

# An Initial Discussion on River Tourism Teaching

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## Abstract

River tourism occurs on the water or along the riverside. River tourism includes water rafting, cruises, boat vacations, canoeing, riverside walks, and riverside cycling. River tourism is a consequence of post-industrialization tourism evolution. Since post-industrialization, human beings have returned to recognizing rivers' natural attributes. River tourism teaching offers the concept of river tourism, urban river tourism, river cruising, and construction of tourism facilities. The paper suggests that the river cruise is developed in Europe and the Yangtze River. Also, river tourism teaching stresses the ecological value and sustainable tourism. The on-site river tourism teaching and classroom group discussion are essential.

**Keywords:** River, tourism, teaching, cruise, urban, ecology.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

River tourism is a recreation that uses rivers and riverside areas as tourism destinations. River tourism appreciates the natural and artificial landscapes along the river. Tourism activities take place on the water or along the riverside. River tourism includes water rafting, cruises, boat vacations, canoeing, riverside walks, riverside dining, fishing (Lankia *et al.*, 2022), and cycling. The Nile, Rhine, Danube, Mississippi, Seine, Ganges in India, Three Gorges of the Yangtze River, and Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal are world-famous river tourism destinations.

River tourism is a consequence of post-industrialization tourism evolution. The world's industrialization began in the mid-18th century. Early industrialization gradually polluted rivers and destroyed the ecological environment of rivers, resulting in many riverside environments unsuitable for people to live and work. After the 1980s of the twentieth century, the world entered the post-industrialization period. Many countries have accumulated immense wealth. The output value of the service and information sectors accounted for a significant proportion of the output value of the industrial sector. Therefore, human beings no longer regard rivers as simple economic resources but return to recognizing the natural attributes of rivers and striving to restore the natural ecology of rivers. Protecting areas along rivers benefit water tourism (Fachrudin & Lubis, 2016). However, water

conservancy facilities may hurt river ecology. Hence, removing river dams may help maintain natural flows, promote the self-cleaning of rivers, and improve the life and reproduction of wild fish. River greenways have ecological value, landscape value, leisure and recreation value, and health care functions. People use the river and riverside areas for sightseeing, swimming, hiking, running, cycling, rafting, fishing, camping, picnics, drinking tea (coffee), and photographs.

College tourism management specialty usually offers tourism resources, environment, and planning courses. This paper presents the significant contents and methods of river tourism teaching.

## 2. Contents of River Tourism Teaching

### 2.1 River Cruise

A river cruise is a voyage that takes place on a river vessel for leisure purposes (Tomej & Lund-Durlacher, 2020). River cruises are conducted on navigable inland waterways such as rivers and canals, possibly through lakes and estuaries, or even along the coast directly connected to rivers or canals. The cruise time may last from a few hours to a few days.

The river cruise business is very well developed in Europe. In 2018, the EU river cruise welcomed 1.64 million visitors (Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine, 2020). About 80% of visitors come from the United States, with local

European tourists accounting for about 20%. River cruises in Europe are developed due to the long history of European voyages. For example, the German cruise line Köln-Düsseldorfer, founded in 1826, has operated on the Rhine for almost two centuries. Europe has an extensive network of navigable inland waterways. During the Industrial Revolution, Europe built many canals. Currently, France and the United Kingdom have 8500km and 3500km of canals, respectively, suitable for navigation. Europe has abundant cultural landmarks, including historic towns along the river, castles, monasteries, and wine regions.

The Yangtze River cruise is the leading river cruise in China. Tourism resources are the foundation for developing cruise tourism on the Yangtze River. The Yangtze River cruise routes call in Chongqing, Wuhan, Nanjing, and Shanghai, which are famous cities. Generally speaking, the Yangtze River cruise takes four days and three nights from Chongqing to Shanghai and five days and four nights from Shanghai to Chongqing.

The Three Gorges Dam and Reservoir are essential tourist destinations on the Yangtze River. Under normal circumstances, the time it takes for a ship to cross the five-stage lock of the Three Gorges Dam is 3.5-4.5 hours and the time to pass through the Three Gorges boat lift is 40 min. However, the average waiting time for ships to pass is two days, and in case of bad weather and lock maintenance, the waiting time for the lock may exceed ten days. Therefore, to increase the attractiveness of the route products, cruise companies need to shorten the time the cruise ship crosses the gate. Medium-sized vessels can pass through the Three Gorges Locks faster than larger vessels.

## 2.2 Urban River Tourism

Urban river tourism enhances the city's image, promotes business development, creates jobs, and increases tax revenue. The rivers flowing through the city shape the urban landscape and spatial pattern and are the city's historical, cultural and tourism resources. The city's inland rivers have different historical periods and unique cultural landscapes, including ancient buildings, traditional folk customs, and characteristic streets. The tourism development of urban inland rivers requires cultural inheritance, urban image shaping, and industrial transformation. Humans dug some urban rivers. Canals were built in the city for shipping and irrigation purposes. China's Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal flows through Hangzhou, Suzhou, Yangzhou, and Beijing and is a crucial waterway and a world cultural heritage. The historical city water system (moat) is the urban waterfront landscape and provides visitors with public space and urban leisure. Open urban river tourism offers various activities, including rowing, boat tours, cycling, hiking, and fishing.

## 2.3 Sustainable and Ecological River Tourism

There are many problems with river tourism. The riverside has inadequate historical landscapes, poor modern landscape design, and the presence of illegal buildings that hinder river tourism (Fachrudin & Lubis, 2016). The development of urban river tourism may damage the city's cultural resources and even disappear historical buildings and monuments.

Water tourism affects river ecosystems (Xiaobin *et al.*, 2021). The residents on the riversides must support river tourism activities. It is necessary to link tourist facilities with the promotion of coastal economies and the improvement of the quality of life of the local population. The government must pay attention to coastal greening and keep rivers clean. Sand mining in rivers is prohibited, and sand mining must not damage the river bank or affect the normal flow of river water. Usually, after the river becomes a theme tourism area and a high-end landscape residential area, solid waste, chemical pollutants, and dirty odors along the river will disappear.

## 2.4 Planning and Construction of River Tourism Facilities

River tourism requires a large number of water entertainment facilities and infrastructure support (van Balen *et al.*, 2014). Infrastructure planning and construction are needed in a narrow landscape along both sides of the river. Public tourist facilities include trails, riverside parks, safety fences, safety signs, trash bins, toilets, easy tour maps, alarm telephones, emergency numbers, and environmental monitoring facilities.

## 3. River Tourism Teaching Methods

### 3.1 On-Site River Tourism

On-site river tourism teaching is valuable. The Huhe River and Nanhe River have more than 2,000 years of history and flow through downtown Chengdu. In the 1990s of the last century, the Chengdu municipal government carried out a large-scale renovation of the Huhe and Nanhe Rivers. The river is clean. The river banks are tree-lined with many modern landscapes, greenways, and bike paths. Riverside parks and a large swimming pool are built on the riverbank. Huhe River and Nanhe River have become significant urban tourism destinations in Chengdu. During our tourism course, we use weekends to take students on river tours to the Huhe River and Nanhe River. The main tourism activities are walking, cycling, drinking tea, eating, fishing, playing chess, and singing. We ask students to document their travel experiences and answer the following questions: Which river tourism activities in Chengdu are the most meaningful, and are there problems with river tourism? How to solve the problem of river tourism? Students generally reported that this kind of live teaching was far more interesting than classroom teaching and was very rewarding.

### 3.2 A Combination of Teacher's Lectures and Class Group Discussion

There are various classroom teaching modes. The teacher usually takes about 15-20 minutes to offer lectures. Teachers can play multiple pictures and videos of geological relics, resources, and geoparks. In class group discussions, each group has 7-8 students. The teacher raised various discussion issues, such as What is the concept of river tourism and how is it different from water tourism? What are the problems with Yangtze River cruise tourism, and how can they be improved? What are the unique characteristics of urban river tourism? How can river tourism promote ecological river construction? After the discussion, students will submit a brief discussion description. Teachers should grade and comment on these reports. Students reported that class discussions are essential for communication between students and teachers. Students have more opportunities to express their opinions. Class discussions allow students to focus more on the course they are studying.

### 4. CONCLUSION

River tourism includes water rafting, cruises, boat vacations, canoeing, riverside walks, and riverside cycling. Since post-industrialization, human beings have returned to recognizing rivers' natural attributes. River tourism teaching offers the concept of river tourism, urban river tourism, river cruising, and construction of tourism facilities. The river cruise is developed in Europe and the Yangtze River. River tourism teaching stresses the ecological value and sustainable tourism. On-site river tourism teaching is functional. Thus, we took students on river tours to the Huhe River and Nanhe River; the tourism activities included walking, cycling, drinking tea, and singing.

The paper recommends various forms of classroom teaching, such as teachers' lectures displaying and playing pictures and videos of different geological relics, resources, and geoparks. The group discussion should be question-oriented; for example, What is the concept of river tourism, and how is it different from water tourism? What are the unique

characteristics of urban river tourism? How can river tourism promote ecological river construction? Finally, students reported that class discussions are essential for communication between students and teachers. Students have more opportunities to express their opinions.

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