

Red Tourism and Youth Education: A Systematic Review of the Literature

Fengyi Wang ¹, Victoria Sanagustín-Fons ^{1,*} and Violante Martínez-Quintana ²

¹ Department of Psychology and Sociology, Faculty of Business and Public Management, University of Zaragoza, 22001 Huesca, Spain; yriegawang@gmail.com

² Department of Sociology III (Social Tendencies), Faculty of Political Sciences and Sociology, National University of Distance Education, 28015 Madrid, Spain; vmartin@poli.uned.es

* Correspondence: vitico@unizar.es

Abstract: Red tourism, centered on historical sites of the Chinese revolution, serves as an educational tool that reinforces historical memory and patriotism among young people. Through a systematic literature review (PRISMA method), this research examines how red tourism meets learning needs regarding political culture by integrating tourism with education to enhance its pedagogical value. The important role of red tourism in patriotic education and the formation of national identity among Chinese youth is highlighted, although challenges such as the risk of political indoctrination and the lack of diversity in educational approaches are identified. The study proposes applying constructivist theories to improve the interactivity and effectiveness of red tourism in youth education and suggests integrating emerging technologies to enrich the educational experience.

Keywords: red tourism; ideological and political education; patriotic identity; technological innovation

1. Introduction

Chinese institutions emphasize the importance of historical memory as a cultural and tourism resource [1], particularly in regions that witnessed military actions associated with painful or traumatic memories. These locations have since transformed into tourist destinations designed to preserve and communicate their historical significance [2–4]. Within this historical context, this form of tourism has evolved into a distinctive mode of cultural education with substantial institutional backing, shaping both the revolutionary trajectory and the broader course of development [5,6]. This phenomenon, known as “red tourism” (hereinafter referred to as RT), is named for the national color of China, which is red, symbolizing its revolution. RT focuses on the theme of war, especially the conflict between China and Japan that lasted eight years (1937–1945). Locations were strategically chosen in rugged terrains to close military gaps due to their difficult accessibility for attacks and ease of defense [7]. Over time, these sites evolved into revolutionary bases, which have now become key RT destinations, preserving historical narratives and serving as platforms for patriotic education [8–10]. According to the 2022 Report on China’s Red Tourism Development, RT in China attracted a total of 3.478 billion visits in 2022, generating 929.5 billion yuan in revenue. It has increasingly become a key driver of the country’s tourism growth [11,12]. The significant educational influence of RT has prompted extensive academic research into its effectiveness and implementation.

Heung and Leong [13] indicate that this type of tourism enjoys prestige among young people, who, due to its significant educational focus, have become its primary consumer



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group. Therefore, the development of RT plays a crucial role in resisting hostile foreign forces, strengthening the legitimate leadership of the Communist Party of China, enhancing national identity, reducing regional development disparities, and fostering patriotism, all while reinforcing the party-state's legacy [14–18]. It serves as an effective method to showcase the significant achievements of the revolution, as well as the phases of construction, reform, and the new era of China [19,20].

This review employed a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology, following the widely recognized PRISMA guidelines, which are essential for conducting high-quality systematic reviews [21]. The SLR provides a comprehensive synthesis of existing research [22], offering a clearer understanding of the role and impact of RT on youth education. It reveals that RT resources play a vital role in political education. Existing studies primarily address three key areas: (1) utilizing these resources to foster political learning that promotes understanding of China's revolutionary heritage, culture, and communist values among youth [23–25]; (2) developing comprehensive tourism promotion strategies to maximize educational value [26–28]; and (3) enhancing visitor experiences through optimized design and innovative approaches [29–31]. While these policy focuses demonstrate the institutional importance of RT, theoretical perspectives offer additional insights into its educational impact. Additionally, there is a need for critical reflection across all programs and plans that use RT as a socializing instrument [32–34]. This research reveals that RT plays a significant role in patriotic education and the formation of national identity among Chinese youth. However, several issues exist, including the following ones: (1) a bias towards ideological education at the expense of others [35–37]; (2) an audience primarily directed at university students, neglecting the broad sector of primary and secondary school students [38,39]; and (3) a gap in multidisciplinary research in this field and insufficient use of emerging technologies [40–42].

From the theoretical perspective of social constructivism, it is considered that tourism experiences are developed at historical and revolutionary sites [43], such as those associated with the Long March of the Red Army and the War of Liberation in the years 1934–1935 and 1946–1949, respectively. These experiences not only convey historical knowledge but also shape the perceptions and attitudes of young people towards their country. Authors like Kong and Lin [44,45] highlight that RT acts as a mechanism for political socialization by instilling a sense of national identity and a commitment to the socialist ideals of the Communist Party of China (CPC) among Chinese youth. To understand this dynamic, it is essential to recognize that the theoretical framework of RT is deeply rooted in its historical origins and geographical significance [46–48]. Another intriguing but under-researched aspect outside of China is the use of RT alongside heritage resources as a way to educate Chinese youth. The intersection between RT and youth education in China has generated increasing interest regarding how this phenomenon influences the ideological development and patriotic values of the CPC.

The basic resources of RT are enclaves in the interior of China that were established as refuges for the population against the Japanese attack. These places demonstrate the value and perseverance of China in the face of the enemy [49]. It is at this critical moment in the country's history that the Government of the People's Republic of China was established. Xu Keshuai [50] proposed a system of symbols, highlighting the importance of linking personal experiences with national identity through the selection and expression of specific information from these enclaves. This shapes red historical memory through real experiences, fostering the enhancement of patriotic education.

RT has a positive effect on the perceived authenticity and cultural value of China's destination image, and this effect is moderated by the level of prior knowledge of Chinese history and culture among tourists [51,52]. Authors such as Zhou and Xing [53–55] have

examined how educational programs based on RT are designed to foster love for the country, loyalty to the party, and commitment to socialist ideology, contributing to the formation of a generation of patriotic and engaged Chinese citizens. On the other hand, some studies have taken a critical approach to examine the impact of RT on youth education and ideological development in China. Authors such as Wang, Xu, and Zhao [56] have questioned the official narrative promoted by the Chinese government through RT, arguing that it may present a biased and simplified version of history that omits controversial aspects and promotes an idealized vision of China's revolutionary past. These critical studies highlight the importance of adopting a reflective and critical perspective when assessing the role of RT in shaping identity and ideology among Chinese youth. In response to this, we propose the need to apply constructivist educational theory to address challenges such as the unidirectionality in information transmission and the lack of critical thinking. Vygotsky [57] emphasized the importance of the social and cultural context in the learning process. These cognitive tools encompass language, cultural history, and the social environment, as well as information and communication technology. Constructivist educational theory emphasizes that learning occurs through collaborative activities in specific environments via practical experience and interaction [58]. This theory values individual agency and the active construction of knowledge in the learning process, facilitating a deeper understanding and effective retention of information, while also promoting reflective and critical thinking to encourage broader comprehension and sustainable learning outcomes [59]. Building on this, cognitive development is inherently intertwined with social interactions, where learning is seen as a socially mediated process, and knowledge is co-constructed through dialogue and collaboration [60].

Consequently, the integration of educational resources focused on RT into youth education should be grounded in constructivist theory, placing students at the center and creating situations that foster collaboration. This measure will contribute to consolidating a collaborative educational identity between educational institutions and local communities, thereby enhancing the formative function of the educational approach of RT. Moreover, this theory emphasizes the importance of cognitive processes such as memory, attention, and reasoning in shaping learning and development, which can positively impact the educational formation of young people. RT offers young people the opportunity to gain a deep understanding of their country's history, fostering social awareness and empathy. However, it is necessary to investigate and address limitations, such as the singularity of the educational model and the restriction of educational approaches. Therefore, we pose the main research questions using the PRISMA Method:

- (1) What is the role of RT in the socialization of youth regarding the understanding and assimilation of revolutionary history and red ideology in China?
- (2) What are the main concepts and foundations of RT?
- (3) How can the design of RT be optimized to enrich the educational experience of students and maximize its educational potential?

To address these research questions systematically and comprehensively, this study employs a rigorous methodological approach.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs an SLR methodology, which is characterized by an exhaustive search for relevant publications and a rigorous synthesis and critical evaluation process following predefined steps [61]. It is a means of synthesizing scientific evidence to transparently and reproducibly answer a particular set of research questions, seeking to include all published evidence on the topic and evaluate its quality [62]. From this perspective, this method is advantageous for addressing an existing diverse and transdisciplinary knowl-

edge base [63], which allows for addressing some of the weaknesses typically associated with traditional evaluation methods [11]. The implementation of this systematic review methodology requires careful selection of appropriate databases and search criteria.

Traditional reviews tend to produce non-representative sampling forms and generate subjective and biased results, which are less structured and often lack critical analysis [64]. Additionally, quantitative systematic reviews employ a transparent and reproducible procedure in the searching, collecting, and selecting of articles. To manage the selection and evaluation requirements of a large amount of information, we used the PRISMA method. It is noteworthy that while originally designed in the realm of medical and health sciences, this methodology has been adapted for application in reviews within the fields of social sciences and tourism studies [65].

The databases used in this study are Web of Science and CNKI (Chinese database). The use of Web of Science was justified due to its extensive coverage of academic articles, which ensures a thorough analysis of relevant research. CNKI is an important tool for research in China and can provide access to a wide range of the Chinese scientific literature. In our case, given that we aimed to analyze significant variables related to one of the most important types of tourism experiences in China, RT, the research gathered in this database was considered relevant to our study. Having established the database parameters, the search process followed a structured protocol to ensure comprehensive coverage of the relevant literature.

In the complete description of the body of knowledge, the temporal framework was defined by the inclusion of articles published from 2004 (the year in which the term RT was coined) to 2023. Furthermore, to ensure the quality associated with sectional reviews, the literature was revisited, and the most recent discussions in the research community were accessed. This review excluded editorials, working papers, conference articles, books, and chapters. Search terms used in titles, keywords, or abstracts included “education and RT”, “youth identity and RT”, and “RT and student”. Figure 1 clearly outlines the various stages involved in the SLR process using the PRISMA method, providing a detailed and comprehensible visualization of the entire procedure.

A systematic exploration of academic databases was conducted using Boolean operators: TITLE = “RT and Youth Education”, “RT and Youth Identity”, or “RT and Student”; OR KEYWORDS = “RT and Youth Education”, “RT and Youth Identity”, or “RT and Student”, with the aim of facilitating the identification of publications where RT in China and its educational ramifications serve as central themes.

The initial search yielded a total of 358 articles, which were subjected to subsequent scrutiny based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. During the literature review process, 81 articles were selected that were published in leading journals and relevant to the research topic. A thorough reading of these articles in their entirety was conducted. In the later phase of the full-text selection process, the content of these articles underwent meticulous filtering and eligibility assessment.

Additionally, the chosen literature corpus underwent an exhaustive cross-referencing process, and the inclusion of supplementary sources was carefully examined to validate the research, as recommended by Seuring and Müller [66]. This meticulous approach aimed to enhance the credibility and reliability of the information incorporated into the study. Finally, the material collection procedure resulted in a total of 49 documents specifically addressing RT and its influence on education, of which 45 were in Chinese, 3 were in English, and 1 was in Spanish (Appendix A). In addition, included was the checklist for the PRISMA 2020 method (Appendix B).

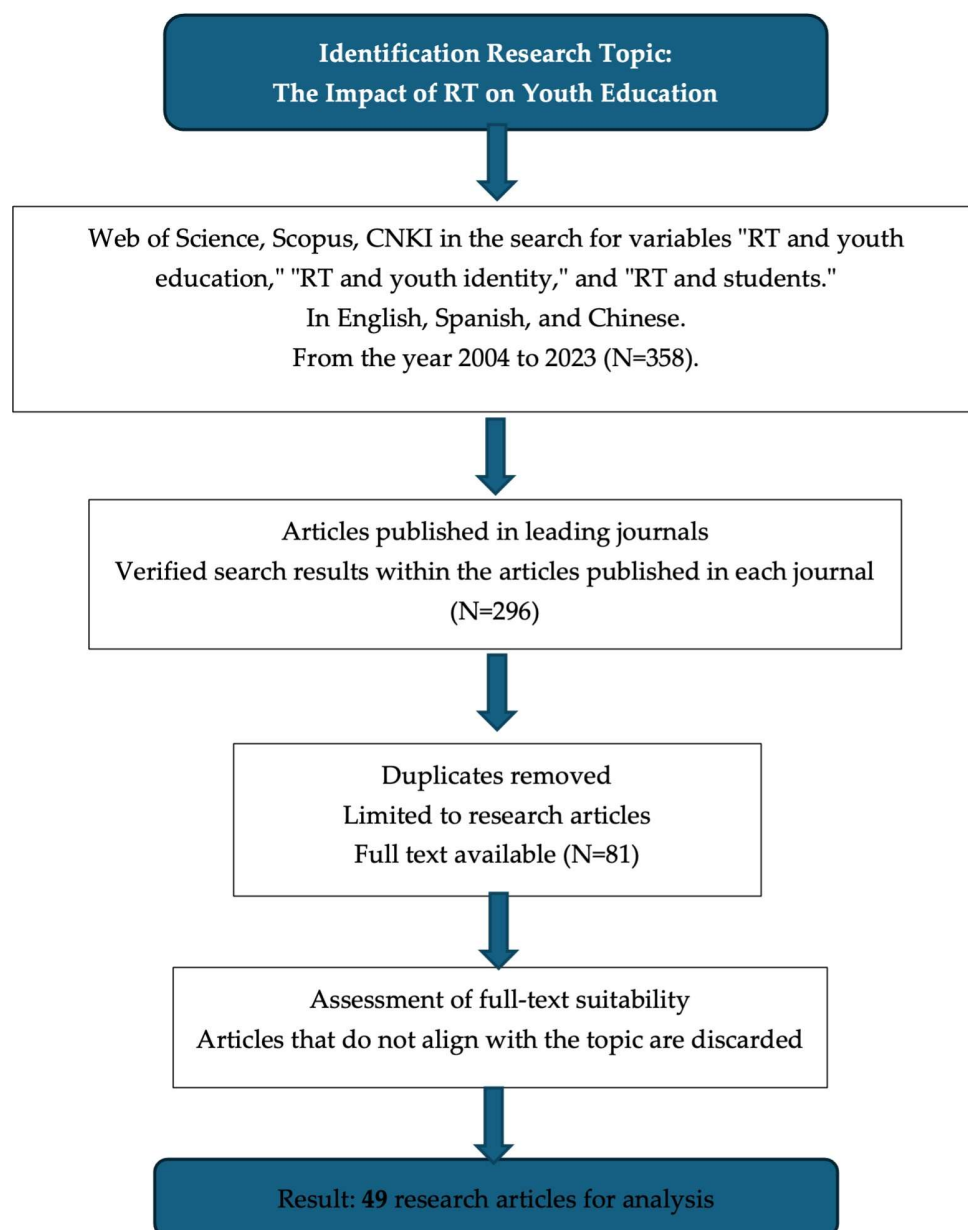


Figure 1. Stages of the systematic review on RT and youth education (PRISMA method).

3. Results

3.1. Linguistic, Temporal, and Disciplinary Distribution of RT Publications

The analysis of language distribution reveals that Chinese-language publications dominate the literature on RT, accounting for 91.84% of the total articles, followed by publications in English and Spanish (Figure 2). This distribution indicates that academic discourse and research activities in RT and youth education primarily occur within Chinese academic circles, particularly within mainland China. This imbalance can be attributed to the close relationship of the research topic with the specific historical and cultural context of China, implying that research on this topic has not yet received the same level of attention or development in other countries and regions. Beyond the linguistic distribution of publications, temporal analysis reveals important trends in RT research.

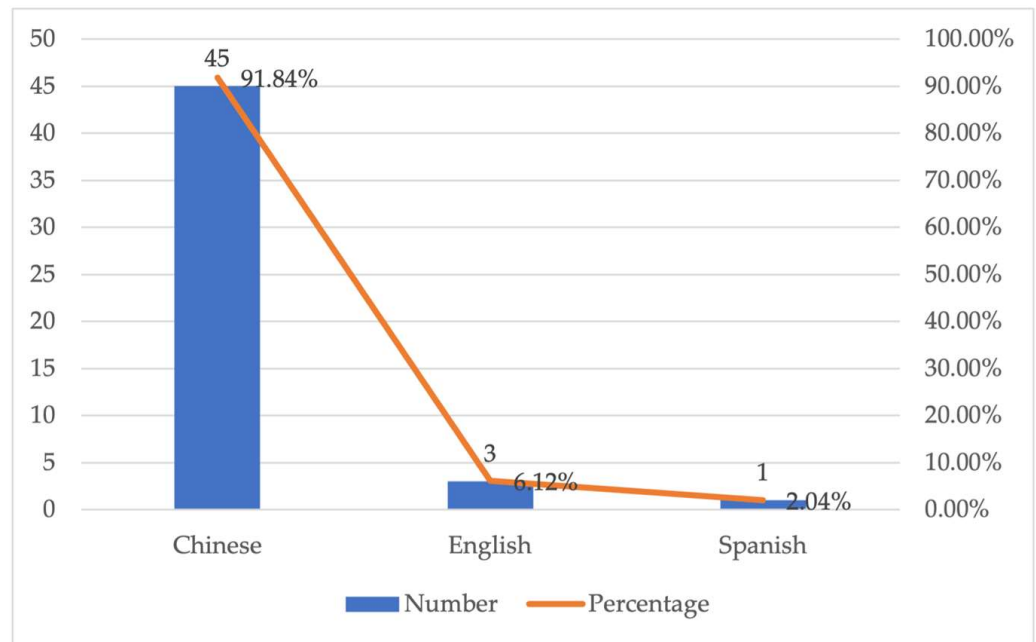


Figure 2. Proportion of languages used in the published articles.

The introduction of RT dates back to 2004, but it was not until 2008 that articles began to be published on how RT affects youth education in specialized journals. This time interval reflects the fact that, in the early years, researchers studied the relationship between RT and education less frequently. It is also noteworthy that the number of published articles reached its peak around 2021, which may be related to significant historical events such as the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Party, inspiring scholars to conduct in-depth research on RT and youth education. In 2023, the decline in the number of published articles may reflect a shift in research focus or a decrease in academic interest in these topics during this period (Figure 3). While the chronological patterns provide insights into research development, examining the disciplinary distribution offers a deeper understanding of the field's academic scope.

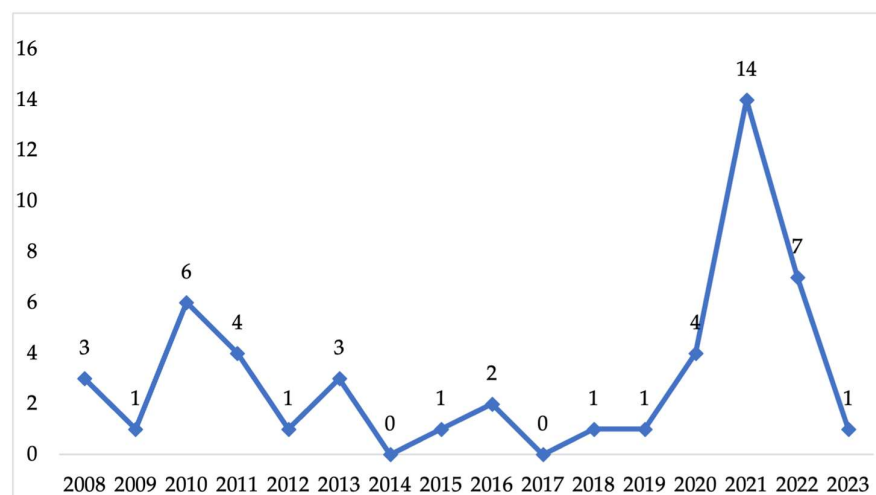


Figure 3. Annual distribution of published articles from 2008 to 2023.

We found that the interdisciplinary nature of the source journals is not as extensive as expected, despite covering disciplines such as tourism, economics, and politics (Figure 4). Additionally, the dual role of RT is highlighted, functioning both as a tourism activity and as an educational medium.

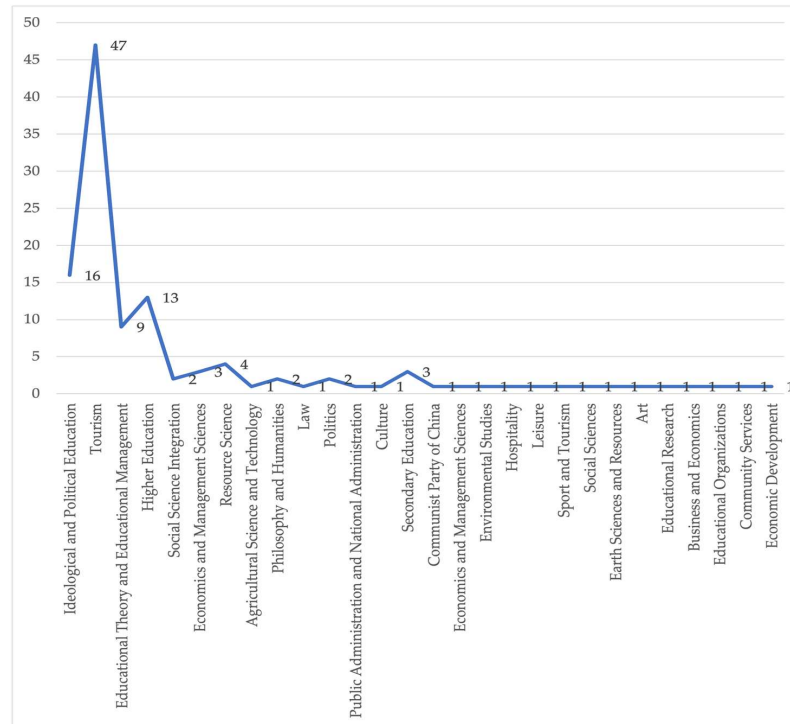


Figure 4. Distribution of disciplines of the published articles.

However, we can observe that they are few; most of these journals have only one article published on our topic. Through a comprehensive analysis of 27 national and international journals, it is revealed that most publications are concentrated in three key journals: Secondary School Geography Teaching Reference, Secondary School Political Teaching Reference, and Pursuit of Truth. In particular, the first two, established in 1972, are educational journals, while the third, initiated in 1959, is a comprehensive theoretical journal affiliated with the Party School of the Provincial Committee of the CPC in Jiangxi. This journal belongs to a comprehensive theoretical category and has been recognized as a leading Chinese journal in China (leading journal of Chinese politics and leading journal of the Communist Party of China) on three occasions (1992, 2000, and 2004). They highlight the importance of education and educational theory in their publications, focusing on topics of ideology and Chinese political theories. That is, these journals predominantly emphasize education and educational theory in their publications, reflecting a characteristic of a uniform educational approach, lacking diversity. This can be seen in Figure 5.

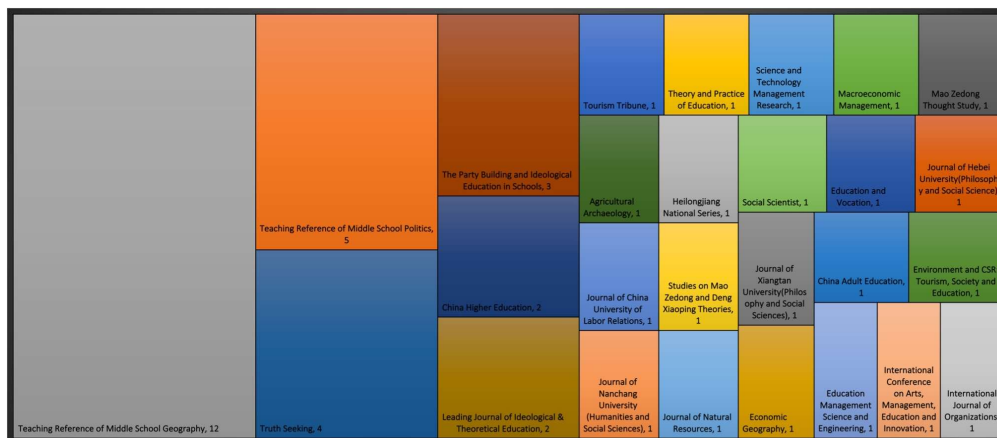


Figure 5. Names of the journals and number of publications.

3.2. Keyword Analysis

To further understand the thematic focus of RT research, a detailed analysis of keywords reveals prominent patterns and emerging trends. This study involves the categorization of keywords within the selected corpus, subsequently analyzing their co-occurrence as shown in Figure 6. High-frequency keywords have been identified, those appearing beyond a specified threshold that can represent the central themes or research directions. The incidence rate of these keywords throughout the sample of 49 articles is quantified and represented as a percentage with two decimal places for greater precision. To facilitate the temporal tracking of research trends, keywords identified in the current year are highlighted in red, while those that are no longer active are indicated in green. This color-coding scheme provides a visual representation of the evolving focus within the field.

Keywords	Percentage	Begin	End	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Red tourism	66.13%	2008	2023	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ideological and political education	37.10%	2008	2023	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
College students	16.13%	2008	2021	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Path	12.90%	2011	2023	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Red resources	11.30%	2010	2022	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Red culture	11.30%	2013	2023	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Patriotism education	9.68%	2010	2022	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Identity	9.68%	2016	2023	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Innovation	8.06%	2009	2022	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Red tourism resources	8.06%	2016	2023	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Education inheritance/Inheritance	8.06%	2013	2022	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Colleges and universities	6.45%	2012	2022	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Youth education	6.45%	2021	2022	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Educational value	6.45%	2008	2021	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Revolutionary traditional education	3.23%	2011	2021	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Study tour/ Red study	3.23%	2021	2022	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Figure 6. The 16 most frequently cited keywords. To facilitate the temporal tracking of research trends, keywords identified in the current year are highlighted in red, while those that are not currently active are indicated in green. This colour coding scheme provides a visual representation of the evolving focus within the field, thus facilitating the rapid identification of emerging and declining areas of interest.

The data presented reveal that ideological and political education is closely related to RT, reflecting considerable interest in exploring the educational and political facets of this phenomenon. The keyword “university students” denotes a strong emphasis on understanding the impact and involvement of university students in RT research, especially up until 2021.

Additionally, the exploration of how RT influences ideological and political education emerges as an important theme. The keywords “patriotism education” and “education” highlight notable interest in the role of RT in promoting patriotism and shaping individual and group identities, with an increase observed between 2016 and 2023. Furthermore, terms such as “innovation” and “heritage education” indicate a persistent exploration of novel approaches, extensive resources, and the transmission of educational values within the realm of RT. Significant peaks of interest are observed in “study trips/red study”, which emerged for the first time in 2021. These peaks likely indicate a heightened focus on the emerging trend of studying RT through excursions or structured study programs.

The visualization shows a co-occurrence network of keywords generated in Python 3.11. According to Figure 7, we can observe that the central nodes, “RT” and “Ideological and Political Education”, represent the core research themes, laying the groundwork to investigate the intricate relationship between tourism and educational ideologies. Additionally, “University Students” and “Youth Education” emphasize a strong focus on

understanding the impact of RT on younger demographics, indicating a potential pathway to explore the educational experiences and perspectives of these specific groups in the context of RT. The connection between “Path” and “Innovation” suggests a promising trend toward exploring innovative approaches within RT and ideological and political education, indicating a research direction that delves into novel methodologies and frameworks in these fields.

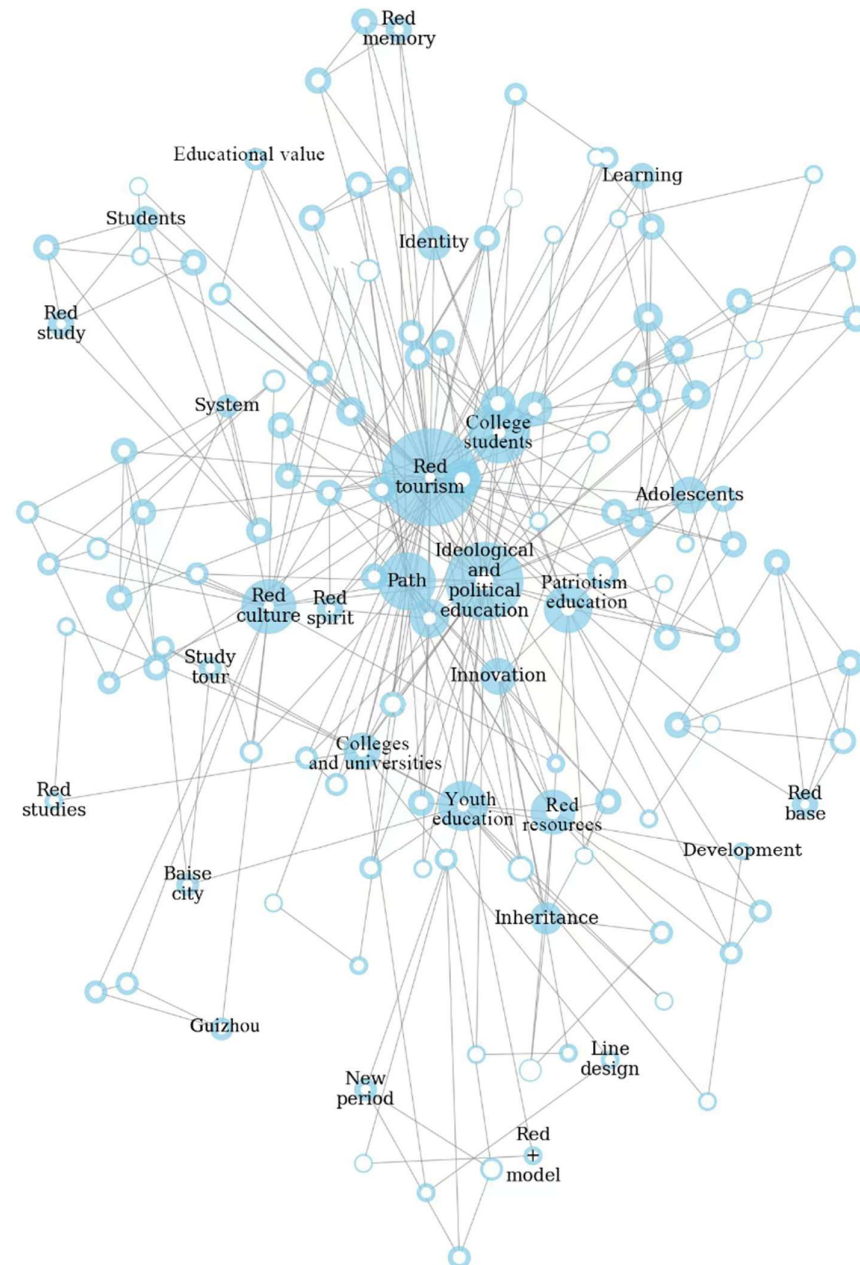


Figure 7. Co-occurrence network of keywords. The central nodes, ‘TR’ and ‘Ideological and political education’, represent the main research themes, highlighting their relevance in the current academic discussion and their function as pillars for analyzing the relationship between tourism and educational ideologies.

Further from the center, the co-occurrence of “Patriotism Education” and “Identity” underscores a focus on understanding how RT contributes to shaping patriotic identities. Moreover, the nodes “Line Design”, “Guizhou”, and “Baise City” suggest a localized study on how study tours are designed in specific contexts, providing an opportunity to investigate the unique characteristics and impacts of RT in those regions [67–69].

On the outer edge of the figure, the consideration of “Red Study” or “Study Trip” shows a connection between structured study programs and RT, highlighting a potential trend in educational methodologies and paving the way to investigate the effectiveness of study tours in enhancing understanding and engagement.

Although the target audience for this type of tourism primarily consists of university students, with an educational focus centered on the topic of political ideology [70–72], it is evident that the needs of young people are diverse and span multiple levels. Therefore, it is crucial to enrich the educational content and enhance its effectiveness to more responsively address the demands of this audience.

3.3. Co-Citation Analysis

The preliminary analysis of relevant authors, based on Table A1 (Appendix A), indicates that no significant correlation is observed among them. Therefore, it becomes essential to implement co-citation analysis; this approach not only helps identify key literature and scholars who exert significant influence in this field of study but also identifies leading journals. Furthermore, we can assess the relevance of these contents to the topic of our study and explore more deeply their cross-interactions and impacts with other related disciplinary fields, thus providing a more comprehensive perspective to understand and resolve complex interdisciplinary issues.

Through the analysis of co-citation relationships among the articles (Figure 8), it is possible to construct a network diagram to visualize the connections and flows of knowledge among the various research outputs, as well as understanding the critical points of the reviewed literature and their potential research trends in the future.

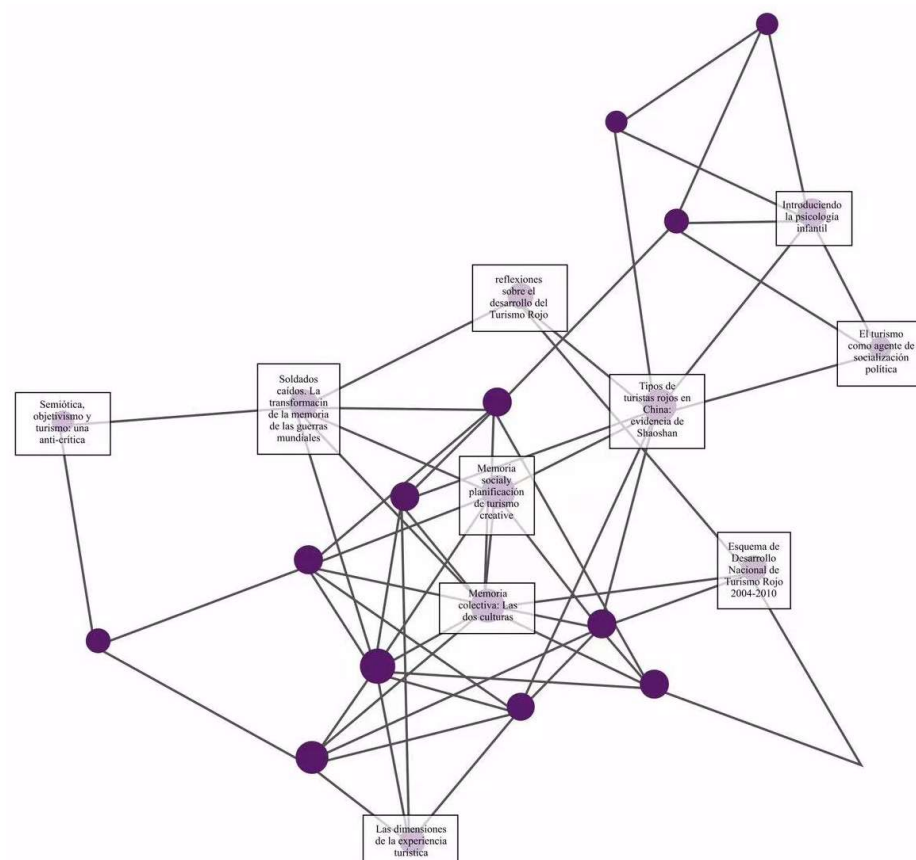


Figure 8. Co-citation network of the most relevant articles.

At the same time, it is worth noting two foreign scholars: one is the sociologist and historian J. K. Olick, who is also the co-president of the Association for the Study of Memory and specializes in the study of social memory, history, culture, and social theory. Olick [76] introduces several concepts, such as the “theater of social memory” and the “collective power of the dead”, which are crucial for understanding how RT often involves the reinterpretation and recreation of historical events and collective memories. The application of Olick’s social memory theory helps analyze the meaning, impact, and social dynamics of RT, allowing for a better understanding of how RT sites convey specific historical narratives and the impact of RT on social identity, political sociology, and collective memory.

On the other hand, Stone [77] focuses on Dark Tourism, exploring the behavior of tourists who visit and experience places associated with death, tragedy, or disaster. Despite the correlation between the two types of tourism, they present different approaches. The former places more emphasis on exploring negative historical events and death, while RT focuses on commemorating the history of the revolution and promoting patriotism.

References to official Chinese institutions such as the CPC Central Committee and State Council, the Department of Social Development of the National Development and Reform Commission, and Xinhua News underscore the importance of RT as a form of government-driven tourism in terms of building the national image, disseminating specific values, and promoting historical education [78,79]. References to theoretical leaders like Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping contribute to transmitting, promoting, and protecting traditional culture during different periods while fostering cultural confidence among young students. However, it is important to note that an excessive emphasis on the role of institutions and governmental leaders may lead RT to focus too much on the effects of historical packaging and propaganda [80,81], to the detriment of objective reflection and pluralistic understanding of historical events. This trend may limit the overall perception by young people and overly politicize the message, undermining the objective educational function.

Regarding Figure 10, a high level of co-citations can be observed in the leading international academic journals and publishers (the official English nomenclature is used). In China, “Tourism Tribune”, “Human Geography”, and “Social Science in China” suggest that the focus on the topics of RT and youth education has been intensely concentrated in the fields of tourism, geography, and social sciences, thereby demonstrating characteristics of interdisciplinary research.

It is noteworthy that the international journals “Annals of Tourism Research” and the publisher “London: Sage” are influential for deepening understanding of tourism and geography, providing important insights into the study topic. Meanwhile, “Truth Seeking” focuses on the theoretical practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics. “Red Flag Manuscript”, as a comprehensive political journal, and the publisher “Higher Education Press”, managed by the Ministry of Education, are responsible for publishing educational materials, advocating for the dissemination of advanced teaching methods and content, contributing to the development of RT in the field of youth education.

References to articles published in official Chinese media outlets, such as People’s Daily and Guangming Daily, indicate that our research is closely related to Chinese political, social, and educational issues, although it may lack pluralism and independent thinking as it primarily presents the official viewpoints of the government and Chinese parties.

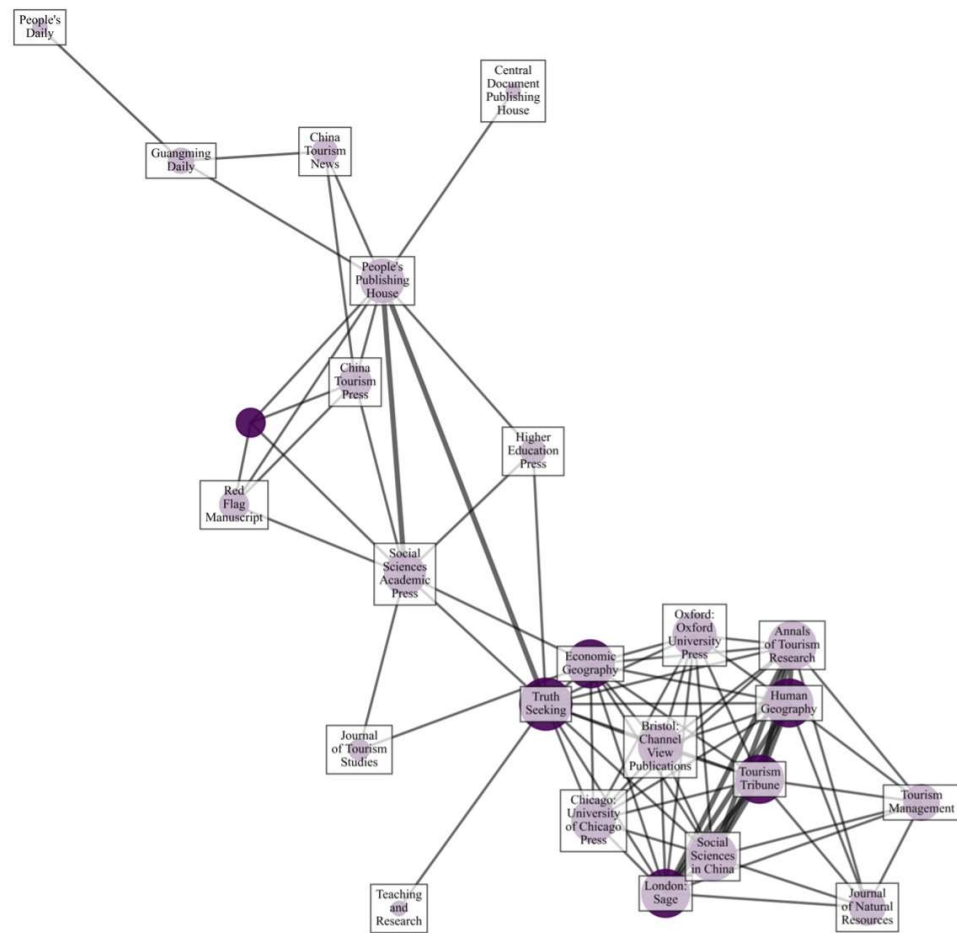


Figure 10. Network of leading magazines and publishers.

4. Discussion

This is an overview of the current research on the impact of RT on youth education in China, summarizing the main contributions. A common feature highlighted is the significant influence that RT has on the ideological and political education of young people.

First, several articles emphasize that visiting revolutionary sites and engaging with traditional revolutionary culture helps foster patriotism and a sense of national identity among the youth [82,83]. These immersive experiences facilitate connections between historical narratives and contemporary youth identity, particularly among university students.

Second, a recurring theme is cultural heritage, exploring how RT contributes to the preservation and transmission of red culture. Educational institutions and structured programs, such as study trips, play a crucial role in this process, especially in areas rich in red resources, such as Shaoshan and Jinggangshan.

Third, many studies have explored innovative approaches, such as designing RT routes and utilizing new media for educational reform. The emergence of terms like “smart education” and “new era” signals a trend towards integrating technological advancements into the education associated with this type of tourism.

As RT has proven to be an effective educational tool, future research should explore ways to expand its educational content to address the diverse needs of different age groups and educational levels. Educational institutions have emerged as key motivators encouraging youth visits to RT destinations, which are frequently situated in mountainous regions that provide excellent opportunities for combining historical education with outdoor activities. In this regard, educational institutions could design outdoor activity programs to provide a more active participation and enriching experiences for students [84].

Most importantly, it is essential to provide balanced information and multiple perspectives to ensure that students receive a well-rounded and objective understanding of historical and cultural contexts, encouraging exploration and reflection on various viewpoints. In addressing the final research question, we analyzed the outputs of the SLR and concluded that optimizing RT design to enhance educational experiences requires a multifaceted approach. This approach, in turn, emphasizes the importance of integrating diverse narratives, which is a key aspect of offering a deeper understanding of these contexts. Furthermore, the incorporation of emerging technologies, such as virtual tours and interactive media, can make historical content more accessible and engaging for students. Finally, historical memory tourism should be examined within the scope of international cooperation and comparative research [85], as this will provide a better understanding of its impact on youth education in different cultural contexts and promote international academic exchanges.

However, the scope of this study is limited to the Chinese, English, and Spanish languages, thus excluding the corpus of other languages, which may affect the comprehensiveness of the results. Additionally, the research primarily relies on the published literature, while unpublished studies (the gray literature) are often overlooked, which could introduce bias. As new research continues to be published, the evaluation system's results also require continuous updates to maintain their relevance and accuracy. Building on these insights and acknowledging the identified limitations, several key conclusions emerge regarding the role of RT in youth education.

5. Conclusions

This qualitative analysis, utilizing the PRISMA methodology and examining a trilingual corpus, demonstrates the significant potential of RT, China's approach to historical memory tourism, as an educational medium. This type of tourism has a clear positive impact on the youth socialization process in China throughout the different stages of identity construction. However, our research highlights the main emerging challenges in the literature related to this type of tourism. Specifically, there is a need to ensure that both the narratives and the public and private strategies associated with RT adopt a balanced and critical approach, addressing the risk of covert indoctrination and exploring the potential interaction of RT with a broader range of disciplines, including those featuring smart technologies.

This research contributes to addressing a gap in academic theories regarding the impact of RT on youth education. Based on the findings, optimizing the design of RT can significantly enrich students' educational experiences by incorporating diverse narratives and integrating emerging technologies. These findings are expected to foster a deeper, more nuanced understanding of China's history and cultural heritage among youth, while promoting a critical mindset and nurturing loyal yet informed citizens. Furthermore, practical recommendations are offered to policymakers, educators, and tourism professionals, opening new research avenues that explore innovative educational perspectives and advocate for the integration of RT into broader curricula through holistic and international approaches. Ultimately, RT has the potential not only to strengthen national identity but also to cultivate a more reflective, globally aware generation of students.

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Data Availability Statement: The data supporting the reported results of this study are available at Table A1; the PRISMA 2020 Statement and Explanation and its elaboration document are available at: <https://www.prisma-statement.org/prisma-2020> (accessed on 12 December 2024).

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

RT	red tourism
SLR	systematic literature review
CPC	Communist Party of China

Appendix A

Table A1. Collection of final results.

No.	Author	Year	Title	Keywords	Language	Discipline	Academic Bases	Journal
1	Xu Keshuai [50]	2016	RT and social memory	RT; red memory; Identity; symbol system; Sense of Sacredness	Chinese	Ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	Tourism Tribune
2	Shi Huijun [2]	2022	The significance and path of integrating RT into ideological and political education	RT; ideological and political education; path; youth education	Chinese	Educational theory and educational management; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Politics
3	Qi Linna [3]	2021	The realization of ideological and political education function in RT	RT; ideological and political education; educational function; youth education	Chinese	Ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography
4	Zhang Li [4]	2021	Research on the value and application of Shanxi RT resources to the ideological and political education of college students	Shanxi RT; college students; ideological and political education; theoretical value; practical value; curriculum civics	Chinese	Higher education; social science integration; tourism	CNKI	Theory and Practice of Education
5	Zhu Xiaojie [6]	2021	The application of RT resources in ideological and political education in colleges and universities	RT; college students; sense of identity; red spirit; educational value	Chinese	Higher education; social science integration; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography

Table A1. Cont.

No.	Author	Year	Title	Keywords	Language	Discipline	Academic Bases	Journal
6	Jiao Xiaoying [23]	2021	Research on the path to improve the ideological and political functions of Guangdong's RT resources	RT resources; ideological and political education resources; revolutionary culture; inheritance	Chinese	Educational theory and educational management; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography
7	Zhu Hong [8]	2021	The ideological and political education function of RT and its implementation path	RT; historical resources; ideological and political education; inheritance significance	Chinese	Educational theory and educational management; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography
8	Wang Yang [9]	2021	Research on the ideological and political education value of RT resources	Ideological and political education; educational carrier; RT resources; educational value; path	Chinese	Educational theory and educational management; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography
9	Li Qingyuan [10]	2021	Utilizing RT resources to expand ideological and political education for college students	Colleges and universities; ideological and political education; college students; spiritual life; RT	Chinese	Higher education; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography
10	Wei Dan [16]	2021	The development of red culture in the ideological and political social practice of colleges and universities in the new era. Take "Research on the Integration of RT Education Elements into Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities in the New Media Era" as an example	Ideological and political education; college teaching; RT; college students; cultural identity	Chinese	Higher education; tourism	CNKI	Science and Technology Management Research
11	Shi Peixin [17]	2020	Improvement of RT education function and innovation of sustainable development mechanism	RT; sustainable tourism; tourism education function	Chinese	Ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	Macroeconomic Management
12	Wei Zhen; Tan Juan [18]	2021	Exploring the ideological and political education value of red cultural tourism	Red cultural tourism; revolutionary traditional education; patriotism education; adolescents; ideological and political education	Chinese	Educational theory and educational management; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Politics
13	Xuan Shan-wen [24]	2020	RT: opening up new ways of ideological and political education in colleges and universities	RT; ideological and political education; innovation	Chinese	Ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	China Higher Education
14	Li Zhihui [29]	2018	On the value transformation of red resources in the ideological and political education of college students	Red resources; ideological and political education; value transformation; path	Chinese	Ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	The Party Building and Ideological Education in Schools

Table A1. Cont.

No.	Author	Year	Title	Keywords	Language	Discipline	Academic Bases	Journal
15	Yan Jun; Yin Hang [47]	2015	The development of red resources and the coordinated realization of its ideological and political education functions—taking Sichuan Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture as an example	Red resources; ideological and political education function; collaborative realization	Chinese	Ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	Mao Zedong Thought Study
16	Sun Ying [20]	2013	An analysis of innovative carriers of moral education in colleges and universities based on the perspective of RT	RT; universities; moral education carriers	Chinese	Higher education; tourism	CNKI	Leading Journal of Ideological & Theoretical Education
17	Yang Zhaohui [79]	2011	The development path of RT's integrated ideological permeability	RT; ideological and political education; integration; path	Chinese	Economics and management sciences; ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	Truth Seeking
18	Hu Xiaojia; Liao Yunsheng [40]	2011	Ideological and political education and red resource development	Red resource; benefit distribution; ideological and political education	Chinese	Ideological and political education; resource science; tourism	CNKI	Truth Seeking
19	Jin Lingyun; Hu Zhenyu [71]	2010	Thoughts on the ideological and political education of college students using red resources	Ideological and political education; Jiangxi red resources; development and utilization	Chinese	Agricultural science and technology; philosophy and humanities; education and social sciences integration; higher education; tourism	CNKI	Agricultural Archaeology
20	Cheng Yangguo; Huang Xijia; Wang Ge [41]	2010	Innovation of RT methods based on ideological and political education	RT; ideological and political education; innovation	Chinese	Ideological and political education; resource science; tourism	CNKI	Truth Seeking
21	Lyu Li [72]	2010	An analysis of RT and the ideological and political education of contemporary college students	RT; college students; ideological and political education	Chinese	Education and social sciences integration; higher education; tourism	CNKI	Journal of China University of Labor Relations
22	Zhou Meng [49]	2010	RT: a pioneering work in traditional education of patriotism and revolution	Revolutionary education; patriotism; RT; Jingtangshan spirit	Chinese	Ideological and political education; law; tourism	CNKI	Truth Seeking
23	Xu Renli [27]	2009	On the ideological and political education function of RT and its realization	RT; ideological and political education function; innovation	Chinese	Politics; ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	The Party Building and Ideological Education in Schools

Table A1. Cont.

No.	Author	Year	Title	Keywords	Language	Discipline	Academic Bases	Journal
24	Liao Yun-sheng; Chen Bo [48]	2008	On the realization of the ideological and political education value of RT in Jinggangshan	Jinggangshan spirit; RT; ideological and political education; educational value	Chinese	Politics; ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	Journal of Nanchang University(Humanities and Social Sciences)
25	Zhou Rui [54]	2022	Give full play to the ideological and political education value of RT resources	Ideological and political education; patriotism education; RT; innovation	Chinese	Resource science; educational theory and educational management; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Politics
26	Wang Wei; Tu Deng-shenggen [25]	2022	Research on the “Red+” model to build a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation in ethnic areas	Chinese nation’s community; red resources; Red+ model	Chinese	Public administration and national administration; tourism	CNKI	Heilongjiang National Series
27	Wen Feng-ping; Hu Xueqin [67]	2022	Research on red study tours from the perspective of regional geography—taking Baise City, Guangxi, as an example	Regional geography; study tour; red resources; Baise City	Chinese	Education and social sciences integration; philosophy and humanities; culture; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography
28	Zhang Qingxue [68]	2022	The value and exploration of red research resources in border areas	Red studies; resource mining; youth education	Chinese	Educational theory and education management; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography
29	Zhang Zhen; Liu Qian; Wang Yun [69]	2022	Research on the design and implementation of red study tour routes in Northern Shaanxi	Red research; line design; youth education	Chinese	Secondary education; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography
30	Zhao Hong [78]	2022	The inheritance of red culture in subject education	Red culture; subject education; red education; cultural inheritance	Chinese	Educational theory and educational management; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Politics
31	Wang Hongchun; Xu Qun; Zhao Donglai [56]	2021	The development and utilization of red resources must adhere to the education standard—an analysis of several adverse phenomena	Red resources; development; education-oriented	Chinese	Resource science; Communist Party of China; tourism	CNKI	Studies on Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping Theories
32	Yuan Zhiling [35]	2021	The design and implementation of red study tour activities from the perspective of core literacy	Core competencies; red study; design of activities; political education; students	Chinese	Secondary education; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography
33	Peng Jinfu [80]	2021	RT and ideological and political education	Patriotism education; red cultural dissemination; RT; college students; identity	Chinese	Ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography
34	Fan Weihong; Li Jiguang [82]	2021	Research on the ideological and political education function of RT	Youth groups; mainstream values; ideological and political education; RT; strengthening awareness	Chinese	Secondary education; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography

Table A1. Cont.

No.	Author	Year	Title	Keywords	Language	Discipline	Academic Bases	Journal
35	Zhong Shi'en; Lu Wenjing; Peng Hong-song; Dai Shuqi [38]	2021	Red scarf children's understanding of RT resources and patriotism—empirical evidence and inspiration from the case of Yuhuatai Martyrs Cemetery	Children's tourism; RT resources; patriotism education; educational value	Chinese	Ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	Journal of Natural Resources
36	Wang Xiaojun; Xu Lilan [42]	2020	The integration and mutual promotion of RT and political ethics education in the new era	RT; political ethics education; realistic basis; institutional guarantee; path	Chinese	Ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	Social Scientist
37	Gai Yanqiu; Li Jianfeng [83]	2020	The educational function of RT resources	Spiritual needs; RT; revolutionary history; learning; educational function	Chinese	Higher education; tourism	CNKI	Teaching Reference of Middle School Politics
38	Yang Kai [30]	2016	Analysis of RT resources and innovation paths for cultural inheritance in universities	RT resources; university culture; inheritance; innovation; path	Chinese	Higher education; tourism	CNKI	The Party Building and Ideological Education in Schools
39	Zhang Shaorong [39]	2013	On the construction of the red cultural education inheritance system	Red culture; education inheritance; system; construction	Chinese	Higher education; tourism	CNKI	Leading Journal of Ideological & Theoretical Education
40	Liu Huazheng [37]	2012	The educational form of red resources in extracurricular practice of ideological and political theory in colleges and universities	Colleges and universities; ideological and political theory; extracurricular practice; red resources	Chinese	Higher education; tourism	CNKI	Education and Vocation
41	Wang Wanyi [81]	2011	Carry out RT and promote patriotism education in colleges and universities	Patriotism education; RT; revolutionary traditional education; college students	Chinese	Higher education; tourism	CNKI	China Higher Education
42	Zhou Yan; Xing Huibin [53]	2011	Using RT to improve college students' ideological and moral cultivation	RT; educational function; college students	Chinese	Higher education; tourism	CNKI	Journal of Hebei University (Philosophy and Social Science)
43	Zhu Dong-guo [31]	2010	RT consumption behavior and marketing strategies of college students	RT; college students; consumer behavior; marketing strategy	Chinese	Education and social sciences integration; tourism	CNKI	Journal of Xiangtan University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)
44	Tan Shuhui; Yu Caixia; Zhang Heqing [36]	2008	In-depth development of RT and interactive development of outdoor sports for college students—taking Changsha–Zhuzhoutan as an example	RT; college students; extracurricular practice; Interactive development; Changsha–Zhuzhou–Tantan	Chinese	Economics and management sciences; ideological and political education; tourism	CNKI	Economic Geography

Table A1. Cont.

No.	Author	Year	Title	Keywords	Language	Discipline	Academic Bases	Journal
45	Wang Jingping; Xie Meijun [55]	2008	An analysis of the educational function of RT culture	RT; RT culture; educational function;	Chinese	Economics and management sciences; tourism	CNKI	China Adult Education
46	Cao Xi-aoyong; Zhang, Y [34]	2013	A Research on RT and ideological education of Chinese universities students	RT; university students; ideological and political education	English	Environmental studies; hospitality, leisure, sport, and tourism; social sciences	Web of Science	Environment and CSR: Tourism, Society and Education
47	Sun Ying [26]	2010	Research on educational functions of special interest tourism for university students in China	Special interest tourism; educational functions; patriotism education	English	Earth sciences and resources; tourism	Web of Science	Education Management Science and Engineering
48	Chen Xiaoyan; Gao, J [52]	2019	Research on the promotion of tourism attraction of red research tourism products in Shaanxi Province	RT products; research tourism; tourism attraction	English	Art; educational research; business and economics; management	Web of Science	International Conference on Arts, Management, Education and Innovation
49	Fengyi Wang; Victoria Sana-gustín Fons; Violante Martínez Quintana [84]	2023	Innovations in educational organizations: the case of RT in China	RT; service-learning; solidarity initiatives; logistical support; economic development	Spanish	Educational organizations; community services; economic development	Web of Science	International Journal of Organizations

Appendix B

Table A2. PRISMA method checklist [11].

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist Item	Location Where Item Is Reported
TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review.	1
ABSTRACT			
Abstract	2	See the PRISMA 2020 for the abstracts checklist.	19
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of existing knowledge.	1–3
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of the objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses.	3
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	5	Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and how studies were grouped for the syntheses.	4
Information sources	6	Specify all databases, registers, websites, organisations, reference lists, and other sources searched or consulted to identify studies. Specify the date when each source was last searched or consulted.	4

Table A2. Cont.

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist Item	Location Where Item Is Reported
Search strategy	7	Present the full search strategies for all databases, registers and websites, including any filters and limits used.	4
Selection process	8	Specify the methods used to decide whether a study met the inclusion criteria of the review, including how many reviewers screened each record and each report retrieved, whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	4–5
Data collection process	9	Specify the methods used to collect data from reports, including how many reviewers collected data from each report, whether they worked independently, any processes for obtaining or confirming data from study investigators, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	4–5
Data items	10a	List and define all outcomes for which data were sought. Specify whether all results that were compatible with each outcome domain in each study were sought (e.g., for all measures, time points, and analyses), and if not, the methods used to decide which results to collect.	4
	10b	List and define all other variables for which data were sought (e.g., participant and intervention characteristics and funding sources). Describe any assumptions made about any missing or unclear information.	4
Study risk of bias assessment	11	Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies, including details of the tool(s) used, how many reviewers assessed each study and whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	4–5
Effect measures	12	Specify for each outcome the effect measure(s) (e.g., risk ratio and mean difference) used in the synthesis or presentation of results.	3–5
Synthesis methods	13a	Describe the processes used to decide which studies were eligible for each synthesis (e.g., tabulating the study intervention characteristics and comparing against the planned groups for each synthesis (item #5)).	3–5
	13b	Describe any methods required to prepare the data for presentation or synthesis, such as handling of missing summary statistics, or data conversions.	3–5
	13c	Describe any methods used to tabulate or visually display results of individual studies and syntheses.	3–5
	13d	Describe any methods used to synthesize results and provide a rationale for the choice(s). If meta-analysis was performed, describe the model(s), method(s) to identify the presence and extent of statistical heterogeneity, and software package(s) used.	3–5
	13e	Describe any methods used to explore possible causes of heterogeneity among study results (e.g., subgroup analysis and meta-regression).	3–5
	13f	Describe any sensitivity analyses conducted to assess robustness of the synthesized results.	3–5
Reporting bias assessment	14	Describe any methods used to assess risk of bias due to missing results in a synthesis (arising from reporting biases).	3–5

Table A2. Cont.

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist Item	Location Where Item Is Reported
Certainty assessment	15	Describe any methods used to assess certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for an outcome.	3–5
RESULTS			
Study selection	16a	Describe the results of the search and selection process, from the number of records identified in the search to the number of studies included in the review, ideally using a flow diagram.	5–13
	16b	Cite studies that might appear to meet the inclusion criteria, but which were excluded, and explain why they were excluded.	5–13
Study characteristics	17	Cite each included study and present its characteristics.	5–13
Risk of bias in studies	18	Present assessments of risk of bias for each included study.	5–13
Results of individual studies	19	For all outcomes, present the following results for each study: (a) summary statistics for each group (where appropriate) and (b) an effect estimate and its precision (e.g., confidence/credible interval), ideally using structured tables or plots.	5–13
Results of syntheses	20a	For each synthesis, briefly summarize the characteristics and risk of bias among contributing studies.	5–13
	20b	Present results of all statistical syntheses conducted. If meta-analysis was performed, present for each the summary estimate and its precision (e.g., confidence/credible interval) and measures of statistical heterogeneity. If comparing groups, describe the direction of the effect.	5–13
	20c	Present results of all investigations of possible causes of heterogeneity among study results.	5–13
	20d	Present results of all sensitivity analyses conducted to assess the robustness of the synthesized results.	5–13
Reporting biases	21	Present assessments of risk of bias due to missing results (arising from reporting biases) for each synthesis assessed.	5–13
Certainty of evidence	22	Present assessments of certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for each outcome assessed.	5–13
DISCUSSION			
Discussion	23a	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence.	13–14
	23b	Discuss any limitations of the evidence included in the review.	13–14
	23c	Discuss any limitations of the review processes used.	14
	23d	Discuss implications of the results for practice, policy, and future research.	14
OTHER INFORMATION			
Registration and protocol	24a	Provide registration information for the review, including register name and registration number, or state that the review was not registered.	14
	24b	Indicate where the review protocol can be accessed, or state that a protocol was not prepared.	14
	24c	Describe and explain any amendments to information provided at registration or in the protocol.	14

Table A2. Cont.

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist Item	Location Where Item Is Reported
Support	25	Describe sources of financial or non-financial support for the review and the role of the funders or sponsors in the review.	14
Competing interests	26	Declare any competing interests of review authors.	15
Availability of data, code and other materials	27	Report which of the following are publicly available and where they can be found: template data collection forms; data extracted from included studies; data used for all analyses; analytic code; any other materials used in the review.	15

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