



## OPEN ACCESS

### EDITED BY

Tereza Semerádová,  
Technical University of Liberec, Czechia

### REVIEWED BY

Erkut Altındağ,  
Doğuş University, Türkiye  
Agustinus Rusdianto Berto,  
Multimedia Nusantara University,  
Indonesia

### \*CORRESPONDENCE

Hailong Zhang  
✉ 498199068@qq.com

### <sup>†</sup>PRESENT ADDRESS

Jing Meng,  
Business School, Beijing Technology and  
Business University, Beijing, China

RECEIVED 14 November 2025

ACCEPTED 30 January 2026

PUBLISHED 27 February 2026

### CITATION

Meng J, Zhang H and Zhu H (2026) How can one integrate the story of a narrator into a short travel video? Analyzing creative reasoning through the lens of narrative transportation theory. *Front. Commun.* 11:1746478. doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2026.1746478

### COPYRIGHT

© 2026 Meng, Zhang and Zhu. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.

# How can one integrate the story of a narrator into a short travel video? Analyzing creative reasoning through the lens of narrative transportation theory

Jing Meng<sup>†</sup>, Hailong Zhang\* and Huaming Zhu

School of Geography and Tourism, Chongqing Normal University, Chongqing, China

**Introduction:** Short travel videos have emerged as a powerful tool for tourism destination marketing, yet the narrative mechanisms that make them effective remain underexplored. This study investigates how travel vloggers integrate storytelling into short videos to enhance viewer engagement and promote destinations.

**Methods:** Adopting a single-case study approach, we analyzed the top 500 short videos of a renowned Chinese travel vlogger on the Bilibili platform. Video narrations and titles were transcribed and subjected to a four-stage procedural coding analysis using NVivo software. User comments were also examined to understand audience responses.

**Results:** The analysis reveals a three-part narrative structure: (1) an opening that employs suspenseful titles and sensory symbols (visual and auditory) to capture attention; (2) a middle section that uses rhythmic control, task-driven plots, and emotional triggers (e.g., healing, nostalgia, humor) to sustain engagement; and (3) an ending that evokes emotional sublimation and provides behavioral guidance through social currency and commercial cues. The blogger's distinct persona and the use of background music further enhance narrative transportation.

**Discussion:** These findings extend narrative transportation theory to the context of short-form travel videos, illustrating how linguistic features, narrative strategies, and emotional dispositions interact to create an immersive experience. The study offers practical insights for content creators and destination marketers seeking to leverage short videos for effective communication.

### KEYWORDS

narrative transmission, short travel videos, narrative mode, tourism destination marketing, narrative approach

## Introduction

In an age in which digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and Twitter are reshaping content consumption patterns, short-form travel videos (SFTVs) have emerged as a novel and engaging way to experience the world virtually (Arora and Lata, 2020). Aiming to enhance tourism through short videos and diverse media outlets, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism supports the “culture and tourism + short video” strategy to attract tourists and boost spending. Official narratives from local cultural and tourism groups, as well as travel bloggers, each with distinct storytelling elements, have emerged to advocate for tourism destination using short videos. The use of user-generated content (UGC) in social media marketing has emerged as a

novel method for promoting destinations (Wengel et al., 2022). Short videos offer the potential to reveal certain destinations to the audience, previously overlooked in conventional marketing approaches. The growing recognition of these sites by the public marks the beginning of an innovative developmental path (Zhu et al., 2022). Consequently, a variety of travel media blogs such as “the video blogger,” “Fangqi Kiki,” and “Little Mustard” have emerged in the tourism sector, providing tailored travel stories online for their audience. Personalized stories offer a digital journey experience, allowing viewers to immerse themselves in the destination’s ambiance via the screen, thereby heightening their enthusiasm and eagerness to explore the place.

In the midst of a common pattern of consistency in short tourism videos, the task of improving communication through innovative narrative methods to convert “network traffic” into “real passenger flow” has attracted considerable attention from academic communities and the industry. Short videos on literature and tourism encompass the creation and storytelling of both linguistic and non-linguistic symbols. Employing semiotics and Narrative for analysis, this study explores the essential role of these short videos in disseminating Literature and Tourism stories, thus expanding the range of semiotics and Narrative studies and presenting a new theoretical path for understanding Literature and Tourism short videos (Fang, 2024). Consequently, understanding the way travel self-media, encompassing both specialized and standard sources, transmit short videos is crucial. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the development of comprehensive tourism analyses for these videos and in enriching the pertinent scenarios and research frameworks in short tourism videos that incorporate storytelling components. Concurrently, by enhancing the storytelling style of travel self-media, the aim is to provide a uniform and enlightening approach for creators of travel self-media to improve the quality of short tourism videos and explore the insights of esteemed tourism bloggers. Simultaneously, this study could pave the way for niche destinations to achieve public acclaim and support major tourism destinations in their marketing and promotional activities.

Scholars have mainly focused on short tourism videos, while modern research predominantly uses conventional qualitative techniques such as semi-structured interviews and grounded theory to investigate their communicative impacts. Clearly, there exists a substantial void in the research that scrutinizes the entire methodology underlying these videos. Consequently, this study intends to concentrate on qualitative research techniques that explore the textual elements of video narration, addressing these three key investigative questions:

- (1) What is the logic of short video narrative transmission in the video blogger?
- (2) The rise of brief videos that normalize tourism material raises the question: how can narratives overcome communication hurdles to convert “traffic” into “retention”?
- (3) Utilizing narrative transmission principles, how can the narrator of a brief tourism video develop a deep cultural identity for the location, including mental engagement, emotional effect, and artistic stimulation?

## Literature review

### Narrative communication in the digital age

Consumers increasingly share their daily-life stories on social media, leading to a rise in digital narrative content (Van Laer et al.,

2019b). However, for special groups, especially the Gen Z, unlike previous generations, Gen Z travellers are more likely to seek values-driven experiences that support self-exploration and meaningful interaction with local communities (Ribeiro et al., 2025; Wattanacharoensil et al., 2024). More importantly, as digital natives raised in an era of constant connectivity, this cohort relies heavily on social media, online platforms, and digital content to inform decisions, shape perceptions, and find emotional resonance (Stipsits, 2024). Within this digitally mediated landscape, popular formats such as reality shows, YouTube, travel vlogs, TikTok videos, and Instagram stories have played a powerful role in influencing travel decisions (Choi, 2025). Meanwhile, compared to other marketing methods, the targeted promotion model of short videos gives it a significant advantage in attracting traffic and increasing consumer engagement (Zhang et al., 2025). This reduces the brand promotion costs. Therefore, short video commerce has become an emerging strategy for e-commerce enterprises to acquire user traffic and achieve profitability (Xiao et al., 2023). Based on the continuous increase in the number of short video users and their growing dependence on short videos. Tourism research has consistently focused on video due to its disruptive effects on promoting destination spots in the new media age, exemplified by a previous incident in which Xi’an was engulfed in flames over short videos (Lei et al., 2020). Concurrently, several scholars focus primarily on tourism microfilms to investigate their influence on the marketing and promotional impact of urban cultural imagery and destination spots, and to examine the variance in the perceived impact of these images and destinations before and after viewing the microfilms.

From a user perspective, Wei et al. (2022) noted that consumers’ perceived warmth and competence of short video influencers affect engagement behaviors. In addition, Gan et al. (2023) found that users’ visual perspectives interact with visual content, which is moderated by the narrative information’s attractiveness. Dong et al. (2024) determined the influence of content alignment, information pertinence, narrativity, and emotional elements in short videos on consumer engagement. Meanwhile, from the perspective of short video content creators themselves, a number of studies have examined the role of internet celebrities in STVs, highlighting their ability to evoke audience emotions toward both the video and the destination (Wu and Lai, 2024). Therefore, this study will also, based on the characteristics and functionalities of the single-case study method, select short video travel bloggers from the broad pool of travel video creators who are relatively well-known, have substantial traffic, and are representative within China.

Short travel videos excel in conveying messages and narrating stories, outshining both textual and visual content in terms of informational richness, thus boosting audience engagement and spurring their travel enthusiasm. Consequently, the study of tourism short videos has evolved into a multifaceted, cross-disciplinary domain. This investigation concentrates on the elements of narrative and communication, facilitating an in-depth and comprehensive scientific analysis of the videos’ substance and format. As an example, Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier delved into the utilization of brief travel videos featuring diverse storytelling motifs, examining their possible uses and practicality in the production of tourism videos. Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier analyzed different narrative themes in travel videos, investigating the role of storytelling in boosting audience involvement (Xiong, 2023). Short travel videos fulfill two roles: firstly, short-form tourism video (STV) have become an important digital tool, reshaping digital marketing strategies by driving high engagement and conversion rates, including in destination marketing (Manic, 2024). These videos have significantly altered how destinations communicate with

potential tourists through their ability to rapidly connect with audiences (Tan et al., 2025) and secondly, they enable tourists to delve into the atmosphere and culture of these locales online prior to arrival, thus boosting their travel enthusiasm. As a result, this study will concentrate on the narrative logic behind short videos and investigate the creation of a unique approach for short tourism videos using diverse storytelling styles, formats, and materials.

## Narrative transportation theory and destination marketing narratives

They introduced the narrative transportation theory in 2000, characterized as the unique psychological phenomenon of “immersion” within a narrative, encompassing focus, feelings, and visual representations. In doing so, the theory of narrative transmission confirms the phenomenon that storytellers use narratives to persuade audiences to accept certain signals or take action, and it has been used to better understand and assess the cognitive processes of audiences (Green, 2004). As both a state of cognitive and emotional absorption and an experiential phenomenon, narrative transportation emerges when consumers engage deeply with a story presented in an advertisement (Van Laer et al., 2019a). This immersion is facilitated by narrative persuasion (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Oatley, 1999), which makes storytelling a powerful tool for shaping consumer attitudes and brand perceptions (Deb et al., 2025).

Within the tourism sector, the aforementioned situation arises among users; and convey the cultural, emotional, and ethical essence of the destination. Narrative transmission is a method employed to analyze the communication signals shared between travel bloggers and their followers. However, this marketing-oriented, interpretive narrative approach could widen the divide between travel bloggers and their audience, hindering effective information sharing and value-sharing discussions. At the heart of destination marketing lies a transition from focusing on content to crafting narratives (Zhou and Cai, 2018). Narrative itself is the process of meaning-making (Zhou, 2020). Tourism destinations have their own unique regional culture and historical stories, which are often processed by various travel bloggers and delivered to users in the form of short videos. With the collaboration of travel short videos with major tourist destinations and the rapid growth of e-commerce and live streaming, also as consumers vertically scroll through short video advertising content, they are inundated with an abundance of visual, acoustic, and linguistic information associated with products or services (Xiao et al., 2025). These sensory stimuli influence consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses (Krishna, 2012), ultimately shaping their purchase decisions (Li and Pan, 2023).

As a result, it is clear that the unique historical and cultural traits of tourist destinations attract tourists, while tourists themselves are drawn to the unique and meticulously designed narrative methods used by various travel bloggers. At the same time, the narrative transmission of tourism destinations promotes the composition of the tourism destination image (Green and Brock, 2000). The narrative image series in tourism short videos influences the actual effect of tourism destination narrative transmission (Zhou, 2020). Therefore, based on the aforementioned narrative transportation theory framework and relevant influencing factors, this study primarily examines auditory elements within short tourism videos—specifically background music and voiceover narrative text—to analyze the narrative mechanisms employed by prominent Chinese travel bloggers. This investigation aims to establish a content production model for future creators of travel short videos and enhance tourism destination marketing strategies.

## Methodological

### Research methodology

The study selected a preliminary approach based solely on a single case study. The main focus of this study is on how the blogger applies her unique characteristics and the specific narrative style of the brief video to develop a formula for short travel videos, highlighting the examination and improvement of the narrative transmission process, culminating in the adoption of the exploratory single-case study method. Primary factors are: first, the exploratory single-case study method is suitable for exploring the “what” and “how” elements of research inquiries (YINR, 2013), and second, this technique allows for a more in-depth exploration and improvement of the storytelling aspects in a blogger's brief videos. Through detailed examination and enhancement, one can learn to develop the storytelling elements and style of short tourism videos, aiming to forge the intricate process of the tourism short video explosion formula. Furthermore, case studies are adept at honing the basic concepts and theoretical underpinnings of specific occurrences, thus aiding in the discovery of novel perspectives and principles (Gioia et al., 2013; Tracey et al., 2018).

### Selection of case

The focus of this study is on the video blogger, a renowned national tour guide and travel anchor, who is the subject of the case study. To begin with, regarding the case's representativeness: By the end of February 2025, the video blogger had garnered 461,000 followers and 11,294,000 likes on the Bilibili platform, a notable benchmark for creators of short videos on the platform. Furthermore, regarding the conduct of the case, official records reveal that the video blogger was designated as a part-time teacher by Zhejiang Tourism Vocational College in November 2009. By 2019, he had begun employing a concise video format to elucidate the local traditions and historical stories of picturesque international locations. Consequently, the blogger possesses an extensive knowledge of tourism and concise video content. Third, the video blogger's case study's congruence with the theoretical goal is clear: His esteemed position and popularity on the Bilibili arise from both his own experiences and the era's advantages, as well as his unique narrative techniques. Included are narratives that merge tourism with indigenous culture, and his adeptness in employing common and casual language to impart historical and geographical knowledge to his audience, thus drawing a varied user demographic. This corresponds with the theoretical goal of improving how narratives are conveyed in brief tourist videos. Fourth, the accessibility of case data—including Bilibili real-time commenting feature and publicly available user interaction metrics such as video play counts, likes, shares, and comments—supports the interactive examination of this research on video storytelling, narrative elements, and related remarks.

### Data collection and sample profile

The case data for this study originates from the textual content of the blogger's top 500 brief travel video stories, spanning from February 2020 to February 2025, available on the Bilibili. By employing Xunfei Hear software, the writer converts video speech into written text, accumulating more than 294,000 words of narration, essential for developing a blogger's concise tourism video narrative system, and incorporates NVIVO software for level-4

procedural coding. Qualitative approaches can uncover the nuanced psychological and behavioral responses of audiences to different STV advertisement formats (Tan et al., 2025). Therefore, in order to fully utilize the video narration texts collected in this study and to deeply analyze the micro-mechanisms of narrative transmission in the blogger's videos, this study mainly follows a text-based analysis approach.

Data examination utilizes a case study approach (YINR, 2013) to enhance the conceptual structure for narrative in short tourism films. New viewpoints are driving further data collection and analysis, making the analytical method outdated (Lei, 2025). In detail, concepts were developed, compiled, and integrated in response to key research inquiries, derived from user feedback and video evaluations. Initially, post text data purification, the initial video narration is divided, followed by a thorough examination of all texts to create an initial impression. Following this, key ideas are formulated, climaxing with the video narration of "Sichuan and Chongqing dialects," "suspenseful questioning," "psychological anti-commonsense," and 188 essential concepts, culminating in the enhancement of 60 sub-categories like "dialect stems," "questioning sentences," "anti-commonsense statements," among others. Consequently, 60 subcategories like "dialectal stem," "question," and "anti-commonsense statement" were derived, and these subcategories were organized, condensed, and amalgamated to create 21 primary categories, including "vocabulary type," "sentence features," and "person perspective." Table 1 displays the primary 21 categories. Concurrently, due to the copious textual material in this research, traditional three-tier coding was utilized to conduct diverse comparisons, analyses, summaries, and enhancements at four distinct stages of coding (refer to Table 1): linguistic attributes, storytelling techniques, emotional inclinations, and functional goals.

Similarly, by analyzing the textual feedback from users, this study identified 78 fundamental ideas such as "strategy request," "utility value judgment," and "humorous feedback," and further refined 26 subcategories, including "content-specific request," "information utility acquisition," and "content enjoyment." Through the application of these concepts, 26 unique subcategories emerged, encompassing "content-specific requests," "acquisition of information utility," and "enjoyment of content." Subsequently, an overview of ten principal categories was presented, encompassing "explicit needs," "functional experience," and "emotional experience." Owing to the extensive textual material, the extraction of four distinct levels—basic user experience, interactive participation, user needs, and value recognition—was completed (see Table 2).

Ultimately, the process of saturation testing and model building is completed. The study employs video narration, commentary, and sample-based coding to examine four narrative forms of short videos: introductions to destinations, sharing travel experiences, suggestions for tourist attractions, and scenic spots, in order to establish an initial theoretical model. To confirm the theory's saturation, the study further selects the last two short tourism video types for the saturation test. Through random selection and examination of the text, no additional categories or connections were identified, nor were any new elements formed within the primary categories. Consequently, it can be deduced that the theoretical framework for encoding and replicating the essence of video narratives and user comments in this study is well-defined.

## Case study

### Opening: suspenseful setting and sensory symbols to build the tourism context

Observations have been made that employing rhetorical methods like questioning and metaphors in titles can amplify the empathetic impact of brief news video stories (Chen, 2023). The blogger's short travel video features unique labels on its cover and title. The video's title and opening, derived from its coding outcomes, predominantly employ rhetorical tactics like questioning and nonsensical remarks, such as, "What is the true nature of the mansion constructed with 200 million dollars?" "What lies beneath the West Lake?" Video titles like "What You Haven't Heard: The Gods Also Have a Test" and similar ones, featuring suspenseful elements and irrational remarks, can quickly capture viewers' attention and spark their interest. They employ delayed-answer storytelling techniques, where the initial 5 seconds don't show the location's name. Instead, "Here" and "this place" serve as alternatives, such as "This is where the Bull Demon King fought in the past", "If you have a piece of this, the best place by the West Lake in Hangzhou is the best place to change a set. West Lake in Hangzhou is renowned as a prime location for numerous villas, attracting more viewers to watch the video and boosting the success rate of short tourism videos.

Furthermore, the blogger employs sensory terminology for content narration, with the imagery and audio in the short video mirroring the visual and auditory representations of the sensory symbols. Short videos, by deeply engaging with sensory symbols, transcend mere "information transmission" to act as a catalyst that stimulates the sensory recollections of viewers, culminating in the enveloping sensation of "viewing video equates to cloud travel." For the audience, visual symbols are the most direct, unique, and intuitive attraction, amplifying the first impression and enhancing the unique cultural characteristics and emotional atmosphere of the blogger's video, exemplified by "Yinchuan City Pagoda, towering into the clouds," and "glowing droplets of blue, grass, and trees turning into mountains and forests." The metamorphosis of grass and trees into mountains and woodlands occurs, accompanied by various visual stories.

Nonetheless, the use of auditory symbols may trigger emotional and memory responses in users by compensating for the visual content in videos. Music in the background fosters an environment for emotional exchange by expressing feelings (Huang and Qiu, 2019), encouraging individuals to connect with the material from their perspective, thereby motivating them to engage in or initiate their communicative actions (Chang et al., 2023): Primarily, it involves utilizing background noises, like the noise of rain hitting a plantain, the echoes of remote commentaries, and the gurgling of streams, to immerse users in the setting, from viewing to experiencing the attractions. Secondly, the blogger skillfully leverages the unique regional traits of their birthplace, ingeniously incorporating local dialects and annotating the pronunciation in the subtitles. This approach not only accentuates the distinct features of these regional dialects but also aids in fostering a sense of pride in the regional culture among users, thereby narrowing the gap between them and the blogger. Thirdly, leverage the influence of ambient music in enhancing video expression, rather than relying solely on "Netflix music." This approach involves aligning background music with the video's regional features and stories, exemplified by titles like "Premier Zhou Enlai's Life," "Jianchuan Museum," "the world's largest museum," "the world's largest museum," "the

TABLE 1 Typical relationship structure of video narration.

Concept of aggregation	Main category	Relationship structure	Relationship structure essential properties implied or reflected by a notion	Core influencing factors
Linguistic characteristics	Lexical type → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships	The two dimensions of linguistic features and narrative strategies constitute the antecedent variables of narrative transmission theory	Make the narrator's vocabulary more vivid and specific
	Sentence features → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Improve the cohesion and presentation of the information
Narrative strategy	Personality perspective → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Bridging the gap between bloggers and users, as well as between users and video content.
	Inversion of suspense → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Setting up suspense to stimulate users' curiosity
	Temporal folding narrative → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Using the narrator's vocabulary to build a sense of travelling
	Task-driven → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Use clear behavioral instructions to motivate users to travel
	Microperspective narrative → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Focus on small scenes, small characters, and small emotions, so that the user can create a deep resonance in a short period of time.
	Multiple parallel narratives → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Alternate between multiple interconnected plotlines to build richer layers of the story within a limited amount of time.
	Contrast reconstructs the narrative → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Creating a sense of surprise and contrast through the narrator's perspective.
Immersive experience narrative → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships	Through acoustic design, psychological cues, and narrative techniques, the user's mind temporarily "forgets" reality and becomes fully immersed in the virtual environment.		
Emotional disposition	Healing → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships	Emotional dispositions constitute a variable in the process of narrative transmission	The use of voice-over narration allows the listener to relax and experience the effects of traveling for healing.
	Hot-blooded adventure system → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		High-energy narratives that inspire exploration, courage and adrenaline in the viewer, giving them the urge to "go now."
	Nostalgic humanities → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Through specific period symbols, emotional anchors and narrative rhythms, it triggers listeners' collective memories and deep emotional resonance.
	Funny → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Using voice-overs to delight and entertain users
	Luxury enjoyment system → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		The use of terms such as price, cost-effectiveness, service details, and others to guide users in enjoying VIP services on the cloud.
Functional objective	Seed attraction type → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships	Functional goals constitute narrative transmission outcome variable	Stimulate consumer interest and purchasing desires through creative narratives and emotional resonance.
	Raider instrumental → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Communicate information clearly to ensure that users can understand and follow the instructions.
	Emotionally empathic → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Artistic techniques that stimulate the audience's innermost emotions through verbal expression, storytelling, or visual presentation.
	Commercial transformational → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Use voice-over narration to enhance the persuasiveness and appeal of the content, thereby encouraging potential customers and investors to take action.
	Branding type → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Tourism branding through voice-over narration of the brand's mission, vision, and values
	Social currency type → narrative transmission	Strategic relationships		Storytelling through narration that resonates with users and inspires sharing

TABLE 2 Typical relationship structure of user comments.

Concept of aggregation	Main category	Relationship structure	The connotations of the relationship structure	Core influencing factors
Basic user experience	Functional experience → user experience	Constructive relationship	The basic dimensions of user experience constitute the sensory-experience layer.	Giving users access to instrumental information and utilities.
	Emotional experience → user experience	Constructive relationship		Give users positive emotional value
	Content experience → user experience	Constructive relationship		Video content and duration focus on the user's ability to bear information.
	Technology experience → user experience	Constructive relationship		Sensory-based enjoyment for the user
Interactive participation	Depth of user involvement → user experience	Constructive relationship	The engagement and user needs dimensions form the behavioral interaction layer.	Video content generates active discussions and debates among users.
	Creator connection → user experience	Constructive relationship		Video content pulls in the distance between bloggers and users, creating an emotional connection
User needs	Explicit needs → user experience	Constructive relationship		Video content triggers ongoing user interest in the video series
	Implicit needs → user experience	Constructive relationship		Video content meets users' emotional needs.
Value identity	Cultural identity → user experience	Constructive relationship	The value-identity dimension constitutes the meaning-construction layer.	The video content inspires a specific sense of cultural belonging and resonates with users' values.
	Expression of values → user experience	Constructive relationship		The video content triggers deep reflection and contemplation of values among users.

world's largest museum," "the world's largest museum," and "the world's largest museum." Rather than relying on "Netflix Music," the choice of background music should be based on unique regional features and story elements, with "My Motherland and I" serving as the backdrop for "Premier Zhou Enlai's Life," "Jianchuan Museum," and "731 Bacteriological Warfare," among other red revolutionary themes, effectively stimulating the red genetic and memory of the audience (see Figure 1).

### Middle: rhythmic control, triggering emotions, and provoking empathy

In the central part of the blogger's brief travel video, the blogger predominantly uses narratives that fold over time and space, along with multiple storylines, to enhance the depth of the information in the video. Additionally, they choose multi-scene transitions to avoid excessive details and slow progression. Concurrently, the blogger employs a task-oriented storytelling approach to guide the audience through the video's development, establishing distinct objectives or obstacles and amplifying the feeling of engagement and interaction.

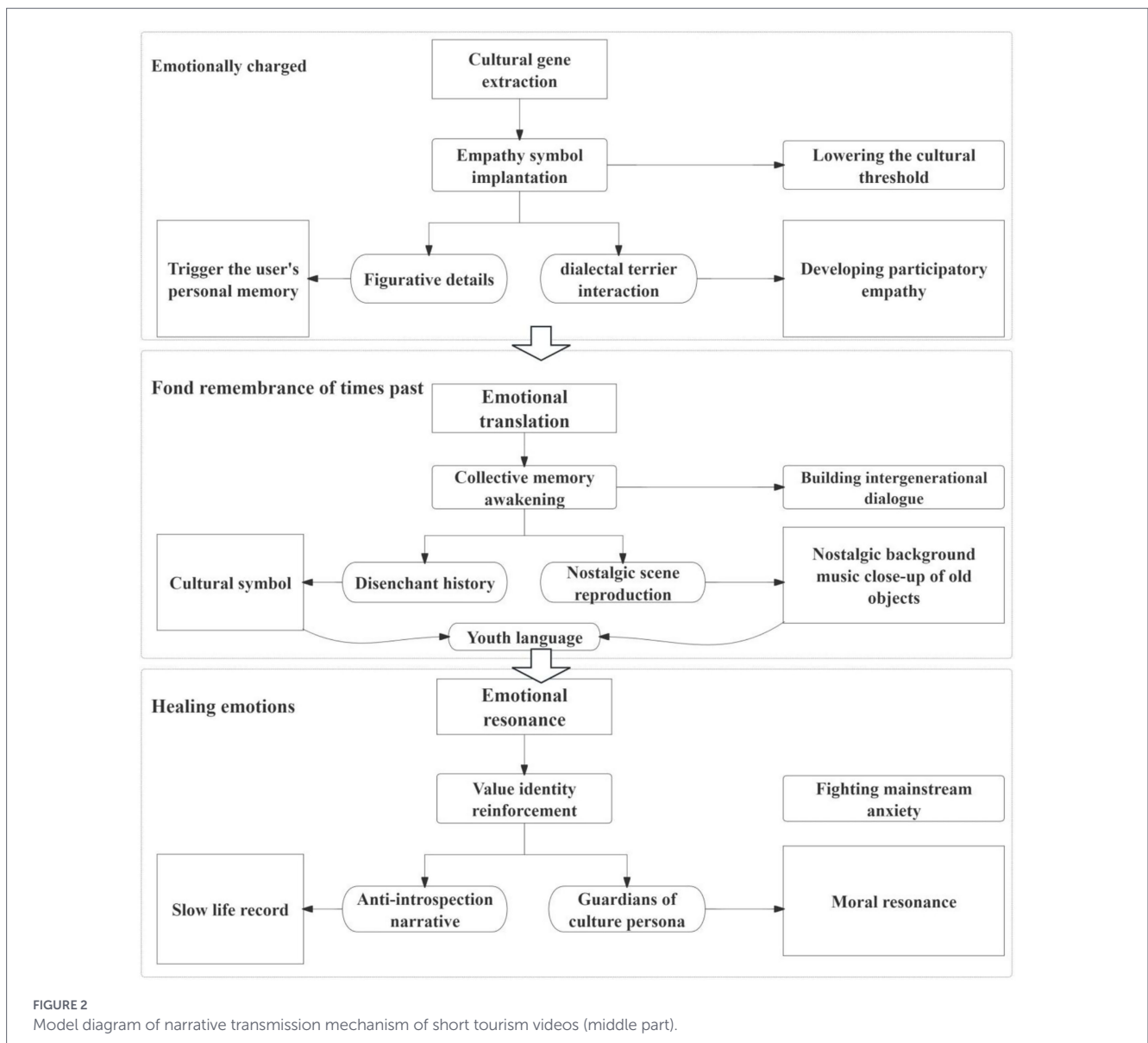
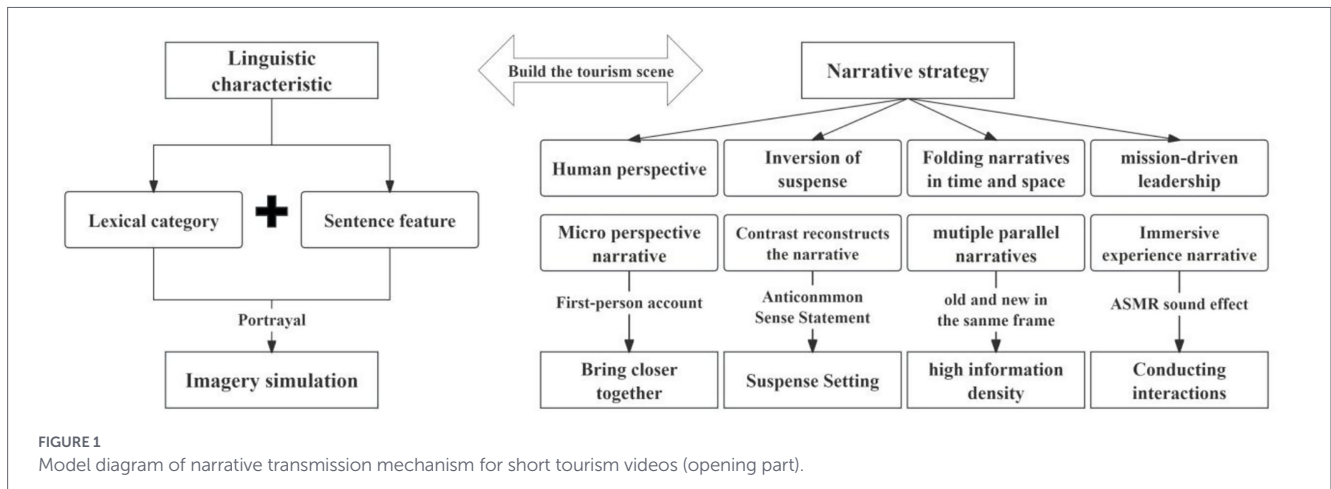
Initially, releasing the task activates the user's "desire to complete," sparks curiosity about the outcome, boosts user engagement, and ensures they remain engaged with the video. Next, the introduction of obstacles ignites the user's "desire to conquer," increases their drive and eagerness to finish the video task, thereby enhancing user involvement. During the third stage, access for users is made available. Next,

by overcoming challenges, ignites the user's ambition to excel, boosts their drive and eagerness to finish the video activity, and increases their engagement. Subsequently, these accomplishments are revealed to satisfy the user's sense of achievement, endowing the video with emotional significance. Consequently, we fully leverage the engaging narrative of the experience to amplify the "local" ambiance. For instance, we capture the blogger's mountain ascents and explorations of old towns from an initial viewpoint, using everyday phrases to immerse the audience in the action, enhance their perception of reality, and incorporate ASMR sound effects and dynamic lenses to simulate the viewer's vision, creating a "personal" sensation in the video. Using ASMR sounds and dynamic lenses creates an immersive experience, making the observer feel as though they are journeying directly through the lens rather than merely observing it.

Nonetheless, the blogger's brief travel clips, varying in narrative style, convey distinct emotional meanings and evoke a variety of emotional responses in users through diverse emotional expressions. As an illustration, short videos depicting travel experiences and character narratives utilize the restorative emotional power found in scenes such as the "sea of clouds rolling," "mountains, rivers, lakes, and seas," along with phrases like "longing to escape the hustle and bustle of the city; why not come to the Five Fingers Peak?" "Experiencing the ethereal craftsmanship of nature" serves as a therapeutic element in tourism, enabling users to unwind during leisure moments. It is a type of short video that introduces destinations and narrates character stories, leveraging nostalgia and a humanistic emotional appeal to focus on

scenes that resonate with the essence of the era, blending historical elements to evoke recollections across various age demographics. Consequently, the use of witty, humorous, and intense adventure

videos serves to regulate user emotions, alleviate aesthetic weariness, and set the stage for emotional adaptation and behavioral guidance in the final sections that follow (see Figure 2).



## Ending: emotional sublimation and behavioral guidance

Concluding the brief travel video, employing emotional resonance and social currency to induce emotional sublimation and social cues, the video incorporates strategic elements, grassy allure, and additional storytelling to foster commercial transformation and branding, thereby instilling in the audience a feeling of “memory” or an urge for prompt action! Audiences will experience a feeling of “recollection” or a “yearning for swift action”. Simultaneously, the core message of the video is captured in a declaration highlighting the significance of humanism, history, and ethics, exemplified by statements like, “The goal of recalling history is not to remember hostility, but to prevent the reemergence of historical calamities,” and “Master Hongyi’s life is simultaneously legendary and remarkable. Receiving life’s splendor and riches makes it challenging to set aside” among other remarks, to realize the impact of emotions, patterns, and the principles of triple sublimation. Furthermore, via statements like “he resides in Li Ziba, this is unknown to us, have the opportunity to visit his memorial,” and “friends watching this video, I trust you’ll extend your heartfelt wishes to the motherland in my remarks, wishing our nation and our generation prosper! In the context of” self-improvement” and similar concepts that foster social engagement, produce content that can be shared, boasted, and discussed, enabling users to engage in the social network of conversation and identity, thereby proactively spreading the video. Ultimately, by intricately narrating material symbols and using close-up shots to showcase products with local features, the process of commercial transformation and branding is finalized (see Figure 3).

## Discussion

The study explores the video blogger’s brief travel footage on the Bilibili, delves into the storytelling aspects of these videos, and seeks

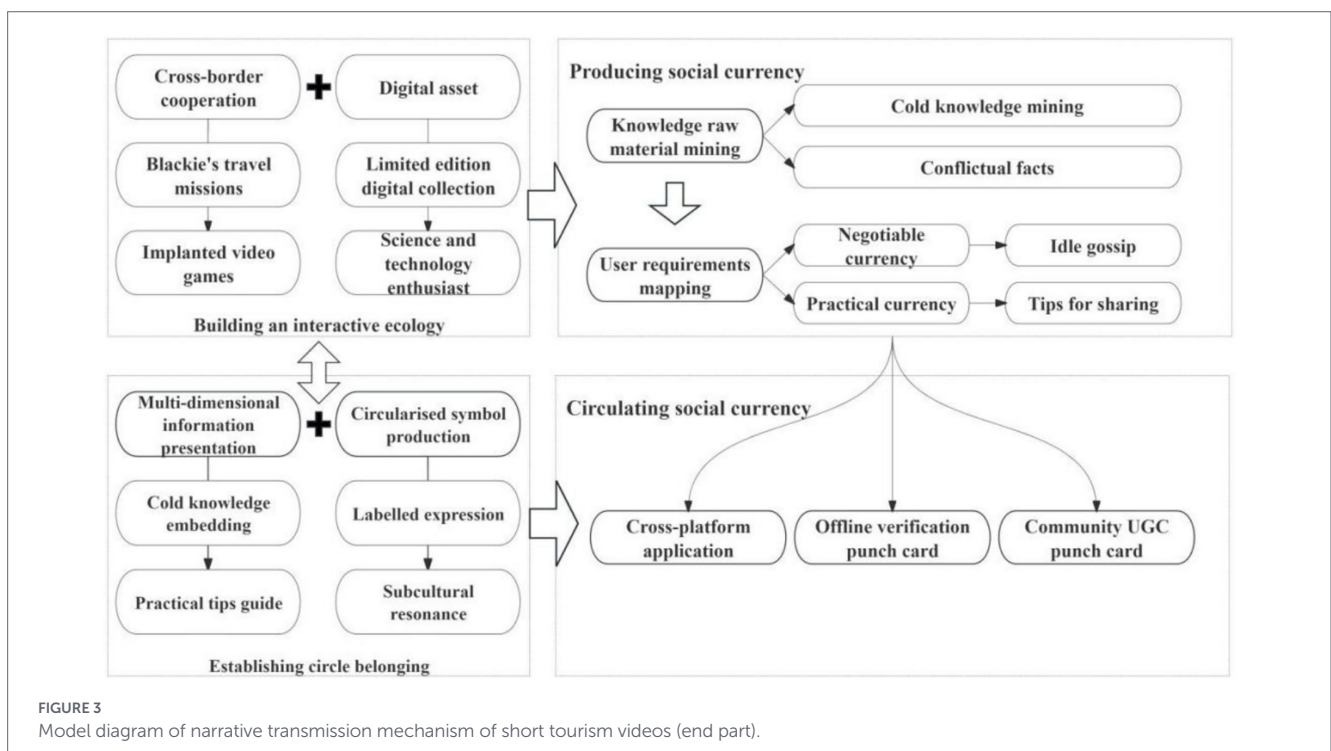
to elucidate and encapsulate the subtleties of their renown in promoting tourism spots.

Research revealed that a blogger’s distinct identity and the video narrator’s three-dimensional emotional sound field shape are key elements in devising tourism short video formulas, with the short video’s cover and title being the primary allure for viewers, and the narrative mood and background music serving as supplementary factors. Tourism short videos are crafted to reflect the blogger’s personal identity, capturing and centering the viewer’s focus with their cover and title. The narrative is conveyed and the video’s narration creates a three-dimensional emotional soundscape. Audio can stimulate emotional responses, affect psychological and biological stress systems, and increase consumers’ immersion (Blood and Zatorre, 2001; Pantoja and Borges, 2021). Therefore, a tourism ambiance is crafted using the narrative’s tone and ambient music, utilizing the viewer’s experience to engage in cultural perception and identification. Drawing from the narrative transmission theory, this document encapsulates a short video destination marketing strategy influenced by the theory of narrative transportation (see Figures 4, 5).

## Conclusion

This study employs a case analysis of short videos produced by a prominent Bilibili travel vlogger. Through the theoretical lens of Narrative Transportation Theory, it investigates the intrinsic textual characteristics of the vlogger’s storytelling style. Utilizing textual data pertaining to video narrations and titles, obtained via network data mining, the research examines the blogger’s short video content through a four-stage procedural coding analysis using NVivo software. The key findings are as follows:

Digital marketers often use key communicators to understand marketing firms, making it essential for these firms to clearly express their unique traits and enhance their appeal within the



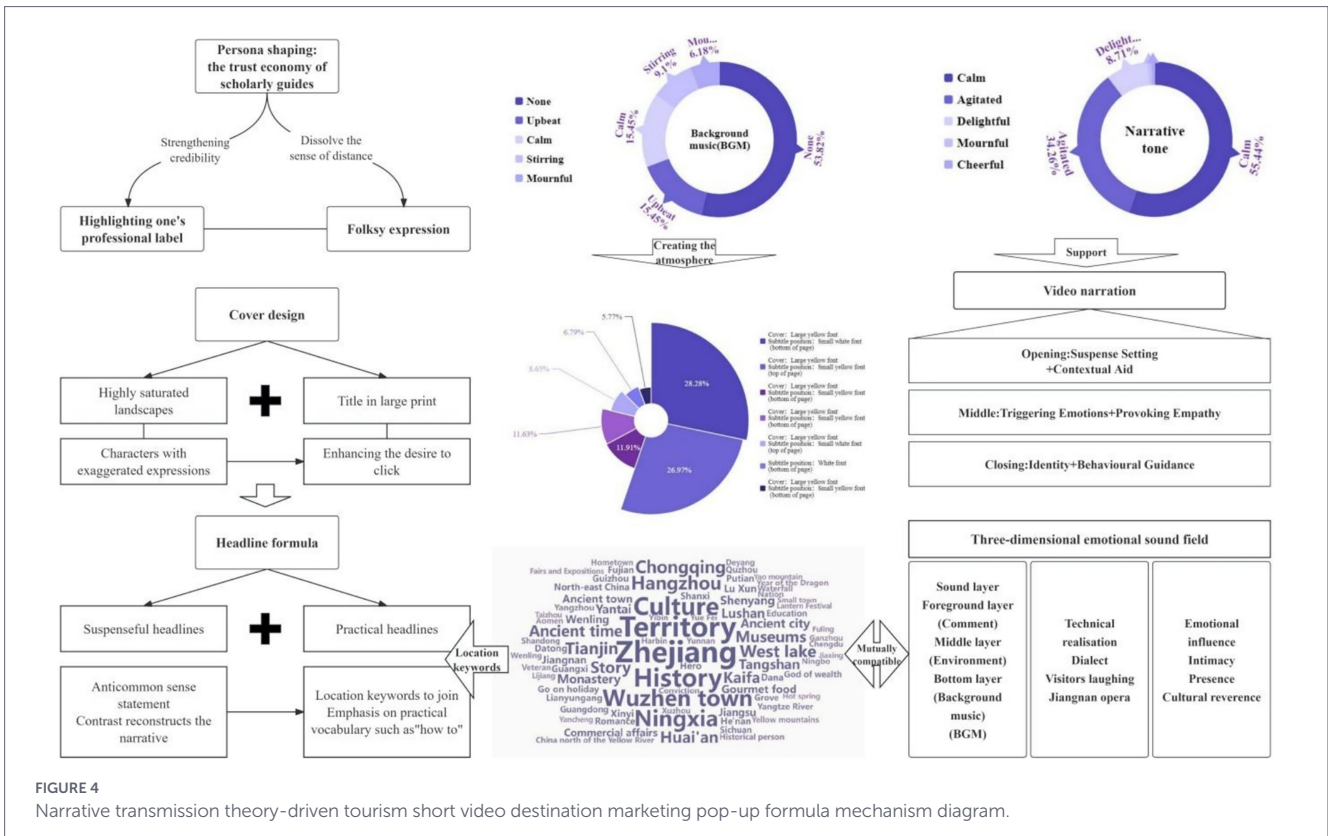
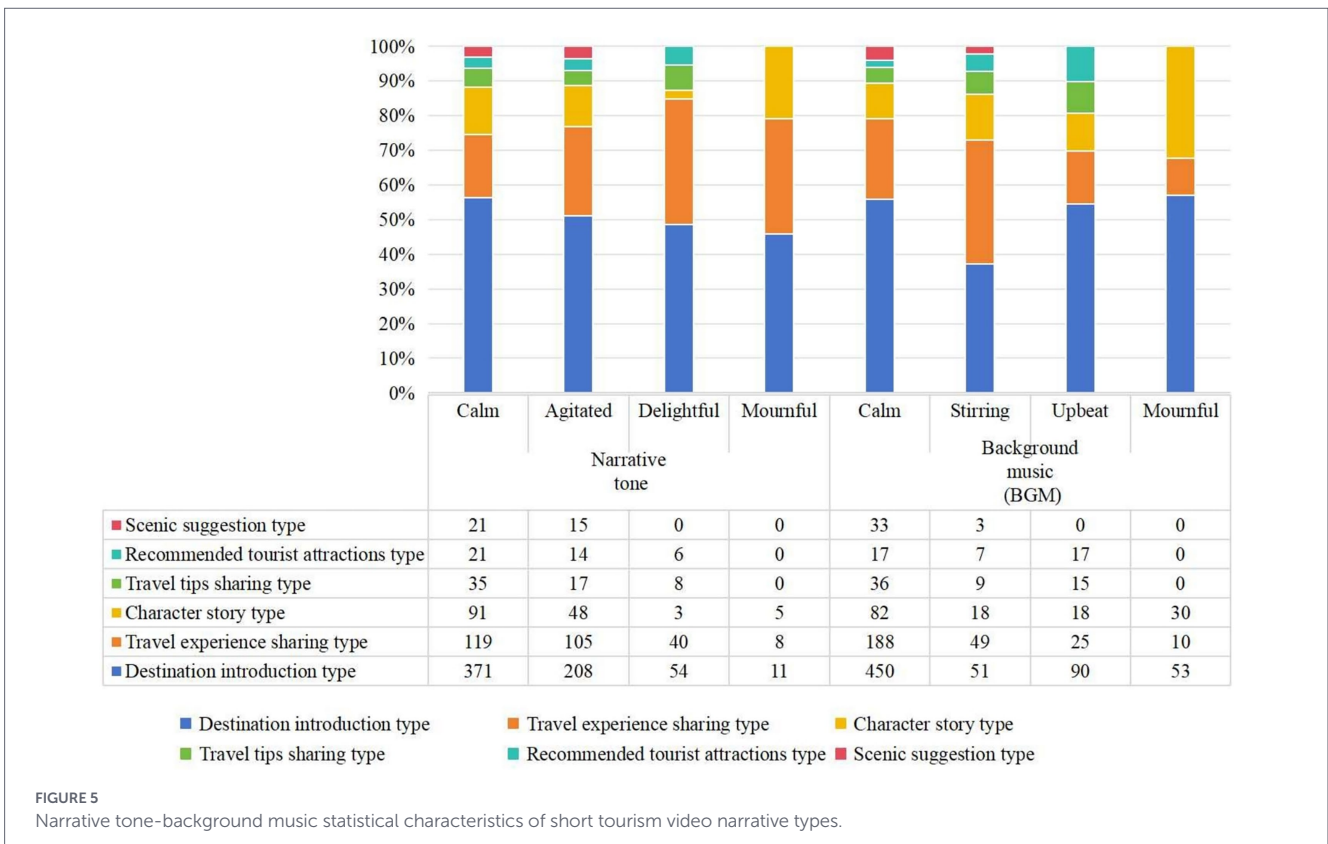


FIGURE 4 Narrative transmission theory-driven tourism short video destination marketing pop-up formula mechanism diagram.



Darren Matrix model (Lei, 2025). Content creators, like bloggers, need distinctive personas to attract users—similar to a tour guide with military expertise. Such a blogger gains wide support, with credibility strengthened by industry-aligned content. The choice

of red tourism destinations is influenced by the blogger’s military background.

Thumbnails and titles significantly impact engagement. Titles affect user involvement and emotions (Fu et al., 2024). The blogger

uses vivid landscapes and exaggerated expressions for humor, with bold fonts in yellow or red to highlight themes. Titles include keywords and provocative statements contrasting with reality, sparking curiosity while incorporating professional tips and practical terms like “strategy” or “guide.”

To maintain click-through rates and avoid user fatigue, creators must keep a steady narrative pace. The opening must align with the title to spark curiosity. Including symbols of local culture—like dialects or childhood memories—evokes emotional connections. The ending uses concise and uplifting messages to promote positive values. Social storytelling encourages offline action, transitioning viewers from watching to traveling. Local and historical narratives, along with mood and music, help build compelling tourism imagery.

## Theoretical implications

Initially, the study delves into the internal workings of how tourism short videos are transmitted, grounded in the concept of narrative transmission. Presently, numerous academics concentrate their studies on the communicative influence of brief tourism videos, their extensive effect on the behavioral intentions of tourists, and how these videos mold the reputation of tourist spots. Nonetheless, detailed studies are lacking on how short tourism videos are transmitted narratively and in the creation of their content itself. Consequently, this document compiles textual data from video narration and titles to formulate the storytelling trajectory of tourism short videos, described as “persona shaping-cover design-title formula-narrative narration-three-dimensional emotional sound field”.

Furthermore, the majority of modern research on brief tourism videos adheres to conventional social science research techniques, such as gathering data via manual coding, conducting questionnaires, interviews, etc., and integrating empirical studies, etc. in the context of the research paradigm (Yin, 2009). Amidst the swift evolution of big data, user-created content, and AI, this study aims to gather textual narration of a blogger’s brief tourist video on the Bilibili. This is achieved through network data mining and integrating it with conventional social sciences to conduct qualitative analysis of the video’s narration, like manual coding, thereby aiding in supporting future research findings.

## Practical implications

Initially, on a local scale, acknowledging the significant role of mobile short-video media in promoting tourism and attracting tourists (Luo et al., 2023), it is essential for local cultural and tourism agencies to utilize exceptional local tourism professionals to increase visitor numbers and exposure through short video media campaigns and promotions, thereby encouraging more people to travel. As seasoned service providers, well-versed in the destination and creators of high-quality tourism material, tour guides stand out as prime choices for endorsing, promoting, and publicizing destinations. For instance, a blogger who is celebrated nationwide as a tour guide in Zhejiang. The released short videos, both introductory and character-driven, feature numerous attractions and notable historical figures from Zhejiang Province, thereby attracting a substantial number of visitors to Zhejiang’s tourist spots and significantly boosting the region’s tourism sector.

Furthermore, when promoting tourist spots, initially, due to the video’s unconventional nature and the unique dialect challenge, typical attractions transform into “social currencies.” From a narrative structure perspective, it has the potential to go viral online.

Concurrently, it facilitates the commercial transformation of pre-sale hotels and specialized tourist spots and addresses the challenges in tourists’ decision-making regarding consumption.

## Limitations and further research directions

This study conducted an in-depth narrative analysis of short tourism video content by a well-known and representative domestic travel video blogger on the Bilibili platform, offering preliminary insights into the narrative structures and communication strategies of tourism short videos within a specific context. While we have strived for rigor, several inherent limitations in the research design and methodology must be acknowledged. These limitations, however, also point to valuable avenues for future research.

First, regarding the research scope, this study employs a single-case, in-depth analysis focused on one platform. While this design facilitates a detailed exploration of narrative texture, it consequently limits the generalizability of the findings. The unique algorithmic logic, user ecosystem, and content format of the Bilibili platform may shape distinct narrative conventions, meaning the insights identified here may not be directly transferable to other platforms (e.g., YouTube, Instagram Reels). Similarly, the personal style and success trajectory of the selected blogger may not represent the broader spectrum of travel content creators. Future research could undertake cross-platform comparative analyses to explore differences in narrative strategies for the same creator or similar content across different platforms. Alternatively, multi-case comparative studies could be conducted, incorporating creators with varying follower counts and content styles (e.g., luxury travel, backpacking, cultural immersion) to test and enrich the narrative patterns identified in this study.

Second, the content analysis in this study possesses significant cultural and linguistic specificity. The narrative appeal identified relies heavily on the use of local dialects, references to indigenous cultural symbols, and shared memories within specific communities. While this deep contextual embeddedness is a source of this study’s value, it also means its explanatory power may be primarily confined to audiences familiar with this cultural context. For international or culturally unfamiliar viewers, the efficacy of certain narrative strategies might diminish or be interpreted differently. Therefore, a highly promising future direction involves cross-cultural audience reception studies. By exposing audiences from different cultural backgrounds to the same or similar content, researchers could investigate differences in narrative reception, comprehension, and emotional response, thereby deepening the understanding of the mechanisms of cross-cultural tourism narrative communication.

Third, and a key methodological limitation, is that this study focuses solely on the content itself without directly incorporating audience data. We analyzed the narrative strategies “encoded” within the videos and inferred their “potential” communication and persuasive effects (e.g., enhancing immersion, boosting destination appeal) based on theoretical frameworks. However, these inferences have not been empirically verified from the audience’s perspective. The relationship between content features and communication effects is not one of simple causation. To establish this connection more robustly, future research should adopt mixed-methods approaches: complementing content analysis with surveys to measure viewers’ levels of narrative transportation, attitude change, and behavioral intentions post-viewing; or employing experimental designs to manipulate different narrative elements (e.g., presence of dialect, use of first-person perspective) to test

their causal impact on outcome variables. Furthermore, technologies such as eye-tracking could be utilized to explore viewers' visual attention allocation when engaging with complex multimodal narratives.

Finally, while the qualitative analysis process followed a systematic coding procedure, it inevitably involves an element of personal interpretation. Although we enhanced reliability through repeated viewings, multiple coding iterations, and team discussions, the interpretation of narrative themes, emotional tones, and cultural symbols may still be influenced by the researchers' own perspectives. To increase the objectivity and transparency of the analytical process, future qualitative research could: (1) implement formal inter-coder reliability checks; (2) utilize qualitative data analysis software (e.g., NVivo) to aid in management and analysis, providing a more detailed account of the data reduction process from raw data to core categories; and (3) where feasible, employ member-checking techniques by presenting preliminary findings to the content creator or knowledgeable audience members to validate the interpretative plausibility.

## Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

## Author contributions

JM: Data curation, Software, Writing – original draft. HaZ: Supervision, Writing – review & editing, Project administration, Conceptualization. HuZ: Project administration, Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision.

## References

- Arora, N., and Lata, S. (2020). YouTube channels influence on destination visit intentions: an empirical analysis on the base of information adoption model. *J. Indian Bus. Res.* 12, 23–42. doi: 10.1108/IJBR-09-2019-0269
- Bhattacharya, C. B., and Sen, S. (2003). Consumer-company identification: a framework for understanding consumers' relationships with companies. *J. Mark.* 67, 76–88. doi: 10.1509/jmkg.67.2.76.18609
- Blood, A. J., and Zatorre, R. J. (2001). Intensely pleasurable responses to music correlate with activity in brain regions implicated in reward and emotion. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 98, 11818–11823. doi: 10.1073/pnas.191355898
- Chang, N., Liu, M., Fan, Z., and Zhang, X. (2023). An empirical study on the multi-point trigger mechanism of hot topic public opinion propagation from an information ecology perspective. *Intell. Sci.* 41, 120–169. doi: 10.13833/j.issn.1007-7634.2023.11.014
- Chen, W. (2023). A study on empathetic narratives in news short videos in online public opinion. *Media* 14, 94–96.
- Choi, K. (2025). Immersive media narratives shaping generation Z working holiday intentions. *Asia Pac. J. Tour. Res.* doi: 10.1080/10941665.2025.2574037
- Deb, M., Ghosh, A., and Shukla, Y. (2025). Storytelling ads, narrative transportation, retrospective reflexivity, and attitude towards brands: role of independent versus interdependence self-construal. *Psychol. Mark.* 42, 1795–1810. doi: 10.1002/mar.22204
- Dong, X., Liu, H., Xi, N., Liao, J., and Yang, Z. (2024). Short video marketing: what, when and how short-branded videos facilitate consumer engagement. *Internet Res.* 34, 1104–1128.
- Fang, R. (2024). A study on the symbolic construction and narrative strategies of Guangxi cultural and tourism short videos on the Douyin platform. (master's thesis). Guangxi University. Master's degree.
- Fu, S., Su, Y., and Sun, J. (2024). A study on the factors influencing the dissemination effect of rumour-busting short videos based on an heuristic-system model. *J. Inf. Sci.* 43, 457–469.
- Gan, J., Shi, S., Filieri, R., and Leung, W. K. (2023). Short video marketing and travel intentions: the interplay between visual perspective, visual content, and narration appeal. *Tour. Manag.* 99:104795. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2023.104795
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., and Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organ. Res. Methods* 16, 15–31. doi: 10.1177/1094428112452151
- Green, M. C. (2004). Transportation into narrative worlds: the role of prior knowledge and perceived realism. *Discourse Process.* 38, 247–266. doi: 10.1207/s15326950dp3802
- Green, M. C., and Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* 79:701.
- Huang, X., and Qiu, Z. (2019). Technology empowerment and emotional interaction: a study on visual music communication on the Douyin platform. *J. Southwest Univ. Nationalities (Humanit. Soc. Sci. Ed.)* 40, 156–161.
- Krishna, A. (2012). An integrative review of sensory marketing: engaging the senses to affect perception, judgment and behavior. *J. Consum. Psychol.* 22, 332–351. doi: 10.1016/j.jcps.2011.08.003
- Lei, J. (2025). A study on the interaction process between consumers and marketing entities from the perspective of digital content marketing: a multi-case study based on the home appliance manufacturing industry. *J. Northwest Univ. (Philos. Soc. Sci. Ed.)* 55, 154–166. doi: 10.16152/j.cnki.xdxbsk.2025-02-014
- Lei, J., Zhao, L., and Chen, D. (2020). Xi'an tourism analysis report. *Am. J. Ind. Bus. Manag.* 10:1360. doi: 10.4236/ajibm.2020.108090

## Funding

The author(s) declared that financial support was not received for this work and/or its publication.

## Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared that this work was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

## Generative AI statement

The author(s) declared that Generative AI was not used in the creation of this manuscript.

Any alternative text (alt text) provided alongside figures in this article has been generated by Frontiers with the support of artificial intelligence and reasonable efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, including review by the authors wherever possible. If you identify any issues, please contact us.

## Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

- Li, H., and Pan, Y. (2023). Impact of interaction effects between visual and auditory signs on consumer purchasing behavior based on the AISAS model. *J. Theor. Appl. Electron. Commer. Res.* 18, 1548–1559. doi: 10.3390/jtaer18030078
- Luo, W., Wang, F., and Ding, Z. (2023). Spatial differences in the online popularity of red tourist attractions in China on Douyin and their influencing factors. *Econ. Geogr.* 43, 198–210. doi: 10.15957/j.cnki.jjdl.2023.03.021
- Manic, M. (2024). Short-form video content and consumer engagement in digital landscapes. *Bull. Transilvania Univ. Brasov Econ. Sci.* 17, 45–52. doi: 10.31926/but.es.2024.17.66.1.4
- Oatley, K. (1999). Meetings of minds: dialogue, sympathy, and identification, in reading fiction. *Poetics* 26, 439–454. doi: 10.1016/S0304-422X(99)00011-X
- Pantoja, F., and Borges, A. (2021). Background music tempo effects on food evaluations and purchase intentions. *J. Retail. Consum. Serv.* 63:102730. doi: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102730
- Ribeiro, M. A., Seyfi, S., Elhoushy, S., Woosnam, K. M., and Patwardhan, V. (2025). Determinants of generation Z pro-environmental travel behaviour: the moderating role of green consumption values. *J. Sustain. Tour.* 33, 1079–1099. doi: 10.1080/09669582.2023.2230389
- Stipsits, C. M. (2024). Influence of the influencer: decoding the credibility of influencers among college students. *Int. J. Undergrad. Res. Creat. Act.* 16:7. doi: 10.61809/2168-0620.1355
- Tan, K. J., Chen, Z., and Huan, T. C. (2025). Short-form tourism video advertisements: overt versus covert persuasion and advertising literacy. *J. Vacat. Mark.*:13567667251360434.
- Tracey, P., Dalpiaz, E., and Phillips, N. (2018). Fish out of water: translation, legitimization, and new venture creation. *Acad. Manag. J.* 61, 1627–1666. doi: 10.5465/amj.2015.0264
- Van Laer, T., Edson Escalas, J., Ludwig, S., and Van Den Hende, E. A. (2019a). What happens in Vegas stays on tripadvisor? A theory and technique to understand narrativity in consumer reviews. *J. Consum. Res.* 46, 267–285. doi: 10.1093/jcr/ucy067
- Van Laer, T., Feireisen, S., and Visconti, L. M. (2019b). Storytelling in the digital era: a meta-analysis of relevant moderators of the narrative transportation effect. *J. Bus. Res.* 96, 135–146. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.10.053
- Wattanacharoensil, W., Pattaratanakun, A., Taecharungroj, V., and Solnet, D. (2024). Toward an improved, holistic understanding of 'meaningful destination'. *Tour. Recreat. Res.* 50, 1011–1027. doi: 10.1080/02508281.2024.2357001
- Wei, Z., Zhang, M., and Qiao, T. (2022). Effect of personal branding stereotypes on user engagement on short-video platforms. *J. Retail. Consum. Serv.* 69:103121. doi: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103121
- Wengel, Y., Ma, L., Ma, Y., Apollo, M., Maciuk, K., and Ashton, A. S. (2022). The TikTok effect on destination development: famous overnight, now what? *J. Outdoor Recreat. Tour.* 37:100458. doi: 10.1016/j.jort.2021.100458
- Wu, X., and Lai, I. K. W. (2024). How the creativity and authenticity of destination short videos influence audiences' attitudes toward videos and destinations: the mediating role of emotions and the moderating role of parasocial interaction with internet celebrities. *Curr. Issues Tour.* 27, 2428–2447. doi: 10.1080/13683500.2023.2229483
- Xiao, Q., Huang, W., Qu, L., and Li, X. (2025). The impact of multimodal information features of short sales videos on consumer engagement behavior: a multi-method approach. *J. Retail. Consum. Serv.* 82:104136. doi: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.104136
- Xiao, L., Li, X., and Zhang, Y. (2023). Exploring the factors influencing consumer engagement behavior regarding short-form video advertising: a big data perspective. *J. Retail. Consum. Serv.* 70:103170. doi: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103170
- Xiong, T. (2023). A study on the classification of destination short video narrative types and content interaction mechanisms based on machine learning. (master's thesis). Beijing second foreign studies university. Master's degree.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: design and methods*, vol. 5: Sage.
- YINR. (2013). *Case study research: design and methods [M]*. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 98–99.
- Zhang, Z., Qiu, K., and Ye, Y. (2025). Influence of audiovisual features of short video advertising on consumer engagement behaviors: evidence from TikTok. *J. Bus. Res.* 201:115662. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2025.115662
- Zhou, Y. (2020). The mechanism of black narrative's impact on the image of tourist destinations. *Tour. J.* 35, 65–79. doi: 10.19765/j.cnki.1002-5006.2020.02.010
- Zhou, Y., and Cai, Y. (2018). From content to narrative: a study on destination marketing communication. *Tour. J.* 33, 6–9.
- Zhu, C., Hoc Nang Fong, L., Gao, H., Buhalis, D., and Shang, Z. (2022). How does celebrity involvement influence travel intention? The case of promoting Chengdu on TikTok. *Inf. Technol. Tour.* 24, 389–407. doi: 10.1007/s40558-022-00233-w