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## Research on the Countermeasures for the High-quality Development of China's Tourism Industry in the Post-epidemic Era

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## **Abstract**

In 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19, in order to control the epidemic and limit the flow of people, led to a sharp decline in the number of tourists. China's tourism industry lost its basic source of operating income, and the market was in a downturn for a certain period of time. Up to now, under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee, the epidemic situation has been basically controlled. Although China has taken the lead in achieving positive economic growth in the world, there are occasional rebound of the epidemic situation in some areas. The impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the tourism economy cannot be ignored. This paper discusses the new situation of China's tourism in the post-epidemic era, and analyzes how the high-quality development of tourism will lead the gradual recovery of China's tourism and bring new vitality to generate.

## **Keywords**

Post-epidemic era; New tourism situation; High-quality development.

#### 1. Introduction

Tourism, as the tertiary industry in China, plays a great role in promoting regional economic and cultural development, and is becoming an important engine of national economic growth. In recent years, tourism and related industries have developed rapidly. The "Basic Situation of Tourism Market in 2019" released by China Tourism Academy shows that in 2019, the growth rate of tourism economy was higher than GDP growth, and the number of domestic tourists reached 6.006 billion; The total number of inbound and outbound tourists was 300 million; The comprehensive contribution of tourism to GDP was 10.94 trillion yuan, accounting for 11.05% of the total GDP. Compared with 2015, China's total tourism revenue increased from 4.13 trillion yuan to 6.63 trillion yuan in 2019. Tourism not only promote regional economic development, but also have a great impact on employment. Before the outbreak of the epidemic at the end of 2019, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China, the number of people directly engaged in tourism was as high as 28.25 million, and the sum of direct and indirect employment was 79.87 million, accounting for 10.31% of the total employed population in China [1].

After the outbreak of pneumonia in COVID-19, countries around the world gradually took measures against the epidemic, and the global population movement was pressed the pause button. The number of tourists traveling has dropped sharply, and the tourism revenue is sluggish. According to statistics, the number of domestic tourists in the first half of 2020 was 1.168 billion, down 62% year-on-year. Compared with the rapid development of China's tourism industry in the previous decade, the development of China's tourism industry has suffered an unprecedented blow since 2020. In the post-epidemic era, under the background

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that the COVID-19 epidemic has repeatedly caused intermittent impacts on tourism, exploring the impact of the epidemic on tourism and its coping strategies has become the focus of social attention.

## 2. Literature Review

Chinese Researchers on this subject mainly explores the negative impact of COVID-19 pneumonia epidemic on China's tourism industry in the early stage of the epidemic, including the negative impact on social development, economy, employment, people's livelihood and politics. For example, J.G.Bao (2020) thinks that the impact of COVID-19 epidemic on tourism has exceeded that of SARS epidemic, and predicts the recovery time of domestic tourism, and thinks that it may take one year for domestic tourism to recover [1]. J.C.xia(2020) analyzed the impact of COVID-19 epidemic as an external shock on the participants of tourism industry[2]. J.W.Wang et al. (2020) analyzed that people's willingness to travel under the COVID-19 epidemic should be affected by their anxiety[3]. H.Luan(2020) predicted that China's annual GDP growth rate will be lower than 4% under the COVID-19 epidemic by comparing SARS from the perspective of production method[4]. With the epidemic prevention and control entering the normalization stage, the research focuses more on the epidemic background, and builds relevant theoretical frameworks and models to help tourism authorities and tourism industry business entities do a good job in risk emergency treatment. For example, Lin et al. (2020) adopts ARIMA bivariate model to forecast the tourism industry in China under the influence of the epidemic in three scenarios: optimistic, neutral, and pessimistic, and to explore the changes of tourist arrivals and the decrease of tourism revenue at different moments caused by the major social event of COVID-19 epidemic[5]. K.Zhu(2020) combed and compared the impact of SARS epidemic in 2003 and Covid-19 epidemic in 2020 on tourism economy, and speculated the impact of Covid-19 epidemic on tourism development trend from the experience of overcoming SARS epidemic, and put forward countermeasures from the perspectives of government, tourism departments, tourism enterprises, medical industry and related industries to help them correctly cope with sudden and frequent risks under the epidemic background[6]. J.Zhang(2020) analyzed the impact of Covid-19 on China's tourism industry, and discussed the crisis management countermeasures to deal with the severe epidemic situation, in order to seek steady progress and recommend the orderly development of tourism[7]. Sun(2020), Chairman of Home Inn Group, pointed out that in the face of epidemic situation, enterprises need to pay attention to professionalism, efficiency and experience, and grasp the application of online and private domain traffic and intelligence[8]. Xia et al. (2020) proposed that tourism enterprises should analyze and predict the demand changes of tourism market after the outbreak in order to seize the development opportunities after the industrial recovery[9]. Ding er al. (2020) put forward suggestions on the financial risks of tourism and accommodation industry after the Covid-19 outbreak[10]. Zhu et al. (2020) analyzed and studied the types of tourism consumers' choice of tourism products after the COVID-19 epidemic and provided corresponding countermeasures for the operation of scenic spots after the epidemic[11]. Li et al. (2020) took SARS in China in 2003, influenza a (H1N1) in Mexico in 2009, respiratory syndrome in the Middle East in South Korea in 2015 and the current COVID-19 epidemic in the world as typical cases, and put forward suggestions to help tourism enterprises to bail out from a macro perspective [12]. Ji et al. (2020) put forward preferential tax measures to help tourism and other service industries to bail out from the perspective of taxation[13]. Huang(2020) studies the impact of emergencies on enterprises and countermeasures from a financial perspective[14].

Although there have been staged rebounds in China during the more than two years when the epidemic lasted, China adhered to the general prevention and control strategy of "defending

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externally against importation, defending internally against rebound" and the general policy of "dynamic clearing", which made the epidemic better controlled. With the gradual normalization of the prevention and control of COVID-19, China's domestic tourism industry is gradually recovering. How to scientifically and rationally exploring the impact of the COVID-19 on China's tourism industry, as well as proposing targeted response strategies, is an important mission of current tourism research in China. This paper analyzes the development status of tourism from five aspects: tourist flow, consumption mode, consumption direction, travel mode and development concept, and then discusses the countermeasures of China's tourism industry to deal with the pneumonia epidemic in COVID-19 in the post-epidemic era from the government level and enterprise level, providing reference for relevant research and decision-making.

## 3. The Current Status Quo of Tourism Development

#### 3.1. Tourist flow

Affected by the superposition of macroeconomic downturn and epidemic situation, the total number of domestic tourists decreased by 18.3% year-on-year in the third quarter of 2021, and the confidence of consumption and industry sides weakened. The number of domestic tourists in the whole year was 3.431 billion, and the tourism income was 3.02 trillion yuan, up by 19% and 35% year-on-year, and recovered to 57% and 53% of the same period in 2019 respectively. From the perspective of holidays, during the Spring Festival, May Day and National Day holidays, the domestic tourist flow recovered to 75.3%, 103.2% and 70.1% respectively, and the income recovered to 58.6%, 77.0% and 59.9% respectively, which were higher than the domestic tourism growth in each quarter. The holiday market effectively supported the annual tourism economy.

The recovery of medium and long-distance tourism market is slow, and the market bottoming effect of short-distance and local tourism is obvious. According to the survey data, under the influence of COVID-19 epidemic, 51.69% of the respondents chose to travel nearby, and 35.27% of the respondents chose not to arrange travel plans, which brought great influence to the domestic tourism market. In the past year, the average travel radius of tourists was 141.3 kilometers, which was 71.7 kilometers less than last year and 33.66% less. The average recreation radius of the destination is 13.1 kilometers, which is 1.1 kilometers less than last year and 7.75% less. The characteristics of "local people visiting the local area", which is mainly based on urban leisure and picnic, are obvious. In addition, affected by the COVID-19 epidemic in China, overseas tourists are not willing to travel to China, and with the large-scale outbreak and spread of foreign epidemics, the number of inbound tourists from abroad has decreased sharply.

## 3.2. Consumption patterns

The release of outbound return demand is limited, and the consumption support of the sinking market is insufficient. According to the market data, except for duty-free shopping in Hainan Island and high-end resort hotels around first-tier cities, the 120 million outbound tourists staying in China have not formed an obvious pulling effect on the domestic tourism market, and the hot spots of tourism consumption are insufficient. The duty-free business on outlying islands has not obviously driven the industrial innovation of the purpose and the national tourism economy. The proportion of rural residents participating in tourism has increased significantly, and the tourism market continues to maintain the trend of "low price and high volume". In the first three quarters, the number of tourists and income of rural residents were 755 million and 0.45 trillion yuan respectively, up 41.1% and 67% year on year[19].

The scale of online travel users is increasing year by year, Many scenic spots now implement online booking to purchase tickets, and online consumption is developing rapidly. In 2019, the

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number of online travel users in China exceeded 400 million. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 epidemic, more scenic spots have started to create online booking platforms, which not only saves time, but also avoids overcrowding. Especially after the opening of the 5G era, the development of "tourism + internet" has made a qualitative leap. The online travel platform represented by Ctrip actively lays out the digital ecology, deepens the deep integration with upstream and downstream enterprises, and constantly creates innovative tourism projects with high cost performance and good experience. By the end of 2021, there were 397 million online travel users in China, with a market size of 862.5 billion yuan.

## 3.3. Consumption direction

Rural tourism has become a trend. With the rapid development of social economy and tourism industry, rural tourism forms such as folklore tourism, farm caravans, sightseeing farms, agricultural theme parks, country garden resorts, resorts, etc. have formed a good development trend. In recent years, more than half of urban residents in China choose the surrounding rural tourist destinations for weekend leisure and holiday travel, and the number of people who choose rural tourism and the income of rural tourism are on the rise. The investment in rural leisure tourism is increasing, and the development of rural entertainment projects such as farm caravans is also increasing. Under the background of a new round of rural economic revitalization and development, rural tourism has become a powerful booster for rural revitalization by constantly improving rural tourism ecology and enriching rural tourism connotation. At present, the form of "rural tourism +" is constantly emerging, relying on the rural environment and blessing the concepts of green ecology, red culture and healthy old-age care, which makes rural tourism more and more popular.

#### 3.4. Travel mode

During the epidemic, road trip became the choice of more people. Relatively speaking, go on road trip contacts relatively safer people such as family members, relatives and friends, and does not have direct contact with strangers, which is more conducive to the prevention and control of epidemic situation. According to China Tourism Academy's survey report on "Chinese people's willingness to travel after the epidemic", the proportion of respondents who like self-driving tour is the highest, reaching 41%; Followed by high-speed rail travel, bus travel and plane travel. This means that self-driving tour will account for a large proportion of tourists' travel modes after the epidemic. The traditional mode of public transportation based on high-speed rail and aircraft has gradually changed to the mode of self-driving tour. Walking, cycling, motorcycles, RVs and other modes of travel, which are mainly represented, have also ushered in a new trend. At the same time, in the choice of self-driving tour, car rental travel has been favored by tourists because of its high freedom, convenience and comfort, which can be illustrated by the rapid increase in the proportion of car rental orders on the tourism platform. And, the preferential behavior of price reduction and discount launched by the tourism platform also better meets the needs of tourists.

## 4. Research on the Dilemma Faced By Tourism Industry

With the normalization of the prevention and control of pneumonia epidemic in COVID-19, sporadic new cases occurred in some provinces of China. On the whole, the pneumonia epidemic in COVID-19 of China has achieved stage victory and initial control, and the development of tourism has also entered the post-epidemic era, mainly facing the following five challenges.

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#### 4.1. A new model of tourism services

The COVID-19 is highly harmful to life and health and easy to spread, which leads to residents' increased perception of potential health risks and psychological risks, and even leads to "social anxiety" or "travel fear". The development of epidemic situation and the effectiveness of prevention and control not only directly affect individual physical and mental health, but also affect social and psychological behaviors such as interpersonal trust, consumption motivation and behavior[15]. Under the influence of COVID-19, residents' consumer confidence, willingness to travel and ability are greatly reduced because they perceive risks and avoid traveling to reduce the probability of exposure to viruses[16]. When traveling, tourists need to consider not only the epidemic prevention policy of tourist source areas and the epidemic control policy of tourist destinations (whether there are medium and high risk areas, local or home isolation, etc.), but also the sanitary environment, congestion degree and travel convenience of tourist destinations (whether nucleic acid detection is needed), especially the public health environment will play a more important decisive role in tourists' travel, such as the choice of destinations, than before the epidemic. At the same time, the epidemic prevention measures, cultural connotation and humanistic care of tourist places where the epidemic occurs or has occurred during the epidemic will affect their tourism image and reputation in tourists' minds, thus influencing their travel choices.

## 4.2. A large gap in high quality tourism products

After the epidemic, the public's requirements for service products are getting higher and higher, but tourism and related industries are still in the process of slow recovery. First, there is still a big gap in multi-level and diversified consumption supply such as youth groups, family groups and high-end business groups. Facing the diversified needs of the era of mass tourism and universal tourism, the tourism products still have the problems of not abundant service types, unreasonable layout, and poor experience quality, making excessive competition and service gaps coexist at the same time. Especially in the past, the planning and design of most hotels, scenic spots and tourist facilities were designed according to the needs of basic group travel, which can no longer meet the service needs of self-driving tourists and individual tourists. At the same time, health tourism formats such as fitness, old-age care and health care are developing slowly, and the quality of tourism products is low, which can not meet the growing needs of the public. The current tourism service products cannot keep up with the changes of the situation.

Second, there is a lack of emergency response ability in the management process, and the service level needs to be further improved. The post-epidemic era is full of problems for tourists, and travel companies need to upgrade their hospitality and service levels. Some hotels have not only failed to improve their service quality on the basis of epidemic prevention, but have also been frequently featured in negative reports involving safety and hygiene. Many hotels and scenic spots related to cleaning, disinfection and other system construction is relatively late, tourism reception vehicles, rooms, restaurants, kitchens, public entertainment areas of health services have not yet established a strict working system.

## 4.3. Tourism support system construction lags behind

First, with the rapid increase in demand for self-driving tour, it is increasingly difficult for related supporting facilities and services to meet the diversified needs of the public. Self-driving camps, motels, campsites, special safety rescues and other supporting facilities corresponding to emerging popular tourism products are insufficient in quantity and low in quality, and lack of facilities and services for different age structures, different educational levels and different individual needs. At the same time, public services and infrastructure in rural and mountainous

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areas are imperfect, and health and environmental protection, mobile networks and road signs need to be improved.

Second, at present, the management services of most scenic spots are still relatively simple, and the support of information technology is insufficient. The network service of most scenic spots is still imperfect, the Internet infrastructure in remote areas, villages and some mountain scenic spots is lacking, the informationization level is not high, and there is still much room for the development of digital tourism products. There is also a big gap in relevant professionals and managers. The current online tourism services can not meet the huge user needs of tourists before, during and after the tour, and it is difficult to develop online tourism services. For example, intelligent planning of tourist routes before the tour, intelligent navigation explanation during the tour, credit evaluation complaints after the tour, etc.

## 4.4. Online experience from the media client

In recent years, the continuous and efficient development of online tourism has attracted many traditional tourism industries to transform and establish online tourism websites. Compared with domestic traditional tourism, it has the characteristics of strong timeliness, complete information and data, and convenient and fast transactions, but it still reveals many drawbacks in the development process.

## 4.4.1. Online and offline information is inconsistent

First, the prices of products presented by the same merchant vary between different platforms, and the products on the platform vary from the actual offline consumption of consumers. Secondly, the inconsistency between the tourism "dreamland" displayed online and the scenic spots actually seen by consumers offline is widespread, that is, the so-called "false" propaganda is serious, which is inconsistent with the user's tourism expectation value and reduces the tourism happiness.

## 4.4.2. Platform homogenization is serious

There are a large number of online travel platforms in China, but as a new business model, there are still many technical deficiencies. Especially, the newly started online travel platforms often use existing websites and mature websites in the market as templates, and many similar websites appear. Users are prone to aesthetic fatigue and are difficult to attract users, which leads to a large number of similar websites being ignored, and the number of clicks and online transactions is low.

How to make offline experience online, restore offline beauty online in real time, increase online digital interaction with tourists, change the previous marketing model, use 5G, VR and other advanced technologies, build a new tourism infrastructure to empower online experience will become a breakthrough point for tourism development.

## 4.5. The transformation of traditional tourism mode

The consumption in different places caused by spatial mobility is a typical manifestation of the relationship between tourism supply and demand. Tourism has strong sensitivity and vulnerability to external uncertain events, and the COVID-19 has exerted a deep impact on tourism in time and space. In the process of prevention and control in COVID-19, tourism economic activities were seriously blocked, resulting in tourists' travel obstruction, refund of scenic spots, cancellation of travel business and suspension of tourism traffic. The disintegration of the single product structure of tourism enterprises directly leads to the sharp compression of the profit space of such tourism enterprises and the serious risk of capital fracture. At the beginning of the outbreak of pneumonia in COVID-19, many tourism enterprises suspended their business and took measures such as layoffs and salary adjustment to maintain their basic operations. However, with the continuous spread of the epidemic, the scale of tourism economy has been greatly reduced, and the phenomena of enterprise bankruptcy, debt

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increase and more layoffs have increased. The sensitivity of tourism and the shortcomings of tourism enterprise management resilience have been exposed. Although the markets such as nearby tours and go on road trip have increased under the epidemic situation, due to the market size, most tourism enterprises cannot participate in it. At the same time, in the process of normalization of epidemic prevention and control, the product design concept, organization and operation mode and management decision-making system of tourism enterprises are difficult to adapt to the rapid change of market consumption patterns in the short term; The "epidemic" tourism under accurate prevention and control also makes the business processes of tourism enterprises more complicated, and the operating costs and departmental management costs increase[17]; The impact of the epidemic on economic operation is uncertain, which has caused investors' worries and fears[18]. Strict flow control, sharp decline in market size, increase in operating costs of enterprises, aggravation of debts, etc., aggravate the fragility of tourism supply system. The fragility of the industry further increases the psychological pressure of tourism practitioners, and their stress reactions such as negative emotions, inner panic and work anxiety greatly weaken labor productivity. With the increase of layoffs, the decrease of salaries and the intensification of brain drain in tourism enterprises, how to turn "crisis" into "opportunity" is an urgent problem for travel agencies.

# 5. The Tourism Development Countermeasures Under The Normalization of Epidemic Prevention and Control

Combined with literature, the general development of cultural tourism during the COVID-19 epidemic and the current difficulties faced by tourism, the following suggestions are put forward to promote the high-quality development of China's tourism in the post-epidemic era.

#### 5.1. Government

The government should play a leading role, in concert with tourism enterprises, tourism industry associations, from the macroscopic tourism enterprises to give guidance, and the development of relevant incentives, help policies to support the tourism industry to resume work and production. Multi-level departments work together to help the tourism market recover rapidly. Formulate active preferential policies, help tourism enterprises financially, support tourism enterprises in policies, reduce taxes and fees, give tourism enterprises appropriate subsidies, benefit the people and enterprises, reduce the burden on tourism enterprises and help them tide over difficulties. Reshape the tourism image from the regional macro, reshape the tourism brand, integrate culture and tourism, and do a good job in the development of global tourism. Give full play to the role of government supervision, standardize the behavior of tourism market, supervise the normal operation of cloud platform, make use of the authoritative advantages of government, authoritative organizations and authoritative media, timely and accurately release authoritative information, correctly guide people to build confidence in tourism consumption, revive tourism morale, rationally arrange tourism marketing strategies, and increase tourism publicity and promotion at home and abroad. Support the transformation and upgrading of tourism enterprises and give necessary assistance. Organize official tourism professionals training to provide technical and theoretical convenience and support for tourism professionals to adapt to the situation of new tourism formats after the normalization of epidemic situation from macro aspects such as future tourism development trend and required tourism talents. For example, Kunming distributed 45 million yuan of tourism vouchers to the public before the May Day holiday to boost tourism consumption, thus driving the overall economic development. During the May Day holiday, Kunming received a total of 2,149,500 tourists, which recovered to 89.69% in the same period last year. The comprehensive tourism income was 1.584 billion yuan, which recovered to 82.04% in the same period last year.

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## **5.2.** Tourism enterprises

With the continuous development of Internet technology and the impact of COVID-19 epidemic, Tourism enterprises should actively develop intelligent products, increase the supply of online "cloud products", actively use the form of "internet + tourism", rely on various network platforms such as Weibo, micro-vision, WeChat, Tiktok, etc., adhere to the principles of precision and innovation, and launch a series of cloud tourism activities, such as cloud live broadcast, panoramic VR, cloud punch card, etc., use Internet technology platform, carry out professional skills and quality training online, and actively use modern technologies, such as 5G, holographic projection, VR/AR, etc., Launch products and projects such as home VR travel products and online scenic spot tour services. To promote the whole process of intelligent tour service in scenic spots, cultural venues and scenic spots at all levels in the province should actively use new media, virtual reality and other carrier means to launch various online viewing, exhibition, display, performance and reading projects, so that people can share tourism experiences without leaving home. On the one hand, launching online "cloud products" can reduce risks and sudden impacts such as epidemics, which is conducive to the steady development of cultural tourism; On the other hand, it uses intelligent grasp to empower the "upgraded version" of cultural tourism, mobilize and integrate digital cultural resources, promote production efficiency, management efficiency and tourist experience significantly, promote the transformation and upgrading of cultural tourism, and provide a path for its highquality development.

#### 5.2.1. Tourist hotels

The tourism hotel industry should develop a strong marketing plan under the normalization of the epidemic, improve the quality of various products such as hotel accommodation products, catering products, entertainment and recreation, etc., pacify the negative emotions of employees brought about by the epidemic, train the whole staff on service quality and improve the service level, and at the same time, promote the construction of hotel information technology and digitalization, and fully use the characteristics of the era of 5G and big data for their own use.

## 5.2.2. Catering enterprises

Due to the epidemic situation, people have higher requirements for diet and pay more attention to dining environment, food safety and raw material sources. People prefer to share meals and dine out rather than dine-in. Catering enterprises should closely follow the actual demand, integrate online and offline, enrich take-out dishes and packaging, continuously introduce new dishes, refine the take-out market, and develop green take-out, semi-finished product take-out, nutritious catering take-out, etc. to meet the needs of diners, expand their own development space and increase profits.

## 5.2.3. Travel agency

The outbreak gave birth to some new tourism format. Group travel projects of travel agencies have decreased, while self-driving tours and RV tours have warmed up. The advocacy of "local people traveling locally" has been launched in various places, and rural tours, Surrounding Tours, short-distance tours and suburban tours are hot. For these new tourism situations and new demands of tourists, travel agencies should transform and upgrade in time to provide tourists with satisfactory tourist routes and products. For example, transform the domestic tourism business, especially the business of traveling to surrounding tours in the province. Develop online travel business, Expand the booking channels of scenic spots tickets as soon as possible. Carry out regional research travel business. Introduce COVID-19 nucleic acid detection certificate and service. Undertake the publicity and marketing business of scenic spots and destination institutions. Acting destination hotel products. Marketing destination characteristic tourism products and characteristic agricultural and sideline products.

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Strengthening the training of tour guides, learning the ability of bringing goods by live broadcast, and bringing goods by excellent tour guides with the advantage of language expression ability can effectively improve the sales efficiency of tourism products and agricultural products, and achieve a double harvest for tour guides and scenic spots.

#### 5.2.4. Tourist attractions

Tourist attractions should actively enhance the image of scenic spots, innovate products and provide tourists with a brand-new tourism experience. Increase the number of interactive, parent-child and recreation-oriented fun projects. Develop a new "day + night" tourism mode, launch night tour projects, extend tourists' playing time in scenic spots, and keep tourists. For example, holographic immersive night tour mode uses diversified digital media, including projection, water curtain, LED, laser and other means, so that tourists can have a more beautiful swimming experience at night and fully expand the application space of science and technology in tourism products. Under the influence of COVID-19, tourism industry form that relies heavily on physical experience consumption, has suffered heavy losses, but also brought opportunities for the development of tourism. The emerging digital cultural tourism consumption form represented by online virtual scenic spots, online procurement, intelligent tourism, etc. will rise rapidly.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper delves into the current situation of the tourism industry under the epidemic and the factors affecting it, and proposes development countermeasures from two main levels: government and tourism enterprises. It provides useful references for the tourism industry to resume work and production and promote the prosperity of tourism for the better. The epidemic is not yet over, and the desire of the majority of travelers to travel continues unabated. Under the normalization of the epidemic, the tourism industry will surely usher in a new dawn after actively facing, practicing internal strength, exploring and upgrading, and seeking transformation.

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