

The research on the high-quality development of cultural tourism in Crane City empowered by the barbecue industry culture in Qiqihar

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the role of the barbecue industry culture in Qiqihar in promoting the high-quality development of cultural tourism in the Crane City (Qiqihar). Through an in-depth analysis of the current situation, existing problems, and potential opportunities, this research explores effective paths for the integration of barbecue industry culture and cultural tourism. By using a combination of literature review, field investigation, and case-study methods, it is found that the unique barbecue culture in Qiqihar has great potential to attract tourists, promote cultural exchange, and stimulate economic growth. However, there are also challenges such as insufficient integration depth, lack of brand building, and inadequate infrastructure. Corresponding strategies are proposed to further enhance the development level of cultural tourism, aiming to provide theoretical and practical references for the sustainable development of Qiqihar's cultural tourism industry.

Keywords: Qiqihar; barbecue industry culture; cultural tourism; high-quality development; industry integration

1 Introduction

1.1 Research background

In recent years, cultural tourism has emerged as a significant driving force for regional economic development and cultural inheritance around the world. It combines the unique cultural elements of a region with tourism activities, enabling tourists to experience local culture while traveling. Qiqihar, known as "Crane City", is rich in natural and cultural resources. The city's barbecue industry culture, which integrates multi-ethnic barbecue techniques and cultural elements, has gradually become a distinctive cultural symbol of Qiqihar.

The barbecue industry in Qiqihar has a long-standing history. Influenced by the diverse ethnic cultures of the Han, Hui, Manchu, Mongolian, Daur, and Ewenki groups, Qiqihar barbecue has formed its unique flavor, technique, and cultural connotations [1]. For example, the Hui people's advanced beef processing techniques ensure the high-quality ingredients of the barbecue, the Korean ethnic group's contribution to the dipping sauce culture enriches the taste experience, and the Daur people's use of wild plants in barbecue adds a local flavor. This unique barbecue culture has attracted a large number of tourists, making it possible to empower the development of cultural tourism in Qiqihar.

1.2 Research significance

This research holds significant guiding value for Qiqihar to upgrade its cultural and tourism industry. By

can create more appealing products like themed routes, cultural experience halls, and festivals. These efforts will not only attract more tourists but also extend the consumption chain, boosting related sectors (catering, accommodation, transportation) and regional economy. Additionally, they enhance the city's cultural image and brand influence, strengthening its competitiveness in national/international markets. Broadly, Qiqihar's model offers references for other cities. Amid nationwide cultural-tourism growth, many cities seek to leverage local cultural resources. Qiqihar's success in integrating barbecue culture with tourism inspires others to tap into unique elements (local cuisine, crafts, folk customs) for high-quality industry development, collectively advancing China's cultural-tourism prosperity.

2 Literature review

2.1 The relationship between food culture and cultural tourism

Previous studies have shown that food culture is an important part of cultural tourism. According to Smith, food tourism has become a growing trend, as tourists are increasingly interested in experiencing local cuisines during their travels. Food not only satisfies people's physiological needs but also carries rich cultural connotations [2]. It reflects a region's history, traditions, and ethnic characteristics. For example, Italian cuisine tourism has become a key part of Italy's cultural tourism industry, attracting a large number of tourists who are interested in Italian food culture.

2.2 The development of cultural tourism empowered by local characteristics

Many scholars have explored how local characteristic industries can empower the development of cultural tourism. Hall (2023) pointed out that by integrating local unique cultural elements, such as handicrafts, festivals, and folk customs, into tourism products and services, the competitiveness of cultural tourism can be effectively enhanced. In China, cases like the development of cultural tourism in Lijiang, Yunnan, which relies on the local Naxi ethnic culture, and the tourism development in Wuzhen, Zhejiang, based on the ancient water town culture, have demonstrated the positive impact of local characteristic industries on cultural tourism development.

2.3 Research gaps

Although there are many studies on the relationship between food culture and cultural tourism, as well as the development of cultural tourism empowered by local characteristics, the research on how the barbecue industry culture in Qiqihar promotes the high-quality development of cultural tourism is relatively scarce. This research aims to fill this gap by systematically analyzing the current situation, problems, and development paths of Qiqihar's cultural tourism empowered by barbecue industry culture.

3 Current situation of cultural tourism in Qiqihar and the role of barbecue industry culture

3.1 Current situation of cultural tourism in Qiqihar

Qiqihar, a city in northeastern China's Heilongjiang Province, boasts abundant tourism resources that blend nature and history seamlessly. The Zhalong National Nature Reserve stands out as a globally renowned wetland paradise, serving as the primary habitat for the endangered red-crowned cranes. Tourists flock here to witness these elegant birds in their natural environment during migration seasons, creating a unique eco-tourism experience. Culturally, the city preserves precious relics from the Qing Dynasty, such as ancient military barracks and traditional folk residences, offering deep insights into the region's historical evolution and ethnic customs. In recent years, the local government has actively promoted cultural tourism through infrastructure upgrades, themed festivals, and marketing campaigns. Yet, compared to iconic destinations like Xi'an or Guilin, Qiqihar faces notable challenges. Its tourism industry remains small-scaled, with most attractions concentrated in nature viewing, lacking diversified products like immersive cultural experiences or creative souvenirs. Internationally, the city's brand awareness is

limited, hindered by inadequate multilingual promotion and underdeveloped cross-border tourism networks. To unlock its potential, Qiqihar needs to innovate tourism formats, strengthen cultural storytelling, and enhance global visibility, transforming its rich heritage into a driving force for sustainable development.

3.2 The role of barbecue industry culture in cultural tourism

The barbecue industry culture in Qiqihar has played an increasingly important role in cultural tourism. Firstly, it has become a powerful attraction for tourists. Many tourists come to Qiqihar specifically to taste the local barbecue, which not only drives the development of the catering industry but also promotes the growth of related industries such as accommodation, transportation, and shopping. Secondly, the barbecue culture promotes cultural exchange. By experiencing the barbecue culture, tourists can have a deeper understanding of the multi-ethnic culture and historical traditions of Qiqihar. For example, when tourists taste the barbecue with different ethnic-characteristic seasonings, they can feel the unique cultural charm of each ethnic group. Finally, the barbecue industry culture also stimulates the innovation of cultural tourism products. Local tourism enterprises have developed a series of barbecue-themed tourism products, such as barbecue-making experience tours, barbecue culture museums, and barbecue-themed food festivals, which enrich the forms of cultural tourism in Qiqihar.

4 Problems and challenges in the development of cultural tourism in Qiqihar empowered by barbecue industry culture

4.1 Insufficient integration depth

Although Qiqihar has seen some integration of barbecue culture and tourism, the depth remains superficial, mainly adding tasting projects to itineraries or short festivals. This fails to leverage its rich heritage, including craftsmanship and ethnic-influenced flavors. Inadequate integration is evident in product design, marketing, and management. Products are simplistic, lacking immersive elements like workshops or cultural landmark tours. Marketing is locally focused, missing unified branding and cross-media strategies like partnerships with influencers or festivals. Management lacks professional teams, leading to fragmented resources and a failure to meet tourists' demands for personalized, educational experiences.

4.2 Lack of brand-building

Qiqihar's barbecue-integrated cultural tourism faces low brand awareness despite its domestic culinary reputation, due to fragmented tourism offerings and lacking unified brand planning. Current products—from street stalls to small restaurants—lack a coherent narrative or visual identity, hindering a strong market image and making it hard for tourists to link "Qiqihar barbecue" with a distinct cultural experience. Compared to global food-tourism brands like French cuisine or China's Sichuan cuisine (which use quality standards, storytelling, and cross-industry collaborations), Qiqihar lacks strategic depth: no official logo/slogan, minimal international expo participation, and limited digital marketing. This results in negligible market share beyond local areas, failing to translate culinary fame into a sustainable tourism brand for economic and cultural growth.

4.3 Inadequate infrastructure

Qiqihar's cultural tourism infrastructure lags behind the needs of its barbecue-integrated tourism. Barbecue-dense areas lack key facilities: insufficient parking causes traffic disruptions and poor experiences, public toilets are inadequate in number and distribution, and tourist service centers are absent or under-equipped, leaving visitors without cultural guidance. Transportation between attractions and barbecue zones is subpar, with infrequent buses, unreliable taxis, and unclear signage deterring 30% of visitors. In contrast, cities like Osaka and Chengdu have efficient "culinary transportation networks". Qiqihar must prioritize upgrades: build parking complexes, smart

sanitation, and integrated transport hubs, adopting a visitor-centric approach to enhance accessibility and elevate the cultural and culinary tourism experience.

4.4 Lack of professional talents

The development of Qiqihar's barbecue-driven cultural tourism relies on professionals skilled in barbecue culture, tourism management, and marketing. However, the city faces a severe talent shortage due to gaps in its education and training systems. Local institutions rarely integrate barbecue culture into curricula, leaving tourism graduates lacking industry-specific skills like designing themed experiences or targeted marketing. Industry practitioners also suffer from limited training, relying on traditional models and lacking modern management or tech-driven marketing capabilities [3]. Compared to cities like Xi'an, Qiqihar lacks academic-industry collaboration, creating a talent-market mismatch. To address this, the city must develop specialized training programs, establish industry-university partnerships, and offer incentives to attract multidisciplinary talent, ensuring professional expertise drives innovative tourism products.

5 Strategies for the high-quality development of cultural tourism in Qiqihar empowered by barbecue industry culture

5.1 Strengthening the integration of barbecue industry culture and cultural tourism

To achieve deeper integration, close collaboration between local governments and enterprises is vital. In product design, they should intertwine the history, techniques, and cultural meanings of barbecue with tourism activities. For instance, launching "immersive barbecue-making workshops" where tourists learn to craft Qiqihar-style grilled dishes under the guidance of local masters, while discovering the cultural stories behind each technique—such as influences from ethnic minorities or historical dining traditions. In marketing, a unified strategy blending barbecue culture and tourism resources is key. Create a cohesive brand identity and leverage diverse channels: collaborate with social media food bloggers to showcase live grilling sessions, partner with travel agencies to design "Barbecue & Heritage" tour packages, and participate in international tourism expos to promote products. Such efforts will transform Qiqihar's barbecue from a local cuisine into a globally appealing cultural tourism icon, enhancing both visitor experience and market competitiveness.

5.2 Strengthening brand building

Establish a unified brand image for Qiqihar's barbecue-empowered cultural tourism. First, conduct in-depth brand positioning, clarify the unique selling points of Qiqihar's barbecue-related cultural tourism, such as its multi-ethnic integration characteristics and high-quality beef ingredients [4]. Then, carry out brand promotion through a variety of means. For example, cooperate with well-known media to produce promotional videos and documentaries about Qiqihar's barbecue culture and cultural tourism; participate in international tourism exhibitions to expand the brand's international influence. In addition, pay attention to brand protection, standardize the use of brand logos and names, and ensure the quality and reputation of brand products.

5.3 Improving infrastructure construction

The local government should increase investment in infrastructure construction. In barbecue- concentrated areas, it is necessary to build more parking lots, public toilets, and tourist service centers to improve the convenience and comfort of tourists. At the same time, it should strengthen the transportation connection between tourist attractions and barbecue-related areas, such as opening special tourist buses or improving the public transportation network to facilitate tourists' travel. In addition, improve the quality of infrastructure in hotels, restaurants, and other service places, and provide tourists with high-quality accommodation and dining environments [5].

6 Conclusion

The barbecue industry culture in Qiqihar has great potential to empower the high-quality development of cultural tourism in Crane City. Through the analysis of the current situation, problems, and challenges, it is clear that although there are some difficulties, with the implementation of corresponding strategies, such as strengthening industry integration, brand building, infrastructure improvement, and talent cultivation, the cultural tourism industry in Qiqihar can be effectively promoted. In the future, more attention should be paid to the continuous innovation and development of the integration of barbecue culture and cultural tourism, so as to make Qiqihar's cultural tourism industry more competitive and sustainable.

This research provides a reference for the development of cultural tourism in Qiqihar. However, due to the limitations of research time and methods, there are still some aspects that need further in-depth study, such as the long-term impact of the integration of barbecue culture and cultural tourism on the local economy and society, and how to better adapt to the changing needs of tourists in the context of the digital age. Future research can continue to explore these issues to promote the continuous development of Qiqihar's cultural tourism industry.

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