

Synergistic Development of Chinese Language Education and Tourism in Cambodia

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Abstract: With the continuous deepening of the Belt and Road Initiative, the ties between China and Cambodia are increasingly strengthened. In 2024, the China-Cambodia Year of People-to-People Exchange provides a rare opportunity for cultural exchanges and tourism development between the two countries. This study focuses on the coordinated development of Chinese education and tourism in Cambodia, and explores how to promote tourism growth and cultural exchange through language education under the Belt and Road Initiative. The article analyzes the current situation of Cambodia's tourism industry, points out that its rich cultural heritage and natural landscapes are strongly attractive to Chinese tourists, and emphasizes the key role of Chinese education in improving the quality of tourism services and promoting cultural exchanges between China and Cambodia. If Cambodia wants to meet the growing demand of Chinese tourists, it must pay attention to Chinese education and cultivate tourism professionals who are proficient in Chinese. This paper also proposes specific development strategies to support the continuous growth of Cambodia's tourism industry and the deepening of China-Cambodia cultural exchanges. By developing the "Chinese + Tourism" model, Cambodia can not only enhance its international tourism competitiveness, but also strengthen the friendship and cooperation between China and Cambodia.

Keywords: Cambodia; Tourism; Chinese Language Education; The Belt and Road Initiative

1. Introduction

Under the framework of the "Belt and Road" initiative, China is committed to deepening cooperation with countries along the route to

promote global economic prosperity and development, while also working to build a practical path for a community with a shared future for mankind. Within this framework, China has established a diversified and extensive cooperation mechanism with The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, becoming a benchmark for regional cooperation. Cultural and tourism exchanges and cooperation are a key part of the bilateral people-to-people exchanges, and both sides continue to deepen and expand the scope of cooperation in this field. Both China and ASEAN countries possess a wealth of cultural and tourism resources, serving as important tourist destinations and sources of tourists for each other. Tourism exchanges and cooperation have become an important bridge to strengthen the friendship between the peoples of both sides and promote mutual understanding, injecting new vitality into the economic development of both parties.⁽¹⁾

Cambodia, officially known as the Kingdom of Cambodia, is located at the southern end of the Indochina Peninsula, bordering Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos, with the Gulf of Thailand to its south. It is one of the important member states of ASEAN. Cambodia boasts unique natural conditions, with a total area of approximately 180,000 square kilometers. Its capital is Phnom Penh, with a total population of about 15.4 million, of which the Khmer ethnic group accounts for 80%.⁽²⁾ Cambodia is endowed with abundant natural scenery and tourism resources, such as the Angkor archaeological site, the Preah Vihear Temple, and the Sambor Prei Kuk temple complex, all of which are world-renowned tourist attractions. In addition, Cambodia also has a unique religious and folk culture. The favorable tourism resources and geographical location make Cambodia a popular choice for Chinese tourists going abroad.⁽¹⁾ With the advent of the China-Cambodia Year of People-to-People

Exchanges in 2024, there is a rare opportunity for cultural exchanges and the development of the tourism industry between the two countries. As both sides actively promote policies, the prospects for cooperation in the tourism industry between China and Cambodia are broad, and it is expected to attract more tourists and investors. Against this backdrop, the demand for talents who are proficient in Cambodian culture and have good Chinese communication skills is growing. Such talents can not only promote the understanding and exchange of culture between the two countries but also play a bridging role in the tourism industry, enhancing the quality of tourism services and strengthening the tourist experience.

2. Status of Tourism in Cambodia

Cambodia, a nation renowned for its profound historical and cultural heritage, captivates the attention of tourists worldwide with its distinctive cultural landscapes and natural beauty. The country boasts several landmarks recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites, such as Angkor Wat, Preah Vihear Temple, and the Sambor Prei Kuk temple complex, which are internationally acclaimed for their historical and artistic significance. Particularly, the "Smile of Khmer" sculptures at Angkor Wat and the graceful dance movements of the "Apsara Dance" have captivated global visitors with their unique charm. The grandeur of the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh, the orderly arrangement of houseboats on Tonle Sap Lake, and the tranquility and natural beauty of Koh Rong Island form the highlights of Cambodian tourism. These attractions not only showcase the rich cultural fabric of Cambodia but also offer a diverse range of tourism experiences. For Chinese tourists, these unique cultural and natural landscapes are highly appealing and serve as important venues for them to delve deeper into and experience Cambodian culture. With the continuous strengthening of China-Cambodia cultural exchanges, the potential of these tourism resources is expected to be further developed and utilized.⁽³⁾

The year 2024 marks the "China-Cambodia Year of People-to-People Exchanges" and the "China-ASEAN Year of People-to-People Exchanges." Cambodian Secretary of State for Tourism, Qian Mingguang, notes that the tourism industry, dubbed the "green gold," has

not only created a multitude of employment opportunities for the Cambodian people, improved their income levels, and attracted investments, but it has also played a positive role in the protection and development of cultural and natural resources, making significant contributions to Cambodia's socio-economic development. Mr. Qian Mingguang emphasized that the tourism industry is a vital pillar of Cambodia's economy, and the Cambodian people are passionate about it. In recent years, there has been a notable enhancement in the quality of tourism services in Cambodia, and the industry's competitiveness has been strengthened. To promote the development of the tourism sector, the Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia has established a board of directors for the Cambodian Tourism Board, composed of representatives from the government and the private sector, to jointly discuss strategies and collaboratively advance the prosperity of the tourism industry. Cambodia's tourism resources are primarily focused on cultural attractions, including the famous temples such as Angkor Wat, Preah Vihear Temple, Sambor Prei Kuk temple complex, and the "Koh Ker" archaeological site. In addition, Cambodia's intangible cultural heritage is equally attractive, including the Royal Ballet of Cambodia, Khmer shadow puppetry, and the masked dance of "Vasaviandor," which not only demonstrate the traditional customs and beliefs of the Cambodian people but also add a unique charm to the tourism industry.⁽³⁾

The tourism industry serves as a vital pillar of Cambodia's economy, acting as a significant driver for the country's economic recovery and a key support for its economic growth.⁽⁴⁾ In 2019, Cambodia's tourism sector experienced remarkable growth, welcoming over 20 million domestic and international tourists, with the number of foreign visitors exceeding 6.6 million. The tourism industry generated nearly \$5 billion in revenue for the country that year, accounting for 12% of GDP, and provided employment opportunities for over 600,000 people. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 posed a significant challenge to Cambodia's tourism industry, resulting in a loss of approximately \$3 billion in tourism revenue. Despite this, the industry demonstrated remarkable resilience, emerging as one of the fastest recovering sectors in

Cambodia post-pandemic. To facilitate the recovery of the tourism industry, the Cambodian government released the "Post-Pandemic Tourism Recovery Roadmap" in 2021, leading to a steady and rapid recovery of the sector. In 2022, Cambodia received nearly 14 million domestic and international tourists, with the number of foreign visitors surpassing 2.27 million, marking a tenfold increase year-on-year, and the total tourism revenue reached \$2.06 billion.⁽⁵⁾ According to the recent statistical data released by the National Bank of Cambodia, in the first half of 2024, Cambodia attracted over 3.1 million foreign tourists, with domestic tourist numbers reaching 9.7 million. The tourism industry brought approximately \$1.7 billion in economic revenue to Cambodia, showing a growth rate of 7% compared to the same period of the previous year. This significant increase indicates that Cambodia's tourism industry has made a strong rebound from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report from Cambodia's central bank further points out that the continuous growth of the tourism industry can be attributed to several key factors: rapid economic growth in Cambodia and its region, enhanced interconnectivity of infrastructure, increased number of international flights, and the rising international reputation of Cambodia as a tourist destination. These factors have collectively driven the recovery and growth of Cambodia's tourism industry.⁽⁴⁾

The construction and operation of large-scale infrastructure have injected new vitality into Cambodia's tourism industry. On the first anniversary of its opening, the expressway from Phnom Penh to Sihanoukville has already served over 4.9 million vehicles, significantly strengthening the transportation network in the region. Additionally, the official inauguration of the Siem Reap Angkor International Airport in October last year, with a steady increase in flight and passenger numbers, has effectively propelled the comprehensive development of Cambodia's tourism industry and economy. Data from Cambodia's aviation sector shows that, as of the first half of 2024, a total of 31 airlines were operating in Cambodia. The three major international airports—Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville—have collectively welcomed 12,386 international flights, with passenger traffic exceeding 1.15 million, a 26% increase year-on-year. Among

them, Phnom Penh International Airport received 8,960 flights, Siem Reap International Airport received 3,214 flights, and Sihanoukville International Airport received 212 flights. These figures indicate that Cambodia has achieved significant success in attracting international tourists.

In the first half of 2024, the Cambodian government also organized a series of major events, including the "Visit Siem Reap 2024 Program" and the "China-Cambodia Year of People-to-People Exchanges," which have significantly contributed to the rapid recovery of Cambodia's tourism industry. At the recently held Cambodian Tourism Revival Seminar, Minister of Tourism Sosokeng disclosed that the Ministry of Tourism is formulating new action plans to invigorate the tourism sector. In the future, Cambodia will intensify international marketing efforts to expand its share of the global tourism market. The government also plans to host more significant cultural and tourism events, develop new tourism products, and accelerate the improvement of infrastructure to stimulate rapid growth in the tourism industry. The Cambodian government's goal is to attract 7 million international tourists by 2025, returning to pre-pandemic levels.⁽⁴⁾

3. Impact of the Development of "Chinese + Tourism" on Cambodia

China and Cambodia have long maintained friendly diplomatic relations, close trade exchanges, interconnected infrastructure, cultural and intellectual exchanges, and profound friendships among their peoples. With the continuous advancement of the "Belt and Road" initiative, various industries in Cambodia are becoming increasingly connected with China, and Cambodia is placing greater emphasis on cultivating professionals proficient in Chinese and knowledgeable about Chinese culture to meet the demands of tourism, foreign trade, education, and other fields. Ensuring the continued and stable development of trade and tourism, linguistic interconnectivity is an indispensable foundation. Cambodia is committed to strengthening Chinese language education and the popularization of Chinese culture, with the aim of establishing a more solid trade partnership with China and attracting more Chinese tourists. Deepening the study of Chinese in Cambodia

and cultural exchanges between China and Cambodia not only promotes bilateral economic cooperation but also enhances mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of the two countries.⁽⁶⁾

With the arrival of the China-Cambodia Year of People-to-People Exchanges in 2024, tourism and cultural exchanges between China and Cambodia are presented with new opportunities for development. China has always been one of the important sources of foreign tourists for Cambodia. This year, as the China-Cambodia Year of People-to-People Exchanges, with increased cultural exchanges between the two countries, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Cambodia in the first half of this year reached nearly 390,000, a year-on-year increase of 45%. It is expected that the number of Chinese tourists visiting Cambodia this year will reach between 800,000 and 1 million, bringing more opportunities to promote the development of Cambodia's tourism industry and economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.⁽⁴⁾ Against this backdrop, the contribution of Chinese tourists to Cambodia's tourism industry is becoming increasingly significant, promoting the diversified development of the local economy. To fully leverage this opportunity, the Cambodian government and tourism industry players are beginning to focus on promoting Chinese language education and actively seeking an integrated development path of "Chinese + Tourism." This model can not only improve the quality of tourism services and meet the growing needs of Chinese tourists but also drive the development of related industrial chains, including catering, shopping, and entertainment, injecting new vitality into Cambodia's economic growth. Moreover, the popularization of the Chinese language in Cambodia also helps to enhance mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of the two countries, laying a solid social and cultural foundation for the long-term stability of China-Cambodia relations. Cambodia needs to cultivate Chinese-speaking talents in the public service sector who can specifically serve Chinese tourists, including relevant agencies such as the Ministry of Tourism, police stations, customs, and visa processing offices. These talents need to be able to work in an office environment and effectively communicate with Chinese tourists

in Chinese, providing them with quality services.⁽⁷⁾

Promoting Chinese language education and the "Chinese + Tourism" model holds significant strategic importance for Cambodia's economic development and social progress. It not only enhances the international competitiveness of Cambodia's tourism industry but also strengthens cultural exchanges and economic cooperation with China, achieving mutual benefits and a win-win situation.

3.1 Impact of the Development of "Chinese + Tourism" on Cambodia's Tourism Industry

3.1.1 Expanded Cambodia's tourism presence

Owing to the advancement of international Chinese language education, a multitude of foreign students annually seek further education in China through Confucius Institutes or bilateral academic exchange programs. The experiences of these students from across the globe while studying and living in China have increasingly piqued the interest of the local populace, fostering curiosity about their home countries. In tandem with the accelerated internationalization of Chinese language education, a significant number of Chinese language teachers and volunteers, serving as cultural ambassadors, transcend geographical boundaries to engage in the dissemination of the Chinese language and cultural exchanges worldwide. They establish bridges for cultural interaction, conveying information about diverse local cultures and tourism insights back to China, thereby expanding the Chinese people's awareness of the global landscape, especially concerning the tourism resources of various nations. This enhances the allure of destination countries to Chinese tourists, invigorates the passion for international travel among Chinese citizens, and propels the surge in the number of outbound tourists. The integration of Chinese language education with the tourism industry can introduce novel growth prospects for Cambodia's tourism sector. In response to the Chinese tourists' quest for premium travel experiences, destinations equipped to provide services in Chinese will exert a stronger appeal. By elevating the proficiency in Chinese among tourism professionals, Cambodia can enhance the quality of tourism services to more effectively cater to the expectations of Chinese tourists, enticing an increased influx of Chinese

visitors.

3.1.2 Creating a favorable tourism environment for Chinese tourists

The tourism industry plays an essential role in promoting international cultural exchanges, with language serving as a crucial medium of communication for foreign visitors. Cambodia boasts a wealth of natural scenery and tourism resources, as well as unique religious and folk cultures. Leveraging these distinctive resources, Cambodia has successfully developed a range of tourism products and services, gradually forming a tourism product system with its own characteristics. Geographically, Cambodia is closer to China compared to regions such as Europe, America, Central Asia, and Africa. Attracted by its rich tourism resources and products, and assured by the quality of tourism services, Cambodia has become a popular choice for Chinese tourists seeking international travel destinations.⁽¹⁾

From the perspective of international tourism, Chinese tourists constitute a significant group visiting Cambodia. To adapt to this trend, the demand for Cambodian tourism practitioners to learn Chinese is growing, which not only enhances their employability but also greatly improves the quality of services they provide to Chinese tourists. In fact, globally, the number of people learning Chinese for tourism-related reasons is increasing significantly. A case in point is Sal, a boy from Siem Reap, Cambodia, who gained internet fame in 2018 for his ability to converse in multiple languages while selling souvenirs, with his fluent Chinese communication skills particularly notable. This represents the learning trend among ordinary tourism workers in the tourist city of Siem Reap. Many tourism service providers in Siem Reap have been learning Chinese through various means to serve Chinese tourists more effectively, significantly enhancing the local tourism language environment and the level of Chinese services. China is a key source of tourists in the global market and has attracted widespread attention from the international tourism industry. To attract Chinese tourists, many countries' tourist attractions have begun to introduce Chinese services, including setting up Chinese signs and incorporating Chinese into tourism promotional materials, conveying a message of friendliness and welcome to Chinese visitors. These initiatives not only provide practical convenience for Chinese

tourists but also greatly enrich their spiritual experience and increase their travel satisfaction.⁽⁸⁾

The year 2024 marks the launch of the China-Cambodia Year of People-to-People Exchanges. As interactions between the two countries in cultural and humanistic fields become increasingly frequent, the number of Chinese citizens traveling to Cambodia has shown a significant increase. According to statistical data from the first half of this year, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Cambodia has approached 390,000, with an increase of 45% compared to the same period last year. Based on this growth trend, it is expected that by the end of this year, the total number of Chinese tourists visiting Cambodia is likely to reach between 800,000 and 1 million.⁽⁴⁾ In terms of providing services targeted at Chinese tourists, tourism industry practitioners with proficiency in Chinese can offer more thoughtful and high-standard service experiences. Therefore, the training and education model that cultivates talents proficient in both Chinese and professional tourism service skills, known as the "Chinese + Tourism" model, shows tremendous potential for development and broad prospects for the future.⁽¹⁾

3.2 Impact of the Development of "Chinese + Tourism" on Cambodian Nationals

In the domain of international tourism, the ability to communicate in Chinese provides Cambodian visitors with a distinctive travel experience. As tourism is fundamentally an interpersonal activity, language serves as the conduit for communication, which is especially critical for international travel. For Cambodian tourists visiting China, linguistic communication is one of the pivotal elements in elevating their travel experience. With the burgeoning of Chinese language education overseas, specialized Chinese language instruction formats have emerged that cater specifically to the tourism industry. Cambodian visitors, by engaging in courses provided by local Chinese language educational institutions, learn the Chinese necessary for everyday communication. Having acquired proficiency in Chinese, they are not only able to gain a deeper comprehension of Chinese culture but also to enrich their travel experiences, leading to greater satisfaction in various aspects of

tourism, including dining, accommodation, transportation, sightseeing, and shopping.

3.3 Contribute to Cambodia's Wider International Linkages

As one of the languages with a vast number of speakers globally, the global influence of Chinese is on the rise. The promotion of Chinese education in Cambodia not only strengthens the polyglot capabilities of its citizens but also aids in enhancing exchanges and cooperation with China and other regions where Chinese is spoken. This initiative is anticipated to broaden Cambodia's international connections and attract further investment and business opportunities.

3.4 Favorable to Enhance the Friendship Between China and Cambodia

The integration of Chinese language education and the tourism industry helps to strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between the people of China and Cambodia. Through language learning and cultural exchanges, the people of both countries can gain a deeper understanding of each other's culture and values, which will lay a solid foundation for the long-term stability and friendly development of bilateral relations. The year 2024, designated as the China-Cambodia Year of People-to-People Exchanges, provides a favorable opportunity for Chinese tourists to visit Cambodia. The widespread adoption of Chinese language education and the development of a "Chinese + Tourism" model in Cambodia will have a positive impact on the country's economic and social development. Through the implementation of this strategy, Cambodia will not only enhance its competitiveness in the international tourism market but also promote the comprehensive development of its culture and economy.

3.5 Helping Accelerate the Building of China-ASEAN Community of Destiny

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is not only a comprehensive strategic partner of China but also a core region for advancing the "Belt and Road" Initiative. Over the past decade, the initiative has been steadily implemented in the ASEAN region, yielding fruitful results. It has become a practical platform for strengthening the community of shared future between China and ASEAN, with

both parties jointly promoting the construction of the "Belt and Road" and sharing its development outcomes. The tourism industry not only facilitates economic and cultural exchanges among ASEAN countries but also brings job opportunities to these nations. As a key member of ASEAN, the Cambodian public has gradually recognized the importance of mastering Chinese for increasing income and promoting employment. Particularly in the tourism sector, China is a significant source of tourists for Cambodia.

The close ties between China and ASEAN countries are being strengthened and reflected through tourism cooperation. Against this backdrop, Cambodians who are proficient in Chinese and possess vocational skills in tourism are more likely to gain employment opportunities. Research has proven that language skills, as a form of specific human capital, directly affect the income level of the users, with a generally positive correlation between language proficiency and income level. Overall, Cambodia's tourism industry has a solid foundation and is highly attractive to Chinese tourists. The demand for tourism professionals who understand Chinese in Cambodia is growing, and the economic value of Chinese is becoming increasingly evident. The need to build a Chinese ecosystem in Cambodia is also becoming urgent. As the role of Chinese in promoting employment is widely recognized, the "Chinese + Tourism" educational model will further contribute to the construction of the China-ASEAN community of shared future. The robust demand has given rise to new educational models, with Cambodia and other ASEAN countries actively promoting "Chinese + Tourism" education, combining international Chinese education with vocational tourism education, which cultivates talent and promotes employment. Their educational curricula and training will undoubtedly be welcomed by tourism practitioners and Chinese learners in ASEAN. ⁽¹⁾

4. Initiatives to Develop "Chinese + Tourism" in Cambodia

4.1 Drawing on the Experience of other Countries in the Development of The Chinese Language in Tourism

Essentially, the tourism sector can be divided into several specific branches, such as aviation,

hospitality, tour guiding services, museum interpretation, etc. Cultivating professionals in these sub-domains falls within the broad scope of "Chinese + Tourism" education, which aims to clarify the application of language in tourism scenarios. As a key member of ASEAN, Cambodia has made initial progress in promoting "Chinese + Tourism" education, with some courses beginning to cover the aforementioned sub-domains. Many countries in ASEAN have demonstrated diversity in educational implementation, including not only Confucius Institutes, educational training institutions, and higher education institutions but also government agencies and enterprises. Teaching methods are also diverse, encompassing not only traditional face-to-face education but also integrating online teaching, achieving a combination of online and offline education.⁽¹⁾Cambodia can draw on the successful experiences of other ASEAN member states in developing "Chinese + Tourism" education, combining its national conditions to explore and develop a "Chinese + Tourism" education model with Cambodian characteristics.

From July 9 to September 24, 2022, the "ASEAN 'Chinese + Tourism' High-end Talent Enhancement Project" was successfully held online, hosted by the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management of Dongbei University of Finance and Economics, with the assistance of the International Education College. The project adopted various forms of bilingual (Chinese and English) teaching methods such as real-time teaching, online activities, and video on demand, attracting more than 200 participants including government officials, tourism and hospitality industry practitioners, and teachers and students majoring in tourism management from higher education institutions in Cambodia and other ASEAN countries. On December 15, 2022, the Lancang-Mekong Vocational Education Base (Cambodia Human Resources University Base) 2022 Cambodian Tourism Chinese Talent Online Training Project, hosted by Yunnan Minzu University, was launched at Yunnan Minzu University and Cambodia Human Resources University, with 60 Cambodian trainees receiving a three-week training program. These educational institutions, in combination with the rich tourism resources of the region, aim to cultivate "Chinese + Tourism" composite talents in ASEAN

countries, aiming to allow participants to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, enhance their affection for China, and promote cultural exchange and mutual learning through the improvement of professional skills. By drawing on the experience of the development of tourism Chinese in other Southeast Asian countries, the education sector and educational entities in Cambodia are coordinating with each other, and the country's "Chinese + Tourism" education is further developing.

4.2 Strengthening Teacher Training for "Chinese + Tourism" in Cambodia

The specificity of the "Chinese + Vocational Skills" educational model poses particular demands on the teaching staff. The goal of "Chinese + Tourism" education is to cultivate composite talents who are proficient in Chinese and possess skills in the tourism industry. This requires ideal teachers not only to master the basics of Chinese language and teaching methods but also to be familiar with the knowledge and skills of the tourism industry, known as "dual-qualified" teachers. To meet the needs of "Chinese + Tourism" education, it is essential to continuously improve the teacher training system and enhance the quality of dual-qualified teacher training, thereby strengthening the teaching skills and professional expertise of teachers.

The long-term objective of Chinese language education is to cultivate local teachers. Currently, the number of local Chinese language teachers in Cambodia is still insufficient to meet the demand, and the shortage of local "Chinese + Tourism" dual-qualified teachers is even more significant. The existing teacher training models and pathways also lack diversity. Cambodia faces challenges in balancing Chinese language and tourism education. Moreover, the training intensity for "Chinese + Tourism" teachers needs to be increased to promote the cultivation and development of the teaching staff.

4.3 Preparation of "Chinese + Tourism" Teaching Materials Adapted to the Cambodian Situation

Textbooks play a central role in the teaching process and have driven the development of academic disciplines. They are key materials relied upon by both teachers and students throughout the teaching process, holding a

significant position in every aspect of instruction. Textbooks are not only auxiliary tools for students to preview, attend classes, and review but also the foundation upon which teachers plan and implement their teaching. Teachers rely on textbooks to prepare lessons and conduct teaching, thus textbooks have an important instrumental value in education.

For the development of "Chinese + Tourism" education, the primary task is to develop relevant textbooks. In terms of content, textbooks can be divided into two major categories: one is for guiding foreigners on how to travel more effectively in China; the other is for practitioners working in tourist destination countries to provide services to Chinese tourists, i.e., "Chinese + Tourism" professional textbooks. Currently, the first category of textbooks dominates and has been more extensively researched. The second category of textbooks, especially those targeting the Cambodian tourism market, is relatively scarce. To further promote Chinese for tourism in Cambodia, it is essential to develop corresponding textbooks. The compilation of these textbooks should be based on the actual situation in Cambodia, with content revolving around Cambodia's tourist attractions and cultural characteristics, using dialogues, selecting real-life communication scenarios, and providing Khmer auxiliary learning materials to help learners better grasp the content. Additionally, reasonable exercises should be designed to enhance learners' language application abilities. The Chinese for tourism textbooks tailored to Cambodia should be suitable for learners who already have a certain foundation in Chinese and aspire to work in the tourism industry, helping them to improve their language skills and professional competitiveness. As of September 2024, the "Chinese + Tourism" textbooks in Cambodia have not yet formed a complete system; the types of textbooks are singular, the teaching models and content arrangement methods are fixed, and the quantity is limited. Therefore, the task of developing more relevant textbooks remains challenging.

4.4 Developing a "Chinese + Tourism" Program in Line with the Cambodian Context

At present, the courses in the "Chinese + Tourism" education field have not yet fully met

the actual needs of the Cambodian tourism market. Given China's important position in the global tourism market, the needs of Chinese tourists have been organically combined with the supply of Cambodia's tourism industry at the language and cultural levels. Therefore, courses related to Chinese for tourism have occupied an important position in Cambodia's education system, becoming credit courses, regular training, vocational skill training, and even featured courses at Confucius Institutes and universities, with an increasingly significant demand for localization. However, Cambodia still has some shortcomings in the development of related courses, especially in the timely updating of teaching syllabi. The lack of targeted course content is also an issue. Currently, "Chinese + Tourism" courses are mostly generic, lacking specialized courses tailored to Cambodia's national conditions and students' individual needs. Teaching methods and technologies are also relatively singular, with many courses still relying on traditional teaching methods, such as teacher-centered lectures and traditional blackboard teaching, lacking diversified and modern teaching methods and technical support. These factors limit the learning experience and improvement of teaching effectiveness for Cambodian students.⁽¹⁾

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we delve into the significance and practical pathways of the synergistic development of Cambodia's tourism industry and Chinese language education. By analyzing the current state and potential of Cambodia's tourism industry, we have identified the pivotal role of Chinese language education in enhancing the quality of tourism services, promoting cultural exchanges, and strengthening international competitiveness. We propose a range of development strategies, including coordination in the education sector, teacher training, textbook compilation, and curriculum development, to support the sustained growth of Cambodia's tourism industry and deepen Sino-Cambodian cultural exchanges.

As the Belt and Road Initiative continues to advance, the connections between Cambodia and China are becoming increasingly close. The integration of Chinese language education and the tourism industry not only brings new

impetus for economic growth to Cambodia but also provides a new platform for friendship and cooperation between the peoples of the two countries. We believe that by implementing the "Chinese + Tourism" model, Cambodia will be able to better meet the needs of Chinese tourists, enhance their travel experience, and at the same time promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding. The prospects for the development of Cambodia's tourism industry are broad, and the promotion of Chinese language education will inject new vitality into it. We look forward to seeing more cooperation projects and innovative practices that further promote the prosperity of Cambodia's tourism industry and deepen Sino-Cambodian cultural exchanges. With the continuous strengthening of cooperation in the fields of tourism and education between the two countries, we have reason to believe that Cambodia will become a model for the development of the tourism industry in the region and make a positive contribution to the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind.

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