

# *Post-epidemic Situation and Suggestions for College Students' Tourism—Taking Guiyang City as an Example*

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**Abstract:** The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on China's economy and tourism industry. This study focuses on college students in Guiyang City to explore the current situation and trends of the college student tourism market after the pandemic. The survey data shows that college students' interest in tourism is constantly growing, and it has become one of their main leisure activities. After the pandemic, college students in Guiyang City have shown a stronger willingness to travel. Most families are open to their students' travel plans but have concerns, and college students generally have psychological worries as well. Their travel budget mainly falls within the range of 1000 yuan, with the main expenses coming from the living expenses provided by their parents. College students prefer short-distance trips and choose to travel during statutory holidays and summer vacations. However, the college student tourism market still faces problems such as homogeneity, insufficient promotion, and unstable services. To improve this situation, this study proposes four suggestions: differentiated product development, personalized promotion and brand building, providing high-quality services and strengthening employee training, promoting weekend trips and nearby tours to promote the healthy development of the college student tourism market.

## **1. Research Background**

### **1.1 Post-pandemic and Its Social Tourism Characteristics**

The Post-Pandemic Era refers to the period after the effective control of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic, which is a moment for careful consideration and planning for the future <sup>[1]</sup>. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has sparked global attention to a series of hot issues and problems <sup>[2]</sup>. With the development and widespread vaccination of COVID-19 vaccines, as well as the gradual strengthening of people's immune systems, the epidemic is gradually being brought under control. After the middle of 2021, countries gradually relaxed epidemic prevention and control measures, and international contacts and communications became closer, signaling the arrival of the post-pandemic era. After the epidemic was brought under control in 2022, people's suppressed consumer desires for three years were released, and the tourism and service industries gradually recovered. Small and micro enterprises and street vendor economy experienced rapid

development, and many tourist attractions also experienced rapid growth. China's tourism industry is gradually entering a new stage of development<sup>[3]</sup>.

In addition, significant changes have occurred in the social tourism market after the pandemic. People have integrated travel into their lifestyles and are more inclined towards local leisure, possibly reducing the frequency of long-distance travel. Travel plans have become more organized, and appointment-based travel has become the norm, emphasizing planned long-distance trips. There is a significant increase in demand for family-friendly trips, becoming the market leader. The quality of tourism consumption has been upgraded, with high-quality tourism products emerging, such as self-driving tours, small group tours, and customized tours. Tourists prefer themed, personalized, and non-standardized tourist destinations, with a shift from multiple destinations to one destination, seeking safety and tranquility. The ticket economy is changing, as tourists are no longer willing to pay high ticket prices. Instead, scenic spots need to develop secondary consumption and "tourism+" models. Social distancing influences tourist choices, with a preference for small group tours and customized tours, reducing contact with strangers. Although online tourism continues to develop, it cannot replace the geographical experience of real travel. Digital construction helps enhance the influence of tourist destinations. These trends reveal the future development direction of the tourism market, and the tourism industry needs to respond flexibly and provide products and services that meet the changing needs of travelers.

## **1.2 Characteristics of the college student tourism market**

The college student travel market presents unique characteristics. First, college students prioritize price affordability and travel experience during their trips. Due to limited financial resources, they value tourism activities that offer value for money. Second, their choice of travel destinations tends to be short-term and nearby natural scenic areas, as college students usually have limited vacation time and economic resources. Third, college students prefer to travel with friends and have a higher level of independence and self-awareness. Additionally, they often have various concerns in their travel plans, especially regarding safety issues. Lastly, the college student travel market exhibits a herd mentality and rapid information dissemination. Their travel decisions are greatly influenced by social factors such as classmates and friends, and information spreads quickly. Post-pandemic, the college student travel market may face new challenges and opportunities. Although the pandemic has had some impact on travel confidence, college students' willingness to travel is gradually recovering. Therefore, the college student travel market still has tremendous potential. However, they are more cautious and prioritize safety and affordability after the pandemic. Therefore, travel companies need to provide products that offer security and affordability while addressing college students' concerns in order to meet their travel needs. The post-pandemic college student travel market is full of challenges and opportunities, requiring travel companies to conduct refined operations and product innovation based on market characteristics to meet the needs of college students and promote the healthy development of the market<sup>[4]</sup>.

## **2. Research design**

### **2.1 Overview of the research area**

Guiyang City is the capital city of Guizhou Province and has a rich and diverse resource of college students. The city has multiple higher education institutions that cover various fields of study, attracting students from all over the country. The scale of college students in Guiyang is large and diverse, with different backgrounds and areas of specialization. In addition, the college life in Guiyang City is rich and diverse, providing a wide range of cultural and social activities for

students. Therefore, it is of great significance to research and meet the characteristics and needs of college students in Guiyang City for their tourism behavior.

## 2.2 Research Object and Research Methods

This study focuses on college students in Guiyang City as research subjects and adopts online questionnaire survey methods. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the travel consumption behavior of college students and predict their travel intentions and behaviors after the pandemic. In order to obtain more comprehensive information, we also use literature search and random interview methods as auxiliary means. The survey was conducted in March 2023, and a total of 354 questionnaires were collected, with 350 valid questionnaires, resulting in an effective rate of 97.4%. In terms of gender ratio, the male-to-female ratio is roughly 6:4. In terms of grade distribution, freshmen account for the largest proportion, accounting for 66.88%, followed by sophomores, accounting for 25.97%. The distribution of monthly living expenses for the interviewed college students is as follows: 30.52% of people have living expenses between 0-1000 yuan, 47.4% have monthly living expenses between 1001-1500 yuan, and 14.94% have living expenses between 1501-2000 yuan. There are fewer college students with monthly living expenses exceeding 2000 yuan. These data reflect the distribution of living expenses among college students, providing valuable reference for analyzing their travel consumption behavior and intentions. In terms of research methods, we comprehensively use methods such as questionnaire survey, literature review, mathematical statistics, and cross-analysis to study in depth the characteristics of travel consumption behavior, travel intentions, and behavior choices of college students before and after the pandemic. At the same time, we combine this data with the destination and product choices of college students to reveal the formation mechanism.

## 3. Results and Analysis

### 3.1 Attitudes towards Traveling after the Epidemic

Table 1: Attitude of college students towards travel after the epidemic

Survey content	Category	proportion "proportion "proportion
The attitude of your family towards your travels after the epidemic.	Support	34.42%
	No objection, but worried.	61.69%
	Oppose	3.9%
Do you have a greater willingness to travel after the epidemic compared to before the epidemic?	Yes, very strong.	51.95%
	Generally, no difference.	33.12%
	No, they are the same.	10.39%
	No, the willingness is reduced.	4.55%
Are there any psychological concerns about traveling after the epidemic?	Yes, it is very serious.	11.04%
	Yes, it is relatively heavy.	23.38%
	General, ordinary.	59.74%
	No	22.08%

According to the survey results in Table 1, it shows that during the post-pandemic period, the families of college students in Guiyang City generally express a non-oppositional but concerned attitude towards their travel plans. Specifically, 34.42% of families support the idea, while a high percentage of 61.69% do not oppose but have concerns. The proportion of families opposing travel is relatively low at only 3.9%. Compared to before the pandemic, the willingness of college students to travel has generally increased. Among them, 51.95% have a strong desire, 33.12% have no significant difference in willingness, 10.39% have no change in willingness, and only 4.55% have a decreased willingness. Overall, the majority of college students (84.07%) show a stronger desire to travel after the pandemic. In terms of psychological concerns, a majority of college students express a certain degree of psychological concern. Among them, 23.38% have a heavy level of concern, while 11.04% have a very severe level of concern. However, a considerable proportion of respondents (59.74%) state that they only have a moderate level of psychological concern, and a portion of them (22.08%) indicate no psychological concerns. In conclusion, college students after the pandemic generally show a higher willingness to travel, although most families have an open attitude towards travel but still have some degree of concern, while the psychological concerns of college students are relatively mild.

### 3.2 Budget for Post-Pandemic Travel and its Source of Expenses

Table 2: Budget and Source of Expenses for College Students' Travel after the Pandemic

Survey content	Category	proportion "proportion "proportion
Ideal budget for your travel after the pandemic.	Below 500 yuan	28.57%
	501-1000yuan	41.56%
	1001-2000yuan	17.53%
	More than 2000 yuan.	12.34%
The main source of travel expenses.	Allowance given by parents.	72.73%
	Scholarship	18.18%
	Part-time wages	36.36%
	Others	23.38%

According to the survey results in Table 2, the ideal travel budget for college students after the epidemic is mainly distributed in the range of 500 yuan or less (28.57%) and 501-1000 yuan (41.56%), indicating that the majority of students have relatively limited travel budgets. The expenses are mainly provided by parents' living expenses, as most college students do not have their own sources of income. The second source is wages from part-time jobs, while scholarships and other expenses are relatively small. This reflects that college students generally have low travel budgets, and living expenses are one of their main sources of funds. After the epidemic, although the restrictions have been lifted, college students still face multiple obstacles to travel. Among them, 21.57% of college students are unwilling to travel due to safety issues, 36.6% are worried about overcrowded tourist attractions, and 42.48% have become accustomed to staying at home for a long time and are unwilling to leave. In addition, 57.52% of college students give up their travel plans due to busy academic schedules, and 55.56% are unwilling to bear the travel expenses due to reduced family income. These problems indicate that although the willingness of college students to travel has rebounded after the epidemic, they are still constrained by various factors. The tourism industry needs to take corresponding measures to promote college students' travel activities.

### 3.3 Epidemic aftermath travel period and duration of play

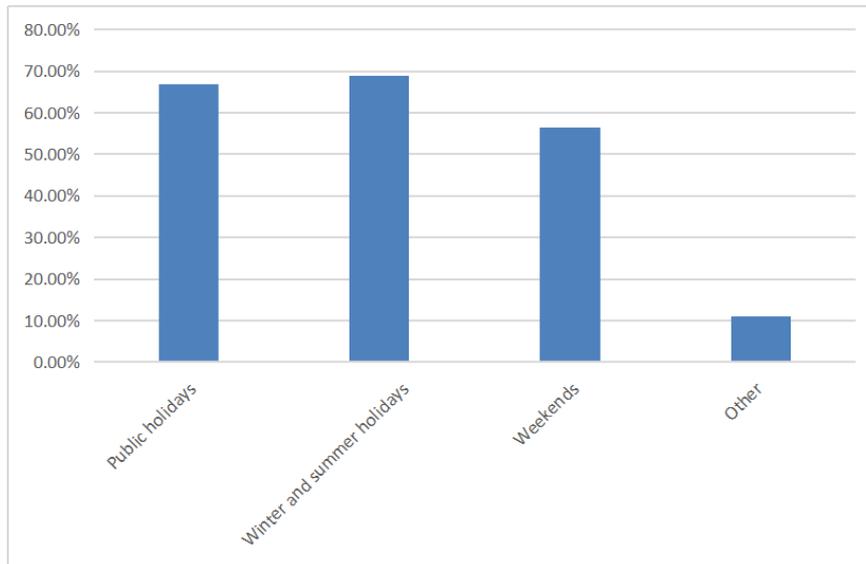


Figure 1: Time selection for college students' travel after the epidemic.

As shown in Figure 1 and 2: After the epidemic, people can travel freely when the lockdown is lifted. However, due to insufficient free time, college students still have different choices in terms of travel time. 66.88% of college students choose to travel during statutory holidays; 68.83% of college students choose to travel during winter and summer vacations; 56.49% of college students choose to travel on weekends. Among them, the majority of college students choose to travel during winter and summer vacations and statutory holidays because of the longer duration of these breaks, indicating that most college students prefer long-distance or medium-term travel. After the epidemic, the survey results on the preferred duration of travel for college students are as follows: 55.56% of college students believe that the optimal duration for travel is 1-3 days; 56.21% of college students believe that the optimal duration is 4-7 days; 20.92% of college students believe that the optimal duration is 8-15 days, and fewer college students choose other time periods. Among them, the highest proportions are for college students who believe that the optimal duration for travel is 1-3 days and 4-7 days, indicating that college students have a relatively high desire for travel.

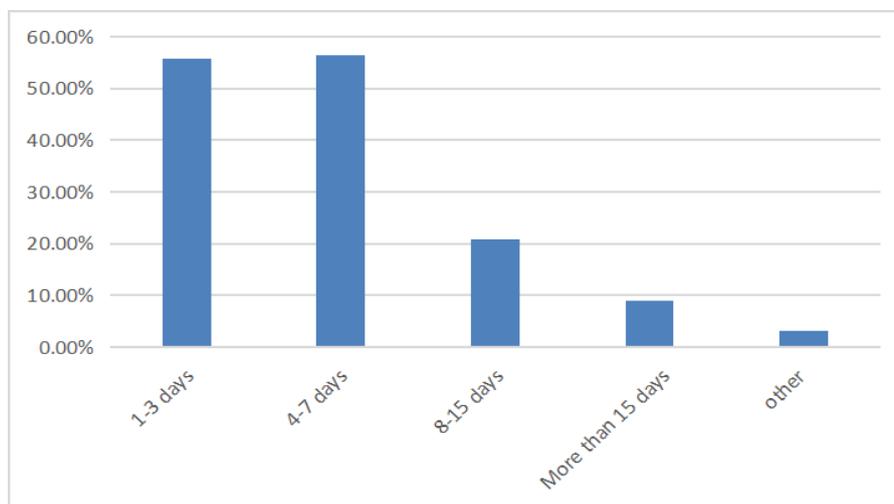


Figure 2: Best Time for College Students to Travel After the Epidemic

### 3.4 Post-pandemic travel transportation methods, modes of travel, and protective measures for college students.

Table 3: Post-pandemic travel transportation methods, modes of travel, and protective measures for college students on campus.

Survey content	Category	proportion
Transportation choices for college students after the epidemic.	Car	54.55%
	Train.	47.4%
	High-speed rail.	77.27%
	Airplane	24.68%
	Subway	36.36%
	Cruise ship	5.19%
	Others	10.39%
Whether to continue protection during transportation and travel processes.	Do not wear protection.	27.92%
	Wearing a mask.	72.08%
	Comprehensive protection including mask disinfectant, etc.	37.01%
	Others	16.23%
Are there psychological concerns about tourism after the epidemic?	Group tour organized by a travel agency	16.23%
	Self-guided trip with friends	77.92%
	Traveling with family	37.66%
	Traveling alone	33.77%
	Self-driving tour	18.18%
	Others	4.55%

As shown in Table 3, college students tend to choose public transportation such as high-speed trains, cars, trains, and subways when traveling, while the proportion of airplanes is relatively low, and cruises and other means of transportation are rare. After the outbreak, college students have generally increased the proportion of wearing masks during travel. This is mainly due to the consideration of personal safety and the increase in awareness of epidemic prevention and control. Wearing masks has become a common phenomenon. Among college students, about 77.78% choose to travel with friends. This may be because most college students are far away from home, and friends near the school are easier to become travel companions, which also increases their sense of security. In addition, about 38% of college students choose to travel with family, while 33.99% choose to travel alone. Some college students choose self-driving tours (18.3%), while only 16.34% of students choose group tours. In summary, college students generally have a strong desire to travel, but economic factors often limit their choices. They prefer to travel during statutory holidays and weekends, especially favoring natural scenery. College students mainly engage in short-distance travel within the province, and the economic level remains the main factor determining the travel mode and destination.

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusion

According to a survey on post-pandemic tourism among college students in Guiyang, the findings are as follows:

After the pandemic, college students generally show a higher willingness to travel, with approximately 84.07% of students expressing a desire to travel. Although families generally have

an open attitude, there is still a considerable proportion of families who have certain concerns. This is consistent with the research findings of Zheng Shaorong (2022)<sup>[4]</sup>

The travel budget of college students is mainly distributed within the range of 1000 yuan or below, reflecting their relatively limited budget for traveling. The living expenses provided by parents are the primary source of funds, accounting for as high as 72.73%. This result is similar to the research findings of Jiang Yan (2023).<sup>[5]</sup>

College students are more inclined to choose public transportation such as high-speed trains, cars, trains, and subways, with a relatively low proportion of airplane usage. They have generally increased the percentage of wearing masks, showing their emphasis on travel safety.

College students mainly choose to travel during statutory holidays, winter and summer vacations, and weekends, especially preferring short trips and natural scenery. A large number of college students believe that the ideal duration for travel is 1-3 days and 4-7 days.

College students are more likely to choose self-guided tours with friends, while there is also a certain percentage of them traveling with family or alone. Despite psychological concerns, most college students have a moderate level of worry and choose self-guided tours more often because traveling with friends is considered safer.

## 4.2 Recommendation

**Differentiated Product Development:** Tourism practitioners should actively develop differentiated tourism products to meet the diverse interests and needs of college students. This includes cultural experiences, outdoor adventures, eco-tourism, and other diversified choices to attract more attention and participation from college students.

**Personalized Promotion and Brand Building:** In order to stand out in a competitive market, tourism companies should strengthen brand awareness and personalized promotion. By creating a unique brand image and providing interesting tourism promotional content, more college students' interests can be attracted, thus increasing market share.

**High-Quality Service and Employee Training:** To enhance college students' tourism experience, tourism practitioners need to focus on service quality. Training tourism service personnel and improving their professional skills ensure that they can meet the needs of college students and provide a higher level of service.

**Weekend and Local Tourism Development:** Considering that college students usually have ample weekends and holidays, it is recommended to develop tourism products suitable for short-distance and local trips. These products can meet the needs of college students for short-term travel and provide rich tourism experiences to increase attractiveness.

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