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Tourist Interaction-Driven User Re-creation at Scenic Attractions: A Case Study of Luoyang, China

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of the experience economy and mobile-first communication, tourists who, after fully experiencing an attraction program, film and creatively edit the experience and publish it on social media constitute a new form of tourist interaction. This paper defines such behavior as "tourist interaction-driven re-creation." Taking Luoyang as a case study and drawing on government documents, mainstream media reports, and platform data, this paper maps the distribution of re-creation traffic across Luoyang's major scenic attractions, explains its generation mechanism from three perspectives—the program side, the official (government/enterprise) side, and the communication side—and conducts a focused analysis of fifteen verifiably foreign creators selected under strict criteria [1]. The findings are threefold. First, re-creation traffic in Luoyang follows a "dual-core leadership plus multi-site matrix" pattern, with cumulative online exposure exceeding 40 billion views citywide [2]. Second, traffic generation follows a "re-creation flywheel" of experience-first design, re-creation mediation, and industry backstopping; free admission, tiered playback-based incentives, and the eventization of hospitality are three counter-intuitive designs distinguishing this mechanism from conventional destination marketing. Third, foreign re-creation exhibits an "occasional peaks but systemic absence" pattern; culturally resonant "cognitive interfaces" such as Li Bai's poetry and low-threshold replicable actions are the key variables enabling penetration of overseas audiences. This study provides both a mechanism-based explanation and actionable design principles for historic cities seeking international communication through tourist co-creation.

Keywords: Tourist interaction-driven re-creation; Tourist interaction; Immersive experience; User-generated content (UGC); Destination communication; Luoyang.

1. Introduction

In recent years, China's cultural tourism market has undergone a structural transformation: shallow sightseeing has been replaced by deep participation, and strongly participatory cultural tourism products have grown far faster than traditional sightseeing products. According to Douyin's 2024 Tourism Consumption Trends Report [3], 63% of tourists decided trips spontaneously via short-video or livestream platforms, and the travel decision cycle shrank from 17 days in 2019 to 5.2 days in 2024; Generation Z already accounts for 42% of the tourism consumption market. Consequently, the relationship between tourists and attractions no longer ends with the "arrival—tour—departure" cycle of one-way consumption; it extends into a complete creative chain of "experience—filming—editing—publishing—disseminating."

Luoyang is a paradigmatic case for observing this phenomenon [4-7]. As the capital of thirteen dynasties, Luoyang has in recent years pursued a "new cultural tourism" agenda—"disruptive creativity, immersive experience, youthful consumption, and mobile-terminal dissemination"—building diversified interactive formats around Hanfu experiences, immersive performances, and digital interaction. During the 14th Five-Year Plan period the city received over 600 million tourist visits with tourism revenue approaching 480 billion RMB; in the first half of 2026 alone it received 93.85 million visits and earned 76.90 billion RMB, while cumulative online exposure exceeded 40 billion views. Existing scholarship has mostly examined tourist interaction through the satisfaction–revisit-intention chain (e.g., structural equation modeling studies of the Yingge Ceramics Museum and PLS-SEM studies of Qingshan Fishing Village), yet the closed-loop phenomenon whereby tourists, after the experience, re-create content that in turn generates traffic for the destination has not been systematically studied. This paper aims to fill that gap through the case of Luoyang.

2. Conceptual Definition and Research Questions

Definition. This paper defines "tourist interaction-driven re-creation" as follows: after fully experiencing a program at a scenic attraction (e.g., Hanfu styling, immersive performance, night tour, or themed route), a tourist films the experience, creatively edits the footage, and publishes the work on social media for public display. The definition contains three elements: first, it is premised on full on-site experience, distinguishing it from "cloud editing" of borrowed footage; second, it involves creative processing (editing, scoring, captioning, mash-ups), distinguishing it from raw recording; third, it is oriented toward public publication, targeting social display rather than private archiving.

Tourist interaction-driven re-creation sits at the intersection of tourist interaction research and user-generated content (UGC) research. Compared with existing notions of tourist interaction, it emphasizes the extendability of interaction: interaction does not terminate at the scenic site but unfolds a second time on social media through creative labor. Compared with UGC in general, it emphasizes the priority of embodied experience—the raw material comes from complete first-hand experience, and the creator is an ordinary tourist rather than a professional.

Accordingly, this paper poses three research questions: (1) How is re-creation traffic distributed across Luoyang's major attractions? (2) Through what mechanism is this traffic generated? (3) In the cross-cultural communication context, what characteristics does foreign creators' re-creation display, and what structural problems does it face?

3. Data and Methods

This study adopts a single-case design centered on Luoyang, combining public-data compilation with content analysis. Data sources include: (1) public documents and replies issued by the Luoyang Municipal People's Government and its departments; (2) reports by Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily (Overseas Edition), China National Radio, Financial News, and Henan Daily [7, 8]; (3) the Municipal Culture and Tourism Bureau's special report on Peony Culture Festival promotion [9]; (4) public data from Meituan, Trip.com, and Tongcheng Travel [10]; and (5) public channel pages of creators on YouTube and other overseas platforms [11].

For foreign-creator samples, strict inclusion criteria were applied: a creator is included only if (a) they are a foreign national whose identity is verifiable through public reporting; (b) the work is a creative re-creation following a complete on-site experience rather than scenery b-roll; and (c) the work was published on overseas social platforms or verified by national-level media as by a "foreign blogger." Accounts operated by Chinese international communication centers, official accounts of foreign media organizations, and Western-language pseudonymous accounts of unverifiable identity were excluded. Note that statistical bases and time points differ across sources; traffic figures are used for magnitude comparison only.

4. The Distribution of Re-creation Traffic across Luoyang's Attractions

Based on available public sources, re-creation traffic in Luoyang displays a graded, "dual-core leadership plus multi-pole support" pattern (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of re-creation traffic across major Luoyang attractions (compiled from public sources)

Rank	Attraction/Project	Core re-creation vehicles	Traffic data
1	Laojun Mountain (Luanchuan)	Golden-roof snow scenes, sea-of-clouds costume transitions, night-climb sunrises	Over 20 billion geotagged Douyin views; a single staff-shot snow video reached 1 billion views within two weeks; 2.003 million official followers
2	Luoyi Ancient City	Hanfu photo films, follow-shot productions	Topic views exceeded 6.3 billion; Old District culture-tourism topics reached 19.2 billion reads; ranked No.1 Douyin Hanfu check-in site since 2023
—	└ Single-item hit: "Goddess Scattering Flowers"	Tourist re-shoots, slow-motion edits, makeup imitations	About 3 billion total views; over 160,000 organic re-creation videos; 50+ days atop local Douyin trending list; 2,250 central-media reports
3	Yingtian Gate (Sui-Tang Luoyang City)	3D projection shows, Tang-style performance "time-travel" films	About 2 billion views
4	White Horse Temple	"Exotic" photo films of four-nation halls	About 1.5 billion views
5	Longmen Grottoes	AR-restored statue check-ins, night tours	5.02 million visitors in H1 2026 (+9.8%); restoration animation of the Binyang Middle Cave reached over 10 million people
6	Xiaojie Tianfu / Cross Street	Food-tour vlogs	About 400 million views
7	Aggregated hashtags	#Tang-DynastyBeautiesAreInLuoyang etc.	17 million–207 million views per hashtag

Sources: compiled from Top News, Meadin, Xinhuanet, Henan Daily, and Luoyang Municipal Government documents.

Three features characterize this pattern. First, a natural mountain landscape (Laojun Mountain) and a cultural district (Luoyi Ancient City) top the list from opposite ends, showing that re-creation traffic does not necessarily attach to historical resource endowment. Second, a single performance ("Goddess Scattering Flowers") can itself become a multi-billion-view hit, indicating extreme topic concentration of single IPs. Third, even non-attraction food scenes generate hundreds of millions of views, meaning the geographic boundary of re-creation has spilled beyond the attraction walls.

5. Mechanisms of Traffic Generation

5.1. The Program Side: Designing Experiences for Filmability

The first mechanism lies in the deliberate "filmability" of the experience itself. In "Goddess Scattering Flowers," the costume uses gauze and an apsara-inspired silhouette; the hairstyle abandons high topknots to permit flips; even the petals' material, color, and falling speed were tuned—program design implicitly adopts the production of shareable footage as an acceptance criterion. Hanfu experiences (from 39 RMB, free entry in Hanfu, 1-RMB rentals) turn tourists themselves into the landscape—"a princess every three steps, a consort every five"—making the whole city an open film studio; an industrial chain of over 1,360 Hanfu shops, some 5,000 stylists, and 680 follow-shot photographers flattens the skill threshold of "looking good on camera."

5.2. The Official Side: Incentivizing and Amplifying Re-Creation

The second mechanism is the deliberate official design of re-creation incentives. First, cash incentives: Laojun Mountain rewards any video surpassing 1 million views with 1,000 RMB, plus 1,000 RMB per additional million up to 10,000 RMB—converting UGC production into extremely low-cost crowdsourced advertising. Second, an influencer matrix: the "Scoring for Luoyang" campaign enlisted 20+ top creators with over 100 million combined followers, producing 50+ videos with 250 million+ views. Third,

cultural motif supply: the "Feng Qi Luoyang" screen IP and Henan TV's "Tang Palace Banquet" and "Ode to the Goddess of the Luo River" provide templates for imitation. Fourth, intellectual property protection: the "Goddess Scattering Flowers" image was patented and trademarked to prevent low-quality imitation from diluting traffic. Fifth, eventizing hospitality: Laojun Mountain's "we don't leave work before our guests do," one-yuan meals, and seasonal gestures become new, self-propagating re-creation material.

5.3. The Communication Side: A Bottom-Up UGC Structure

The third mechanism is the decentralized communication structure. Roughly half of Luoyang's re-creation content is spontaneously produced by ordinary tourists; authentic, empathetic user footage reaches same-generation audiences more effectively than official promotional films. Public urban spaces (official performances, lighting scenes) and private filming feed each other's traffic, forming a stable "traffic reservoir." With visitors under 30 accounting for 65%, the demographic structure is highly coupled with the production structure of social content.

5.4. The "Luoyang Re-Creation Flywheel"

Integrating the three layers, this paper summarizes the model as a closed flywheel of experience-first design, re-creation mediation, and industry backstopping: immersive experience (filmable programs) → tourist filming and re-creation (self-propagating UGC) → hit traffic (trending lists) → visitor inflow (check-in consumption) → industrial backstopping (Hanfu, follow-shots, lodging, cultural-creative goods) → official incentives and data-driven product iteration → back to the experience stage. The model contains three counter-intuitive points. First, free admission can be more profitable: Luoyi Ancient City earns through rents, performances, and cultural-creative products; the disappearance of a ticket wall also removes the psychological cost of filming and publishing, raising re-creation density. Second, rewarding re-creation is the most cost-efficient marketing: playback-based payouts are far cheaper than conventional advertising. Third, the official role is "building the stage and receiving the ball," not manufacturing stars: hits emerge from the market, and officials amplify and backstop them. The model also has limits: uneven service quality among micro-merchants; single hits vulnerable to nationwide imitation (300+ attractions copied "Goddess Scattering Flowers"); and conversion of traffic into retained demand depending on the depth of repeat-visit products.

6. A Focused Analysis of Verifiably Foreign Creators' Re-creation

6.1. Sample and List

Applying the strict criteria of Section 3, fifteen foreign creators with verifiable identities were identified; the main cases are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Selected verifiably foreign re-creation cases (partial)

Creator	Nationality	Verification basis	Re-creation content	Traffic data
Hai Wenna	Germany	Bylined People's Daily Overseas Edition report; culture blogger on X	Hanfu self-film at the Mingtang captioned with Li Bai's line "Whose jade flute's sound steals on the spring wind through Luoyang?" followed by Henan-dialect commentary	Over 2 million views and 80,000 likes on a single video; comment section spontaneously became a Luoyang poetry relay
Li Weita (Vita)	Belarus	Xinhua GLOBALink byline; on-camera in CNS video	"A Foreign Girl's 144 Hours in Luoyang": Hanfu at Longmen Grottoes—old-street snacks—evening at lantern-lit Luoyi Ancient City	Distributed in multiple languages by Xinhua; 697,000 Douyin followers
An Xinran	Australia	People's Daily Overseas Online invited blogger	Restored Tang-dynasty "Hu courtesan" styling filmed at Dingding Gate	Over 10,000 likes
Riley	New Zealand	People's Daily Overseas Online invited blogger	72-hour experience vlog documenting the full styling process	Representative process-type re-creation
Titi	France	People's Daily Overseas Online invited blogger	Peony-porcelain workshop and Hanfu visit to Longmen; bilingual caption "the Lushena Buddha has a Mona-Lisa-like smile"	Model of cross-cultural translation
Irina	Russia	People's Daily Overseas Online invited blogger	Mimicked the "V-sign" Buddha gesture at Longmen, triggering a relay of look-alike check-in photos	Sparked a UGC imitation chain
"Nordic Wife"	Sweden	Best Creativity Award, "iLuoyang" contest	Playing the piano while wearing Hanfu	Award-winning work
Da Zhu (SULHYUKJOO)	South Korea	Best Host Award, "iLuoyang" contest	"A Korean's First Visit to Longmen Grottoes" and food series	Award-winning work
James	United States	Named in Luoyang government website report	Seven consecutive TikTok videos on Luoyang, four on beef soup and cold dishes	Serialized vertical re-creation
Gibbon Travelogue et al.	English-speaking	Public YouTube channel pages	22-minute long-form Luoyang guide (Longmen—Guanlin—White Horse Temple—Water Banquet—Luoyi Ancient City)	2.2K–8.8K views

Sources: People's Daily Overseas Edition (June 16, 2025), Xinhua GLOBALink (August 24, 2024), Luoyang Municipal Government website (August 13, 2025), Luoyang Daily "iLuoyang" contest award list, YouTube channel pages, etc.

6.2. A Typology of Foreign Re-Creation

Foreign re-creation falls into six types: (1) cultural-translation type, explaining Chinese symbols through the

creator's home-culture coordinates (Titi's Mona Lisa and French-bread analogies; Hai Wenna's Li Bai interface); (2) full-process documentation type, foregrounding backstage routines such as garment selection, styling, and makeup (Riley's 72-hour vlog); (3) imitation-interaction type, embedding oneself into existing check-in grammars (Irina's Buddha "V-sign"); (4) contrast-mashup type (Hanfu with piano); (5) vertical-niche type (James's food series; Da Zhu's "first-time" reactions); and (6) long-form guide type (Gibbon Travelogue's complete itinerary).

6.3. Key Findings

First, hit-level gaps span two orders of magnitude. Hai Wenna's single video exceeded 2 million views while independent English channels' Luoyang videos drew only thousands; the explanation lies in distribution rather than content quality—the former rode the composite channel of People's Daily Overseas Online campaigns, overseas social matrices, and a Chinese literary motif, the latter relied on organic reach alone. Second, poetry penetrates cultural boundaries better than scenery: the hook of Hai Wenna's hit was a Li Bai poem familiar to overseas Sinology circles and the Chinese diaspora, a ready-made cultural interface that pure landscape long-form videos lack. Third, process outperforms polished cuts: foregrounding backstage stages such as Hanfu styling constitutes foreign creators' differentiated advantage over domestic re-creation, which is mostly polished films. Fourth, replicability determines reach: Irina's zero-threshold, anyone-can-do gesture triggered a cross-national imitation relay, whereas re-shooting "Goddess Scattering Flowers" requires rigging and professional equipment—so among the 160,000 domestic re-creations most remain "watching others perform" rather than "I can do it too."

6.4. Structural Assessment

Of the fifteen verified foreign creators, more than ten produced their Luoyang content through three types of officially organized campaigns: People's Daily Overseas Online's "72 Hours in China" and "Every Step, the Divine Capital" field trips [11]. (seven countries); the "iLuoyang" International Short Video Competition (over 1,300 entries from 19 countries); and Henan Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism's "Walking Henan, Reading China" trip (20 influencers from Japan, South Korea, etc.) Foreign creators who visited independently and organically produced high-reach re-creation were rare. Correspondingly, the 2025 Report on Overseas Network Communication Capacity of Chinese Cities ranks Luoyang 55th among 338 cities (Zhengzhou 36th; Chengdu 3rd), while the China Urban Online Image Index Report (2025) shows substantial overseas search demand for Luoyang but insufficient content supply. This paper therefore characterizes foreign re-creation in Luoyang as "occasional peaks, systemic absence": single items can exceed 2 million views, yet such results cannot be stably reproduced. The bottleneck lies not in raw material—Hanfu, the grottoes, peonies, and Tang-poetry motifs all carry hit potential overseas—but in the mechanisms that would convert occasional hits into routine capacity: a stable pool of foreign creators, replicable low-threshold interactive actions, and a normalized supply of English-language content.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper defined the concept of "tourist interaction-driven re-creation" and examined its traffic-generation mechanism through the case of Luoyang. Main conclusions: (1) Luoyang's re-creation traffic follows a dual-core graded pattern and is generated by a "experience-first design—re-creation mediation—industry backstopping" flywheel, with free admission, playback-tiered incentives, and eventized hospitality as three key designs; (2) foreign re-creation remains campaign-driven rather than ecosystem-driven, with culturally translated interfaces and low-threshold replicable actions as the two core variables for penetrating overseas audiences.

Three design principles follow for foreign-oriented re-creation. First, design "interfaces" rather than "attractions" for foreign creators: proactively supply home-culture cognitive anchors—Tang poems, analogies to world art, parallels to domestic crafts—to minimize translation costs. Second, open backstage processes as filmable content: establish permitted filming routes through styling rooms, workshops, and kitchens, and ease filming permits. Third, design zero-threshold replicable actions: following the Buddha "V-sign" precedent, systematically implant interactive actions requiring neither equipment nor skill at undeveloped sites, fostering cross-national imitation chains.

This study has two limitations. First, traffic statistics differ in basis and time point across platforms, so magnitude comparisons carry error. Second, part of the foreign-creator sample relies on Chinese media paraphrase; platform-level interaction details (comment-language composition, audience country distribution) await verification with first-hand platform data. Future research may compare re-creation density between free-admission and ticketed attractions and test the causal effect of "cognitive interface" design on cross-cultural communication outcomes.

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