

A Review of Short Video Marketing Development at Kaifeng Wansuishan Scenic Area

Beibei Li*

School of Digital Economics & Resource Management, East China University of Technology, Nanchang, Jiangxi, China

*Corresponding author: Beibei Li, 1805145666@qq.com

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: The convergence of short-video platforms and cultural tourism has reshaped destination marketing. Kaifeng Wansuishan Martial Arts City, propelled by the viral “Wang Po’s Matchmaking” phenomenon, achieved 15-fold revenue growth within three years, becoming a representative case. This paper examines the evolution and operational logic of its short-video marketing, revealing a transition from accidental virality to systematic UGC-centric operations that generated substantial returns. However, four dilemmas persist: single-IP over-reliance, management lags, content homogenization, and traffic-to-retention conversion difficulty. Countermeasures are proposed, including a diversified IP matrix, refined management, cultural differentiation, and systematic capacity building, aiming to facilitate the shift from “internet celebrity” to “everlasting popularity” and offer practical references for cultural tourism marketing.

Keywords: Short video marketing; Wansuishan Martial Arts City; Cultural tourism integration; UGC communication

Online publication: July 15, 2026

1. Introduction

Short videos have become a comprehensive medium integrating social interaction, communication, and commerce, profoundly transforming cultural tourism. The “short video + cultural tourism” integration steers destination branding towards content-driven, user-co-created paradigms. Kaifeng Wansuishan Martial Arts City exemplifies this shift. In early 2024, “Wang Po’s Matchmaking” went viral on Douyin; by 2025, the scenic area attracted 24.5 million visitors and generated 1.27 billion yuan in revenue—a 15-fold increase from 2022. Related topics exceeded 100 billion views, with UGC accounting for 82%. Previous studies indicate that through interactive performances, the scenic area co-creates a standardized visual process (“intrusion → interaction → spectacle → transformation”), reflecting the broader transition from “watchable landscapes” to “photographable experiences.” Yet, a comprehensive investigation of its short-video marketing evolution, operational logic, and effects remains absent. This paper systematically reviews its trajectory, analyzes content production, platform strategies, and user participation, evaluates successes and challenges, and offers practical

insights for cultural tourism marketing innovation.

2. Literature review

International scholarship on short-video marketing in tourism centers on two dimensions: impact on travel decisions ^[1] and drivers of consumer engagement and purchase intention ^[2–6], identifying emotional engagement, perceived authenticity, and social proof as core mediators. Domestic research covers brand communication ^[7], consumer purchase intention ^[8,9], and tourism behavioral intention ^[10], with Peng *et al.* examining visual speed effects on travel intention. While both bodies contribute significantly, they predominantly address general contexts or isolated dimensions, lacking longitudinal case studies of specific scenic areas. Preliminary analyses of Wansuishan exist ^[11–13], but a systematic review of its short-video marketing evolution and strategic effectiveness is still missing. This paper fills that gap.

3. Current situation and existing problems

3.1. Current situation

Wansuishan's short-video marketing has evolved from accidental virality to systematic operation. In early 2024, "Wang Po" performer Zhao Mei gained 6 million followers in half a month, marking a turning point. The scenic area built a UGC-centric communication system: Li identified a co-creation process ("intrusion → interaction → spectacle → transformation") that turns experiences into "first-person game-style" narratives with "rough authenticity." Sun noted a three-dimensional experience matrix ("culture as soul, scenes as body, technology as wings") with over 1,000 NPCs performing 3,000+ shows daily. Peng *et al.* attributed its rise to differentiated positioning. Commercial outcomes: revenue rose from 80 million yuan in 2022 to 1.27 billion in 2025; annual visits exceeded 24.5 million, with year-on-year growth of 146.9% and 136.5%.

3.2. Existing problems

3.2.1. Over-reliance on a single IP and risks to sustained popularity

Wansuishan's communication is heavily dependent on "Wang Po" and the personal charisma of Zhao Mei. Although subsequent NPCs like "Old Sister-in-law" and "God of Wealth" have been introduced, "Wang Po" remains the core traffic driver. Should this IP's popularity naturally wane, both online communication power and offline visitor flow would face substantial downside risks.

3.2.2. Management deficiencies and service experience gaps exposed by traffic surges

The explosive visitor influx has severely tested management capacity. During the 2025 Qingming Festival, the reservation system collapsed, leading to tourist stranding and refund demands. In March 2026, security guards stopped tourists from using professional photography equipment, prompting two formal apologies. Recurring complaints include opaque photography charges, forced consumption, sluggish mini-program reservations, and unclear signage, revealing a significant gap between traffic explosion and actual carrying capacity.

3.2.3. Content homogenization and competitive pressure from replicable models

Following Wansuishan's success, numerous scenic areas across China have imitated its NPC interaction and immersive experience formats, leading to proliferation of homogeneous projects. The abundance of similar

content raises audience aesthetic thresholds, and the appeal of any single model inevitably diminishes over time. Maintaining continuous content innovation to avoid the “uniformity” trap is a long-term imperative.

3.2.4. The deep-seated challenge of converting “traffic” into “retention”

The rapid rise of short-video popularity largely relies on algorithm recommendations and spontaneous user sharing, but this driving force has clear temporal limits. As novelty fades and similar models multiply, the marginal utility of short-video marketing declines. The scenic area must build robust brand assets and product barriers beyond short videos to achieve the transition from “internet celebrity” to “everlasting popularity.”

4. Causes and proposed solutions

4.1. Over-reliance on a single IP: Causes and solutions

Causes: First, the initial virality was largely serendipitous rather than systematically planned, and the scenic area failed to transform personal IP into institutional brand assets in time. Data indicate tourists remember “Wang Po” but not necessarily Wansuishan. Second, the traffic-driven ecosystem is inherently time-sensitive; when the performer took sick leave, the heat dropped sharply, and visitor numbers decreased markedly.

Solutions: First, accelerate development of a diversified IP matrix, cultivating additional independently communicable content beyond “Wang Po,” redirecting attention to domains such as “Martial Arts World,” “Intangible Cultural Heritage,” and “Song-style Elegance.” Second, convert personal IP into long-term brand equity, reinforcing the association “Wansuishan = immersive martial arts experience” through consistent storytelling, shifting tourist motivation from “coming for Wang Po” to “coming for Wansuishan.”

4.2. Management shortcomings: Causes and solutions

Causes: Management measures lag behind rapid traffic growth; systems were designed for normal flows. Incidents like reservation crashes and security interventions indicate that reservation capacity, staff training, and emergency protocols have not kept pace. Additionally, extensive management coexists with short-sighted profit motives, as seen in opaque photography fees and forced consumption.

Solutions: Establish a management system aligned with actual visitor volumes—upgrade reservation platforms, enhance staff training and emergency response, clarify photography regulations to crack down on unlicensed commercial photography while safeguarding tourists’ legitimate rights. Move beyond the “ticket economy” mindset and diversify revenue streams, using secondary consumption (catering, accommodation, cultural products) to subsidize public services, placing tourist experience improvement at the center of management decisions.

4.3. Content homogenization: Causes and solutions

Causes: The “Wang Po” model was swiftly copied nationwide, leading to NPC proliferation and industry involution, while audience aesthetic expectations rise. Insufficient innovation capacity and over-generalization of “emotional value” mean that when all destinations offer similar value, that value depreciates quickly.

Solutions: Delve deeper into cultural heritage to craft differentiated content—draw on unique materials such as the chivalrous spirit and narratives of Great Song martial arts culture, collaborate with short-video platforms to use data analytics for content iteration, shifting from inspiration-based creation to a sustainable “data + creativity” production model. Build competitive barriers through quality and innovation, pivoting from

“chasing traffic” to “creating value,” positioning short videos within a broader product innovation framework where continuous offline experiential renewal drives repeat visits.

4.4. Traffic-to-retention conversion dilemma: Causes and solutions

Causes: The gap between “online seeding” and “offline experience”—short videos present idealized scenes, while tourists encounter real-world service quality, negatively affecting satisfaction and repurchase intentions. Moreover, the scenic area failed to promptly establish brand equity and product defensibility; at the brand level, tourists remember “Wang Po” rather than “Wansuishan”; at the product level, the core experience lacks continuous renewal and is easily imitated.

Solutions: Accumulate brand trust through quality and service—the exceptional value proposition of “80 yuan for three days” should be converted into word-of-mouth assets of “super-value experience.” Build systematic development capabilities, including transportation connections, public services, commercial reception, and diversified revenue structure. Implement a continuous iteration mechanism for experiential content, promptly translating user feedback into product improvements, ensuring tourists discover something new on each visit, and ultimately achieving the transition from “internet celebrity” to “everlasting popularity.”

5. Conclusion and prospects

This study systematically examines the development of short-video marketing at Kaifeng Wansuishan Scenic Area. Based on a review of international and domestic research, it centers on the typical case of Wansuishan Martial Arts City, analyzing its current status, problems, and development pathways. The findings reveal that the scenic area’s short-video marketing has evolved from accidental popularity to systematic operations, forming a UGC-centric communication ecology and matrix structure, with communication fission delivering remarkable commercial outcomes. However, four challenges persist—over-reliance on a single IP, management lag, content homogenization, and difficulty in converting traffic into retention. In response, this paper proposes countermeasures including diversifying the IP portfolio, solidifying brand assets, upgrading management systems, deepening cultural distinctiveness, building barriers with quality, and pursuing systematic development to achieve lasting popularity. Future research could further explore quantitative measurement of UGC communication effectiveness, comparative studies across different types of scenic areas, and the long-term sustainability of traffic-driven tourism models.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Jing W, Qing F, Yu W, et al., 2026, From Watching to Sharing and Visiting: Impact of Short Video Marketing on Tourist Behavioral Intentions from a Seasonal Iconness Perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 31(6): 1135–1158.
- [2] Dong X, Liu H, Xi N, et al., 2024, Short Video Marketing: What, When and How Short-Branded Videos Facilitate Consumer Engagement. *Internet Research*, 34(3): 1104–1128.

- [3] Gan J, 2024, Research on the Impact of Short Video Marketing on Tourism Communication: A Case Study of TikTok. *Forum on Research and Innovation Management*, 2(8).
- [4] Zhang R, Tian Y, 2024, The Impact of Short Video Marketing on the Consumer Willingness to Consume Immersive Experience Projects. *Frontiers in Economics and Management*, 5(5).
- [5] Ma H, Abbas Ali D, Ping W, 2024, TikTok Study on the Impact of Short Video Marketing Advertising on Consumer Purchase Intention. *Information Systems and Economics*, 5(2).
- [6] Liu Y, Li L, Xi J, et al., 2025, Research on Influencing Factors and Optimization Strategies of Short-Video Marketing on Consumption Willingness. *Scientific Journal of Economics and Management Research*, 7(10): 89–96.
- [7] Wang W, 2025, Research on Brand Communication Effects and Implementation Paths of Short Video Content Marketing. *Time-Honored Brand Marketing*, (21): 19–21.
- [8] Ni H, 2023, Research on the Influence of Short-Video Marketing Platform Quality on Consumers' Purchase Intention, dissertation, Lanzhou Jiaotong University.
- [9] Wang H, 2022, Research on the Influencing Factors of Short-Video Marketing on Consumers' Purchase Intention, dissertation, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.
- [10] Liu Y, 2023, Research on the Influence of Short-Video Marketing on Tourists' Consumer Behavior Intention, dissertation, Hainan University.
- [11] Li J, 2026, Constructing "First-person Jianghu": A Study on the UGC Visual Communication Mechanism of Wansuishan Martial Arts City on Short Video Platforms. *Audiovisual*, (9): 20–24.
- [12] Sun N, 2025, Research on Immersive Communication Practice of Wansuishan Martial Arts City in the Context of Cultural Tourism Integration. *New Media Research*, 11(24): 35–40.
- [13] Peng T, He X, Ren J, 2025, Research on Marketing Strategies of Wansuishan Martial Arts City in the Context of Cultural Tourism Industry Integration. *Time-honored Brand Marketing*, (21): 34–36.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.