

Research on the Innovation of Marketing Strategies for Forest Health and Wellness Tourism in Dalian under the New Media Environment

Xianxin Mu*

School of Cultural Tourism & Health and Wellness, Liaoning University of International Business and Economics, Dalian 116000, Liaoning, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

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: In 2024, the forest coverage rate in Dalian, Liaoning Province, reached 41.5%. With a coastline stretching 2,211 kilometers and distinct seasons, as chronic diseases become increasingly prevalent in China, health and wellness tourism has emerged as a significant aspect of people's lives. Dalian's abundant forest resources and high-quality hot spring resources in various locations provide favorable conditions for the development of health and wellness tourism. This study analyzes the marketing strategies for forest health and wellness tourism in Dalian under the new media environment, explores the issues in new media marketing strategies for health and wellness tourism in Dalian, and proposes a path analysis for empowering health and wellness tourism marketing strategies through new media. It lays a theoretical foundation for research and innovative marketing strategies for forest health and wellness tourism in Dalian, Liaoning Province, and promotes the promotion of high-end health and wellness tourism featuring mountains, seas, and hot springs.

Keywords: New media environment; Dalian City; Health and wellness tourism; Marketing strategies

Online publication: April 15, 2026

1. Preface

In recent years, China's tourism industry has experienced rapid growth, with tourists' demands for travel becoming increasingly diverse. Forest health and wellness tourism, centered around healing and promoting health, has garnered more attention from tourists. Forest health and wellness tourism is a novel form of tourism that combines forest ecological resources with health and wellness concepts through cultural and tourism activities such as forest meditation, forest yoga, and nature education ^[1]. Dalian boasts a relatively high forest coverage rate and high-quality hot spring resources in locations such as Zhuanghe, Wafangdian, and Anbo in Pulandian. During the 2026

Two Sessions in Dalian, multiple deputies to the National People's Congress and members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference proposed transforming Dalian into a coastal healing capital, establishing a year-round health and wellness healing IP featuring spring aromatherapy, summer sea therapy, autumn forest therapy, and winter hot spring therapy. Scenic spots such as Dalian Forest Zoo, Laohutan Ocean Park, and Sun Asia Ocean World have achieved rich practical results in new media marketing strategies. However, a systematic marketing system for new media marketing strategies for forest health and wellness tourism in Dalian has yet to be established. Numerous scholars have explored innovations in marketing strategies for health and wellness tourism. As the core service of ecotourism, forest health and wellness tourism promotes physical and mental well-being and offers unique travel experiences. Based on ecological principles, it is essential to vigorously develop health and wellness products with local characteristics and enhance the technical skills of relevant health and wellness service personnel to improve the quality of health and wellness services and elevate the overall quality of the health and wellness industry ^[2].

2. Development advantages of forest wellness tourism in Dalian

2.1. Superior forest hot spring resources

Leveraging its unique geological structure and abundant forest wellness tourism resources, Dalian facilitates the promotion of high-end wellness tourism that combines mountain-sea landscapes with hot springs. Located in the northern section of the Tanlu Fault Zone, Dalian is rich in geothermal resources, boasting high-quality hot spring clusters represented by Anbo Hot Spring, Minghu Hot Spring, and Laotieshan Hot Spring. The Anbo Hot Spring in Pulandian reaches a water outlet temperature of up to 73°C and is rich in over 20 beneficial mineral elements such as metasilicic acid, fluorine, and radon, offering significant therapeutic effects for rheumatism, skin diseases, and cardiovascular conditions. Moreover, Anbo National Forest Park is adjacent to the Anbo Hot Spring Resort, allowing visitors to enjoy forest hiking followed by hot spring therapy.

2.2. Favorable policy environment and financial support

The 14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural and Tourism Development in Dalian and the Implementation Plan for Enriching and Activating the Cultural and Tourism Market in Dalian, both released in 2021, explicitly emphasize supporting key innovations aligned with the city's cultural and tourism development direction and encourage diverse social capital to actively invest in the tourism industry, providing a policy basis for the new media marketing and promotion of forest wellness tourism in Dalian. The Administrative Measures for Special Funds for Tourism Development in Dalian, issued in 2023, establish dedicated tourism development funds, offering robust financial support for the new media marketing of forest wellness tourism. During the 2026 Two Sessions in Dalian, multiple deputies proposed transforming Dalian into a coastal wellness and healing capital and creating innovative year-round wellness and healing IPs, providing policy guidance for the development of forest wellness tourism.

2.3. Extensive experience in new media tourism marketing and operations

In recent years, Dalian has collaborated with leading platforms such as Douyin (TikTok) and Tongcheng Travel, achieving remarkable results in new media marketing approaches, including innovative scenic area promotion, construction of Internet-famous landmarks, and international online dissemination. As of July 2025, there have been over 270 million short videos related to Dalian's culture and tourism on the Douyin platform, garnering 13.9 billion likes and attracting a cumulative 6.41 million visitors to check in and record their experiences in the city.

In the first half of 2025, Dalian saw a year-on-year increase of 18.04% in domestic tourist arrivals and 20.01% in comprehensive tourism revenue, with inbound tourist arrivals growing by 77.67%. Notably, Xiongdong Street became a phenomenal case of offline traffic generation through a viral short video IP featuring a mechanical giant bear named Beibei, attracting 1.63 million visitors in 2024. Nanshan Road gained popularity through City Walk short videos on Douyin, successfully drawing 163,000 visitors during an 11-day event and generating over 30 million yuan in revenue, demonstrating the efficient conversion of online popularity into offline consumption. These successful new media marketing approaches provide practical and innovative directions for the development of forest wellness tourism in Dalian.

3. Problems in the development of forest wellness tourism in Dalian

3.1. Vague brand positioning and lack of distinctive IP

On August 10, 2022, the National Medical Service Platform incorporated air negative ion therapy into medical service items. Given its suitable forest climate and fresh air, forest wellness tourism, which combines traditional medicine and wellness culture with the objectives of healing, self-cultivation, functional adjustment, and anti-aging, holds promising development prospects^[3]. However, the brand positioning of forest wellness tourism services in Dalian remains vague, resulting in a lack of distinctive IP. For instance, Dalian Daheishan Scenic Area boasts high-quality forest resources and a rich cultural background in traditional Chinese medicine, including the Kangdeji Pharmacy with its traditional pharmaceutical heritage and the Chaoyang Temple Yaowang Hall, which reflects the ancient belief in the “King of Medicine” in the mountains. Nevertheless, in practice, tourists often simply hike and take photos, lacking a clear understanding of the scenic area’s brand-specific IP, making it difficult to form brand memory points and stimulate repeat visits.

3.2. Lack of a systematic new media marketing system

Some forest wellness bases in Dalian post promotional information on new media platforms such as WeChat official accounts, Douyin (TikTok), and Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book). However, these posts primarily consist of simple scenic spot introductions and ticket information, failing to convey the high-quality content related to the cultural and health values of forest wellness tourism to tourists. This limitation makes it challenging to attract visitors and results in limited influence from online new media marketing. Scenic areas lack composite talents who possess both expertise in wellness and familiarity with new media communication and marketing systems. The marketing teams, mostly composed of individuals with tour guide backgrounds, have weak capabilities in utilizing new media such as short videos and live-streaming commerce, making it difficult to accurately understand the tourism consumption needs of target customer groups. According to tourist satisfaction survey results, various indicators of public account engagement for forest wellness tourism companies are low, indicating a lack of loyal followers and low user stickiness. On Ctrip, the scenic area has a rating of 4.2, with 198 reviews and only 999 favorites^[4]. Therefore, in the internet era, online new media marketing and promotion through digital channels can help expand the customer base, promote forest wellness services, and highlight distinctive brand IP. Scenic areas should recruit professional new media operation talents, establish a systematic new media marketing system, and precisely deliver high-quality content to attract visitors.

3.3. Weak repeat purchase mechanism for tourists

The forest wellness tourism projects in Dalian exhibit a high degree of homogeneity, primarily focusing on forest

hiking, hot spring bathing, and simple outdoor activities, lacking distinctive offerings. The pace of scenic area updates and iterations is slow, and services such as the installation of handrails, anti-slip floor tiles, and emergency call systems for age-friendly and barrier-free transformations in public areas need improvement. Scenic areas lack a systematic membership system and community operation. Given that the core of forest wellness tourism lies in healing and long-term health management, it is essential to optimize the scenic area's experience services to enhance tourists' willingness to revisit and increase repeat purchase rates. Most scenic area tickets are limited to single-use discounts, without the introduction of monthly or annual passes. Additionally, there are no long-term effective coupons or membership mechanisms to attract tourists for wellness projects such as five-sense therapy, traditional Chinese medicine physiotherapy, and medicinal cuisine workshops^[5]. The relationship between tourists and scenic areas is often a one-time transaction, lacking sufficient attraction for repeat visits.

4. Innovative promotion of new media marketing through scenario-based design

4.1. Immersive sensory experience through short videos

In recent years, new media platforms such as Douyin (TikTok), Kuaishou, and Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book) have rapidly developed, with daily short video browsing becoming an important medium for tourists to obtain external information and engage in leisure and entertainment. The frequency of using short video platforms continues to rise. For Dalian's unique health and wellness resources, including beaches, forests, and hot springs, scenario-based designs such as an aesthetic forest ecological museum, a healing forest professional wellness area, and a cultural forest intangible cultural heritage experience area can be created. Through first-person and third-person perspectives, utilizing ASMR technology to capture multi-angle, multi-camera shots with rich lens layers, immersive sensory experiences such as healing forest hikes, dewdrops rolling on leaf tips, and light penetrating leaf veins can be filmed. By employing ambient sound effects and distinctive shots, the visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile experiences of forest wellness from different perspectives can be recreated, allowing tourists to feel the negative oxygen ions and rare medical-grade hot spring water just by watching short video promotional clips.

For scenic spot short videos, a professional and systematic marketing team can be established, with shooters focusing on capturing Dalian's health and wellness tourism attractions, real-time moments such as morning yoga and forest hikes, tracking landscape features across different seasons, and exploring various wellness promotion themes such as ocean healing, forest wellness, and hot spring therapy. Creating promotional short videos showcasing different styles of scenic spot experiences, such as intangible cultural heritage, ecological wellness, and Hakka cuisine, from an immersive experience perspective can quickly generate buzz on new media platforms like Douyin, Xiaohongshu, and Bilibili, driving the development of immersive sensory experience promotion models through short videos.

4.2. Xiaohongshu's five-sense package for graphic and textual recommendations

Xiaohongshu introduces a five-sense package for graphic and textual recommendations, offering tourists a comprehensive and deeply relaxing experience through their visual, auditory, olfactory, taste, and tactile senses. The graphic design features high-saturation healing landscapes, published in multi-scene perspectives such as 9-grid or long image collages. The copywriting not only introduces basic scenic spot information but also emphasizes sensory experiences like the fresh scent of pine needles mixed with sea breeze and the tactile sensation of touching warm pebbles. Leveraging immersive experience templates and popular content formats like "pit-avoidance

guides”, health and wellness projects are marketed and promoted.

4.3. Douyin live streaming to promote seasonal theme activities

Dalian’s forest wellness tourism projects can fully utilize the traffic advantages of Douyin live streaming to explain and showcase scenario-based design activities themed around the four seasons. In spring, real-time demonstrations and explanations of forest oxygen bars and herbal wellness packages can be presented; in summer, forest yoga and beach summer escape specials can be showcased; in autumn, live streaming of hot spring pools and seasonal cuisine can be conducted; and in winter, tourism influencers can be invited to promote winter hot spring wellness season activities online. For example, on December 8, 2024, the “Dalian Jinshitan Winter Hot Spring Wellness Season: Strontium Hot Spring Secret Realm, Slow Enjoyment of Jinshi” cloud promotion event achieved over 12 million exposures and over 7 million views across the internet through a new cloud promotion marketing model combining “OTA + new media matrix + corporate collaboration.” Douyin live streaming should consistently update content with the latest seasonal landscapes and cultural characteristics of the wellness base, retaining online traffic through high-quality scenario content and sincere, detailed service explanations, driving Dalian’s wellness tourism promotion on Douyin.

4.4. Professional IP creation for traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) physiotherapy and medicinal cuisine workshops

In 2024, the Dalian Health Commission issued the “Implementation Plan for the Dalian TCM Cultural Communication Action”, explicitly proposing support for the construction of TCM cultural experience venues and the creation of TCM cultural tourism products, as well as conducting TCM health tourism projects such as Chinese herbal medicine planting and picking experiences, showcasing TCM health and wellness products on-site. In 2026, the “Comprehensive Pilot Tasks for Expanding Opening-up in the Service Industry in Nine Cities including Dalian” issued by the Ministry of Commerce specifically proposed pilot tasks for Dalian to develop “TCM + wellness” and “tourism + wellness” services.

Against this backdrop of national policy support, Dalian’s TCM physiotherapy and medicinal cuisine workshops’ professional IP should focus on the authenticity of physiotherapy techniques, the quality and efficacy of medicinal cuisine ingredients, and customer feedback during the experience process, allowing tourists to enjoy a tranquil, trustworthy, and relaxing wellness atmosphere. The scenario-based design of TCM physiotherapy and medicinal cuisine workshops should incorporate elements such as the original wood and warm yellow tones of TCM culture, paired with herbal specimens and ancient book decorations. Through professional physician teams utilizing new media platforms like Douyin and Xiaohongshu, daily wellness knowledge, such as acupuncture and tuina (Chinese therapeutic massage), can be shared while protecting privacy, allowing more people to learn about correct and professional wellness methods. Inviting authoritative wellness experts to experience TCM physiotherapy wellness projects at the medicinal cuisine workshops in person can leverage professional celebrity effects to attract consumer attention and drive the marketing and promotion of Dalian’s forest wellness TCM physiotherapy and medicinal cuisine workshop projects.

5. New media marketing strategies to enhance tourist repurchase rates

5.1. Systematic community operation

Relevant departments of Dalian’s health and wellness tourism should establish a systematic community operation

system to transform one-time tourist traffic into sustainable tourist resources. The community regularly shares professional seasonal health and wellness knowledge specific to Dalian. By implementing tag management and hierarchical operations for community members, they can precisely grasp the repurchase needs of each member, thereby enhancing tourist repurchase loyalty. Exclusive community activities such as flash sales, membership mechanisms, referral rewards, and live-streaming sessions featuring health and wellness experts sharing their experiences should be introduced. Community operation and promotion should emphasize refined and personalized services, reducing reliance on traditional advertising models and instead leveraging the unique high-quality services and exclusive benefits of their health and wellness brand to boost tourist repurchase rates for revisiting the destination.

5.2. Differentiated marketing with precision content recommendations

Dalian's health and wellness tourism needs to vigorously improve the design of its health and wellness product system, establish a differentiated pricing mechanism tailored to market demands, focus on expanding marketing channels, and significantly enhance the quality of health and wellness services to recommend precise content to tourists. Product differentiation marketing involves creating a unique forest hot spring health and wellness product system through immersive sensory experiences, five-sense packages, seasonal theme activities, and popular projects such as traditional Chinese medicine therapy and herbal cuisine workshops. Price differentiation marketing involves offering time-limited discounts during off-peak and peak seasons and holidays, as well as package deals combining hot springs, accommodation, dining, and forest hiking. Channel differentiation marketing involves collaborating with traditional travel agencies to offer exclusive routes, cross-attraction combo tickets, and complimentary experience vouchers, while strengthening content updates and fan interaction on online platforms such as WeChat official accounts, Douyin (TikTok), and Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book). Personnel differentiation marketing involves optimizing staff allocation, introducing professional marketing and operations management teams, and regularly conducting specialized training such as interest training, first aid drills, and health and wellness knowledge lectures.

5.3. An integrated online-offline repurchase system

In the future, Dalian's health and wellness tourism should focus on bridging the gap between online platforms and offline entities to create a comprehensive tourist relationship management system that guides tourists' willingness to repeat travel consumption. Offline service personnel should actively encourage tourists who have completed their health and wellness itineraries to follow the company's official social media accounts, join communities, or register as members, and present them with exquisite health and wellness souvenirs. Online, personalized health and wellness care consultations should be regularly pushed through WeChat communities and official accounts to enhance tourist loyalty. A hierarchical membership repurchase mechanism should be introduced, where membership points can be redeemed for health and wellness products and discount coupons for attraction tickets, encouraging tourists to conveniently book and share their experiences of each forest health and wellness project on online platforms, making the end of each consumption the beginning of the next marketing effort.

6. Conclusion

Against the backdrop of the rapid development of new media and the wellness industry, Dalian's unique forest

and hot spring resources provide favorable conditions for the development of forest health and wellness tourism. Through an analysis of the current state of forest health and wellness tourism in Dalian, this study identifies a lack of innovative new media marketing approaches as a contributing factor to insufficient tourist repurchases. To address these issues, this paper proposes four innovative new media scenario-based marketing strategies: immersive sensory experiences through short videos, graphical recommendations on Xiaohongshu, live-streaming promotions on Douyin, and the creation of a professional IP for traditional Chinese medicine therapy and herbal cuisine workshops. By adopting systematic community operation, differentiated content recommendations, and an integrated online-offline repurchase system, tourist loyalty and repurchase rates can be enhanced, providing a practical path for the high-quality development of forest health and wellness tourism in Liaoning Province.

Funding

General Project of Scientific Research at the University Level of Liaoning University of International Business and Economics, titled “Analysis of the Development of Forest Wellness Tourism in Dalian and Marketing Strategies” (2022XJLXYB20)

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] He J, 2021, Research on the Development of Forest Health and Wellness Tourism in Yongzhen Garden Scenic Spot, Henan, thesis, Guangxi Normal University.
- [2] Lu J, 2023, Current Situation and Prospects of the Development of Forest Health and Wellness Tourism Industry in Shandong. *Journal of Qinghai Nationalities University (Social Science Edition)*, 49(6): 65–69.
- [3] Li ZX, Luo FX, Jiang SX, et al., 2023, Evaluation Methods and Optimization Strategies for Health and Wellness Tourism in State-Owned Peak Forest Farms in the Era of Great Health. *Southern Agriculture*, 17(13): 93–98.
- [4] Wang, H, 2022, Research on Differentiated Marketing Strategies for Forest Health and Wellness Tourism at T Company in Sanming City, thesis, Fuzhou University.
- [5] Zhong YX, 2025, Research on Digital Marketing Strategies at Z Health and Wellness Tourism Company, thesis, Shanghai International Studies University.

Publisher's note

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