

# Development of Inquiry-Based Learning Tourism Products in Binzhou from the Perspective of Tourism Resources

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**Abstract** Under the macro-background of “all-for-one” tourism, this study analyzes the related concepts and characteristics of inquiry-based learning tourism to understand the significance and role of developing inquiry-based learning tourism in China. With Binzhou as the object of study, this study also explores the development of inquiry-based learning tourism products from the aspects of the product development idea, level, framework and marketing, with a view to providing references for implementing inquiry-based learning tourism activities in other regions.

**Keywords** Inquiry-based learning tourism, Tourism resource, Tourism Plus, Binzhou

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Inquiry-based learning tourism is a form of tourism that is entertaining and educational at the same time. The characteristics of “tour” and “learning” make it extremely prevalent. In recent years, a number of policy measures have been introduced to encourage the development of inquiry-based learning tourism<sup>[1]</sup>. In 2015, the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) proposed the “515 Strategy”, that is, launching ten actions for tourism development in the next three years, one of which is to vigorously develop new tourism formats and promote the transformation and upgrading of tourism consumption. In 2016, the Ministry of Education promulgated and implemented the *Opinions on Promoting the Inquiry-Based Learning Tourism of Primary and Secondary Schools*, which gives clear instructions on the nature, development form, and significance of the inquiry-based learning tourism<sup>[2]</sup>. Developing inquiry-based learning tourism will help tourists to deepen their understanding of local culture, and focus on learning and living with purposeful and planned tourism activities, which has strong practical significance. Presently, domestic inquiry-based learning tourism, which is mainly based on local tourism resources, cultural heritage, and educational resources and which can expand knowledge of young people, is developing rapidly because it is in line with the expectations of the state, society and parents for the healthy development of young people<sup>[3]</sup>.

Thanks to the tourism resource survey work of Binzhou, authors of this study systematically analyzes the tourism resources of Binzhou, and

concludes that Binzhou is abundant in tourism resources and has a good foundation and conditions for the development of inquiry-based learning tourism. Specifically, Binzhou’s tourism resources cover all types of the 8 main categories proposed by the *Classification, Investigation and Evaluation of Tourism Resources*. Its tourism resources include 27 of the 31 sub-categories, accounting for 87.1% of all sub-categories of tourism resources, and 78 of the 155 fundamental types, accounting for 50.32% of all fundamental types of tourism resources. Compared with the surrounding cities, however, Binzhou is still faced with many issues in its tourism development such as late start, slow progress and weak development. Therefore, Binzhou should seize the development opportunity of inquiry-based learning tourism, and carry out inquiry-based learning tourism work in a planned and organized manner, and make it a new signboard for Binzhou’s tourism image.

## 1 Overview of inquiry-based learning tourism

### 1.1 Related concepts

There is no unified definition of inquiry-based learning tourism in the academic world. For example, Wang Dinghua<sup>[4]</sup> believed that inquiry-based learning tourism is an organized, planned, and purpose-oriented out-of-school experience and practice activity; Zhao Rui<sup>[5]</sup> defined inquiry-based learning tourism as an out-of-school group activity that organize students to acquire knowledge and experience life. At

present, most scholars in China have unilaterally defined inquiry-based learning tourism as out-of-school activities that integrate inquiry-based learning with travel experience through collective travel and centralized accommodation and that are organized and arranged by education departments and schools in a planned manner. This concept ignores social workers outside the school. The real inquiry-based learning tourism refers to the special travel for the purpose of research and inquiry learning. It is a cultural tourism activity where tourists temporarily leave their permanent residence and go to different places for the sake of acquiring knowledge. Its subject is not only a student, but a person of any age who travels for the purpose of seeking knowledge. As the saying goes, “It is never too late to learn”<sup>[6]</sup>.

### 1.2 Characteristics and classification

**1.2.1 Characteristics.** Inquiry-based learning tourism is a practical activity aiming to broaden knowledge, enhance learning interest and expand understanding of young people. It makes up for the deficiency of traditional school education and family education. It has the interdisciplinary nature, namely “inquiry-based learning + tourism”. In addition to meeting basic tourism elements, it is more important to satisfy students or visitors’ acquisition or understanding of the knowledge of a particular industry. The current inquiry-based learning tourism has the following characteristics:

(1) Focusing on young students at school. The key to the smooth development of inquiry-based learning tourism activities is whether

to meet the actual needs of young students. Students are the main body of inquiry-based learning tourism. Only by meeting their actual needs can the inquiry-based learning tourism activities be successful. This feature determines that the early-stage design of inquiry-based learning tourism will make scientific arrangements for the content, route arrangement, activity type, travel time and other factors of inquiry-based learning tourism based on students' hobbies, physical and mental characteristics, as well as objective needs.

(2) Taking schools as the main organizational unit. The school is not only the basic organizational unit for educational activities, with the class as the main component, but also the main organizational unit for the normal development of inquiry-based learning tourism activities. Taking the school as the basic unit of inquiry-based learning tourism activities is not only conducive to cultivating students' collective consciousness, group collaboration ability and learning enthusiasm, but also conducive to the organization and management of inquiry-based learning tourism activities, thus ensuring the safety of students in inquiry-based learning tourism.

(3) Having a clear theme. Whether there is a clear theme is one of the key factors for the inquiry-based learning tourism activities to be carried out normally and achieve good results. It is necessary to actively explore inquiry-based learning tourism activities of different themes according to the needs of different types of tourists, enrich the inquiry-based learning tourism products and routes, and expand the inquiry-based learning tourism market.

(4) Having good social support. The development of any activity is inseparable from social support, as is the inquiry-based learning tourism activity. Good social support contributes to the development of inquiry-based learning tourism activities. The social support for inquiry-based learning tourism activities mainly includes macro-level national policy support and meso-level professional agency support.

**1.2.2 Classification.** The classification of people participating in inquiry-based learning tourism is shown in Table 1.

### 1.3 Development significance

Inquiry-based learning tourism is a form of integration of educational practice, cultural development and tourism activities in the long-term development. Its development is related to the country's overall economic strategy, the development of education and tourism as well as the national thought and knowledge

**Table 1 Classification of groups engaging in inquiry-based learning tourism**

Group classification	Sub-classification	Activity
Student	Graduate (master and doctor)	Research and study, summer research and volunteer teaching
	College student (undergraduate and junior college student)	Go to the countryside in summer, extracurricular activity, special research and cultural exchange
	Middle school student (junior school student and high school student)	Summer camp, winter camp, parent-child activity, bilingual education and cultural participation
	Primary school student	Summer camp, winter camp, parent-child activity, bilingual education and cultural participation
Social staff	Preschool children	Festival performance and parent-child exchange
	Manager and technician	Industrial education, management experience learning, technology management exchange and leadership growth
Government employee	Government official	Red education and party education
Amateur	Amateur calligrapher, dancer, musician and lacquer maker	Calligraphy culture study, dance exchange, music tour and lacquer making

level. Currently, the state promotes supply-side structural reform through a series of policy measures such as rural revitalization, tourism poverty alleviation, all-for-one tourism and paid vacation. At the educational level, the promotion of quality education model has made the new teaching method of inquiry-based learning tourism deeply concerned by the society, and has gradually been promoted. At the tourism level, the accumulation of various negative problems in the development of traditional sightseeing tourism has made the public's perception of tourism image poor, and the inquiry-based learning tourism is conducive to optimizing the image of the industry and promoting development. At the cultural level, the integration of local culture into the scope of inquiry-based learning tourism to establish an inquiry-based learning tourism system contributes to steadily cultivating children's patriotic sentiments and enhancing students' understanding of nature and society.

## 2 Overview of tourism resources in Binzhou

Binzhou is a city located in the northern part of Shandong Province, the hinterland of the Yellow River Delta and the southwestern coast of the Bohai Bay. It is bordered by the Bohai Sea in the northeast, Dongying in the east, and Zibo in the south, Jinan in the southwest, and Dezhou in the west. It is the northern gate of Shandong (Fig.1). Despite its late tourism development, Binzhou has a long history, splendid culture, beautiful scenery and good ecology, which constitute rich natural and cultural landscapes with distinctive features, thereby providing a favorable foundation for the rapid development of tourism. In recent years,

the Binzhou Municipal Party Committee and the Municipal Government have attached great importance to the development of tourism and have cultivated tourism as the leading industry in the city, creating a sound policy and social environment for the rapid development of the tourist industry<sup>[8-10]</sup>.

### 2.1 Natural tourism resources

According to the *Classification, Investigation and Evaluation of Tourism Resources*, natural tourism resources in Binzhou can be divided into physiographical landscapes, water landscapes, biological landscapes, astronomical and climate landscapes. Among them, physiographical landscapes are concentrated in Zouping County, especially in the towns south of Zouping County, forming the southern mountainous scenic area of Binzhou, mainly including the mountainous area with the Changbai Mountains as the core in Zouping County. Water landscapes are grouped in the coastal areas of the Yellow River and coastal counties and districts in the north, especially in the water area of Binzhou city proper, Zouping, Boxing, Zhanhua and Huimin along the Yellow River and the Tuhai River. They are also distributed in the area along the seashore of the entrance of the Dakou River (Zhewei New River) and the estuary of the Chaohe River in Wudi County, Zhanhua District and Beihai New District, and the vast area along the Tuhai River.

### 2.2 Cultural tourism resources

According to the *Classification, Investigation and Evaluation of Tourism Resources*, cultural tourism resources in Binzhou can be classified into site relics, buildings and facilities, tourism commodities and humanities activities.

Binzhou has a long history and splendid cultures. Dinggong culture, Buddhism culture,

filial piety culture, love culture, Sun Tzu culture, Fan Zhongyan culture, water conservancy culture, ecological culture, etc. are unusually brilliant here. Binzhou has various traditional folk culture types, such as Lv opera, Qinghe board New Year pictures, paper-cut, wicker weaving, salt carving, etc. The diverse traditional folk culture techniques provide a variety of possibilities and practical objects for the development of inquiry-based learning tourism. Moreover, Binzhou boasts unique humanistic historical tourism, red tourism, Buddhist tourism, and rural tourism resources, which have a high degree of fit with the inquiry-based learning tourism activities.

### 3 Development of inquiry-based learning tourism products in Binzhou

Under the strategic background of “all-for-one” tourism, combined with the existing tourism resources of Binzhou, this study explores the development of inquiry-based learning tourism products in Binzhou from the aspects of ideas, levels, framework and marketing of inquiry-based learning tourism product development, in order to fully develop Binzhou’s inquiry-based learning tourism.

#### 3.1 Product development idea

According to the development trend of inquiry-based learning tourism and the characteristics of tourism resources in Binzhou, the development of inquiry-based learning tourism products in Binzhou in the future should be based on the physical and mental development rules and cognitive situation of young students, and enrich related tourism activities and products from the level and stage.

**3.1.1** Focusing on the development of new products for inquiry-based learning tourism. While developing traditional tourism, it is necessary to take into account of the requirements and characteristics of inquiry-based learning tourism to further enrich tourism products<sup>[7]</sup>, for example, implanting the inquiry-based learning function into new tourism formats such as agricultural tourism, industrial tourism, and eco-tourism, hot spring tourism, etc., to truly achieve “learning” in the “tour”.

**3.1.2** Integrating and optimizing existing tourism resources. That is to say, inquiry-based learning tourism products can be integrated with regional characteristic industries to develop inquiry-based learning tourism products such as cultural inquiry-based learning, ecological inquiry-based learning, health inquiry-based learning and art inquiry-based learning, because inquiry-based learning tourism based on local culture is more

dynamic, which can reduce the emergence of low-end replication.

**3.1.3** Carrying out modular development based on regional features. It is suggested to refine the characteristics of advantageous resources in different counties and districts based on the analysis of tourism resources in various counties and districts of Binzhou, carry out functional zoning of different themes, build inquiry-based learning bases and develop localized inquiry-based learning tourism routes in Binzhou, thereby enhancing the overall competitiveness of inquiry-based learning tourism of Binzhou. To be specific, according to the characteristics of the tourism resources in Binzhou, it is divided into the central Yellow River ecological tourist area, the western Sun Tzu culture tourist area, the southern mountain scenery tourist area, and the northern coastal wetland tourist area, respectively, to develop differentiated inquiry-based learning tourism products, thus promoting the development of “all-for-one” tourism in Binzhou.

#### 3.2 Product development level

At the level of product development, the development of inquiry-based learning tourism products in Binzhou should follow the principle of progressive progress, focusing on the needs of inquiry-based learning tourism destinations and tourists.

**3.2.1** Adopting the point-line-plane promotion approach based on the development level of the inquiry-based learning tourism destination. For the development of inquiry-based learning tourism destinations, Binzhou should insist on strengthening the construction of inquiry-based learning tourism projects on the point, promoting the construction of inquiry-based learning tourism corridors on the line, promoting the development of the whole area on the plane, to realize the development goals of point start-up, line development and plane radiation. Firstly, different types of inquiry-based learning tourism bases can be established in the whole area, and inquiry-based learning tourism bases can be rooted in the existing scenic spots. Take Weiji Town in Huimin County of Binzhou, which is chosen as a national 4A level scenic spot due to its manor culture and ancient village landscapes, for example. While developing traditional tourism, the town can conduct inquiry-based learning tourism activities based on its unique manor architecture and ancient village culture. Secondly, the inquiry-based learning tourism resources can be combined with different inquiry-based learning themes to introduce customized and thematic inquiry-based learning

courses. Thirdly, regional inquiry-based learning tourism modules with different themes can be formed in accordance with the special inquiry-based learning tourism activities and tourism resources of different counties and districts.

**3.2.2** Focusing on the connection between innovative school education and off-campus education based on the development level of the classification of inquiry-based learning tourists. In the future development process, Binzhou’s inquiry-based learning tourism should fully consider the curriculum and training objectives of primary and secondary schools, make up for the lack of classroom teaching, enhance students’ ability to acquire extracurricular knowledge and promote the organic integration of inquiry-based learning courses and classroom courses.

First of all, it is necessary to set up different inquiry-based learning tourism courses for tourists of different ages and with different learning abilities, which can not only meet the students’ physical and mental health development, but also meet the purpose of inquiry-based learning tourism, the supplement of textbook knowledge and the increase of students’ experience. Secondly, it is necessary to enhance students’ interpersonal skills and to cultivate their local culture cognition ability through setting up various projects such as physical training, outdoor survival, quality development, and farming culture experience. Finally, various kinds of specialized inquiry-based learning activities can be carried out for social customers, such as ceramic art inquiry-based learning, photography inquiry-based learning, forest yoga inquiry-based learning, farming inquiry-based learning and off-road inquiry-based learning, etc., so as to increase the vitality and attractiveness of traditional scenic spots.

#### 3.3 Product development framework

Binzhou has jurisdiction over 4 districts and 6 counties. According to the resource endowments of the districts counties, Binzhou is divided into four major areas: the central Yellow River ecological inquiry-based learning area, the western Sun Tzu culture inquiry-based learning area, the southern mountain scenery inquiry-based learning area, and the northern coastal wetland inquiry-based learning area (Fig.2).

**3.3.1** Central Yellow River ecological inquiry-based learning area. The area has established a new concept of “city as tourism”. With the city proper as the core, the whole city proper is built and operated as the largest scenic spot, the best tourism product and the most beautiful tourist destination, to form the scenery experience tourist area with the water culture of the Yellow

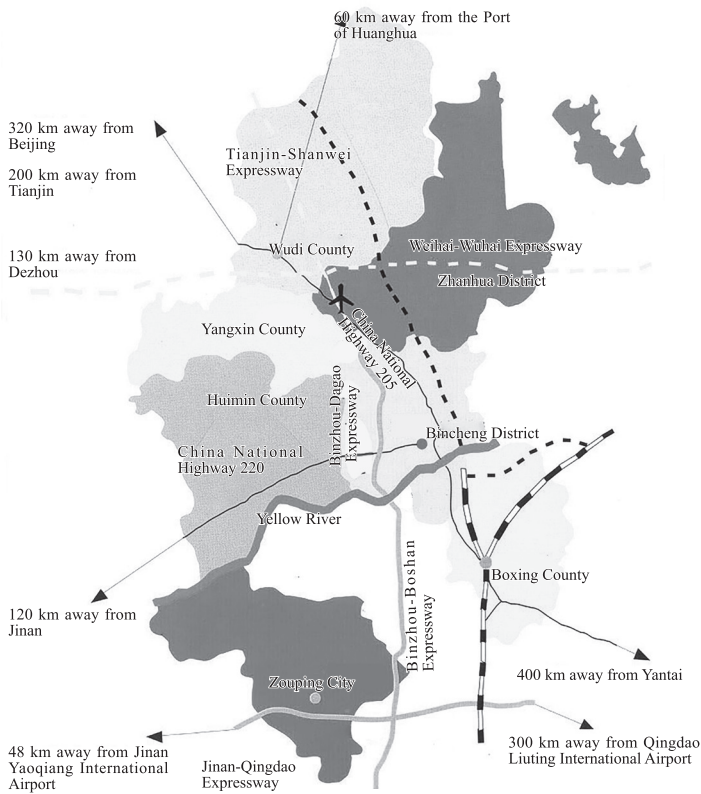


Fig.1 Administrative divisions in Binzhou

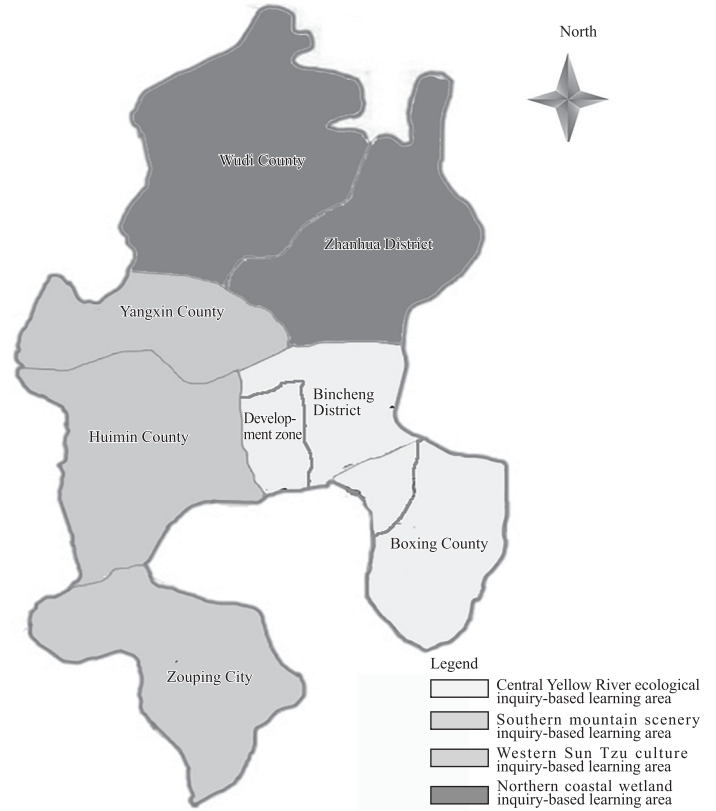


Fig.2 Spatial distribution of inquiry-based learning tourism products in Binzhou

River. To this end, we must strengthen the development of resources such as the Central Sea, the South Sea, the North Sea and the Pu Lake, vigorously develop tourism service facilities and cultural experience tourism projects, actively develop leisure and entertainment projects in the central city and deeply develop the Sanhe Lake, Former Residence of Du Shoutian, Bohai Revolution Memorial Park, Qinhuangtai and Liang Cai Picking Garden. Boxing County is the hometown of Dong Yong, the filial son of the Eastern Han Dynasty. His love story with the seventh fairy is widely circulated. In this sense, Boxing County has strong uniqueness of tourism development. Coupled with the good environmental background of the Madahu Boxing County's tourism development value is expected to be further enhanced. The county's other tourism resources with distinct personalities such as Xingguo Temple and Longhua Temple Site are attractive, too.

**3.3.2 Northern coastal wetland inquiry-based learning area.** It includes the area along the seashore between the mouth of the Dakou River (Zhewei New River) and the estuary of as well as the vast area along the Tuhai River. Rivers, wetlands, oceans, tidal flats, islands and other natural resources are concentrated in this

area, forming a unique wetland landscape of the original Yellow River Delta. In addition, there are rare natural tourism resources such as shellfish islands and migratory birds, as well as the Jieshi Mountain with dual attributes of nature and history. In particular, due to the small impact of human activities, the original and quaint features of most areas have been preserved, adding to the tourism appeal of the area. Most of these resources are not only appreciable<sup>[8]</sup>, but also suitable for development as a variety of tourism projects that are entertaining, highly participatory, and in line with market development trends. Particular attention should be paid to protecting the flora and fauna resources and ecological environment of the area in the course of development. Binzhou's characteristic planting such as *Pyrus bretschneideri* in Yangxin County and *Ziziphus jujube* in Wudi County has a large scale, has certain influence in and outside the province and is relatively concentrated in geographical distribution. Thus, the foundation for agricultural sightseeing tourism is better. In general, taking the coastal eco-tourism area and the Jieshi Mountain tourist resort as the main scenic spot, the winter jujube picking and flight experience as the attraction, combined with salt carving, sea shell porcelain and fishery

experience, the northern coastal wetland inquiry-based learning area develops into an area featuring flying, ocean, wetland, farming and picking.

**3.3.3 Southern mountain scenery inquiry-based learning area.** It mainly includes the mountainous area in the Zouping County with the Changbai Mountains as the core. Most of the vegetation in the mountainous area has been preserved well, and there are many places of interest distributed in the mountainous area. The mountainous area has certain comparative advantages in terms of location characteristics, resource types, tastes, and development foundations. After reasonable scientific development and construction, it has the conditions to become a comprehensive tourist scenic spot based on mountain sightseeing and mountain forest eco-tourism with certain influence in the province. In short, taking the Heban Mountain National Forest Park and the Madahu Lake Tourist Area as the main scenic spot, Fan Zhongyan culture and Lv opera as the attraction, the southern mountain scenery inquiry-based learning area deeply explore inquiry-based learning tourism products reflecting the mountainous scenery in southern Binzhou.

**3.3.4 Western Sun Tzu culture inquiry-based**

learning area. With the City of Art of War as the core, the western Sun Tzu culture inquiry-based learning area turns out to be a historical and cultural leisure and tourism area with the theme of Sun Tzu culture, which is composed of red tourism resources including the Wei's Manor, Hot Spring Culture Expo Park and the old site of the Bohai Revolutionary Old District (Wuding House) and Memorial Hall of Mao Anying. With profound historical and cultural heritage, Huimin County is the hometown of Sun Tzu, the founder of the ancient Chinese military culture. The Art of War is the preferred object for the development of inquiry-based learning tourism in Binzhou. Based on the 3A-level scenic spot of the City of Art of War, Binzhou's prospect of developing inquiry-based learning tourism products is promising. Sun Tzu culture is also an important component of Shandong's "Landscape Saints" tourist route. It has a corresponding relationship with Confucius in terms of "civil and martial virtues". The cross-regional combination of this product has strong market appeal. Wei's Manor in Huimin County, which is a rare castle-style manor, is unique in the domestic residential buildings and belongs to the national treasure-level cultural relics unit. It has great tourism development value. Qinhuangtai in Bincheng District has profound historical and cultural heritage. Du Shoutian is a person with certain influence in modern history. Former Residence of Du Shoutian is the only 4A-level scenic spot in Binzhou with high cultural value. In brief, taking the City of Art of War and Wei's Manor as the main scenic spot, combined with the development of folk cultural tourism resources such as clay sculpture and woodcut New Year paintings, the western Sun Tzu culture inquiry-based learning area focuses on folk custom inquiry-based learning tourism and cultural inquiry-based learning tourism.

### 3.4 Matching path between product and market

As the basic component unit of tourism activities, tourism products are an important foundation for the existence and development of modern tourism. The economics of modern

tourism activities lies in the exchange of tourism products between the tourism demand side and the tourism supply side. Without tourism products, the needs of tourists cannot be met; and the well-structured and sustainable tourist market is the basic condition for the development of regional tourism. The key to the success of tourism project development lies in the accuracy of market positioning. Good market positioning helps tourism activities attract more customers. Therefore, studying and formulating scientific market development strategies are an important part of Binzhou's inquiry-based learning tourism development. In the development process of inquiry-based learning tourism products, the most popular fist products are mainly targeted at the main tourist market. Once the main tourist market has achieved the results, the surrounding areas that are not regarded as the tourist market will follow up under the influence of word-of-mouth effect and form a tourism boom.

The development of inquiry-based learning tourism products in Binzhou should be based on the characteristics of the city's tourism resources, paying attention to satisfying students' understanding of local conditions and raising students' awareness of Chinese traditional culture, eating habits, lifestyles, architectural styles, etc. For example, the central Yellow River ecological inquiry-based learning area is mainly based on the Yellow River culture of China for 5,000 years. Binzhou's inquiry-based learning tourism products strive to form a comprehensive and multi-angle product system to meet the diverse market needs of tourists.

## 4 Conclusions

Under the macro background of "all-for-one" tourism, this study explores the significance and role of conducting inquiry-based learning tourism in China by analyzing the concepts, characteristics and types of inquiry-based learning tourism, and comprehensively sorts out the natural and cultural tourism resources of Binzhou, laying a solid foundation for Binzhou to better carry out inquiry-based learning tourism.

This study also explores the development of inquiry-based learning tourism products from the aspects of the product development idea, level, framework and marketing, with a view to providing references for implementing inquiry-based learning tourism activities in other regions.

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