

# Marketing Strategy for Taihu Bay Music Festival

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## Abstract

**This paper takes the Changzhou Taihu Bay Music Festival as the research subject. Combining case study analysis, online textual analysis, and field investigation, and based on SWOT analysis, the 7Ps marketing theory, and experiential marketing theory, it begins with the background of the Taihu Bay Music Festival to clarify its brand positioning and the characteristics of its primary customer base. From the perspective of marketing strategy, it analyzes the festival's product, pricing, place, promotional, people, physical evidence, process. Subsequently, optimization suggestions for the future development of the Taihu Bay Music Festival brand are proposed. These include, for example, incorporating Jiangnan water town characteristics into stage design by adding water curtain effects; designing scenario-based murder mystery games integrated with the music festival while incorporating intangible cultural heritage features of the Changzhou region; and combining the music festival with environmental public welfare initiatives. The aim is to provide a reference for enhancing the market competitiveness of the Taihu Bay Music Festival and achieving sustainable development in the future.**

## Keywords

**Taihu Bay Music Festival; 7Ps; Marketing.**

## 1. Introduction

Since the 21st century, fueled by domestic economic prosperity and the growing demand for cultural and entertainment experiences, music festivals in China have entered a new era of vigorous development. Various music festivals have sprung up like mushrooms, not only increasing significantly in number but also demonstrating diversification in terms of musical styles, event formats, and target audiences. The *Upgraded Competition, Diversified Development – Analysis of Trends and Characteristics in China's 2024 Large-Scale Commercial Performance Market* report released by the China Association of Performing Arts indicates that in 2024, the box office revenue for large music festivals (with over 5,000 attendees) reached nearly 2.4 billion yuan, with attendance surpassing 5.81 million. During the May Day and National Day holiday periods, the number of festival events exceeded 60 and 40 respectively, representing annual box office peaks[1]. It is evident that music festival performances have become deeply integrated into people's lives. Traveling to a city for a music festival has emerged as a new vacation trend. China's music festival market has entered a new phase characterized by scale, mainstream acceptance, holiday-centric scheduling, and deep integration with cultural and tourism industries. A broader consumer base is now willing to pay for emotional resonance, social experiences, and unique memories.

The Taihu Bay Music Festival in Changzhou has emerged as one of China's most influential music festivals. Leveraging its unique geographical location, diverse musical offerings, and exceptional on-site experience, it has attracted significant attention and participation from music enthusiasts nationwide. Interestingly, the festival did not initially debut as a conventional large-scale music event. Its precursor was a 2019 trial held by Changzhou Universal Cartoon Fun Valley to celebrate its anniversary, with an investment of less than 3

million yuan. Due to its positive reception and considerable revenue, the event evolved and expanded over time. By 2025, it had successfully concluded its 11th edition. In 2023, the Taihu Bay Music Festival attracted an estimated 100,000 attendees, with 68.7% traveling from outside Jiangsu Province. The festival generated approximately 280 million yuan in revenue for surrounding attractions, hotels, transportation, and related sectors[2]. It has evolved into a popular cultural IP driving urban development. Consequently, the Taihu Bay Music Festival is no longer merely a cultural event but has become a shining new hallmark of the city's cultural tourism. It has revitalized the popularity and commercial value of West Taihu Lake, boosting the local cultural tourism industry and fostering an upgrade in economic consumption. The festival's box office revenue in 2024 approached 2.4 billion yuan, underscoring its transformation into a large-scale, integrated event that combines premier music, natural scenery, holiday leisure, and city marketing.

This paper employs case study analysis, online textual analysis, and field investigation to conduct an in-depth examination of the marketing strategy of the Taihu Bay Music Festival. It explores the festival's brand influence and market competitiveness, analyzes certain issues arising during its operation and development, and, through research, proposes recommendations for the festival's future development, with the aim of promoting its further progress.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. SWOT Analysis**

SWOT analysis is a framework used to assess an enterprise or brand based on its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Strengths (S) refer to the positive, advantageous factors internal to the organization relative to its competitors. These represent its core competitiveness. Weaknesses (W) refer to the negative, disadvantageous factors internal to the organization relative to its competitors. Opportunities (O) are favorable, positive factors in the external environment that can benefit the organization's future development, such as policy dividends or an expanding consumer market. Threats (T) are unfavorable, negative factors in the external environment that may hinder the organization's future development, such as intensifying industry competition[3].

In today's society, the music festival landscape is flourishing, with events like the Midi Music Festival and the Strawberry Music Festival exhibiting product homogeneity. This intensifying industry competition will inevitably impact the development of the Taihu Bay Music Festival. Employing SWOT analysis can enhance its resilience to risks, achieve optimal resource allocation, ensure it maintains its competitive edge in a fierce market, continuously increase its brand value and influence, and promote the long-term, sustainable development of the Taihu Bay Music Festival.

### **2.2. The 7Ps Marketing Strategy Theory**

The 7Ps marketing mix theory comprises seven elements: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. Product includes both tangible goods and intangible services. It encompasses information provided to customers regarding the quality, standards, experience, service content, and after-sales service of the goods or services offered. Price refers to the monetary amount a user must pay to obtain the product. Pricing strategies are diverse, including the product's base price and discount prices. Therefore, in actual pricing, different strategies should be selected based on the product's positioning, customer perception, product costs, and competitor pricing. Place refers to the entire flow process of the product from the manufacturer to the consumer, covering both traditional physical sales channels and online sales platforms. Promotion involves the strategies enterprises adopt to

stimulate consumers' willingness to purchase, thereby achieving sales objectives. It encompasses various aspects such as advertising, personal selling, sales promotions, public relations, brand image promotion, and commercial publicity. People refers to all individuals directly or indirectly involved in the service delivery process, including both consumers and service providers. Physical Evidence refers to the service itself and product display, including the physical environment and service aspects, such as environmental design, equipment and facilities, company branding, and ambiance. Process refers to the specific service mechanisms, activities, and procedures through which the service is delivered[4].

The music festival is essentially a complex and highly participatory experience-based service that encompasses music, atmosphere, social interaction, cuisine, scenic beauty, and more. Therefore, this article employs the 7Ps marketing theory for analysis, treating it as a complete service experience system supported by personnel, environment, and processes. Consumers go through the process of obtaining information, purchasing tickets, arriving by transportation, undergoing security checks and entry, locating the stage, purchasing food and beverages, using facilities, watching the performance, and finally leaving and sharing memories. Each step in this process affects the consumer's experience. The stage lighting design, performance lineup, atmosphere creation, material display, and personnel service at the Taihu Bay Music Festival influence customers' intuitive judgment of the quality and value of the music festival. Therefore, this article uses the 7Ps theory to analyze the marketing strategy of the Taihu Bay Music Festival.

### **2.3. Experiential Marketing Theory**

Unlike traditional marketing theories, which focus on a product's functional features, benefits, and value, experiential marketing theory emphasizes creating memorable sensory experiences and emotional resonance for customers.

In the *Experiential Marketing* Bernd H. Schmitt proposed five core dimensions of experiential marketing: Sense, Feel, Think, Act, and Relate. Sense refers to creating sensory stimulation through sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch to enhance aesthetic appeal and excitement—for example, the powerful sound effects and dazzling stage lighting at a music festival. Feel involves touching customers' inner emotions and creating a strong emotional connection with them, fostering a profound sense of belonging. Think engages customers' intellect, encouraging creative thinking and problem-solving experiences. Act enriches customers' lives by altering their physical experiences, lifestyles, and modes of interaction. Relate connects individuals with a broader social system—such as a subculture, a brand community, or an ideal—thereby shaping and reinforcing their social identity[5].

The essence of a music festival is an experiential product. What consumers purchase is not merely a performance but the complete experience and feelings during that period. As competition intensifies, various music festivals are vying for headlining or top-tier artists. However, relying solely on a star-studded lineup makes it difficult to establish a competitive product advantage or achieve differentiation. Experiential marketing highlights that the ultimate goal of a music festival is not merely ticket sales but creating precious memories that make fans eager to return, thereby building brand loyalty.

## **3. Analysis of Taihu Bay Music Festival's Brand Positioning**

### **3.1. Market Positioning**

The Taihu Bay Music Festival is a popular domestic IP that integrates culture and tourism. Strategically located in the core of the Yangtze River Delta, it attracts audiences from Nanjing, Suzhou, Shanghai, and surrounding areas. By featuring headlining artists and star-studded lineups, and leveraging the Changzhou Joyland, it has created a unique music + entertainment

park setting that prioritizes the overall experience. This approach not only provides consumers with top-tier musical performances but also enhances the festival's entertainment value. Transcending the model of a simple music event, it has cultivated a weekend lifestyle that blends music, trends, social interaction, and tourism. Thus, the festival places greater emphasis on a comprehensive experiential model—a new music + cultural tourism format. It integrates with Joyland, surrounding resorts, and scenic areas to establish a closed-loop consumption ecosystem centered on music festival + tourism vacation. This positions the festival as a platform for deep consumer immersion rather than just an affordable party. Consequently, the festival enjoys a strong reputation and has become a benchmark among music festivals for its premium, experiential, and high-quality audiovisual offerings.

### **3.2. Target Audience**

The consumers of Taihu Bay Music Festival are characterized by their youth, wide geographic distribution, high consumption levels, generally higher education, appreciation for music and trendy culture, strong social engagement, and a propensity for sharing across various social platforms. Firstly, in terms of age structure, the primary audience comprises individuals aged 18 to 30, with this group accounting for 68.7% of attendees at the ninth edition, highlighting the distinctly youthful nature of the festival. The young people who are new to the workplace constitute the core audience group of music festivals. Furthermore, the reach of this music festival is extremely extensive. The proportion of music fans outside Jiangsu Province is as high as 70% [6]. These fans come from regions such as Beijing, Hebei, and Jiangxi, as well as a small number from countries like Singapore and South Korea. In terms of occupation, the audience mainly consists of students and young professionals entering the workforce. The proportion of university students is relatively high, with some participating as volunteers to support the festival's operations. Young professionals are predominantly employed in youth-oriented industries such as internet technology, cultural and creative sectors, and services, along with a small number of trend-seeking freelancers. While income levels vary within this group, overall, they exhibit strong consumption capacity. Students primarily rely on parental support or part-time income, focusing their spending on basic tickets and small on-site purchases. Young professionals typically earn between 5,000 yuan/month and 10,000 yuan/month, enabling them to afford not only tickets but also moderate expenses such as accommodation and cultural merchandise. Most consumers pursue high-quality music experiences and are willing to pay for premium experiences that align with their personal preferences. Many fans combine their festival attendance with visits to local homestays and scenic spots in Changzhou, creating a "music festival + micro-vacation" consumption pattern. The educational level of this consumer group is generally high, with the majority holding bachelor's degrees. As a result, they exhibit a high degree of openness to diverse cultures, a desire for novelty, and an ability to quickly embrace the trendy elements and cultural atmosphere of the music festival. They are adept at understanding, appreciating, and accepting various music genres. Dissatisfied with mainstream pop song, they crave the "uniqueness" and cutting-edge nature of the festival lineup, seeking to deeply immerse themselves in the charm of music. Consequently, they prioritize high-quality performances and are highly willing to pay for top-tier artists and cross-genre guests such as Zhou Shen, Secondhand Rose, and 0713. Furthermore, this group is enthusiastic about participation, interaction, and sharing. They view attending high-end music festivals as a trendy social activity and enjoy sharing their experiences on social media to cultivate an image of being "life-savvy and tasteful." They favor novel and "photogenic" consumption settings, displaying a strong curiosity for unique experiences like food markets and graffiti photo spots. They also have a keen interest in distinctive cultural and creative products, such as practical yet personalized items like fridge magnets and limited-edition pendants. Their strong inclination to share and interact is evident in their active presence on platforms like Weibo super-topics,

fan WeChat groups, and Douban discussion boards, where they seek the latest updates and engage in insider conversations. They meticulously curate nine-square photo grids and produce vlogs with advanced filters and background music, accompanied by thoughtful written reflections to share their experiences and foster social interactions. This high level of content creation and sharing transforms the target consumers into co-creators and brand ambassadors for Taihu Bay Music Festival's marketing efforts.

### **3.3. Consumer Behavior Analysis**

Positioned as a high-quality music + tourism experience, the Taihu Bay Music Festival attracts consumers driven by various motivations that extend far beyond simply listening to music. These include emotional needs like seeking joy and releasing stress, social desires such as spending time with friends, and fervent admiration for music or specific artists. They pursue high-quality weekend cultural vacations, seek to experience the atmosphere at top venues, and enjoy the revelry. Therefore, the consumers of the Taihu Bay Music Festival are willing to pay for the premium of love, experience and emotions. This leads them to willingly pay a premium for their preferences, the overall experience, and the emotional value derived. Their journey typically begins with information gathering through platforms like rednote, TikTok, and word-of-mouth from friends. For instance, they search for Taihu Bay Music Festival guides, real experience reviews, or Outfit of the Day inspiration on rednote or TikTok. On Bilibili, they watch official footage from past festivals, high-definition fan videos, music critic analyses, and artist documentaries to gain a comprehensive, in-depth understanding, building realistic expectations and mitigating consumption risks. They also frequent Weibo super-topics, fan WeChat groups, and Douban discussion boards to access real-time updates, insider discussions, and genuine fan feedback to make informed choices and avoid potential pitfalls. This pattern reveals a tendency to trust decentralized sources or trust nodes, placing greater faith in third-party evaluations and user-generated content. During the decision-making process, consumers are skilled at information gathering and comparison, meticulously evaluating factors like the artist lineup, ticket pricing, past reputation, and travel and accommodation costs. However, the final decision is often swayed by emotional drivers: passion for a particular artist, longing for the live atmosphere, or influence from peers. This indicates that the consumption decisions of Taihu Bay Music Festival attendees are highly intertwined blends of rationality and emotion, with emotional drivers often acting as the ultimate switch. They seek both functional value—such as comparing artist lineups, assessing ticket price fairness, evaluating transportation convenience, and judging service reliability—and emotional/social value. The latter includes the sense of ritual from being present with idols, the catharsis of collective revelry, self-identity through participation in trendy events, and the sense of belonging from strengthening social bonds. This emotional and experiential value often defines the peak experience and lasting memories, making functional value a superficial factor influencing purchase consideration, while emotional and experiential value ultimately justify the purchase. During the experience itself, consumers exhibit a strong tendency towards online sharing and interaction, characterized by high creativity. They post their consumption experiences, feelings, photos, and videos from the event on short-video and social media platforms. If the festival meets or exceeds expectations, these consumers become organic promoters, generating positive word-of-mouth. Conversely, if the experience falls short, they may articulate detailed, logical cautionary posts on social media, citing terms and comparing them against promotional claims, forming a potent force of public oversight. Thus, consumers of the Taihu Bay Music Festival not only pursue social capital through their participation and sharing but also actively exercise their oversight power.

### 3.4. Differentiation Analysis

First, in terms of market positioning, Taihu Bay Music Festival distinguishes itself from many other music festivals by emphasizing a premium experience, with ticket prices slightly higher than those of most competitors. In contrast, other music festivals often focus on affordability and cost-effectiveness. For example, Table 1 below compares the ticket prices of Taihu Bay Music Festival during the 2025 National Day holiday with those of several other music festivals in nearby cities.

**Table 1. Price Comparison of Music Festivals**

	Taihu Bay Music Festival	Nanjing DNA Music Festival	Nanjing MiDou Music Festival
Ticket price			
VIP	888Yuan(Standard ticket) 698Yuan(Presale ticket)	799Yuan(Standard ticket) 699Yuan(Presale ticket)	599Yuan(Presale ticket)
standard fare	666Yuan(Standard ticket) 499Yuan(Presale ticket) 399Yuan(Early bird ticket)	599Yuan(Early bird ticket)	399Yuan(Presale ticket) 299Yuan(Early bird ticket)

Secondly, the lineup of the Taihu Bay Music Festival primarily features top-tier and mid-tier artists. For the 9th edition of the festival, the lineup included well-known artists such as Yuan Wang, Yojia Lin, Sulong Wang, and Zhiqian Xue. By the 11th edition, the festival continued its collaboration with Sulong Wang and Zhiqian Xue while also inviting artists like Ella, Qingfeng Wu, and Shunxi Zeng. Nanjing DNA Music Festival, despite having invited two influential and talented Mandopop singers—Junjie Lin and Yojia Lin—as guests, falls slightly short of the Taihu Bay Music Festival in terms of both the number and overall impact of top-tier artists. The Nanjing MiDou Music Festival, on the other hand, placed more emphasis on discovering local and niche artists. In terms of attracting public attention and creating widespread influence, it lagged behind the Taihu Bay Music Festival.

On the stage equipment, the Taihu Bay Music Festival replicated the full-surface continuous screen technology of Adele's concert, combined with 3D viewing and animation effects. It extended the stage on both sides to increase the stage size, innovatively adopting a dual push stage and dual system mode, reducing the set-up time to 5 minutes. It was also equipped with bubble machines, color cannons, water spray devices, etc., continuously enhancing the atmosphere on the spot. The audience's cheers were loud and the interactive experience was good. In terms of planning the performance, the performance sections were divided into bands, rap, pop, and new-generation idol groups. New talents were constantly discovered, and the performance lineup was constantly updated, keeping up with the trend. At the same time, surprise segments were added, such as the Taihu Bay Music Festival in May Day 2025. At the end of the event, a fireworks display was added, with dozens of fireworks suddenly bursting into the night sky, providing consumers with a unique and novel music festival experience. At the end of the music festival and when the fans dispersed, the park NPCs would stand in a line and wave goodbye to the fans. This all-round and high-quality experience is unmatched by many other music festivals, and it is also the key to how Taihu Bay Music Festival can stand out in the market and form a differentiated competitive advantage.

In addition, the venue is located at the Joyland. The venue remains the same for each event, and the fixed location helps with maintenance and updates. The equipment is also continuously optimized. The fixed venue means that the flow planning, crowd control, and emergency evacuation plans can be constantly reviewed and optimized, thereby significantly improving the order and efficiency of on-site management and reducing chaos. The Taihu Bay

Music Festival is held at the Joyland. The magical architecture and theme installations of the park become the unique visual backdrop for the music festival, complementing the stage art, creating an immersive experience beyond a pure music event. It can create a multi-experience of music + entertainment, music + amusement, allowing consumers to enjoy a diversified experience of vision, hearing, movement, aesthetics, and entertainment. However, other music festival venues often change, usually being open spaces or lawns. This not only increases the setup and equipment costs of the music festival but also easily leads to unpredictable problems (such as muddy conditions on rainy days, unstable power supply), reducing the quality of the music festival and weakening the sense of experience.

## **4. SWOT Analysis of Taihu Bay Music Festival**

### **4.1. Advantages (S)**

The Taihu Bay Music Festival has created a high-quality and well-equipped lineup and stage configuration to meet diverse needs. The lineup covers various genres, with the 10th edition featuring popular and rock singers and bands such as Shen Zhou, Zhiqian Xue, and also responding to fans' requests by inviting Yuan Wang to perform. The 9th edition also included powerful musicians like Shu Pu. Regarding the stage, the 10th edition introduced the same screen as the Adele concert [7], adopting a 100-meter-wide single stage and dual push stage design, which shortens the set change time to only 5 minutes, and the surround LED screen creates an immersive experience, ensuring that fans in different areas can clearly enjoy the performance. In addition, the venue also has multiple food stalls and rich cultural and creative points to enhance the product experience dimension.

The Taihu Bay Music Festival is held at Joyland. It comes equipped with entertainment facilities and spacious venues, which can meet the requirements for large-scale performance setups. Additionally, it is located in the core area of the Yangtze River Delta and is adjacent to cities such as Shanghai, Nanjing, and Hangzhou. By leveraging free shuttle buses and coordinating extended subway operating hours, it makes it more convenient for outside Jiangsu music fans to reach the festival site. This is also an important geographical basis for its high proportion of outside Jiangsu music fans, reaching up to 70%. It can also easily link with nearby guesthouses and villages to form a consumption chain of Music Festival + Micro Vacation.

The Taihu Bay Music Festival places great emphasis on humanistic care. It divides the music venue into various areas such as standing areas and inflatable sofa areas. It also provides free drinking water and supplementary snacks to the music fans queuing up on site. This news has been widely spread in the music fan community, significantly enhancing the popularity. In terms of transportation, about 3,000 new parking spaces have been added. The total number of parking spaces in the resort area exceeds 10,000. 600 free shuttle buses provide free shuttle services between Suzhou, Wuxi and Changzhou every day. They offer refined storage services, categorizing items into small bags and backpacks, and managing the shelves by numbers. During off-peak hours, it takes only 20-30 seconds to retrieve or deposit items. In terms of hygiene, 210 cleaning staff have been equipped, and 450 turnover trash cans have been set up. The ratio of male and female toilets can be adjusted in real time. In addition, there is a women-only beauty area, providing brand setting sprays, disposable makeup tools and makeup mirrors. Two medical points have been set up. Even after the performance ends, volunteers offer warm farewell services. After the 9th music festival, the evacuation of tens of thousands of people was completed in about 45 minutes. It can be said that the service guarantee of the Taihu Bay Music Festival ensures that the music festival is carried out in an orderly, safe and successful manner, increasing the consumers' sense of experience and satisfaction.

The Taihu Bay Music Festival has built up a good reputation through providing high-end music experiences, with a high level of fan loyalty. It has a strong influence in the music market. From its first edition in 2019 to the present, the topic traffic has continuously exceeded 100 million. The ninth music festival attracted 135,000 music fans to participate. Additionally, its fans actively share their feelings after the performances on social media. For instance, on rednote, fans spontaneously praise the heartwarming details such as the farewell celebration after the show. This further amplifies the positive reputation. As a top-tier IP of domestic music festivals, the Taihu Bay Music Festival has been featured on CCTV four times consecutively. Its online popularity remains high, and related topics frequently top the Tiktok and Weibo hot searches. Ticket sales often sell out within 30 seconds. Offline, it has also promoted Taihu Bay to become a popular tourist destination for young people. It is evident that it has already achieved considerable influence.

#### **4.2. Disadvantages (W)**

The investment cost for each music festival keeps increasing, and the funds spent on inviting guests also rise continuously. However, in order to maintain their market competitiveness, the ticket prices remain almost unchanged, resulting in a significant reduction in the profit margin. Due to occasional malfunctions of the audio equipment and the problem that large screens are hard to see during the day, the consumers' experience is greatly compromised, the on-site interaction is reduced, and some fans even consider leaving early. Moreover, the pricing of food stalls inside the music festival is too high, and the restriction on fans bringing their own food has caused dissatisfaction among consumers. This forces fans to make additional purchases on-site, and some students from other places express that it has increased their financial burden. At the same time, the viewing effect in the general area is poor but the pricing is too high, and the problem of the VIP area being overly crowded is also an important factor for fans to consider whether to purchase the music festival. Many fans may give up purchasing due to these factors, which directly affects the profit of the music festival. There are also certain problems with the performance order, such as the ticket check-in area being overly crowded when entering the venue, the occurrence of incidents like mobile phone stands and support banners blocking the view, and the insufficient supervision by security personnel, which poses certain safety hazards.

#### **4.3. Opportunity (O)**

At the provincial and municipal levels, relevant incentive policies were introduced to support and boost the development of the Taihu Bay Music Festival. Changzhou City issued the *Implementation Rules for Reward and Subsidy for Commercial Performances*, stipulating that for each performance with an audience of 5,000 - 19,999 people, a reward of 50,000 yuan would be given; for 20,000 - 29,999 people, 80,000 yuan would be awarded; and for more than 30,000 people, 100,000 yuan would be given. The cumulative reward would be increased based on the number of attendees for each performance [9]. Through a multi-department collaboration mechanism, safety and standardization of the performances were ensured, and measures such as free shuttle buses and discounted scenic area tickets were implemented to drive local consumption. The Implementation Opinions issued at the provincial level clearly supported the creation of regional characteristic performance brands like the Taihu Bay Music Festival and encouraged innovation in the performance + tourism business model [10]. These policies not only reduced the operational costs of the music festival but also provided guarantees for its expansion and upgrading of quality.

With the easing of restrictions after the pandemic and the recovery of the social and economic situation, the performance market economy has remained extremely prosperous, and the demand for attending live music events offline has soared. Currently, young people are under great academic and work pressure, and music festivals have become an important scene for

stress relief and social interaction. In the 9th Taihu Bay Music Festival, the proportion of audiences aged 18-30 reached 68.7%. At the same time, cross-city attendance has become a new consumption trend. Changzhou ranked first in the national cross-city attendance proportion of large music festivals in 2024, and the proportion of out-of-town music fans at Taihu Bay Music Festival was as high as 70%. In 2024, this music festival ranked first in the national music festival box office revenue, and it also drove a 38.76% year-on-year increase in revenue for 13 major scenic spots and rural tourism spots in Wujin District. The consumption model of "music festival + micro vacation" has further increased the market potential of this music festival [11].

The rapid advancement of internet technology and the continuous development of popular short video platforms have greatly facilitated the widespread dissemination of music festivals. The 11th Taihu Bay Music Festival, in a deep collaboration with Tiktok, generated 121 trending topics and achieved an astonishing exposure of over 1.51 billion views. Among these, The topic # Taihu Bay Music Festival is truly comprehensive. It ranked TOP 1 on the Changzhou local trending list, with a cumulative duration on the chart exceeding 210 hours. The platform also collaborated with over 17 top influencers to co-create content, producing multiple videos with tens of thousands of likes, while attracting over 10,000 users to submit content spontaneously. This online promotional model not only enabled the music festival to transcend geographical barriers in its reach but also effectively converted online buzz into offline attendance, further enhancing its brand recognition.

#### **4.4. Threat (T)**

In the current context where the competition among music festivals is becoming increasingly fierce, the external environment poses a significant challenge to the Taihu Bay Music Festival. In Changzhou, there are already several influential music events such as Manghe Music Festival and NUTS Music Festival; nationwide, there are also established and highly recognizable music festival IPs like the Strawberry Music Festival and BUBBLING&BOILING that continue to occupy a significant market share, presenting a very clear competitive situation. At the same time, the pricing strategies of most music festivals are relatively more affordable, with ticket prices generally lower than those of the Taihu Bay Music Festival, making price a crucial consideration for some music fans. Therefore, price-sensitive consumers may prefer alternative projects with better value for money, and this change in consumption behavior may lead to a decrease in the market share of the Taihu Bay Music Festival, thereby affecting its overall brand influence and profitability. In addition, music festivals are large-scale activities that require a high level of resources, organization complexity, and a lot of manpower, material, and financial investment. Each edition of the Taihu Bay Music Festival requires a significant investment in personnel, venue setup, artist coordination, security maintenance, and audience services. Due to the high staff turnover and the involvement of multiple aspects such as venue construction, artist coordination, security maintenance, and audience services, the organizational difficulty continues to increase. This high-intensity operation mode also brings greater safety risks. If an accident occurs on-site, it will not only directly affect the progress of the music festival but also cause serious and irreversible damage to the brand image accumulated by the Taihu Bay Music Festival over the long term. For example, in 2022, due to the force majeure factors of the weather, some performances were cancelled, which directly affected the profit of the Taihu Bay Music Festival and greatly reduced the experience of the audience, causing a huge impact on its box office.

## 5. Analysis of the Marketing Strategy for Taibei Bay Music Festival

**Product Strategy:** The core product of the Taihu Bay Music Festival is centered around the on-site festival experience, adopting a music + tourism model and positioning itself in the market through high-quality live music experiences. Its star-studded lineup serves as a major highlight, featuring primarily top-tier artists from the current music industry alongside emerging young talent with substantial followings. This combination of established and mid-tier artists grants the festival significant influence and a large, dedicated fan base. The festival's programming is also innovative. Different days are dedicated to distinct music genres, allowing fans to purchase tickets based on their preferences. For example, the lineup on October 4th of the 11th Taihu Bay Music Festival focused on new-generation idol singers like Yubo Huang, Zihongfan Huang, and Jiuzhou Tang, while October 5th highlighted bands such as Secondhand Rose and Young Drug. In contrast to other regional music festival IPs, such as the Nanjing MiDou Music Festival, Taihu Bay demonstrates greater diversity in its artist curation. The Nanjing MiDou Music Festival's 14th edition, for instance, featured a more homogenized lineup—October 1st included Qingyun Liu, Runze Zheng, and Young Captain, all pop singers, while October 2nd showcased Huang Zihongfan, Jiang Dunhao, and Hou Minghao, again predominantly pop artists. This lack of stylistic variation can easily lead to listener fatigue. The stage lighting at Taihu Bay further enhances its appeal. Utilizing various types of stage lights, such as rotating LED fixtures overhead and floor lights, the design dynamically adjusts the position and color of the lighting in sync with different musical styles and rhythms, enriching the visual spectacle and aesthetic impact of the performances. In terms of venue layout, the festival takes place in the central square of the Play Valley amusement park, an open space that allows for expansive viewing. Large screens are extended on both sides of the stage, and a runway is incorporated to facilitate closer interaction between artists and fans. Each designated area within the venue is spacious and thoughtfully arranged. The inflatable sofa zone at the rear is gently sloped, ensuring that seated attendees are not obstructed by those standing in front. Along the edges and in open areas at the back of the venue, specially curated food stalls, festival merchandise booths, and interactive photo spots are set up, offering fans opportunities to enjoy local flavors, purchase memorabilia, and capture memorable moments. Together, the festival's impressive artist roster, well-planned programming, dynamic stage lighting, meticulous venue arrangement, and immersive on-site atmosphere all contribute to safeguarding a deeply engaging and unforgettable live music experience.

**Pricing Strategy:** The Taihu Bay Music Festival determines its ticket prices through a competitive benchmarking + market positioning approach. Given that its target audience primarily consists of university students and young professionals, and its market positioning emphasizes a high-quality on-site festival experience, the festival offers tiered ticket options to accommodate varying consumer budgets. Based on the sales timeline, tickets are categorized into early bird ticket, presale ticket, and standard prices ticket. Within the presale ticket and standard ticket tiers, the festival further divides standing areas into general and VIP zones. In 2025, the Taihu Bay Music Festival also offered a discounted ticket option for couples, with separate discounts of 9.1% and 7.9% on the original full-price tickets. This multi-tiered pricing structure provides consumers with greater flexibility and choice. In comparison to other regional music festivals, such as the Soda Music Festival—which offers only a single ticket tier priced at 128yuan with no zone differentiation—the Taihu Bay Music Festival adopts a more refined zoned pricing model. While festivals like Soda charge the same price for front and rear sections despite significant differences in the attendee experience—a practice that may lead to audience dissatisfaction and raises questions about pricing

rationality—Taihu Bay sets more reasonable prices based on the varying experiences of different standing zones, offering consumers clearer and fairer choices.

**Place Strategy:** The Taihu Bay Music Festival utilizes a variety of marketing channels to enhance brand influence and increase ticket sales. The Damai App, a well-known ticket purchasing platform in China, has wide dissemination and high influence, and enjoys high trust among most consumers. The Taihu Bay Music Festival has chosen the Damai App as its official distributor, authorizing the Damai App to sell tickets of various types and prices. This platform has sufficient ticket sources and, through the ticket purchasing discounts independently launched by the Damai App, more music fans tend to purchase the festival tickets on this platform. Secondly, tickets for the Taihu Bay Music Festival are usually sold through the official public account of the organizer. With the development of Tiktok, the Taihu Bay Music Festival has authorized Tiktok to handle ticket sales. The Taihu Bay Music Festival also sometimes collaborates with ticket-selling platforms such as Maoyan and ShowStart. These diverse marketing channels not only enhanced the popularity of the Taihu Bay Music Festival but also promoted ticket sales, laying a solid foundation for the successful organization of the music festival.

**Promotion Strategy:** The Taihu Bay Music Festival employs a variety of promotional tactics to enhance brand visibility and increase fan engagement. During the pre-event buildup, the festival fully leverages social media platforms for online promotion. On Weibo, it initiates trending topic discussions, inviting well-known music bloggers and entertainment influencers to participate, share festival-related news, artist lineups, and highlight moments, attracting substantial fan attention and reposts to amplify the topic's reach. In 2025, the festival's invited guests reached new heights of influence, with artists such as Sulong Wang and Zhiqian Xue posting official announcements on Weibo about joining the Taihu Bay Music Festival and tagging the festival's official account. The festival also utilizes the Tiktok, creating short promotional videos that showcase the on-site stage setup, exciting performance clips, and interactive atmospheres with fans. Leveraging Tiktok's algorithm-based recommendation system, these videos are precisely targeted toward potential attendees. During the stage construction phase, the festival conducts real-time, round-the-clock live broadcasts on Tiktok to enhance interaction with consumers, addressing questions about ticketing, accommodation, transportation, and other venue-related logistics. Simultaneously, the festival encourages fans to post their own videos from past editions of the Taihu Bay Music Festival on Tiktok using specific hashtags, fostering user-generated content and organic spread. During the event phase, it collaborates with nearby businesses for joint promotions, such as placing festival posters and promotional materials in partner hotels and restaurants, while offering discounts to fans who patronize these establishments. Additionally, the festival motivates fans to share their on-site experiences of the day through online prize draws and on-site QR code sweepstakes for official merchandise. For example, during the 9th Taihu Bay Music Festival, a collaboration with the beauty brand PRAMY allowed fans to participate in a lucky draw by posting festival moments on social media and tagging the official festival account, with winners receiving beauty products. Through these effective promotion strategies, the Taihu Bay Music Festival has successfully attracted widespread fan interest, significantly boosting its brand recognition and influence.

**Physical Evidence:** The Taihu Bay Music Festival is held in the form of music festival + amusement park. Therefore, the poster of the music festival is also designed based on the characteristics of music festival + amusement park, with a unique and vibrant style, ingeniously integrating the musical elements with the joyful atmosphere of the amusement park. Taking the 10th and 11th editions of the Taihu Bay Music Festival as examples (as shown in Figure 1), the posters primarily feature bright, vivid colors, integrating diverse musical instruments with fantastical amusement park imagery. The iconic Ferris wheel of Play Valley

is prominently featured in every edition's poster. Additionally, the posters thoughtfully incorporate the signature products and brand logos of each edition's sponsors, highlighting the festival's theme while showcasing the park's unique charm, making its distinctive appeal immediately recognizable. Upon closer inspection of the festival's logo, one can appreciate its clever design. For instance, from the 9th to the 11th editions, the logo employs gradient-style artistic typography with bright, lively colors. Its most distinctive feature is the integration of ferris wheel into the design—specifically, the character "music" incorporates the Ferris wheel as an artistic replacement for the lower part of its component "sun"(as shown in Figure 2). These tangible elements not only enhance the brand recognition of the Taihu Bay Music Festival but also subtly convey its core values of joy, vitality, and cultural diversity. Furthermore, the festival places great emphasis on interactive experiences with fans. On-site, multiple interactive zones are set up, such as music-themed photo walls and fan message boards, allowing attendees to create unique memories while enjoying the performances. Together, these physical elements contribute to the distinctive brand appeal of the Taihu Bay Music Festival, enabling it to stand out in a highly competitive market.



Figure 1. Poster of The Taihu Bay Music Festival



Figure 2. Logo of The Taihu Bay Music Festival

People: The Taihu Bay Music Festival is supported by a sufficient number of on-site volunteers, who undergo rigorous screening and professional training to ensure a warm service attitude and strong communication skills. During the festival, volunteers are stationed across various areas, providing comprehensive assistance to attendees. Their responsibilities range from guiding and checking tickets at entry points, offering directional advice and answering questions about zone access and routes within the venue, to maintaining order at security checkpoints and managing emergency situations. With a strong sense of responsibility and professionalism, the volunteers ensure that every attendee receives thoughtful and attentive service. Particularly during ticket check-in queues, volunteers guide fans to prevent them from entering incorrect lanes, thereby avoiding confusion and maintaining orderly lines. Clear signage and festival maps are placed at every intersection on-site, making it easy for attendees to locate their desired areas. Simultaneously, the festival is equipped with a professional security team and medical emergency personnel, who remain vigilant and ready to respond to any unexpected incidents, safeguarding the safety and well-being of all attendees. Given the significant proportion of female attendees, the festival has additionally set up dedicated women's restrooms equipped with mirrors, disposable cosmetic tools, and other amenities, effectively addressing issues related to restroom shortages and long waiting times. A day before the event, the Taihu Bay Music's official WeChat public account also shares updates on weather conditions, outfit suggestions, and transportation tips, ensuring that visitors traveling from afar feel the meticulous care of the Taihu Bay Music Festival. Furthermore, the festival provides free shuttle buses services operating throughout the day across multiple time slots and routes, facilitating easier transportation for attendees and alleviating challenges related to high crowd volumes and limited taxi availability at the venue.(as shown in table2)

**Table 2. Taihu Bay Music Festival Bus Schedule**

City	Origin point	Destination	Time
Changzhou	Changzhou Passenger Transport Station	Joyland Parking Lot, Zone D	8:00-15:00
Changzhou	High-speed Railway Station	Pinyue Hotel	8:00-15:00
Wuxi	Wuxi Meiyuan Kaiguan Temple Metro Station - Exit 6	Joyland Parking Lot, Zone A	09:00-15:00
Suzhou	Suzhou New District Railway Station - Exit 1	Joyland Parking Lot, Zone A	09:00,09:20,09:40,10:00,10:20,10:40,11:00,11:20,11:40,12:00,12:20,12:40,13:00,13:20,13:40,14:00,14:15,14:30
Return journey	Joyland Parking Lot, Zone D	Changzhou Passenger Transport Station	18:00
	Pinyue Hotel	High-speed Railway Station	
	Joyland Parking Lot, Zone A	Wuxi Meiyuan Kaiguan Temple Metro Station - Exit 6, Suzhou New District Railway Station	The performance is over.

When the music festival concludes, the volunteers will also be stationed at each intersection in each area to guide the flow of people and quickly complete the evacuation of the venue's

occupants, avoiding the occurrence of stampede incidents due to overcrowding. This comprehensive personnel arrangement and high-quality on-site service not only enhance the viewing and performance experience of the music fans, but also further strengthen the brand reputation and market competitiveness of the Taihu Bay Music Festival.

## **6. Suggestions for Optimizing Brand Marketing of Taihu Bay Music Festival**

According to the China Performing Arts Industry Association: In 2025, there will be 0.3 million large-scale commercial performances with a total audience of 5,000 people across the country, and 198,700 performances of large and medium-sized tourism-themed shows [12]. It can be seen that large-scale performances such as concerts and music festivals have become a powerful engine for local cultural and tourism consumption. How the Taihu Bay Music Festival can stand out among numerous music festivals and achieve sustainable development has become a crucial aspect in the development of the Taihu Bay Music Festival.

The Taihu Bay Music Festival should pursue a strategy of differentiated competition. Instead of sticking to the "music + theme park" format, it could also explore cross-industry brand collaborations and strengthen coordination with more cultural and tourism resources in the surrounding area. The Taihu Bay Music Festival is located in the Wujin District of Changzhou City, which boasts abundant historical and cultural heritage sites as well as natural landscapes, such as the China Spring & Autumn Yancheng Tourist Area, the Chinese Filial Piety Garden, the Zhushan Lake Town, and the West Taihu Lake Ecotourism Zone. The festival could engage in deeper partnerships with these attractions by offering special packages like music festival + historical and cultural tours or music festival + ecological sightseeing tours. This approach would seamlessly integrate the music festival with local cultural tourism, creating a unique new cultural and tourism experience. For example, dedicated tourist shuttle buses and discounts on accommodations in nearby scenic spots could be arranged, allowing music fans to immerse themselves in the local history and natural beauty while enjoying the musical feast. Such initiatives would enhance the added value of the Taihu Bay Music Festival. The Changzhou region also boasts an exceptionally rich array of intangible cultural heritage, such as Jintan Paper-Cutting, the Buddhist Chanting of Tianning Temple, Wuxi Opera, Changzhou Bamboo Carving, Changzhou Hair Comb, the Craftsmanship of Changzhou Sesame Candy, and the art of Changzhou Sesame Cake Making. These intangible cultural elements can be integrated into the music festival, leading to the development of immersive cultural tourism products like the "Taihu Bay Murder Mystery Game." Using the music festival venue as a real-life setting, the game's plot can weave together stories of Taihu's intangible heritage with musical puzzle-solving elements, set against the historical backdrop of Ji Zha's feudal enfeoffment [13]. The story revolves around an archaeological team that accidentally discovers a secret passage leading to an underground palace at the Yan City Ruins. However, on the day of the excavation, a bizarre incident occurs—the entrance to the underground palace is destroyed, and the only clues point to six bronze artifacts from the Spring and Autumn period. Music fans will randomly draw identity cards, complete tasks based on hints, collect game fragments, uncover the final secret, and receive corresponding limited-edition festival merchandise featuring intangible cultural heritage elements. Simultaneously, a Taihu Flavors food workshop will be set up at the venue, where local chefs will craft edible, music-note-shaped pastries using the "Three Whites of Taihu Lake" (whitebait, white shrimp, and white fish). This allows participants to savor the culinary delights of the Taihu region while immersing themselves in the interactive game and music festival, creating a full-day consumption scenario of playing the mystery game and enjoying local food by day—indulging in a musical feast by night. By organically integrating music, history, intangible heritage, and

cuisine, and enhancing engagement through interactive storytelling and tangible rewards, the experience significantly extends visitors' stay. This transforms a one-time performance attendance into an in-depth, multifaceted, and culturally enriching cultural tourism experience, greatly enhancing the added value and unique appeal of the music festival.

Innovation in stage and installation design is key to creating unique memorable moments for a music festival. The Taihu Bay Music Festival can center around the dual themes of Aquatic Charm of Jiangnan × Music and Trendy Play, crafting a full-sensory immersive field that engages sight, hearing, touch, and smell. The main stage could feature a 360° circular water curtain projection, blending intangible cultural heritage elements such as the fishing songs of Taihu Lake and the intricate shadow patterns of Jintan paper-cutting with electronic music to create a spectacular visual show—a truly “flowing” digital art performance of Jiangnan’s intangible heritage. Simultaneously, an AR navigation system could be introduced, allowing attendees to scan landmark markers on-site to trigger animated stories based on Taihu’s historical legends, achieving an immersive interactive experience of “one step, one scene, one story.” In different areas of the venue, tactile installations like “Sound Wave Mystery Boxes” could be added, where touching sound wave sculptures vibrating at different frequencies rewards visitors with limited-edition merchandise. Additionally, the Taihu Bay Music Festival could collaborate with a scent lab to develop themed fragrances such as “Taihu Morning Mist” and “Taihu Sunset Glow.” Through on-site scent diffusers and scented wristbands distributed to attendees, the aromas would shift in sync with the performance schedule and emotional atmosphere, creating a synchronized rhythm between scent and the audience’s mood. This forms a unique sensory memory anchor, transforming the entire festival into an interactive, explorable, and fully perceivable organic entity. Ultimately, this multi-sensory approach will etch the experience of the Taihu Bay Music Festival into the lasting memories of every attendee.

The Taihu Bay Music Festival will establish a dedicated fan database, integrating data from ticket purchases, on-site spending, movement patterns, interactive engagements, and social media sentiment to create precise user profiles. By analyzing fan purchase history, spending behavior at the event, and preferences for specific artists or genres, the festival can tailor personalized marketing strategies and deliver targeted notifications about performances. For fans who frequently purchase VIP tickets, exclusive benefits and value-added services—such as priority access to backstage tours, voting rights on limited-edition merchandise designs, and other premium privileges—will be offered. These exclusive perks enhance the perceived value of VIP status and deepen fans' sense of owner toward the festival.

For fans with strong preferences for specific music styles, personalized content—such as exclusive artist interviews, behind-the-scenes footage, and pre-event notifications—will be shared regularly to keep them engaged. To further strengthen fan loyalty, a self-governing fan operations system will be established, including the formation of a “Taihu Bay Fan Club.” Through community nominations, selected core fans will participate in future festival planning, with voting rights on key decisions such as stage designs and artist lineups. Additionally, an online demo submission platform will allow fans to vote for five original songs, which will be professionally produced and performed live by artists during the festival.

Furthermore, a virtual online space called “Taihu Bay · Metaverse” will be created to extend the festival experience beyond physical and temporal constraints. Using VR devices, fans can create virtual avatars to attend the festival, enjoying exclusive camera angles, backstage views, virtual fireworks, and interactive bullet-screen comments. A “Digital Collectibles Auction House” will also be introduced, where rare virtual instruments and special effects can be auctioned. By completing tasks such as visiting different stages offline or finishing AR exploration missions, fans can unlock corresponding digital badges or 3D collectible models. Collecting a full set of limited-edition digital items can even be exchanged for VIP benefits in

the following year. Through this model of data-driven precision, deep community co-creation, and blended virtual-physical experiences, the Taihu Bay Music Festival will build a highly engaged, loyal, and ever-evolving fan ecosystem—seamlessly merging the physical and digital worlds. This approach will drive long-term brand growth and pave the way for innovative business models.

A music festival is more than just a leisure destination—it also carries significant social responsibilities. The Taihu Bay Music Festival can launch a "Green Music Ecology Initiative" in alignment with the "carbon neutrality" concept. This would include using biodegradable glow sticks and wristbands, generating electricity from food waste biogas, and implementing other eco-friendly measures. Additionally, the festival could encourage attendees to drop used items such as past glow sticks, tickets, and wristbands into on-site recycling bins. The organizers could then transform these materials into collectible merchandise featuring the festival's IP for sale, with the proceeds donated to Taihu Lake ecological conservation projects. Regular, organized environmental cleanup activities along the lakeshore could also be initiated, inviting fans to collect litter and send it to recycling facilities. This would create a value cycle of "entertainment consumption → environmental philanthropy → brand enhancement."

In summary, the Taihu Bay Music Festival can ultimately achieve a transformation from a mere "leisure and entertainment event" into a "cultural IP ecosystem." By building a unique growth engine powered by fan co-creation, digital technology integration, and cultural-tourism fusion, it can establish a distinctive and hard-to-replicate competitive edge, positioning itself as a continuous leader in the market.

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