



## Research on the Current Situation and Countermeasures of Tourism Employment in Lishui City under the All-region Tourism

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**Abstract:** With the release of optimized epidemic prevention and control policies in China, the tourism industry is experiencing a strong return. However, the post-epidemic tourism era has led to rapidly changing tourist demands, which have greatly increased the professional ability and quality requirements of tourism workers. Therefore, the post-epidemic tourism employment problem has become a concern for both the government and the industry. This paper analyzes the talent demand in the tourism industry in Lishui City under the background of all-regional tourism and makes suggestions. While the rapid development of tourism in Lishui City has brought about increased employment opportunities, the tourism labor market in Lishui still faces various challenges, such as a shortage of tourism management talents, low cultural quality of tourism workers, and lack of tourism professionals. In addition, employment quality has declined due to high worker mobility and personnel loss caused by COVID-19. To address these issues, this study proposes several measures: establishing the concept of all-round tourism, promoting high-quality development of tourism to create more jobs, improving the quality of tourism workers and services, adjusting the tourism employment system, and optimizing the employment structure of the tourism industry by adjusting its layout. This paper offers useful suggestions to address the challenges faced by the tourism industry in Lishui City in the post-epidemic era.

**Keywords:** All-region tourism; Post epidemic era; Lishui City; Tourism employment; Countermeasures

### Introduction

As an important part of the tertiary industry, tourism has a high correlation with other industries and obvious advantages. It has the characteristics of being labour intensive and having a broad social employment radiation. The tourism industry covers a wide range of sectors, a broad market and many levels of employment, which contributes greatly to the employment of the whole society. According to data published by the World Tourism Organisation, for every additional direct employment opportunity in the tourism industry, 5-7 indirect social employment opportunities can be added<sup>[1]</sup>.

Most of the jobs in tourism enterprises, such as scenic spots, hotels, catering, tourism and transportation departments, travel agencies, tourism products, etc., do not require age and education requirements. These jobs, however, can solve the reemployment of laid-off workers. The problem of employment and local use of surplus rural labour According to the statistics of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China, in 2019, the comprehensive contribution of tourism to GDP was 10.94 trillion yuan, accounting for 11.05% of the total GDP; tourism direct employment 28.25 million people, tourism direct and indirect employment of 79.87 million people, accounting for 10.31% of the total number of national employment ( tourism developed countries are more than 10% )<sup>[2]</sup>. Tourism has played an important role in national poverty alleviation, local employment of rural surplus labour and shared prosperity, especially in promoting the income of the rural poor. This study on the labour market in the case of Lishui city is to provide some academic and practical references to the Chinese tourism industries. The suggestions provided in the study may help the local cities develop their tourism in a correct direction.

### 1 Research basis

#### 1.1 Research on Concept of tourism employment

In general, tourism employment refers to work in jobs provided by the tourism industry and related industries. Shi P H (2003) defined tourism employment as an economic activity in which workers who have reached the working age (16 years old) and are able to work, use the means of production to engage in tourism activities in accordance with the law, and receive remuneration or operating income for their livelihood. Tourism employment was divided into three levels: direct employment in core tourism (narrow tourism), employment in directly related tourism industries (broad tourism), and employment in comprehensive tourism-related industries (social support and security)<sup>[3]</sup>. In 2004, the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Tourism Administration of China clearly defined the concept of tourism employment in the "Study on China's Tourism Employment Objective System and Strategic Measures". The concept of tourism employment is divided into three levels: First, the number of employment in the core tourism

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industry refers to the employment of tourism accommodation, travel agencies, scenic spots, tourism bus and ship companies and other tourism enterprises and institutions; Second, the number of employment in characteristic tourism industries refers to the tourism personnel in 13 sectors that directly serve tourists and are closely related to tourism, such as catering, entertainment, railway, aviation, highway, water transportation and public facilities services; Third, the number of jobs in the tourism industry refers to the number of direct and indirect jobs driven by tourism economic activities<sup>[4]</sup>.

## 1.2 Research progress

In his research, Allan (1991) found that from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, only four industries were able to maintain employment growth, and tourism was one of them in Europe. This shows that the employment effect of tourism is still evident in economic downturns<sup>[5]</sup>. Hu Q C believed that there were some problems in China's tourism employment, such as the mismatch between the scale of tourism employment and the scale of industry, the unbalanced distribution of tourism employment, the low reputation of tourism employment, and the quality of tourism employees, and proposed solutions<sup>[6]</sup>. Wang Erda and Gao Wused the tourism statistical data of 31 provinces in China from 2001 to 2014 to construct a panel model for research. The results showed that the employment level of tourism industry is influenced by the number of tourism enterprises, the proportion of fixed assets, the seasonal changes and policies of tourism management, the promotion of human capital, the expansion of tourism international trade and other factors<sup>[7]</sup>. Meng Y and Zhang G H believed that the regional economic level, employees' income and investment in tourism talents training had a significant dynamic effect on tourism employment population, while the investment level of tourism enterprises and the level of informatisation did not play a significant role in the short term<sup>[8]</sup>. Wang X R and Sun J X argued that the development of rural tourism can significantly promote the return migration of migrant workers. When tourism is developed in the hometown, if the migrant workers have better family endowment, they are more inclined to return to the countryside for employment<sup>[9]</sup>.

Arachchi R. et al. studied the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Sri Lanka's tourism and hotel workers and identified the future challenges facing Sri Lanka's tourism workers. The survey results showed that more than 400,000 direct and indirect tourism and hospitality workers lost their jobs or sources of income. Arachchi R. et al. Suggested the adoption of flexible strategies to deal with this devastating situation such as concessions, relief programmes, reduction in tax burden, favourable policies and strategies to rebuild the industry and tourism employee relief programmes (TERP)<sup>[10]</sup>. José Francisco Perles-Ribes et al. used the classical Box-Jenkins (ARIMA) method and the more recent Bayesian structural time series models to discuss the direct impact of the COVID 19 crisis on the employment of Spanish tourists and non-tourists. According to the study, tourism is the most resilient sector of the Spanish economy and the implementation of public policies can prevent the possible collapse of employment<sup>[11]</sup>.

The theoretical research of domestic and foreign scholars on tourism employment mainly focuses on the influencing factors of tourism in terms of employment, effect, statistics, countermeasures, female employment, etc. Tourism employment effect refers to the effect of the development and change of tourism industry on the change of social employment demand, which can be divided into employment quantity effect and employment quality effect. In the study of tourism employment effect, scholars generally use elasticity index, multiplier index, number index and input-output method to evaluate and measure the tourism employment effect of a place. Compared with foreign research results, the domestic literature on tourism employment is relatively small, and its role in guiding tourism employment is relatively limited.

## 2 Research objective and methods

### 2.1 Research objective

In the post-COVID-19 era, how to promote the recovery and rapid development of the tourism industry, increase the level of employment and improve the quality of employment has become an important issue facing Chinese governments. The development of tourism and the development of economy and society complement and promote each other, and the combination of science and technology is increasingly close<sup>[12]</sup>. With the continuous development of "Internet + Tourism", several new professions have emerged in the tourism industry, such as tourism customizer, homestay steward, tourism consultant, research travel instructor and travel steward, opening a new channel for the job market. The tourism industry is gradually moving towards high-quality, customised, high-value and personalised development. More high-quality and high-skilled tourism talents joining the tourism industry will inevitably become the general trend of employment. Against the background of global tourism, this paper aims to explore the employment absorption capacity of Lishui's tourism industry, and puts forward corresponding countermeasures and measures to enhance the tourism industry's role in promoting employment in the post-epidemic era. The research results can provide a reference for the decision-making of the Lishui municipal government in developing tourism and promoting employment.

### 2.2 Research methods

This paper mainly adopts the methods of literature research and data analysis. The study reviews the relevant literature on tourism employment and systematically analyses the literature of domestic and foreign scholars. In order to obtain accurate data, the author collects data for statistical analysis from Zhejiang Statistical Yearbook, Lishui Statistical Yearbook, the official website of Lishui Municipal Government, the official website of Lishui Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Tourism and Sports and other channels. Finally, the study compares the tourism income and tourism

employment in Lishui from 2015 to 2019, and analyses the current situation and countermeasures of the demand for tourism employment talents in Lishui.

### 3 Description of the Study Area

Lishui City is located in the Yangtze River Delta region of China, southwest of Zhejiang Province, the ancient name is Chuzhou. The terrain is dominated by mid-mountain and hilly landforms, and the terrain slopes from southwest to northeast. The total area of the city is 17,300 sq. km. It is the largest prefecture-level city in Zhejiang Province (accounting for 1/600 of the country and 1/6 of the province). It has nine counties (cities, districts): Liandu District, Longquan City, Qingtian County, Yunhe County, Qingyuan County, Jinyun County, Suichang County, Songyang County, Jingning She Autonomous County, with a total population of about 2.7 million. It borders Wenzhou in the southeast, 126 kilometres away from Wenzhou, 292 kilometres away from Hangzhou and 512 kilometres away from Shanghai.

#### 3.1 Characteristics of Lishui's tourism resources

##### 3.1.1 Ecological environment

Lishui, known as "Zhejiang Green Valley", is called "the first ecological city in China" for its remarkable ecological advantages, and is an important ecological barrier in East China. Huangmaojian, the highest peak in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, is located in Longquan City; Ou River, Qiantang River, Min River, Feiyun River, Ling River and Fu'an River all originate from Lishui, so it is also known as the source of the six rivers. Lishui has a high forest cover of 81.7%, and its air quality is the best in Zhejiang Province all year round. It is the only non-coastal and low-lying city in China to be ranked among the top ten cities for air quality. Lishui has been ranked first in the Zhejiang Ecological Environment Status Index for 17 consecutive years. It is one of the first batches of the National Ecological Civilization Pilot Demonstration Zone, National Forest City, Climate Health City of China and Natural Oxygen Bar City of China.

##### 3.1.2 Profound history

Lishui has rich historical and cultural relics and a deep heritage. It has been awarded the title of "Zhejiang History and Culture City" and "China's first folk art hometown". The three treasures of Lishui - Longquan Celadon, Longquan Sword and Qingtian Stone Carving - are famous in China and abroad. As of 2022, Lishui has three United Nations Intangible Cultural Heritage sites (Longquan Celadon, Lishui Wooden Arcade Bridge, Suichang Banchun Quannong) and 21 national intangible cultural heritage sites. Lishui is the area with the largest number of ancient villages and the most complete features in East China, and is known as the "last secret landscape of Jiangnan". It has 51 national and provincial-level historical and cultural cities, towns and villages, and 257 national-level traditional villages. Tongji Weir, the world's oldest arch dam and the world's first batch of drainage and irrigation project heritage, is located in Lishui Bihu Plain. There are many famous people in Lishui, such as Ye Shaoweng, a famous poet of the Song Dynasty; Zhang Yuniang, a famous poet of the Southern Song Dynasty; Liu Ji, a founder of the Ming Dynasty; and Li Lingwei, a world champion of modern badminton. Tang Xianzu (a great literary figure in the Ming Dynasty) was once the magistrate of Suichang County. During his tenure, he created the popular drama "Peony Pavilion", known as "Shakespeare in the East" in the history of Chinese literature.

##### 3.1.3 Tourism resources

Lishui is an excellent tourism city in China, a national tourism demonstration area, an international recreation and health city, a national garden city and a national civilised city. The nine counties (cities, districts) in Lishui have picturesque scenery and distinctive features. By the end of 2021, there are 2365 tourism resources in the city, of which 353 are excellent. It has successfully created 1 5A-level scenic spot (Xiandu scenic spot in Jinyun), 24 4A-level scenic spots and 1891 beautiful villages.

#### 3.2 Analysis of the Current Situation of Lishui Tourism Development

Since 2000, the Lishui Municipal Government focused on the organic integration of the overall advantages of the ecological environment and its profound cultural heritage. Following the idea of "urban scenic spots, rural landscape, quality of life and overall service", with the theme of "ecology, leisure and health protection", it has actively explored a new way for the development of tourism, ecological construction and sustainable development in the whole region. Lishui City has deeply practised the important idea of "clear water and lush mountains are invaluable resources", and continuously strengthened the first strategic pillar industry of ecotourism. The cultural tourism industry has become the biggest economic growth point in Lishui. Lishui has been transformed from one of the newest areas of tourism development in Zhejiang Province to a hot tourism city for tourism development and smart tourism.

In 2009, Lishui was successfully established as an excellent tourism city in China. In 2011, Lishui was awarded the title of "International Leisure and Health City"; in 2013, Lishui was awarded the title of "City of Longevity in China", becoming the first prefecture-level city in China to receive this honour. In 2017, Lishui was selected as "The second batch of national tourism reform and innovation pioneer zone" by ranking first.

Over the past decade, the development of Lishui's tourism industry has progressed rapidly, and the total tourism revenue has increased steadily year by year. The total tourism revenue increased from 20.584 billion yuan (RMB) in 2012 to 78.104 billion yuan (RMB) in 2019, 127.9 times that of 2000, with an average annual growth rate of 20.99%. This is the best proof of Lishui City's adherence to sustainable tourism and the development of tourism in the whole region (see Figure 1) [13]. The role of tourism in promoting local economic development in Lishui is becoming more obvious, and it plays a positive role in promoting the implementation of "targeted poverty alleviation" and achieving common prosperity. Therefore, it is really feasible to encourage local residents to achieve common prosperity through the

development of tourism.

Figure 1: Statistical Table of Tourism Income in Lishui City ( 2015-2019 )

Year	Total tourism revenue ( billion yuan RMB)	Increase rate (%)	Domestic tourism revenue ( billion yuan RMB)	Increase rate (%)	Tourism foreign exchange earnings ( ten thousand, US \$ )	Increase rate (%)
2015	426.02	25.5	375.42	27.3	82,000	12.9
2016	535.83	25.8	474.65	26.4	92,100	12.4
2017	644.37	20.26	572.67	20.7	106,200	15.3
2018	667.88	16.6	667.62	16.6	392.07	11.7
2019	781.04	16.9	780.70	16.9	494.44	24.8

Note: ①Data source : 2016-2020 ' Lishui Statistical Yearbook ', Lishui Municipal Bureau of Statistics

②Since the 2018 annual report, the statistical caliber of inbound tourism in Zhejiang Province has been adjusted to " accommodation units receive inbound overnight tourists, " so the total tourism income and tourism foreign exchange income have been adjusted accordingly. )

③Due to the impact of the new coronavirus pneumonia epidemic, the data after 2020 will not be statistically compared.

#### 4 Analysis of the current employment situation and demand for tourism workers in Lishui City

##### 4.1 Analysis of the current employment situation of tourism workers in Lishui City

##### 4.1.1 Population basic data analysis of Lishui city

According to the data of the seventh national demographic survey, the permanent population of Lishui City is 2.507396 million, of which 400417 people are 0-14 years old, accounting for 15.97 %; 1574433 people aged 15-59, accounting for 62.79 %; there are 532,546 people aged 60 and over, accounting for 21.24 %, of which 385,344 people aged 65 and over, accounting for 15.37 % ( see Figure 2 )<sup>[14]</sup>.

Figure 2 Population age composition of Lishui City in 2021

Age	Population	Proportion
Total	2.5074 million	100
0-14	400417	15.97
15-59	1574433	62.79
60 years and over,	532546	21.24
include 65years and over	385344	15.37

##### 4.1.2 Statistical analysis of tourism employees in Lishui City

To broaden the space of multiple employment and promote employment growth, it is necessary to vigorously develop the tertiary industry. In 2021, the proportion of the primary industry, secondary industry and tertiary industry in Lishui City is 6.3 %, 37.3 % and 56.4 % respectively <sup>[15]</sup>. In the tertiary industry of Lishui City, tourism is the most dynamic and potential industry. According to the official statistics, from 2016 to 2020, tourism employees in Lishui accounted for 11.34%, 11.42%, 11.43%, 11.84% and 11.39% of the total number of employees in the whole society (see Figure 3), which all exceeded the national average level (about 10%). These data show that in recent years, the ability of the tourism industry of Lishui City to absorb employment has been increasing, driving a large number of local labor employment, and showing an increasing trend year by year.

Figure 3 Statistical table of tourism Employees in Lishui City from 2016 to 2020

Year	Employees ( ten thousand )	The proportion of employees in the whole society ( % )
2016	16.18	11.34
2017	16.45	11.42
2018	16.48	11.43
2019	17.08	11.84
2020	16.01	11.39

Source: Statistical Office of Lishui Cultural Broadcasting Tourism and Sports Bureau

##### 4.2 Analysis of talent demand in the tourism industry in Lishui

From 2020, due to COVID-19, the total tourism revenue of Lishui in 2020 was 65.599 billion yuan, a drop of 16.0% compared with 2019; among them, domestic tourism revenue was 65.594 billion yuan (RMB), a drop of 16.0%; tourism foreign exchange income was 729,300 US dollars, a drop of 85.3%<sup>[16]</sup>. The living conditions of workers in the tourism industry (especially the travel agency industry) are difficult. Many tourism workers can only work part-time or even change jobs to make a living. The quality of employment in the tourism industry has declined and employment confidence has been severely affected, resulting in a serious brain drain.

Overall, Lishui is facing many problems in the development of tourism employment, such as lack of tourism

management talents, low cultural quality of tourism workers, lack of tourism professionals, lack of professional management in the tourism market, declining employment quality, significant mobility of workers, brain drain caused by COVID-19, and so on. All these problems have seriously hindered the healthy and orderly development of Lishui's tourism industry.

According to the "Lishui City 2021-2022 Shortage Talent Development Orientation Catalogue" issued by the Human Resources and Social Security Bureau of Lishui in June 2021, the technical and professional talents in the ecotourism industry are very scarce, and the talent demand gap is large. Tourism management professionals with intermediate and above titles, and hotel management talents with senior and above titles are included in the ranks of very scarce talents. (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Statistical Figure of Shortage Talents in Lishui Eco-tourism Industry from 2021 to 2022

Job category	Post name	Professional requirements	Title	Degree of shortage
Technical post	Tourism commodity developers	Smart scenic spot development and management and other related majors	Intermediate professional title or above	Very short
	Tourism information management personnel	Tourism management, travel agency operation and management, homestay management and service, etc	Intermediate professional title or above	Very short
	New format tourism professionals	Tourism management and other related majors	Intermediate professional title or above	General short
Skill post	Guide	Tourism management, tour guide and other related majors	Intermediate tour guide or above	Very short
	Exhibition commentator	Hotel management, Chinese language and literature, etc	Senior worker or above	Very short
	Chinese cook	Cooking technology and nutrition, Chinese and Western pastry technology, etc	Senior worker or above	Very short
	Western cook	Cooking technology and nutrition	Senior worker or above	Very short
	Barista	Unlimited specialty	Senior worker or above	Very short
	Bartender (red wine)	Unlimited specialty	Senior worker or above	Very short

Although COVID-19 has slowed the pace and rhythm of people's travel, the potential demand for tourism has not been reduced. The long-term fundamentals of the tourism industry have not been fundamentally affected, and people's desire for a better life remains. In the long run, COVID-19 has awakened people's awareness of health and wellness, and greatly increased the attention to slow tourism, non-scenic spot tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism, health tourism, medical tourism, cultural heritage experience tourism products, which has become a new direction for tourism development in the post-epidemic era. With the continuous upgrading of tourists' needs, the requirements of professional skills and professional knowledge of tourism workers have been greatly improved.

## 5 Countermeasures to promote tourism employment in Lishui City

By analyzing the above data, the authors puts forward the following five suggestions for the development of the tourism in Lishui City.

### 5.1 To establish the concept of all-round tourism

Government departments should firmly establish the concept of all-regional tourism, fully explore the unique advantages of Lishui's tourism resources, create eco-tourism products, and promote the high-quality development of tourism. Government departments should continue to build the regional tourism brand of "Beautiful Mountains and Waters, Poetry and Painting Landscape, Health Preservation Land and Longevity Town", enhance the brand influence, and make tourism a pillar industry in Lishui. It is need to cultivate tourism products, enhance the popularity of Lishui tourism, and improve the influence and competitiveness of Lishui tourism in the domestic and international tourism markets. The government should develop quality tourism, introduce various policies to benefit the people, unleash the consumption potential of tourists, expand employment channels and create more jobs.

### 5.2 To promote the high-quality development of tourism and create more jobs

On the one hand, colleges and universities with tourism management and other related majors can directly cooperate with local tourism enterprises, and send students to local high-level scenic spots, travel agencies, hotels, homestays and other tourism-related enterprises for practice; to formulate a joint training plan with enterprises, guide students to learn in practice, so that students can become formal employees of tourism enterprises after graduation. On the other hand, tourism enterprises can take the initiative to seek cooperation with local universities, jointly train tourism talents, give

full play to the role of tourism management majors in local universities, and serve local economic development.

### 5.3 To improve the quality of tourism workers and the quality of services

The tourism administrative department may formulate a long-term training plan for tourism employees according to the macro layout of local economic development. Each year, a comprehensive quality and business training plan for tourism employees will be formulated and implemented by tourism administrative departments and industry organisations at all levels (such as tourism associations, tour guide associations and hotel industry associations) at different levels. Guide tourism employees to strengthen professional knowledge learning, further improve the service level, create a good talent reserve for the quality development of tourism industry in the whole region, strive to build an "accessible and reliable" local tourism service talent team, improve the service quality, and strive to build a characteristic tourism service brand of Lishui.

### 5.4 To Improve the treatment of employees and the employment system of the tourism industry

The local government should summarize the actual situation of Lishui City, improve the legal system of tourism employment, formulate tourism employment policies that are compatible with the local economic development level, improve the treatment of tourism employees, guide more highly educated, highly skilled and combined talents to join the tourism industry, and expand the ranks of tourism professional managers. The government can start with financial supporters to establish special funds for tourism employment, which can be used to build tourism talents, especially for the rural working population engaged in rural tourism work. Tourism workers who have obtained qualifications in various industries and have worked in the front line for a long time will be given appropriate talent treatment or rewards according to their level, and their social recognition and professional respect for tourists will be improved.

### 5.5. To adjust the layout of the tourism industry and optimise the employment structure of tourism

After the epidemic, tourists pay more attention to the quality of services and the tourism experience than to the price of tourism. At the same time, tourists' knowledge and tastes are constantly improving, and their interest in homogeneous tourism products is rapidly declining. Therefore, it is imperative to update and iterate tourism products. The government should adjust the layout of the tourism industry according to market demand, optimise the structure of the tourism industry, and guide tourism-related industries to jointly build industrial clusters. Guided by the market, resources and tourism, the city needs to cooperation between cultural tourism and agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, fishery, industry, science and technology, sports, health, medical treatment and other industries, and promote the integrated and healthy development of culture and tourism. The author proposes to expand the long-term tourism industry chain, increase employment demand and introduce new products and business forms such as health tourism, research tourism, adventure tourism, rural tourism, customized tourism and night tourism. Local residents should seize the opportunity, actively seek jobs and achieve local employment.

## 6 Conclusion

Due to the differences in tourism sources, consumption, investment and economic development level, the development of tourism in Lishui is unbalanced, leading to the difference in the number of workers absorbed by tourism. However, with the adjustment of epidemic prevention and control policies, the improvement of people's consumption ability and the upgrading of consumer demand for tourism, the tourism industry chain will continue to expand, and the tourism employment will be greatly improved. Especially in the post-epidemic period, consumer demand for tourism quality has been continuously improved, and the tourism industry has entered a new stage of comprehensive growth of industry confidence. Lishui Municipal Government should summarize the actual situation, formulate a tourism employment system suitable for the economic development of the region, and urge tourism enterprises to strictly implement it, strengthen employment management, and comprehensively promote the high-quality development of regional tourism. Five countermeasures are put forward to provide a solution path to the future development of the tourism not only in Lishui, but also provides some support to the policy makers in tourism industry in other paces of the China.

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