

Analysis of Tourism Resilience and Enhancement Path in Zhuhai

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Abstract: *Tourism resilience is the ability of the tourism industry to cope, adapt, and evolve in the face of external shocks, which emphasizes not only the ability to return to a stable state but also the ability to dynamically adapt innovate and develop. Through field research, statistical data, SWOT, and other methods, this study focuses on analyzing the current situation of tourism development in Zhuhai, the impact of tourism in Zhuhai by the epidemic, and the path of tourism resilience enhancement, and promoting the healthy development of tourism in Zhuhai.*

Keywords: *Post-Epidemic; Tourism Resilience; Zhuhai*

The tourism industry bore the brunt of the severe challenges following the outbreak of New Crown Pneumonia, and the ability of cities to adapt in the face of sudden shocks varied. Although Zhuhai's tourism industry has a certain degree of resilience, there are still areas that need to be improved in the face of large-scale disasters. The New Urban Agenda of 2016 has set a new global standard for the sustainable development of resilient cities. Urban tourism resilience is one of the core arguments of urban sustainable development, the core is to effectively respond to various changes or shocks, and reduce the uncertainty and vulnerability of the development process. Based on the general background of the epidemic and the development policy of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, this paper cuts into the study from a small scope, analyzes the characteristics of Zhuhai's tourism industry in the context of the post-epidemic, and then quantitatively evaluates the resilience of Zhuhai's tourism industry to restore the resilience of Zhuhai's tourism industry and propose reasonable and effective paths to strengthen the resilience of Zhuhai's tourism industry, which will help to improve the resilience of Zhuhai's tourism industry and to build a better tourism city.

1. Current Situation of Tourism Development in Zhuhai

Zhuhai is a coastal city in Guangdong Province, China, famous for its beautiful beaches, resorts, shopping centers, and sightseeing spots. In the past two years, the tourism industry of Zhuhai City has shown a relatively stable development. According to the data, there are several advantages for the development of Zhuhai's tourism industry within the last two years. First, the number of tourists has been growing steadily. In the past two years, the number of tourists in Zhuhai City has shown a steady growth trend. Secondly, tourism revenue has continued to increase. The continuous increase in tourism revenue in Zhuhai is mainly attributed to the increase in the number of tourists and the diversified development of the tourism industry. Third, the structure of tourism is optimized. In addition to traditional seaside tourism resources, Zhuhai has actively developed diversified tourism products and services such as cultural tourism and convention and exhibition tourism. This structural optimization helps to attract more types of tourists and improves the sustainable development of the tourism industry. To gradually restore tourism development, Zhuhai has put forward several initiatives, and the tourism market has gradually rebounded. When responding to emergencies such as epidemics, Zhuhai's tourism industry focuses on strengthening its epidemic prevention system^[1], taking rapid measures to control the spread of epidemics and protect the safety of tourists. It also carries out refined management of various aspects such as tourism facilities, tourism routes, and tourism services to ensure the quality and efficiency of tourism services. At the same time, Zhuhai Tourism focuses on regulating and evaluating the tourism industry, identifying problems promptly, and taking improvement measures to enhance the overall level of the tourism industry. Finally, the Zhuhai tourism industry focuses on working with enterprises in various fields, such as hotels, catering, entertainment, and transportation, to respond to emergencies, promote the development of the tourism industry, and improve the overall response capacity of the tourism industry. With these initiatives, the Zhuhai tourism industry has gradually recovered and tourism resilience^[2] has been improved.

2. Impact of the epidemic on the development of tourism in Zhuhai City

2.1 Impact on Tourism Economic Development

2.1.1 Sharp decline in tourism revenue and number of tourists

The economic impact of the epidemic on the tourism industry of Zhuhai City is firstly reflected in the significant decline in tourism revenue. As an important tourist city in Guangdong Province, Zhuhai's tourism industry contributes an important proportion to the city's economy^[3]. However, the outbreak of the epidemic led to a sharp drop in the number of domestic and foreign tourists, especially during the peak of the epidemic, when tourism activities came to an almost complete standstill. Revenues from hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, and other industries dropped dramatically, and many related enterprises faced serious operational difficulties or even the risk of closure, causing huge economic losses to the tourism industry in Zhuhai.

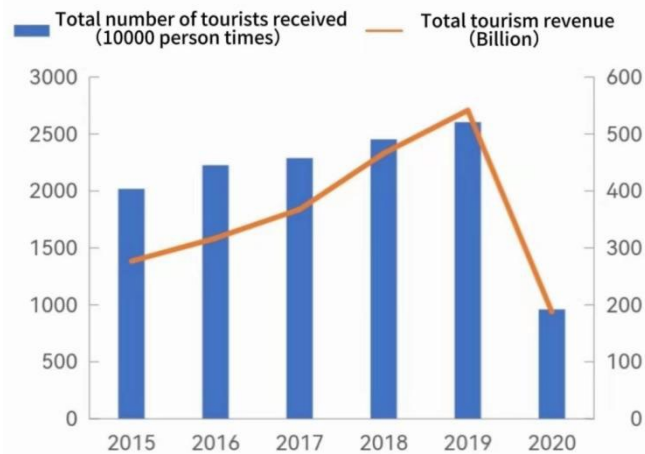


Figure 1: Changes in the number of tourists and total revenue of Zhuhai tourism

(As shown in Figure 1, the total number of tourists received in Zhuhai City in 2020 was 9,603,500, a decrease of 16,435,500 compared with 2019, a year-on-year decrease of 63.12%. Among them, the total number of domestic tourists received was 9,243,900, a decrease of 13,383,800 compared with 2019, a year-on-year decrease of 59.15%. Total tourism revenue in Zhuhai amounted to 18.759 billion yuan, a decrease of 35.393 billion yuan compared with 2019, a year-on-year decrease of 65.36%)

Second, the epidemic has also led to a setback in the tourism job market. As a labor-intensive industry^[4], tourism provides a large number of employment opportunities. During the epidemic, the shrinkage of tourism-related industries resulted in a large number of employees being forced to take leave or become unemployed, which not only affected the livelihood of these families but also had an indirect impact on social stability and consumption capacity.

2.1.2 Impact on the development of related tourism enterprises

The epidemic had a great impact on tourism enterprises in Zhuhai. Tourism-related enterprises such as hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and scenic spots faced unprecedented challenges.

(1) Operational difficulties: the sharp decline in passenger traffic directly led to a significant drop in tourism enterprises' income, and many enterprises faced serious cash flow^[5] problems. Especially for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises, they are more difficult to cope with prolonged business interruptions due to the lack of sufficient capital reserves.

(2) Human resource management: To reduce costs, some enterprises have to take measures such as layoffs, salary cuts, or temporary work stoppages, which have a direct impact on employees and affect the long-term development and talent reserves of the enterprises.

(3) Business adjustment and innovation: In the face of the challenge of the epidemic, some tourism enterprises started to look for new business models and sources of income, such as developing online tourism services, launching customized tourism products, and strengthening the development of the local market. These adjustments and innovations helped enterprises tide over the difficulties to a certain extent and accumulated experience for future development.

2.2 Impacts on the structure of the tourism market and tourism patterns in Zhuhai City

2.2.1 Changes in tourism market structure and consumption pattern

During the pandemic, the international tourism market was greatly impacted, leading to changes in the structure of Zhuhai's tourism market, with domestic tourism becoming the mainstream. At the same time, consumers' demand and preference for tourism also changed, with health and safety becoming the primary consideration. This requires the Zhuhai tourism industry to improve its service quality and strengthen its health and safety measures to meet the new demands of consumers.

Firstly, the international travel market has been hindered, promoting the development of the domestic tourism market. As demand for outbound travel shifted to the domestic market due to international travel restrictions, Zhuhai attracted more domestic tourists by strengthening the development and promotion of local tourism resources. For example, it has met the needs of different tourists by launching more customized tourism products for small groups such as families and small partners.

Second, in terms of market demand structure, safety, and health have become the primary considerations for tourists in choosing tourism products. The Zhuhai tourism industry has strengthened the health and safety management of tourist attractions, hotels, and restaurants while providing tourism services to ensure the health and safety of tourists.

2.2.2 Accelerated innovation of tourism form and products

During the epidemic, Zhuhai's tourism industry sought opportunities amidst challenges and actively explored industry innovation [6]. On the one hand, digital transformation has become an important direction for tourism development. Utilizing the Internet, big data, cloud computing, and other technologies, the development of online tourism service platforms, providing virtual tours, online booking, intelligent guides, and other services, not only to meet the needs of tourists at home "cloud tourism", but also for the future recovery of the tourism industry to lay the foundation.

On the other hand, eco-tourism, rural tourism, and other emerging forms of tourism have developed rapidly. With people's emphasis on health and safety, the pursuit of nature and travel away from crowds have become more popular. Relying on its rich natural resources and cultural heritage, Zhuhai has vigorously developed eco-tourism, rural tourism, and cultural tourism, providing tourists with more diversified tourism choices.

3. Path to Enhance Tourism Resilience in Zhuhai

3.1 Analysis of Advantages

The advantages of Zhuhai's tourism development lie in its comprehensive and combined nature. It is located in the southwest of the Pearl River Estuary in Guangdong Province, 36 nautical miles away from Hong Kong by water in the east and connected to Macau by land in the south, which makes Zhuhai an important scenic tourist city along the southeast coast and the only city in the mainland that is connected to Hong Kong and Macau by land at the same time. It is rich in various resources such as islands, beaches, hot springs, and convention and exhibition brands. Among them, Dong'ao, Waialingding, Wanshan, Guishan, Miaowan, Tandang, Hobao, Qi'ao, and other islands are the main part of its marine island tourism resources. In addition, Zhuhai's coastal style central leisure core and coastal leisure tourism belt rely on the three major advantages of transportation links, regional market, and tourism development foundation, integrating Zhuhai's coastal tourism resources and linking up well-known attractions such as Tangjiawan Ancient Town, Lovers' Road, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, the Cross Gate Business District, and the Zhuhai Changlong Tourism Resort for development. Policy support is also an important reason for the recovery of Zhuhai's tourism industry after the epidemic. According to statistics, the city received 3.001 million tourists during the Mid-Autumn and National Day holidays in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 102.8%, while the total tourism revenue realized was 2.149 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 178.9%. With the construction of the Greater Bay Area, the deepening of the "Regional" initiative, and the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Zhuhai is committed to making full use of its location and ecological construction to develop a cultural tourism industry cluster in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

3.2 Analysis of Disadvantage

Through the research and exploration of Zhuhai City, it is found that the tourism infrastructure of Zhuhai City is not perfect, especially in transportation. The public transportation network is denser in the center of Xiangzhou and sparse in other areas, and some sections of the central city of Zhuhai can be seriously congested, which lowers the average speed of passage. Zhuhai's tourism resources are limited by the seasons, with island tourists mainly concentrated in the spring and summer seasons and a sharp drop in winter visitors. Data shows that the number of domestic tourists received by the city's travel agencies during January-November 2022 was only 98,500 visitors. This seasonal pattern of tourism makes Zhuhai's tourism revenue somewhat unstable. Insufficient development of tourism resources is also a problem facing Zhuhai's tourism industry in the post-epidemic era, with the main well-known attractions concentrated in the Xiangzhou district. There are far more tourists in Xiangzhou and Hengqin in Zhuhai than in Jinwan and Doumen, resulting in the lack of coordinated development of tourism in Jinwan District. Zhuhai City has an insufficient combination of culture and tourism, with fewer landmarks and fewer indoor entertainment programs.

3.3 Analysis of Opportunities

With the advancement of the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Zhuhai, as part of the Greater Bay Area, will have more opportunities for in-depth cooperation with cities such as Hong Kong and Macao to share tourism resources, improve the quality of tourism services, attract more tourists from different regions, and form a tourism industry cluster. In addition, there are numerous industrial parks in Jinwan District, and resources can be utilized to develop industrial tourism to balance the uneven development of tourism in Zhuhai. The development of large-scale tourism projects can also alleviate the problem of single tourism in Zhuhai. In recent years, Zhuhai has successfully introduced large-scale tourism projects such as Yuanming New Garden, Haiquan Bay, and Zhuhai Changlong, which not only enriches the supply of tourism products but also realizes the diversification of tourism projects in Zhuhai. In the post-epidemic era, the travel demand has surged, and with the improvement of people's living standards, tourism consumption has gradually upgraded, and more tourists have begun to pursue high-quality tourism experiences, which also indicates that Zhuhai's tourism industry should gradually move closer to high-quality tourism.

3.4 Analysis of Challenges

According to the analysis of disadvantages as well as dilemmas of Zhuhai's tourism industry, Zhuhai needs to overcome the seasonality of its tourism resources, homogenization of tourism products [7], and imperfect tourism industry chain. The peak season of Zhuhai's tourism is in summer, and winter is relatively low. To balance the development of the tourism industry, Zhuhai City needs to explore the winter tourism projects about islands or rich local characteristics to attract tourists to come to visit even in the off-season. Moreover, Zhuhai's tourism products are mainly seaside resorts, which lack characteristics and differentiation, resulting in insufficient tourism experience for tourists, and it needs to develop more of its resources such as mountains, hot springs, and business conventions and exhibitions, which will become supporting industries for seaside resort tourism, thus merging development. In the post-epidemic era, Zhuhai Tourism should also pay more attention to the impact of emergencies on the tourism industry and strengthen tourism safety management.

4. Summary and Recommendations

4.1 Build a tourism resilience organization adapted to the epidemic crisis response

Given the serious impact of the epidemic on the tourism development process in Zhuhai, its tourism industry needs to build a resilient organization with the participation of multiple subjects [8], and resilient resources with the integration and synergy of multiple elements to enhance the ability to cope with the crisis. For example, Zhuhai can broaden its tourism target markets, develop diversified tourism products and services, and unite various regions to reduce overdependence on specific areas. The city of Zhuhai is rich in various types of tourism resources, such as islands and beaches, which can satisfy the interests and preferences of different groups of people. Establishing close cooperative relationships with various tourism suppliers ensures that the required resources can be adjusted and secured in time in times of crisis.

4.2 Enhance the brand image of Zhuhai tourism

(1) Invest heavily in existing "hardware facilities". For tourist attractions with a relatively large area of scenic spots, the corresponding battery car tour service can be added for travelers to choose from. For island scenic spots on the outskirts of Zhuhai, such as Dong'ao Island and Wai Lingding Island, there is a need to increase the frequency of round-trip cruises between them and the harbor. For natural attractions like Phoenix Mountain and Shijingshan Mountain, corresponding cable car services can be increased for tourists.

(2) Enhance the "soft power" of culture. Zhuhai is rich in historical and cultural resources, and with the promulgation of the Outline of the Plan for the Development of the Greater Bay Area of Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao, synergistic development of cultural heritage preservation and utilization in the Greater Bay Area is one of the common goals of the cities in the Pearl River Delta. Zhuhai City has a series of non-heritage cultural heritages, such as Sai Nong Boat, Salt Water Song, Tang Jia San Temple God's Birthday Sand, and Tian Min Song [9]. At the Zhuhai Museum, the city has designed a free public education program called "Topography" for visitors to experience. The Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao Greater Bay Area Cultural and Creative Design Competition was held, and with the help of cultural and creative industry training, study tours, counseling, and other achievement transformation measures, enterprises were promoted to realize cooperation with the participating units and individuals, and the docking session for cultural and creative achievement transformation projects was held, which attracted more tourists to participate in the event.

(3) Empowerment of typical scenic spots to create distinctive tourism brands. In Zhuhai City, the top tourist attractions in terms of tourism economic recovery after the epidemic are the Lovers' Road Scenic Zone, Zhuhai Changlong Ocean Kingdom, and the Royal Hot Spring Resort. This is firstly attributed to the tourism image brand and market appeal that these attractions have formed over the years. Secondly, the government's concept and action of integrating epidemic prevention and control with tourism development, as well as its supportive policies and incentives for tourism recovery. Zhuhai has many natural tourist attractions, the most famous of which is the Lovers' Road Scenic Zone, where there is the Zhuhai Grand Theater, the Zhuhai Fisherman's Maiden, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, and so on. Many tourists take a walk on the Lovers' Road, which is a symbolic place of romance. Zhuhai Grand Theater has become a Netflix spot with its unique scallop-shaped exterior. For special tourist attractions, each scenic spot is categorized according to its different tour functions and made to fit its tour objectives. For example, the Yuanming New Garden can be more to the tourist's output of our country's "humiliating" history, so that we firmly remember the history, do not forget the national shame. An area with a unique tourism brand is not only a tourist attraction, but also a place with stories and cultural connotations, which helps to enhance the local image and attract more tourists and media attention.

4.3 Promote cross-border sharing and explore resilience provision.

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is an important strategy proposed by the Chinese government aimed at strengthening economic integration and cooperative development between Guangdong Province and the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions, as well as nine neighboring cities. As part of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Zhuhai City, in the Outline of the Plan for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, issued in 2019, proposes to be "driven by the poles", and to play the leading role of the "Macao-Zhuhai" strong alliance. The Zhuhai Jiuzhou Sea Study Series is a boutique course certified by the Guangdong Province Study Tour Association with several honors, and a series of study boutique courses such as "Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge - Sea Study" and "Zhuhai-Macao Bay Tour - Patriotism Study" have been held, and the Zhuhai Changlong Ocean Kingdom is scheduled for the summer vacation in 2023.

Accelerating synergistic development can promote information sharing, synergistic use of resources, and policy coordination with other cities, prompting the integration of tourism resources with neighboring cities to form more complete and diversified tourism products. Developing cross-city itineraries allows tourists to experience the culture, natural landscapes, and historical sites of different cities more comprehensively [10].

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