it violates the original intention of the policy that study travel should be led by the education department. Eventually, it is difficult to guarantee the educational effect of study travel. Therefore, the domination position needs to be held in the education department and school in the implementation of study travel courses.

5.2.4 To Formulate the Curriculum Evaluation System

Study travel course is quite different from the other disciplines, which is characterized by off-campus, comprehensive, practical and complex links with many departments and institutions. The discipline characteristic determines the evaluation method of study travel courses different from the other disciplines. In terms of evaluation approaches, it can be divided into the two, one is the traditional quantitative evaluation related to scores, the other is the qualitative evaluation related to the performance during the process of study travel. In terms of the evaluation contents, it doesn't only include the study outcomes in terms of investigation and research report, handicrafts, etc., but also the process evaluation mainly related to the performance including the initiative and cooperation, etc. In terms of the evaluation subjects, it's diverse, which mainly refer to the students themselves, their classmates, study tutors and parents. As can be seen from the above, the evaluation of study travel courses is quite complex. In order to play the role of curriculum evaluation in the improvement of study travel courses, and the development of study travel, it needs to formulate the curriculum evaluation system based on the mentioned above.

5.3 To Establish the School-Society-Family support system

Study travel is an off-campus course, which indicates the difficulty and complexity of the course implementation, and means that it needs the great support from schools, social institutions and family. However, the present situation is that the parents can understand and accept the study travel, and social institutions are eager to profit from study travel. The above are the important reasons leading to the difficulties and obstacles of the implementation of study travel. Therefore, it's necessary to establish the school-society-family support system to promote the implementation of study travel courses. As for school, except for the curriculum construction, it needs to formulate the security measures to ensure the students' safety away from campus, which is to reduce the probability of crisis events from the source. As for society,

we can learn from Japan to establish a social public institution to supervise and manage the operation of study travel, which is to research and investigate study travel, provide the information consultation related to study travel, as well as the venues and technology support for the training of study tutor and so on. In addition, the local study travel bases, museums, transportation departments, travel agencies and hotels, etc., should serve the study travel, and should not make exorbitant profits or even waive fees. As for family, parents should understand the significance of study travel to students' all-round development, and support the student to experience the study travel.

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