

Analysis of Cultural and Tourism Promotion in Chinese Small and Medium-Sized Cities on New Media Platforms

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Abstract. In 2023, China is witnessing a new wave of tourism in the post-epidemic era, with a number of new cultural and tourism industry dynamics emerging, supported by government policies and new technologies. This "tourism wave" differs from previous ones in that there is a gradual downward trend in tourism destinations, as the public is no longer keen to travel in modern, economically developed big cities but rather to discover some "anti-mainstream", "small town" destinations. The public is no longer keen to travel in the modern, economically developed big cities, but to discover the "anti-mainstream" and "small town" third and fourth tier tourist cities. Smaller cities previously less economically developed have seen new opportunities for cultural tourism development. During this period, most of the small cities that have been successful in marketing have started to be known through new media platforms, such as TikTok, RED, AAUTO Quicker, and WeChat, to promote the city's dining, landscape, history, and culture, in order to attract tourists and develop tourism. Some cities have now successfully attracted a large number of followers on the new media platforms through "cross-dressing videos", "special cuisines", and "hit spots". Based on the development of cultural tourism in small and medium-sized cities in China, this paper analyses the future development trend of cultural tourism and how third- and fourth-level cities can use new media platforms to promote urban tourism and finally gives relevant operational suggestions.

1. Introduction

The current new media + cultural tourism model is mainly reflected in the local government's macro planning for urban cultural tourism development and the dissemination of short cultural tourism videos. At this stage, the use of new media platform marketing tools to follow this trend has become major research; many scholars combined audience psychology in the theory of mind flow, communication in the media scene theory, advertising and marketing in the source reliability theory, and source attraction model, and more to analyze how the content in short videos affects the audience's psychological and sensory perceptions in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. Some scholars have also proposed the integration of traditional media and new media, mostly WeChat, Weibo, and TikTok (Chinese version), to strengthen the main account to achieve cultural tourism publicity [1]. However, traditional media are not effective in promoting cultural tourism, and most of them rely on new media platforms, registering local official accounts and publishing local news and information in the form of short videos or graphics. In promoting cultural tourism, following the tone of the new media platform, local officials or heads of cultural tourism departments are used as Kols to promote the city's cultural tourism and find net celebrities to come to the local tourism card. However,

there is less research on the match between the tone of the new media platform and the city's promotion style. There is a lack of regular summaries of cultural tourism development in the new media era and guidance methods for the sustainable development of cultural tourism. At present, there are many studies on the direction of cultural tourism development and marketing on the TikTok (Chinese version) platform in Chongqing, Changsha, Xi'an, and Chengdu. Many studies on the newly-emerged online cities of Zibo and Zhongwei, but most of their cultural tourism development suggestions are broad summary statements, lacking in the development of cultural tourism in the face of reduced short video traffic. Fewer studies are on attracting traffic to cultural tourism products on new media platforms. This study is based on this demand gap, relying on the tone of the new media platform, mainly from the analysis of the new rural cultural tourism development dilemma, the new media platform audience needs, the importance of new media for rural cultural tourism development, to provide practical and heterogeneous new media content and publicity new models, using case studies and qualitative research methods, on how to "go viral" in the new media platform. The study uses case studies and qualitative research methods to analyse how to "go viral" on new media platforms, review how cultural tourism development in related cities has "turned viral", and make

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recommendations for maintaining the "longevity" of new media traffic.

2.The current phenomenon of cultural tourism development

In 2023, after the epidemic (2020-2022), China ushers in a "tourism boom" three years since 2020, which was already "warmed up" by the major official media at the beginning of the year, with both domestic and outbound tourism on the rise the tourism industry has been recovering strongly. In recent years, many governments across the country have focused on the cultural and tourism circuit, strongly laying out new media communication platforms and creating new city business cards with high-quality content, with a number of cities converting web traffic into tourist traffic in different ways, becoming not only a Netflix destination but also a preferred place for young people to start their own businesses and employment. As measured by the data centre of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the number of domestic travelers in China alone during the May Day Festival reached 274 million, up 70.83% year-on-year, and domestic tourism achieved a revenue of 148.056 billion yuan, up 128.90% year-on-year, recovering to 100.66% of the same period in 2019.

2.1.The reasons for the phenomenon

During this period, many third and fourth-tier cities have become "popular", such as Zibo in Shandong, Weihai in Shandong, Mangshi in Yunnan, Xishuangbanna in Yunnan, Leshan in Sichuan, and more. The first- and second-tier cities that have been popular with tourists, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, and Chongqing, have shown a downward trend in this round of "net red cities", from first-tier cities to provincial capitals to third- and fourth-tier cities, and perhaps to small towns and villages in the future, to a certain extent. To a certain extent, new products, niches, and experiences are the new growth points of demand. With the development of high-speed rail, many small cities along the high-speed rail line have ushered in the opportunity for cultural tourism development [2].

However, during this development process, many problems have emerged, such as "homogenisation", "over-commercialisation", "disposable", and "high price drift". Despite these problems, some small and medium-sized cities have been able to stand out on new media platforms, accumulate a large amount of traffic, and realise it for the following four main reasons:

First of all, to create a heterogeneous urban style, due to the limited information resources in third and fourth-tier cities, the circulation of items that have been popular in big cities to third and fourth-tier cities has already lagged behind in time and mindlessly following the trend in the mistaken belief that they can chase "fads" has led to a large number of small and medium-sized cities cultural and tourism landscape, cultural and tourism products, cultural and tourism entertainment projects converge, such as the city The blue road signs in the city: 'I'm

waiting for you somewhere', originally intended as a photo-op for tourists, are now all over small and medium-sized cities, causing a backlash from tourists and netizens alike, who believe that the development of cultural tourism in small and medium-sized cities lacks innovative thinking. In contrast, the city of Zibo in Shandong province was able to use "good quality and inexpensive small cake barbecue" as a selling point for cultural tourism, using "college students' group to Zibo to eat barbecue", "take the high-speed train to Zibo to jerk off", and "enter Zibo to grill". The actual fact is that many people are not able to get a good deal on many things. These cities are all able to create unique cultural tourism products and city styles through short videos, vlogs, graphics, and other new media platforms with a large number of fans. The new consumers' psychological needs and behaviours differ greatly from traditional consumers. They value the usefulness of products or services, and seek personalisation, differentiation, participation and experience.

Secondly, the development of new media platforms has enabled internet users to make their own strategies and book tourist attractions well in advance, so cities with cultural tourism campaigns that meet the needs of new media audiences are more likely to succeed. Unlike a dozen years ago, when people followed a tour group to enjoy historical and cultural attractions, contemporary tourism is fast, precise and accurate. Many young people tease this mode of tourism as "special forces-style tourism", i.e., tight schedule, many attractions and low cost, for "milk tea", "barbecue", "vintage" and "costume", "barbecue", "ancient costumes", "script kill" and more a certain type of commodity service products consumption is larger because a class of commodity marketing publicity to bring young people more involved, a sense of fresh experience This is because the marketing campaign for one type of commodity brings young people a more engaging and fresh experience, thus driving the development of tourism in a city.

Next, travel demand has changed in the post-epidemic era: tourists no longer pursue high-profile city tours and are turning to cities with a high level of leisure and entertainment. For the previous first-tier net cities, such as Shanghai, Chongqing, Changsha, and Chengdu, the country has completed a round of bursting into the limelight, cold third- and fourth-tier cities with special characteristics to meet the heterogeneous travel needs of tourists after the epidemic, in which second-tier cities are suitable for travel as a transit point for first-tier cities to third-tier cities. Mangshi, Yunnan, is seen by netizens as a flatter version of Thailand, where domestic tourists can experience Southeast Asia without leaving the country, with palm leaves, banana trees, pagoda temples, low commercialism, low prices, and a slow-paced atmosphere, where a random tourist photo is like being in Thailand.

Finally, the local characteristics of small cities are discovered through the marketing campaigns of new media platforms, creating city IPs, and net stars are constantly discovering third and fourth-tier cities in order to create unique original videos, which inadvertently promote lesser-known cities to enter the public's perspective.

2.2.Reasons for the decline and flip-flopping of traditional cultural tourism cities

The development of cultural tourism in cities inevitably requires a large investment of material capital, with a large amount of money needed for construction costs in the early stages, a large amount of money needed in the middle stages to support services during the tourist season, and a lot of financial resources needed for maintenance and aftercare work in the later stages. Therefore, the sustainable development of the "hit" is paramount. However, many of the country's once famous tourist attractions are no longer what they used to be, from crowded to uncrowded, and their associated restaurants, hotels, shops, vendors, and more are doing poorly. Therefore, going from 'hit' to 'long-lasting' requires sustainable strategies and selling points and depends on the supply of tourism products and services in addition to the city's charm.

Yunnan, as a tourist province that has experienced multiple waves of popularity, possesses abundant tourism resources. However, it has also encountered bottlenecks during decades of cultural and tourism development. Twenty years ago, attractions such as the Colorful Yunnan Show, jade artifacts, tobacco, Lijiang Ancient Town, and the Water-Splashing Festival attracted many tourists. However, after the period of prosperity, numerous restaurants, shops, and stalls were left abandoned, resulting in a sharp decline in visitor traffic and negative impacts on related service industries. Many traditional scenic spots have failed to regain their former popularity, thus squandering physical, human, and financial resources. During tourism transformation and upgrading, Yunnan's cultural and tourism sector once again seized the opportunity and effectively promoted its major tourist destinations through TikTok. Particularly, attractions such as "Gaozhuang," "Starry Night Market," "Mangshi," and "Wild Elephant Valley" received strong publicity. Additionally, they promoted entertainment activities popular among young people, such as Dai-style barbecue, Dai disco, and music festivals. Topics like "Finger Snap Transformation" and "Hani Baby" generated millions of discussions. The use of new media platforms to promote the tourism image of Yunnan Province has attracted the attention of a large number of media users, and the use of fun videos and weblebrities has increased the exposure of Zhongwei as a tourist city, which is also an exploration and innovation of new media platforms for tourism marketing. The cross-dressing video is an extension of the Dai portraits, and after the popularity of the portraits of celebrities such as "Ju Jingyi" and "Yang Ying", imitating their make-up and costumes became popular, but soon after the launch of the relevant costumes and make-up in Yunnan, a desert-style princess portrait was launched in Northwest China, and a Tibetan baby was launched in Tibet. Soon after the launch of the Tibetan baby in Tibet and the Miao girls in Jiangxi, the Dai costumes were no longer scarce. So after a short period of having traffic, it did not retain it.

In addition, the local government's supervision is also particularly important. In the case of Daliangshan, for example, there were many netizens with the label

"Daliangshan" active on major short video platforms, who created a label of kindness, hard work and positivity by live-streaming their work, and even cooking on the mountain, and then selling goods and helping agricultural products live. However, soon afterward it was revealed that many of them were. However, it was soon revealed that several Netflix anchors had been labelled as "Daliangshan" but were deeply tied to the grey industry chain: some Daliangshan fake charity teams mainly spread false information to gain people's trust and support. The public service activities they publish include fundraising, donations of supplies, orphan relief and other credible things. However, when it comes to the actual implementation process, a series of problems often arise, including misrepresentation of income and expenditure, falsification of certificates, misappropriation of charity funds, and even the private transfer of materials that should have been donated to people in need for profit.

2.3.Suggested measures for new media marketing for cultural tourism development in third- and fourth-tier cities

In order to help small and medium-sized cities take advantage of the "city + new media" collaboration, this article proposes suggestions from the perspective of user needs and the laws of short video operation. Before doing so, cultural and tourism-related departments should conduct an objective test to assess the city's existing cultural and tourism situation. In 2013, Professor Liu Dehuan of Peking University proposed the ISMAS user behaviour model, which is more characteristic of the Internet era, based on the traditional marketing models AIDMA and AISAS, that is, Interest-Serch-Mouth-Action-Share [3]. Since then, this model has been used many times to study city image building. Since then, this model has often been used to study city image-building and communication strategies. Many cities, however, use the traditional assessment model when evaluating their charisma and do not incorporate the relevant features of the new media era, resulting in a cognitive deficit at the first step.

The White Paper on Short Video and City Image Research gives a set of methodological BEST rules for city image videos: BGM, Eating, Scenery, and Technology. The paper combines the BEST rules with new media user profiles to come up with the following suggested approaches:

First, cultivating local weblebrities and increasing sticky fans is the long-term way. Instead of leveraging the blogger or celebrity effect of major online platforms, localities should cultivate their own Netflix and traffic stars, and localities should create MCN agencies with the support of the government with local characteristics. In the Netflix short video communication has an impact on consumers' attitude towards tourism, the study found that: the personal traits of Netflix, including attractiveness, credibility, and popularity, significantly influence the audience's pleasure, concentration, and immersion in watching the short video, prompting the audience to have a mind-flow experience, which in turn affects the

audience's attitude towards tourism in Netflix-related areas. Secondly, the short video content should be cultivated deeply, local propaganda departments and cultural tourism departments are mostly based on traditional media and integrated media, but in recent years turning red tourism cities are obviously on the new media platform, sometimes months-long long video planning may not beat the short video bloggers a few seconds of the screen, this is the reality of the current new media era, but also will be the future development trend. However, this is an opportunity to develop cultural tourism in third and fourth-county cities and rural areas in the districts and counties: ordinary people can easily get started and shoot short, interesting videos of around ten seconds.

Creating exclusive BGM-city music and music culture, take hip-hop singers. Sichuan, Chongqing, and Changsha are dominated by hip-hop, which is extremely attractive to young people who pursue pop music and like hip-hop and who enjoy traveling in pairs to listen to live, which then blends with nightlife and becomes an irreplaceable tourist label [4].

Local food is fused with traditional culture and packaged into a modern aesthetic. The pursuit of "food" in China is as important as ever, and the current development of e-commerce platforms, where everyone can buy food online, has played a role in the lives of the public. Offline people pay more attention to "doing" the food; a major selling point of Zibo barbecue is Zibo small cakes, the barbecue sandwiched in the cake to eat. Eaters have to "draw" the barbecue stick this action, so many people feel fresh and experienced. The bamboo tube milk tea is made from bamboo, symbolic in China, to hold the milk tea, which is both bookish and memorable. Sweet treats also use colour to show the 24 solar terms, allowing visitors to experience traditional culture in a modern product [5].

Finally, use technology well to create a new cultural and tourism industry. Using humanistic landscapes to drive natural landscapes, with full entertainment services, the new cultural tourism industry combines new technology and creativity, integrating online and offline to create new scenes. For example, the digital museum of Tunbao culture in Guizhou "makes full use of realistic character generation technology and motion binding technology to reproduce the three-dimensional scenes of Tunbao culture"[6].

In the new media age, one to two breakout products often catch the eye, rather than a landscape that takes a long time to view. Simply put, it is about getting seen first, then remembered. It is like using a museum's creative products to attract visitors and then using the exhibits in the museum to keep them in their minds [7].

"Audience-oriented" is the essence of new media operation and the core of communication. Therefore, no matter what new media content is presented, it should be appropriately low-profile and close to the audience. New media and traditional media are different, as most new media content is user-generated content (UGC), which is not professional enough but closer to the audience's real life [8]. The traditional media style cannot meet the needs of the new media audience and does not match the tone of the new media platform. The UGC content is mainly

characters or episodes. This narrative style is easy to attract the audience's continuous attention [9]. It is also easier to create an IP and shape a distinctive account style, thus increasing the stickiness of fans and facilitating the subsequent dissemination of other video content and the upgrading and transformation of the city's future cultural tourism [10].

3.Conclusion

China's third and fourth-tier small and medium-sized cities urgently need cultural tourism development. They know the importance of new media platforms for cultural tourism development, and many small and medium-sized cities have already succeeded through new media marketing. As intermediaries between large cities and rural towns, their development and passenger-carrying capacity will directly impact the future prospects of new rural cultural tourism. This paper gives concrete, implementable advice by analysing the success stories and bottlenecks of cultural tourism promotion in China's third- and fourth-level cities on new media platforms. Like the architecture, music, and landscape of a city, new media can outline the distinctive human temperament of a place and spread it widely on the internet [8], reflecting the spiritual core and appearance of a city through short videos, pictures, and texts, and leading internet users to identify with the city emotionally [9]. Emotional identity is the key to the development of cultural tourism, and nowadays, short cultural tourism videos, as a new practice of "Internet + tourism", can not only strengthen the audience's physical "presence", but also diversify the mode of communication, leading consumers and producers to build social interaction scene. Audience participation is the key to completing the social media communication chain. In order to promote audience participation, it is crucial to reject the notion of the "magic bullet theory" and instead empower the audience as the central entity in the communication process. By initiating topics that are of interest to the audience, have outstanding local characteristics, have a low threshold for participation, and are popular on new media platforms, cultural tourism new media operations can attract the audience to participate in the dissemination and reward the content with good flow and wide dissemination, expanding the influence of dissemination through the social circle of the audience by radiation. Enhancing additional value and stimulating audience sharing is one of the basic attributes of social media and is also the key to the fission of communication effects. The social value of communication content is the key to whether audiences are willing to share it, and social value mainly includes information value and emotional value. Therefore, a good cultural and tourism communicator should be clear about what kind of cultural and tourism videos are able to trigger "neutrality" and "empathy".

On the whole, the spatial reproduction of tourism short videos, driven by new media technology, promotes the construction of tourism images, thus advancing China's cultural tourism development into a new phase.

This paper proposes corresponding strategies. However, due to the limited sample size, there are inevitably limitations to the research findings. Whether this conclusion is applicable or not still needs further observation and research.

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