



# The Research on the Development of Tourism Short Videos Based on the Post-Epidemic Era

## —Take DouYin App as An Example

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**Abstract.** In the post-epidemic era, short video platforms such as Douyin have developed rapidly, opening up more functions and models. The epidemic is both an opportunity and a challenge, hitting the tourism industry while providing opportunities for the development of tourism-based short videos. This paper adopts a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews quantitatively plus qualitatively, for analyzing the degree of influence of different user groups by tourism short videos and the reasons for it, and derives the development of tourism short videos in the post-epidemic era from the users' perspective. What's more, after analyzing the research results, this paper finds that tourism-based short videos have gradually integrated into people's lives to different degrees in the post-epidemic era, and mainly influence people's spiritual, and aesthetic needs and become an instrument online as well. This paper finds that the creators of tourism short videos should focus on authenticity, and practicality and commercialize reasonably, and create quality content.

**Keywords:** Post-Epidemic Era, Tourism, Short video, Douyin

## 1 Introduction

Since the outbreak, the risk of infection has become a major factor affecting travelers' travel decisions [1], and more travelers choose to set their destinations at home rather than abroad, or even in the surrounding areas [2], but when the blockade finishes and comes to the post-epidemic era, one of the main things on consumers' minds is travel under the influence of compensatory consumption brought by the epidemic [3]. At the same time, the Internet, as an important carrier of information, transmits information that largely determines travelers' perception and judgment of risk [1], as well as the

shaping of the image of travel destinations, and the impact on travelers' willingness to travel [4]. With the explosive growth of short video users at home and abroad [5], Douyin is one of the "best" new media, with a large base of young users, and has gradually established an important position for urban tourism marketing [6]. The "short video + tourism" model has increasingly made a breakthrough for the tourism industry to deepen, promote immersive experiences, and trigger substantial consumption [7]. In the web 2.0 era, "leisure tourism" has become a way for a group of people to release stress [8]. The development of tourism short videos in the post-epidemic era has also attracted the attention of various researchers.

The authors searched the Chinese website with the keyword "tourism short videos" and got 154 results, mainly in the fields of tourism, journalism and media, the information economy, and the postal economy. Most of these studies have been published in the past three years, at most five years, so they are of great significance for reference. The research content can be broadly summarized as, tourism short video communication and marketing strategies, such as the marketing strategy and optimization path of tourism short video on the Douyin platform [9], the impact on travel intention and behavioral intention, such as the impact of Douyin on travel behavioral intention [10]. The promotion of tourism branding for a specific city and the establishment of electronic word-of-mouth, such as the study of Douyin to promote urban tourism-taking Chongqing as an example [11].

Although much of the literature does not include the epidemic as one of the research factors, it still can be seen the current research on tourism-based short videos is based on the development during the epidemic period. However, the research on travel-based short videos is not particularly rich, mostly from the perspective of video creators, platform operators, or the travel industry. This paper will stand in the perspective of user groups, use questionnaires as well as in-depth interviews to collect 400 valid questionnaires and five in-depth interviewees, synthesize the attitudes of the interviewees, classify and study tourism short video accounts on the Douyin platform, explore the development and current situation of tourism short videos in the post-epidemic era by analyzing the specific use with feelings of the audience and the impact produced, generalize from the elements of the development of tourism short videos and understand the elements that users care about, to provide suggestions for its further improvement and development.

From the author's observation, the distribution of tourism short videos can be roughly divided into the following four categories: travel bloggers' videos, ordinary users' videos for recommending their travel preferences, "travel online" live streaming, and promotional videos of tourism attractions. Travel bloggers such as "Fanqi kiki" improve their influence and trigger substantial consumption through accurate positioning of user groups and quality content production; ordinary users share their travel routine and thoughts through posting travel vlogs, which develop into a lifestyle, several tourist attractions have started to expand their tourism industry by live-streaming to achieve a breakthrough under the impact of COVID-19. The short video platform has become an important tool for image positioning and promotion of many tourist cities. Tourism short videos have been further sub-classified and convey an unending vitality, and a kind of enthusiasm for hope retention conveyed from these

videos improves people's negative perceptions in the post-epidemic era, greatly driving the growth of travelers' willingness to travel. The author hopes this article can help analyze the development of different categories of tourism short videos in the post-epidemic era and the impact on users' travel intentions and choices, giving more effective suggestions to tourism short video creators and other scholars.

## **2 Research method**

This study mainly adopts a quantitative plus qualitative research method, using questionnaires and in-depth interviews to study the current development situation and impact of tourism short videos in the post-epidemic era, for better proposing relative development suggestions.

The tourism industry at home and abroad has been hit hard by the sweeping epidemic. Under this circumstance, there is a lack of research on some details of tourism short videos in the post-epidemic era in China, such as the proportion of users' time spent watching tourism short videos to the total time spent watching short videos, and the categories of tourism short videos that users like watching. For the method of analyzing questionnaire, the authors quantitatively analyze the tendency for tourism short videos of different user groups according to the length and categories when watching videos, and combine In-depth interviews conducted to understand users' feelings and influence by tourism short videos, to conclude the changes and development of tourism short videos in the post-epidemic era.

In the sample selection of the questionnaire survey, because the content of the short video is different depending on the age level, this paper selects four different groups under 18 years old, 18-35 years old, 35-45 years old, and above 45 years old as the research samples, and focuses on the acceptance and enjoyment of tourism short videos by different user groups in the post-epidemic era. To make the survey results universal, the questionnaires were distributed to people of different age levels in large, medium, and small cities, to discover the development status of tourism short videos in the post-epidemic era. The final sample collected in this paper was 400, with a male to female ratio of 2:3 and approximately 80% of interviewees monthly consuming within 3000 RMB. Combined with the questionnaire research, five respondents of different ages, genders, and consumption levels were equally and evenly selected to explore the usage, impact, and development factors of tourism short videos more deeply.

## **3 Research results**

### **3.1 The Analysis of Questionnaire Results**

The analysis of the results of the questionnaire survey study shows that before the outbreak, as shown in Table 1, nearly 85% of the people had travel experience, of which 12% of them traveled frequently and only 15% of them had no travel experience. However, the number of people who traveled during the epidemic decreased

significantly, with 62.79% of people having no travel experience abroad. Table 1 shows that the epidemic has had a huge impact on the tourism industry, as the number of people who choose not to travel has tripled, with 3/5 of people following the principle of not going out unless it is necessary which is advocated by the government. For some people who travel frequently or who travel as a job, the epidemic has undoubtedly brought them considerable problems. On the other hand, the impact of the tourism industry under the epidemic provides opportunities for tourism short videos, people can acquire spiritual satisfaction and wander around their fantastic world by watching tourism short videos.

**Table 1.** The basic information of the participants in the questionnaire

Age	Options	Subtotal (Total=400)	Proportion
Gender	Male	132	33.00%
	Female	268	67.00%
Age	Under 18 years old	24	6.00%
	19-35	304	76.00%
	36-45	12	3.00%
	Over 45	60	15.00%
Frequency of travel before the epidemic	Frequently	48	12.00%
	Occasionally	292	73.00%
	Never	60	15.00%
Did they travel during the epidemic	Yes	128	37.21%
	No	216	62.79%

From Table 2, the results show that among the collected samples: 52% of people used Douyin for less than 2 hours per day; 89% used Douyin for less than 4 hours per day in total; only 3% used it for more than 8 hours. Therefore, nearly 90% of people do not spend more than 4 hours a day, from which can analyze and understand that the majority of people do not devote a lot of time to Douyin because of daily work and other reasons and Douyin is a daily entertainment tool to balance people's life. In the survey, the results show that 50% of Douyin users have significantly increased the frequency of using Douyin during the epidemic, indicating that the epidemic has played an important role in the development of short videos. Due to the question set of the questionnaire, users who choose the option of not having watched tourism short videos will automatically finish the questionnaire, 14 people choose (14.0%), so the subsequent sample is 344 (all users who have watched tourism short videos). 22.09% of people increase their viewing hours of tourism short videos a lot during the epidemic, the results show that a considerable part of people during the epidemic would spend more time watching tourism short videos, which shows their increased reliance on tourism short videos, especially during the epidemic.

**Table 2.** Exposure to tourism short videos and watching hours

Age	Options	Subtotal (Total=400)	Proportion
Daily Douyin usage hours	Less than 2 hours	208	52.00%
	2-4 hours	148	37.00%
	4-8 hours	32	8.00%
	More than 8 hours	12	3.00%
Did the frequency of Douyin usage increase during the epidemic	Increase a lot	200	50.00%
	Increased moderately	128	32.00%
	Did not increase	72	18.00%
Frequency of watching short travel videos on Douyin	Often	164	41.00%
	Occasionally	180	44.00%
	Never	56	14.00%
Did the number of watching hours of tourism short videos increase during the epidemic	increased a lot	76	22.09%
	increased moderately	172	50.00%
	Did not increase	96	27.91%

From Table 3, one can understand that in the selected short video user sample, only 3.49% of them do not like to watch tourism short videos, which means that most short video users hold a fondness for tourism short videos without rejection, so the prospect of such videos in short video development is quite promising and the audience group is broad. However, it is found in the survey and research that there are few users who follow tourism bloggers: 68.6% of users follow 2 or fewer tourism bloggers, indicating that most users rely on Douyin's recommendation mechanism to watch tourism short videos, and few parts of them will put their extra energy and spend more time to follow certain tourism bloggers for a period of a long time.

**Table 3.** Level of attention to tourism short videos

	Options	Subtotal (Total = 344)	Proportion
fondness of tourism short videos	Like very much	160	46.51%
	General preference	172	50%
	Dislike	12	3.49%
Number of following tourism bloggers on Douyin	2 or less	236	68.6%
	3-5	80	23.26%
	6-9	16	4.65%
	More than 10	12	3.49%

The analysis of the questions and results in Table 4 shows that 75% of people have searched for travel tips on Douyin before traveling, 37% of them often search for travel tips from Douyin, and 29.07% of them think that tourism short videos have a great influence on their willingness to travel, indicating that these people have a high degree of reliance on tourism short videos. However, 54% of people will not post

travel videos on their Douyin accounts, from which it can be reflected that travel bloggers are the main force of tourism short videos, and the ordinary user whose videos for recommending the travel preference is a secondary role. 68.6% of people will not generate consumption during the epidemic due to advertising or recommendation in tourism short videos, indicating that there is still a considerable obstacle to triggering substantial consumption through tourism short videos. So the survival of tourism short video posters (professional bloggers) is difficult, but there is still huge room for development. On one hand, the majority of users have a bad impression of tourism short videos because of the false propaganda and over-rendered filters. On the other hand, 25% of people do not search for travel tips through Douyin before traveling, which greatly shows the distrust of tourism short video recommendations. They do not search for them to get effective advice when preparing for travel although the videos are well produced. Such videos are just a kind of entertainment for them.

**Table 4.** Tendency to utilize travel-based video functions

	Options	Subtotal (Total=400)	Proportion
Do they search for travel tips on Douyin before going on a trip	Often	148	37.00%
	Occasionally	152	38.00%
	Never	100	25.00%
Do they share their travel experience by posting videos on the Douyin account	Often	36	9.00%
	Occasionally	148	37.00%
	Never	216	54.00%
Whether consumption was generated during the epidemic due to the advertising or recommendation in tourism short videos	Yes	108	31.40%
	No	236	68.60%
Did tourism short videos from Douyin have an impact on willingness to travel	Highly influential	100	29.07%
	Fairly influential	184	54.49%
	Not influential	60	17.44%

Table 5 shows that a larger proportion of users watch travel bloggers' videos, ordinary users' videos for recommending their travel preferences, and promotional videos of tourism attractions, while a smaller proportion of people watch "travel online" live streams. Combined with the analysis of Table 6, the results show that more than 65.12% of people are attracted to or recommended successfully because of the beautiful travel images. Moreover, 66.28% watch the short video because of firstly the informative content, and secondly the copy or the user having a favorite online celebrity in short videos, etc. The results show that short video tourism wants to develop in the long run, it must be full of content and ensure the quality of video creation to attract the public's attention. As tourism itself is a special industry, tourism short video creators must create videos based on real and reliable content, not excessive publicity to attract attention. Because when people are attracted by the content of eye-catching

recommendations and go on a trip but instead have a bad impression, which will have a huge impact on the frequency of users watching tourism short videos.

The epidemic is both an obstacle and an opportunity. For tourism short videos to develop in the long term and stand on their feet in the post-epidemic era, the creators must uphold the principle of honesty above all else and don't ignore the long-term development for acquiring the temporary benefits. In the post-epidemic era, there is still a huge room to be improved in terms of effective propaganda and other aspects. Once relying on the dependence of short video users on travel short videos, its development room is huge, and video creators will have a long development as long as they seize the opportunity, review the situation, and do not fixate on themselves.

**Table 5.** Douyin platform usage (day)

	Options		Proportion
What kind of short travel videos have they seen? (Multiple choice)	Travel blogger's videos	260	75.58%
	Ordinary users' videos for recommending their travel preference	192	55.81%
	"Travel Online" Live stream	100	29.07%
	Promotional videos of tourism attractions	172	50%

**Table 6.** Preference for the attractiveness of travel-based short videos

	Options	Number of multiple choices	Proportion
Reasons for the attractiveness of Douyin tourism short videos (multiple choices)	Well-produced videos	224	65.12%
	Informative content	228	66.28%
	Appealing copywriting	140	40.7%
	Filmed or recommended by a favorite online celebrity	104	30.23%
	Other	40	11.63%

### 3.2 The Analysis of In-Depth Interview Results

In addition, this paper also used in-depth interviews to analyze users' behavioral impressions of tourism short videos and conducted in-depth interviews with five Douyin users respectively. It is clear from the interviews that four of them are travel enthusiasts and the other one also had travel experience before the epidemic and did not reject traveling. All of these five interviewees traveled about 1-3 times a year before the epidemic, while most of them would choose to travel close to the local province during the epidemic and would not go out for a long period, indicating that the arrival of the epidemic would have an impact on people's travel in one way or restrict people's

travel. In the interview on the issue of the change in the length of Douyin viewing, the authors learned that all four respondents increased their watching time on Douyin videos because of the epidemic. Besides all of them restricted their travel because of the epidemic and stayed at home watching videos to kill time, while only one respondent thought that Douyin videos did not have something they were interested in thus the viewing time did not change. Through interviewing detailedly related to tourism short videos such as whether the viewing volume of tourism short videos increasing during the epidemic and the reasons, the types of tourism short videos tend to watch, the number of tourism short video accounts followed, the advantages and disadvantages of travel videos and suggestions, it can be indicated that the number of respondents watching tourism short videos after 2021 has increased significantly compared to 2020 and before. However, for the content, all the respondents thought they are not trustworthy as travel tips and are considered being false to a certain extent. For this, people need to think critically, short video without filters and other special techniques of modification, the viewer's experience of beauty will decline. However, ensuring its authenticity without losing the sense of beauty, which is largely a challenge. Moreover, through the interview, three interviewees clearly said they would not "accept" the advertising in travel short videos. They thought that it has a strong commercial purpose so they are not willing to be guided, indicating that tourism short video creators' purpose of earning is still difficult. Finally, for the four kinds of tourism videos presented on Douyin, all five interviewees have good feelings toward the video vlogs produced by travel bloggers like Fang Qi and expressed their hope for their future development. For ordinary users' videos for recommending their travel preferences, the interviewees also hold a positive attitude. They believe that such videos are more authentic and credible than travel bloggers' without commercial purpose. For the promotional videos of tourism attractions, many interviewees said that they would not get travel tips in that kind of videos, and for the "travel online" live stream, respondents said that it is not as strong as a personal travel experience and is relatively boring.

## **4 Discussion**

### **4.1 The Analysis of the Current Situation about Tourism Short Videos**

This study finds that the rising demand for tourism short videos by Douyin users in the post-epidemic era is mainly motivated by two aspects: the spiritual demand for aesthetics and the instrumental demand for clear goals. People watch tourism short videos, first of all, to satisfy their spiritual needs for watching scenic spots without being able to immerse themselves in them. This kind of user often pays much attention to the quality of the video and the humanistic heritage behind the natural scenery of the region. Secondly, they want to know the natural and humanistic landscape of the travel destination and the local folk culture characteristics in advance after deciding on the tourism destination, so what they need is detailed travel strategies and recommendations, which is the so-called "informative content" of tourism short videos, to prepare themselves for the trip. This kind of user usually searches actively. As for



the influence of tourism short videos on users' willingness to travel and destination selection, there is only a certain subtle influence, some users are pushed for tourism short videos when watching Douyin, or often watch a recommended video of a place under the big data push, so they are often attracted to it and thus have the willingness to travel to that place. However, this influence will rarely be a decisive factor.

In the previous studies, "travel online" is a new model in the online entertainment industry. "Live stream+", as an emerging function and form on the short video platform, has its value of technological innovation and new business model, so they are always seen as positive in the development of the short video platform during the post-epidemic era. However, this study finds that "travel online" live stream is considered being of little significance in tourism short videos, with low acceptance of fondness and low capacity for earning. The main reason is that the ultimate purpose of "travel online" live stream is often to expand the business and promote selling, but the scenery demonstrated and products sold may not be highly attractive and there is even the phenomenon of exaggerating facts and false propaganda for profit. This leads to such videos failing to attract viewers and even may cause users to reject them. In addition, although the scenery is more realistic, it is more difficult to take into account the aesthetics. What's more, the user's intention is more to understand the actual introduction of the scenic spot to get practical information, but the "travel online" live stream also lacks practical content such as travel tips. It is difficult for users to produce the psychology of yearning, and also can not meet the core needs of tourism short video, so the audience is lesser.

## **4.2 The Development Elements of Tourism Short Video**

### **Quality Content is the Basis of Development.**

This study finds that the core competitiveness of tourism short video lies in "beauty" and "reality". "Beauty" is the breathtaking spots and the exquisite pictures, and the "reality" is the real and practical introduction and recommendation. The reason for the popularity of travel bloggers (e.g. Fanki Kiki) is its well-made images, fascinating scenery, detailed travel tips, and heartwarming copy. All of these make it a core competency of tourism short videos, which can allow users to be curious and yearning, and more likely to have the impulse to follow. Although the communication environment and media are constantly changing, the creative principle of "Content as King" remains unchanged, and quality content is always the winning formula to attract the audience. Only by continuously improving the quality of short video production, creating diversified creation styles, following user-oriented principles, planning elaborately, and producing attentively, can truly realize the significance of tourism short videos and attract more Internet users to swarm into travel destinations, to achieve the purpose of tourism marketing.

### **Authenticity and Practicality are the Focus of Development.**

Whether it is fed back by a questionnaire survey or in-depth interview, what respondents care most about travel short video is always the authenticity and practicali-

ty of the video. At present, on the short video platform, the phenomenon of homogenization and exaggerated publicity of tourism short videos is serious. There are a series of problems, for example, heavy filters make the scenery completely distorted on the internet and numerous imitations follow the same or similar style and copy, and so on. Although under the existing technology, users cannot and usually do not expect to travel online. What they care about is still personal traveling and pursuing deeper meaning and real acquisition when traveling. For travel short videos, it is more important to present the real charm of the landscape and be as intuitive and clear as possible to provide travel routines and tips. Whether it achieves the spiritual and aesthetic needs or instrumental needs or not, the fundamental role of a tourism short video is to introduce, so authenticity and practicality should be its basic attributes and is now the most important focus of the development of travel short video.

### **Reasonable Commercialization is the Road to Development.**

Through interviews, the study also found that users generally reject the commercialization of travel short videos at present, but regardless of the type, if pursuing further development, different degrees and types of commercialization is an inevitable path. With the necessity of regarding the travel short videos as an instrument, how to commercialize them reasonably: balance users' senses, needs, and operators' interests. So they can not only provide real convenience for users, but realize the online commercial extension of the tourism industry, and to exclude the dilemma and achieve development, this should be the next important research direction for travel short videos.

## **5 Conclusion**

The epidemic has had a huge impact on the tourism industry, greatly reducing or limiting people's willingness to travel, while at the same time bringing opportunities and boosts to the development of the online tourism industry. In the post-epidemic era, travel short videos have achieved huge development and the dependence of users on short videos has been increasing. However, users do not have a high dependence on tourism short videos because the instrumental attributes are quite prominent. Regardless of the degree, travel short videos have evolved and been integrated to become part of people's lifestyles, and travel short videos changed people's travel habits and have a certain influence on people's willingness to travel and their choice of destination. For this kind of video, people are most concerned about the beauty of the scenery and its authenticity, and whether it can provide a detailed and clear itinerary. What they generally reject is the homogenization and commercialization of the part. The creators of travel short videos need to balance beauty and authenticity, focus on practicality, and commercialize reasonably to create quality content. In addition, they also should focus on excellent video production, meaningful connotation expression as well as increase the profit while satisfying users' needs. Only in that way can they achieve further development.

This study combines quantitative and qualitative analysis, starting from the specific feelings of users and the influence of travel short videos, materializing the real needs of users, as well as summarizing the two major needs: authenticity, practicality, and the need for commercializing rationally from the four types of tourism short videos, for proposing the future development path of tourism short videos. It is beneficial for video creators and the tourism industry to develop travel short videos precisely and effectively in a user-oriented way in the future. However, this study did not consider other diverse influential factors during the epidemic and the influences of other platforms of the same type, so future studies can pay more attention to the influence of travel short videos with different cultural backgrounds and local policies on users' feelings and its practical use.

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