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СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО И РАЗВИТИЕ ТУРИЗМА МЕЖДУ КИТАЕМ И БЕЛАРУСЬЮ

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Рассмотрены бурное развитие туризма и его неразрывная связь с межкультурной коммуникацией на фоне глобализации в XXI в. Путем анализа данных установлено, что индустрия туризма Китая и Беларуси, как и тенденция формирования международного туризма, играет ключевую роль в развитии национальной экономики. С предложением инициативы «Один пояс, один путь» исследуемые страны углубили свои взаимосвязи в различных областях. Но с помощью эмпирических данных обнаружено, что в сотрудничестве между Китаем и Беларусью в сфере туризма все еще существует значительный пробел, что также создает большие проблемы для дальнейшего межкультурного общения между рассматриваемыми странами. Выдвинуты обоснованные предложения после анализа дилеммы развития китайско-белорусского туризма и межкультурной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: туризм; китайско-белорусская культурная коммуникация; инициатива «Один пояс, один путь»; дилемма развития.

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COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM BETWEEN CHINA AND BELARUS

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This paper discusses the rapid development of tourism and its inseparable relationship with cross-culture communication under the background of globalisation in the 21st century. Through the analysis of the data, it was found that the tourism industry of China and Belarus, like the development trend of international tourism, plays a pivotal role in the national economic development. With the proposal of the Belt and Road Initiative, China and Belarus have deepened their cooperation in various fields. However, through data, it was found that there is still a big gap in the cooperation between China and Belarus in the field of tourism, which also rises a great challenge for the further cross-culture communication between China and Belarus. The article puts forward reasonable suggestions after analysing the development dilemma of China – Belarus tourism and cross-culture communication.

Keywords: tourism; China – Belarus cultural communication; the Belt and Road Initiative; development dilemma.

Introduction

With the acceleration of the globalisation process, the development of the world economy, politics and culture has gradually become a common development, which leads to the inevitable trend of cross-cultural communication. It is actually a process of cultural transmission, in which people transmit knowledge, information, ideas, emotions and beliefs in a certain way. And all social communication activities related to this can be regarded as cross-cultural communication.

The globalisation of the modern economy also means the continuous improvement of people's quality of life and basic needs of human life. Under such circumstances, cross-cultural, economic and social exchanges between different regions, ethnics increase day by day. At that time, needs of tourism become the spiritual needs of human beings after the basic material substances needs are satisfied, and this spiritual need belongs to the needs of self-actualisation, which is proposed by A. Maslow.

Tourism is a special cross-cultural activity, and the inseparability of tourism and communication, especially intercultural communication, is determined by the nature of the tourism activity itself. Factors such as the

nature and history promote the emergence of human multi-civilisation. The difference between the destination and the source of tourists is one of the important factors to attract tourists, therefore, in the process of tourism, tourists not only appreciate the difference in natural scenery, but also perceive different cultures. Travel to remote locations, particularly those felt to be primitive and historic, provides tourists a glimpse of the «real life» of others. Experiences like this ostensibly help tourists better understand themselves and their place in society [1]. At the same time, due to the need for accommodation, meals, entertainment and other, communication is unavoidable in the process of tourism activities. Moreover, once there is communication, there is information exchange between two individuals that come from different cultural backgrounds. Even a simple question will convey different cultural information. Therefore, tourism activities promote the exchanges between people in different regions, and tourists. As the carriers of cross-cultural communication, in the process of tourism, the choice of exotic culture will have an impact on the source of tourists more or less, and vice versa.

Development of tourism in China and Belarus

Nowadays, tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries that contribute significantly to the global GDP. Tourism has become an important driving force for world economic growth and one of the fastest growing industries in the world economy. This is indicated by its dynamics (fig. 1).

According to World Travel & Tourism Council, it can be seen that the development of tourism is greatly affected by political and social factors, but from 2012 to 2019,

before the outbreak of the COVID-19, the contribution of tourism to GDP generally showed an upward trend, especially tourism employment¹. Prior to the pandemic, travel and tourism (including its direct, indirect and induced impacts) accounted for 1 in 4 of all new jobs created across the world, 10.6 % of all jobs (334 mln), and 10.4 % of global GDP (9.2 trln US dollars). Meanwhile, international visitor spending amounted to 1.7 trln US dollars in 2019 (6.8 % of total exports, 27.4 % of global services exports)¹.

¹Economic impact reports [Electronic recourse]. URL: <https://wtcc.org/Research/Economic-Impact> (date of access: 29.10.2022).

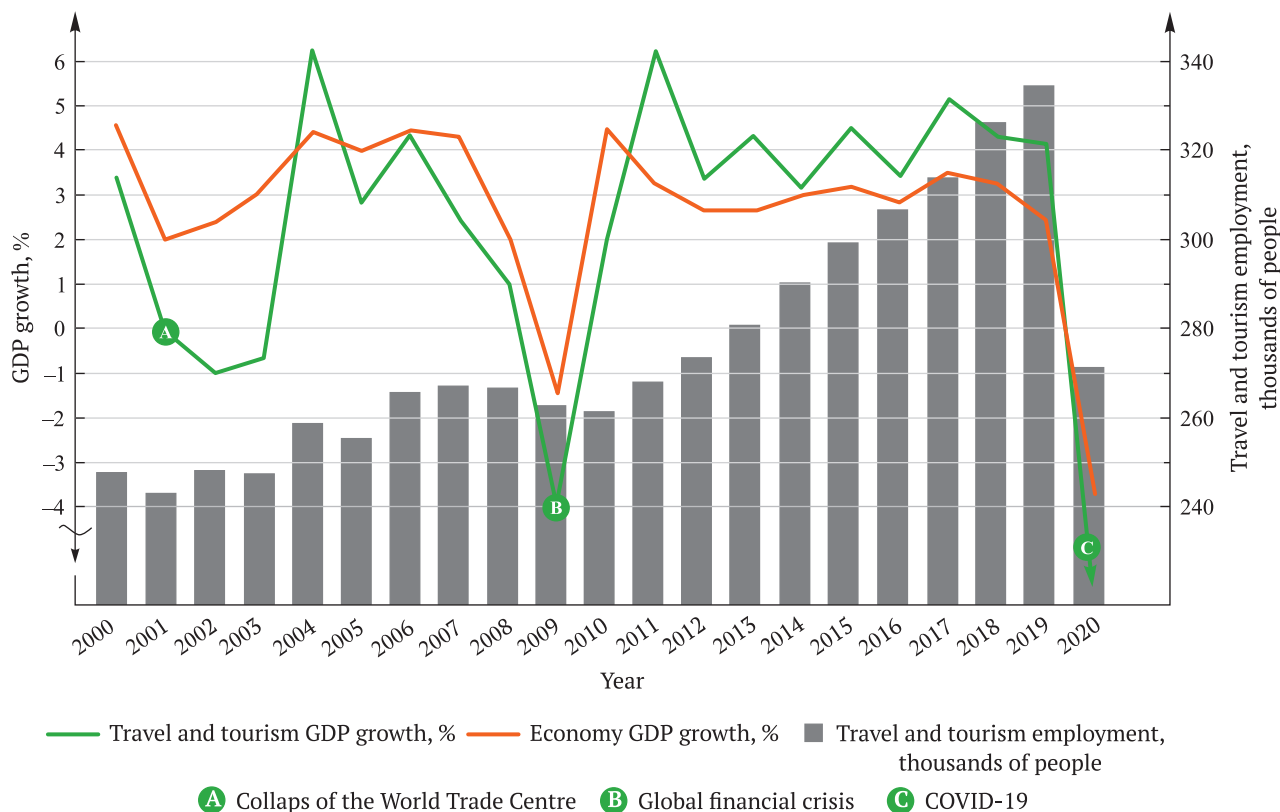


Fig. 1. Economic impact timeline in 2000–2020.

Source: <https://wtcc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2021/Global%20Economic%20Impact%20and%20Trends%202021.pdf>

Tourism consumption can promote regional economic growth and achieve balanced regional development. Tourism consumption can also play an important role in promoting balanced regional development. Few scholars believe that there is neither a short-term two-way causality nor a long-term two-way causality between the tourism industry and regional economic growth [2, p. 106]. With low resource consumption, creating many jobs and high comprehensive benefits, tourism industry has been identified by many countries as the key direction of industrial structure adjustment and an important way to enhance national comprehensive competitiveness. Tourism cooperation has also become an important direction of bilateral and regional multi-lateral cooperation between countries.

With the development of China’s reform and opening up and the socialist market economy, the tourism industry has developed rapidly with an ever-increasing momentum. The scale of China’s tourism industry has gradually expanded, its forms have become more diver-

sified, and its industrial elements and industrial system have become more complete, and the number of people involved in tourism is also growing rapidly.

The development of China’s tourism industry has roughly gone through four processes (table 1).

1. From 1978 to 1991, the initial development stage was mainly based on inbound tourism. At this stage, China’s tourism industry is an important leading industry that creates exchange rates.

2. From 1992 to 1997, the domestic tourism industry began to develop. From 1997, China’s tourism industry achieved a major breakthrough. While vigorously developing cross-border tourism, China actively promoted domestic tourism.

3. From 1998 to 2008, tourism became an important industry in China’s national economy and integrated into the world economic system.

4. Since 2009, tourism has gradually transformed into a pillar industry, and the influence of tourism has continued to increase.

Table 1

Various indicators of China’s tourism development in 2015–2019

Indicators	Year				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Travel and tourism revenue, trln yuan	4.13	4.69	5.40	5.97	6.63
Travel and tourism contribution to GDP, %	10.08	11.01	11.04	11.04	11.05

Ending table 1

Indicators	Year				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Travel and tourism employment, thousands of people	79.11	79.62	79.90	79.91	79.89
Travel and tourism employment, %	10.20	10.26	10.28	10.29	10.31
Number of inbound tourists, millions of people	134	138	139	141	145
Number of outbound tourists, millions of people	117	122	130	160	155

The proportion of China's tourism industry in GDP is increasing year by year, and the number of employment in tourism increased from 79.11 thsd people in 2015 to 79.89 thsd people in 2019 (see table 1). The percentage of tourism employment to national employment is also constantly on the rise. The number of inbound and outbound tourism is also increasing, which not only shows the overall improvement of China's international tourism development trend, but also reflects the growing influence of China's international tourism industry and its contribution to the global tourism industry. In 2020, while travel and tourism GDP declined by an unprecedented 59.9 % in China, compared with the regional average fall of 53.7 %, the country remained the second largest travel and tourism economy globally and first in the Asia-Pacific region, accounting for nearly half (47.1 %) of the regional total GDP².

All indicators of China's tourism industry are increasing year by year, realising a leap from a major tourism country to a world tourism power. And it is also experiencing the transition from the big country to strong country in tourism, which is not only benefits from the support of national policies, but also abundant tourism resources in China. According to statistics, as of 2020, there are 13.332 thsd A-level³ tourist attractions in China, 302 5A-level tourist attractions, 4.030 thsd 4A-level tourist attractions, and 6.931 thsd 3A-level tourist attractions. There are 11.314 thsd cultural relic institutions, 3.373 thsd cultural relics protection and management institutions, 5.452 thsd museums, 29.347 thsd exhibitions and exhibitions held by various cultural relic institutions, and 1.372 thsd national intangible cultural heritage representative projects announced by the State Council of the People's Republic of China. There are 3.068 thsd representative inheritors of high-level intangible cultural heritage and 52 items included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list, ranking first in the world⁴.

Similarly, as an important strategic partner of China in the 21st century, the tourism industry in Belarus is also developing rapidly. Since the independence of Belarus, the government has attached great importance to the development of the country's tourism industry. First, in 1999, the Law of the Republic of Belarus «About tourism» was promulgated and implemented to regulate related tourism activities; since 2001, four national tourism development plans have been successively formulated and implemented. According to the state program «Hospitable Belarus» adopted for 2016–2020, a course has been taken to form and develop a modern competitive tourism complex, increase the contribution of tourism to the development of the national economy. The development of the tourism industry as a highly profitable sector of the economy is an important factor in the social development and cultural upsurge of Belarus. In recent years, significant changes have taken place in the tourism industry in the country, the number of organisations involved in tourism activities has increased.

In addition to the tourism development plans proposed by the country, local governments in Belarus have also formulated corresponding tourism development plans according to the actual situation of each region, in order to explore the potential of regional tourism, develop tourism infrastructure and improve the contribution of tourism to the development of regional economy.

In the «National strategy for sustainable social and economic development of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2030» issued in May 2017, tourism has been identified by Belarus as one of the main driving forces for national economic development, and is listed as a key area for the development of Belarus' service industry. It has set a high goal to make Belarus one of the top 50 countries in the world for tourism by 2030⁵. The dynamics of the indicators of the tourism industry is presented in the table 2.

²Ministry of Culture and Tourism on the 2019 National Travel Agency statistical survey report [Electronic recourse]. URL: http://zwgk.mct.gov.cn/zfxgkml/447/465/index_3081_2.html (date of access: 29.10.2022) (in Chin.).

³The scenic spot level is divided into five grades, which are 5A, 4A, 3A, 2A, and A grades from high to low.

⁴National Travel Agency statistical survey report by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2020 [Electronic recourse]. URL: http://zwgk.mct.gov.cn/zfxgkml/tjxx/202104/t20210416_923778.html (date of access: 29.10.2022) (in Chin.).

⁵National strategy for sustainable socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2030 [Electronic recourse]. URL: <https://economy.gov.by/uploads/files/NSUR2030/Natsionalnaja-strategija-ustojchivogo-sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo-razvitiya-Respubliki-Belarus-na-period-do-2030-goda.pdf> (date of access: 29.10.2022) (in Rus.).

Table 2

Various indicators of Belarus' tourism development in 2016–2020

Indicators	Year				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Travel and tourism revenue, mln US dollars	1.019	1.126	1.221	1.290	0.542
Travel and tourism contribution to GDP, %	2.2	2.5	2.5	6.4	2.5
Travel and tourism employment, thousands of people	242.800	242.0	255.600	257.800	251.902
Travel and tourism employment, %	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.8
Number of inbound tourists, thousands of people	495.7	727.5	850.7	982.9	258.6
Number of outbound tourists, thousands of people	83.396	92.086	93.259	92.212	28.104

With many investments and constructions in the tourism industry in Belarus, the number of jobs created by the tourism industry is increasing. In 2015, the number of employment accounted for 5.6 % of the total number of employment in 2019. The Belarusian tourism inbound and outbound tourism market has increased steadily. Cross-border tourism is on the rise as a whole⁶.

Belarus is very rich in natural tourism resources. There are about 10 000 lakes in Belarus, and it enjoys the reputation of land of ten thousand lakes. There are relatively complete natural landscapes preserved in Belarus, and two of them are inscribed on the World Heritage List. In addition to natural resources, Belarus has 159 museums, 29 professional theaters, 2 protected areas and 4 national parks. The superior geographical conditions and rich historical and cultural resources provide a good foundation for the development of tourism in Belarus.

There are good development conditions for China and Belarus to realise cross-cultural communication through tourism cooperation. First of all, China is located in eastern Asia and Belarus is located in eastern Europe. The two countries are far apart. Huge differences in natural features and customs make less competitive in the process of developing tourism of two countries. Due to the pursuit of new things, these differences can arouse the interest of tourists. So that the tourism cooperation between the two countries has a certain natural geographical basis.

Secondly, since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1992, the relationship between the two countries has maintained a steady development. After the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed, the two countries have carried out more comprehensive cooperation policies to promote cultural exchanges and the development of tourism. Cooperation between the two countries in the field of tourism

began in 2014, when the work of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee for Cooperation was launched. Tourism was considered in detail in the activities of two commissions: the Commission for cooperation in the field of culture and Commission for cooperation in the field of education⁷. In terms of visa policies, Chinese citizens can enter Belarus visa-free with private reasons, while Belarusian citizens can enter in 15 ports such as Shanghai Pudong International Airport, and can stay in 7 administrative regions for 114 h without visa. China and Belarus have launched a series of bilateral policies based on the actual situation: in 2015, these countries opened direct air routes; as the friendly relations between China and Belarus continue to warm up, in September 2016, the list of measures to promote the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative was signed, which includes tourism-related measures and projects. In 2017, Belarus proposed to designate the year of 2018 as China's «Belarus Tourism Year», and at the same time, tourism forum was held, which became another major cooperation achievement of China – Belarus economic cooperation after the «China – Belarus Industrial Park» project.

However, despite the continuous development of tourism in both countries and phased results in tourism cooperation, compared with neighboring countries, there is still a big gap in tourism and cross-cultural communication between two countries (tables 3 and 4).

According to the tables 3 and 4, from 2015 to 2019, the number of Chinese tourists entering Belarus only ranked fifth, and against the background of 155 mln Chinese outbound tourists in 2019, the number of organised Chinese tourists to Belarus reached 5.121 thsd, which is like a drop in the ocean⁸. However, the data on outbound tourist destinations in Belarus shows that Belarusian are more inclined to travel to nearby countries, and the number of outbound trips to China is not shown.

⁶Tourism and tourist resources in the Republic of Belarus [Electronic recourse]. URL: <https://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/realny-sector-ekonomiki/turizm/> (date of access: 29.10.2022) (in Rus.).

⁷Chinese tourists made more than six billion domestic trips in 2019 [Electronic recourse]. URL: <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202003/11/WS5e683b54a31012821727e085.html> (date of access: 29.10.2022) (in Chin.).

⁸Ibid.

Table 3

Distribution of inbound tourists to Belarus, people

Country	Year				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Russia	243 908	171 100	191 520	207 416	217 837
Lithuania	1722	5846	26 182	59 564	76 060
Poland	5927	7992	22 686	46 305	61 349
Latvia	2337	2967	6533	11 026	10 478
China	992	1579	3151	3277	5121
Germany	1635	2506	3102	3566	4538
Ukraine	7046	5224	4363	4016	3578
Estonia	803	1399	2769	2562	2316

Table 4

Distribution of outbound tourists from Belarus, people

Country	Year				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Egypt	85 263	41 929	123 814	211 962	258 715
Turkey	111 840	57 735	140 159	151 393	155 700
Ukraine	18 508	45 919	91 234	122 137	146 981
Russia	130 517	71 503	46 736	47 033	61 530
Bulgaria	79 216	58 745	62 356	49 821	48 424
Spain	25 330	24 783	31 403	32 228	33 583
Greece	35 400	22 132	27 978	28 080	28 418
Poland	75 184	40 799	36 187	30 245	28 357
Tunisia	1399	1901	3792	7033	25 752

Similarly, according to the annual report on China's inbound and outbound tourism development in 2019, the outbound destinations and inbound sources of Chinese tourists are mainly distributed in neighbouring Asian region and countries, such as Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, Japan and others. The number of Belarusian tourists to China and the number of Chinese tourists to Belarus do not even rank in the top 15 of the data, which can be concluded that the attractiveness of Belarus to Chinese tourists and China to Belarusian tourists is not enough at present⁹.

Although there are many cooperation policies and the support of the Belt and Road Initiative cooperation strategy, the progress of bilateral tourism interaction is still slow. As one of the most direct way of cultural exchange, the degree of development of tourism determines the depth of cultural exchange to a certain extent. However, through the analysis of the data on the entry and exit destinations of Chinese and Belarusian tourists, it can be seen that, the current exchanges between two

countries in the tourism industry have greatly limited cross-cultural communication.

The main reason for the large gap is the big difference between China and Belarus in the international tourism market, and it is difficult to achieve balanced development in the Belt and Road Initiative tourism cooperation. Language difference is also the main reason of low attractiveness, which lead the insufficient cultural understanding of tourists between two countries. Although in recent years, the number of Chinese students studying in Belarus is increasing year by year, and China and Belarus have also carried out the Belt and Road Initiative educational cooperation policy, it started late and the level of language exchange is low. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 in 2020, which has hit the world wildly, it has seriously endangered public health security, and the global tourism industry has suffered a cliff-like fall, which has also greatly affected the cooperation and development of China – Belarus tourism industry. Over the past two years, COVID-19 has spread around the world, and COVID-19 is a global public health

⁹China Tourism Academy: 2019 Annual report on China's outbound tourism development [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.199it.com/archives/995988.html> (date of access: 29.10.2022) (in Chin.).

emergency. The occurrence of this emergency not only caused direct damage to tourist destinations to a certain extent, but also affected tourists' willingness to travel to a greater extent [3].

Driven by the Belt and Road Initiative, the interaction and exchanges between China and Belarus are becoming more and more frequent. In order to further promote the development of China – Belarus tourism and cultural exchanges, China and Belarus should give full play to the role of Confucius Institutes in the construction and education on the basis of the original policies and cooperation, and strengthen the cultural communication and mutual learning between the two countries in terms of language. At the same time, we can cooperate in film and television media and other aspects to promote tourism consumption in various forms.

Compared with other industries, tourism industry has weak anti-risk ability. For example, from the data of global tourism, it can be seen that under the influence of the economic crisis in 2008 and the epidemic in 2020, the number of tourists dropped significantly, which greatly reduced the frequency of cross-cultural ex-

changes between the two countries. But technological innovation can improve this situation to some extent. Virtual reality can change the way tourists experience and open up a whole new field of tourism development. By experiencing real sensations such as vision, hearing, touch in the virtual world, users can feel immersive in the virtual world. With the help of VR technology, it is more convenient for tourists to learn more about the destination culture through online multi-language. «Cloud tourism» can ignore factors such as time, environment and distance, provide tourists with more choices, and enhance the attraction to tourists from both countries. The quality of tourism in cities significantly contributes to the sustainable development of urban as well as regional areas by creating diverse tourism products and services. The development of city tourism largely depends on the local authorities and their entrepreneurial ability to respond to new tourism trends [4, p. 14]. The application of technology has realised true borderless tourism, which has greatly promoted cross-cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Conclusion

Tourism has become an important form of cross-cultural communication. In the process of cross-cultural exchanges between China and Belarus, it not only promotes tourism interaction, but also promotes the development of China – Belarus educational and cultural cooperation, and also promotes the development of economic cooperation such as the Belt and Road Initiative, China – Belarus Industrial Park, etc. The differences between China and Belarus are not

only reflected in geography, but also in diet and language, which have become an important prerequisite for mutual attraction. With the deepening of China – Belarus economic cooperation, China and Belarus will usher in more development opportunities and better development prospects. The cross-cultural communication contained in tourism can reflect the beauty of different cultural differences and promote the process of global cultural exchange.

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