

Research on the Mechanism of Digital Marketing Based Short Video Influences Spectator Behavior in Mass Sports Events

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Abstract: In the digital era, short videos have become a core carrier of digital marketing, profoundly reshaping the communication ecology and audience viewing behavior patterns of mass sports events. Taking Guizhou Village Super League as a single case, this paper adopts literature review, semi-structured interview and thematic analysis. Drawing on the SIPS consumer behavior model, a three-dimensional analytical framework of “content triggering—experience construction—behavior transformation” is established to explore the internal mechanism how digital marketing based short videos influences spectator behavior of mass sports events. The results show that digital marketing based short videos drives the generation and iteration of spectator behavior through three pathways. Content triggering is realized by emotional narratives and local cultural-symbol communication to arouse audience resonance and information identification. Scenario-based short videos resources and immersive live streaming reconstruct online viewing experience and promote deep psychological involvement of audiences. Social interaction and UGC content co-creation contribute to behavior transformation, motivating audiences to shift from online attention to offline stadium attendance and cultural, tourism and sports consumption. UGC content produced by audiences flows back into the content pool and forms a “communication—spectating” interactive feedback loop to continuously expand communication influence. Different from professional sports events which rely on star athletes and competitive suspense for short videos marketing, mass sports events represented by Guizhou Village Super League take local emotional bonds and intangible cultural heritage as core drivers and form an all domain resonance communication pattern led by user generated content. This study

expands the application scope of the SIPS model in mass sports research and identifies new characteristics of audience behavior for rural sports events empowered by digital technology. It provides theoretical reference and practical suggestions for short videos digital marketing of similar domestic rural mass sports events.

Keywords: Short Video; Digital Marketing; Mass Sports Events; Guizhou Village Super League; Spectator Behavior; Mechanism

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of digital technology, the evolution of marketing models has undergone profound changes alongside the transformation of the digital media ecology. From one-way information dissemination in the traditional media era, to two-way interaction in the social media era, and further to algorithmic recommendation and emotion-driven communication in the short video era, the core logic of marketing communication has been continuously iterated. Against this background, short video platforms, with their fragmented, immersive, and highly shareable characteristics, have become core carriers of digital marketing. From AIDMA to AISAS, and then to SIPS (Sympathize–Identify–Participate–Share), the changes in consumer behavior models reflect an internal shift in user decision-making paths in the digital age from a “linear funnel” to “cyclical resonance.” Audiences are no longer passive recipients of information but producers, communicators, and co-creators of content. Mass sports events in the short-form video era exhibit new communication characteristics and spectator behavior patterns. Unlike professional sports events, whose communication logic centers on competitive professionalism and star effects, mass sports events rely more on the participatory nature of the events themselves, community belonging, and cultural uniqueness to attract attention. Because of their immediacy

and strong visual content, short videos can precisely capture the most infectious moments of mass sports events—players’ striving, spectators’ carnival, and ethnic cultural performances—thereby pushing regional rural events to national and even global audiences. Guizhou “Village Super League,” as a representative case of mass sports events, takes “zero-threshold participation and immersive experience” as its core competitiveness. With the help of platforms such as Douyin, it has built a global communication matrix and achieved phenomenal communication with comprehensive views exceeding 100 billion. This case provides a unique research field for studying how short video digital marketing drives spectator behavior in mass sports events.

Based on this, this paper comprehensively uses literature review and semi-structured interviews, takes Guizhou “Village Super League” as a case, and explores the mechanism by which digital marketing based short video affects spectator behavior in mass sports events. Specifically, this paper focuses on answering three questions: How does short video content trigger audiences to move from “incidental attention” to “active viewing”? What psychological path do audiences experience in information search and behavioral decision-making? How does short-video marketing promote the extension of spectator behavior from online to offline and the formation of sustained participation?

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Foundation

2.1 Short-Video Communication and Mass Sports Events

As short video platforms have become important carriers for sports content communication, domestic academia has conducted extensive discussions on short-video empowerment of mass sports. From the perspective of communication effects, some studies argue that short videos can broaden communication channels for mass sports, stimulate ordinary people’s interest in participating in sports, satisfy audiences’ diverse information and social needs, and provide new paths for the popularization of mass sports [1]. Other studies point out that short-video media create a narrative field of “virtual presence” for rural sports events. Relying on secondary editing and platform distribution of short videos, ordinary folk events

quickly create a collective carnival atmosphere in online public opinion, promoting explosive growth in the communication scale of local events [2].

Regarding phenomenal rural mass sports events such as “Village BA” and “Village Super League,” existing studies mostly use classic communication tools for analysis. Some researcher the model to deconstruct the “breaking-out” logic of mass sports events arguing that the coordination of communicators, communication content, media channels, audiences, and communication effects jointly contributed to the popularity of rural sports events [3]. Other studies have built a three-dimensional analytical framework of “mainstream media—self-media—local residents” to interpret the traffic formation mechanism of the Village Super League, proposing that mainstream media complete value construction through grand narratives such as rural revitalization and cultural confidence, while self-media and ordinary users achieve viral diffusion of content through grassroots stories and ethnic cultural narratives [4]. Research using LDA topic modeling to mine online comments shows that audience discussions of the Village Super League mainly focus on four themes: cultural-tourism integration, reference to professional events, regional culture, and stadium competition, indicating that the Village Super League has long transcended a football match and evolved into a composite media carrier integrating sports, culture, and cultural-tourism economy [5].

From the existing literature, current research mostly stands from a communication studies perspective, focusing on event communication phenomena, communication elements, and communication effects. This has laid a good literature foundation for this study, but obvious research gaps remain. First, most achievements focus on explaining “why the event became popular,” that is, external communication mechanisms, but lack an audience-side entry point to conduct in-depth analysis of the complete spectator behavior chain and internal psychological process. The formation mechanism of the entire behavior process—from browsing short videos and developing interest to online interaction and even traveling offline to watch—has not been fully explained. Second, existing studies mostly discuss online communication and offline spectating separately

and rarely analyze online traffic generation, online interaction, offline participation, and sustained communication as a complete behavioral chain from the perspective of digital marketing. Third, the underlying logic differences between short-form video marketing of mass sports events and professional sports events mostly remain at the level of fragmented phenomenon comparison, lacking systematic induction from case evidence. It is precisely because of these research limitations that this paper takes Guizhou Village Super League as a case and attempts to fill the research gap at the level of audience behavior mechanisms in mass sports events.

2.2 SIPS Consumer Behavior Model and Its Applicability

The SIPS model was proposed by Dentsu in 2011 to explain the evolutionary path of user behavior in social media environments. The model includes four stages: Sympathize, Identify, Participate, and Share. The Sympathize stage emphasizes that audiences are emotionally touched by content, generating willingness to pay attention. The Identify stage refers to audiences actively searching for information and verifying it from multiple sources to eliminate cognitive doubts. The Participate stage represents audiences moving from merely receiving information to interactive involvement such as liking and commenting. The Share stage refers to audiences actively outputting content outward after obtaining a good experience, completing secondary word-of-mouth diffusion. Compared with the earlier AISAS model (Attention–Interest–Search–Action–Share), the biggest difference between the two lies in the starting point of behavior and the overall logic. AISAS still retains the linear funnel thinking of traditional marketing, with the starting point being “attention capture” by external information. The SIPS model, however, takes emotional resonance as the logical starting point of behavior, no longer regarding users as passive recipients of marketing information, and fully considers the realistic characteristics of information circulation, diffusion, and user content co-creation in social networks. Its behavioral path is cyclical rather than one-way progressive [6].

In the context of mass sports events, the SIPS model has stronger applicability. Professional sports event communication relies more on star

IP and competitive suspense to stimulate audiences, whereas mass sports events such as the Village Super League derive their core appeal from ordinary people’s stories, local community atmosphere, and ethnic cultural emotions. Audiences often pay attention not because of high-level competition but because they are moved by the human warmth and local culture in short-video content. That is, they first develop emotional resonance, then actively search for event-related information, engage in online interaction, and even travel to the site. After watching, they publish their experiences on short-video platforms to complete secondary communication. This behavioral chain of “emotional touch—information verification—deep involvement—spontaneous diffusion” exactly fits the internal logic of the SIPS model. In contrast, the AISAS model starts with external attention and can hardly explain the complete process of audiences voluntarily entering and cyclically communicating out of emotional empathy. At present, some domestic studies have applied the SIPS model to the field of national fitness short videos promotion, but rarely transferred it to empirical analysis of spectator behavior in mass sports events. This is also the theoretical innovation of this paper.

2.3 Construction of an Analytical Framework for Short Videos’ Impact on Spectator Behavior: Content Triggering—Experience Construction—Behavior Transformation

Based on the SIPS model and combined with the realistic characteristics of short video communication in mass sports events, this study deductively constructs a three-dimensional analytical framework of “content triggering—experience construction—behavior transformation” (see Figure 1). This framework is not a simple copy of the SIPS model but an adapted transformation based on the case context of this study. It merges the four SIPS stages into three functional modules and adds a feedback loop of behavioral feedback (communication–spectating cycle), reflecting the characteristic that audiences in mass sports events simultaneously act as content producers.

The first module is content triggering, corresponding to the Sympathize and Identify stages of the SIPS model. As a stimulus source of digital marketing, short videos rely on emotional narratives and local cultural symbols to produce content, first triggering audiences’

emotional resonance and pulling users from a state of unconscious video browsing to interest in the Village Super League. Then, through platform search, browsing more short videos, and reading netizen comments, audiences complete information identification, gradually establish cognition of the event, and generate preliminary spectating motivation. This stage completes the psychological transformation from incidental attention to spectating intention.

The second module is experience construction, corresponding to the Participate stage of the SIPS model. Interest alone is not enough to support sustained user investment. Through immersive live streaming, multi-scenario clips, and online community interaction, short videos construct virtual spectating experiences for remote online audiences. Without arriving at Rongjiang, audiences can feel the stadium atmosphere and ethnic folk culture through short videos, obtain a sense of remote presence, achieve deep psychological involvement, and further strengthen their spectating intention.

The third module is behavior transformation, covering the Participate and Share stages of the SIPS model. After deep experience, audience behavior begins to transform outward: first, online participation, including liking, commenting, posting bullet comments, and forwarding short videos; further, offline behavior, including traveling to Rongjiang to watch on site and cultural-tourism consumption. After obtaining a complete experience online or offline, audiences shoot and edit their own short videos and publish them on platforms, producing a large amount of UGC content.

The “behavioral feedback” loop set in the framework is an important supplement. UGC content generated by audiences flows back into the short-video content pool and becomes material for a new round of digital marketing, once again triggering the content triggering stage for other potential audiences, thereby forming a cyclical “communication–spectating” interactive closed loop. That is, communication output promotes audience behavior, and audience behavior in turn generates new communication content, continuously amplifying communication effects.

Overall, the three modules have a sequential progressive relationship, but not a one-way termination—rather, a cyclical path. Relying on the behavioral feedback loop, audiences who have completed behavior transformation can

return to the starting point of content triggering, driving more potential audiences, thereby restoring the real state of cyclical iteration of spectator behavior in mass sports events under the short-video social environment.

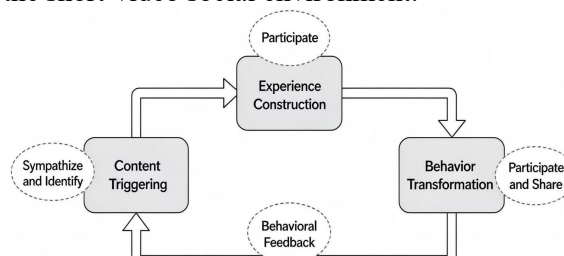


Figure 1. Theoretical Model

(Note: The modules in the figure are marked in brackets with corresponding SIPS model stages: content triggering corresponds to Sympathize and Identify; experience construction corresponds to Participate; behavior transformation corresponds to Participate and Share; behavioral feedback represents the communication–spectating interactive loop feedback path.)

3. Research Objects and Methods

3.1 Overview of Guizhou “Village Super League” and Rationale for Case Selection

Guizhou “Village Super League” is abbreviated as “Village Super League.” The event officially started in May 2023, rooted in the local rural society of Rongjiang County, with grassroots football as its core label, and rapidly grew into a phenomenal mass sports event in China. As of December 2025, comprehensive online views exceeded 130 billion, and more than 1,800 matches had been organized [7]. The event has long exceeded football competition itself and gradually developed into a comprehensive rural sports platform integrating sports competition, intangible cultural heritage performance, and local cultural-tourism consumption. Relying on the traffic dividend of the Village Super League, Rongjiang County has driven the coordinated development of county tourism, specialty agricultural products, ethnic cultural and creative industries, and become a typical practical sample of rural sports empowering rural revitalization.

This study adopts a single-case research approach based on theoretical sampling and selects Guizhou Village Super League as the empirical case. The case selection is mainly based on three practical considerations. First, the communication volume is sufficient. Short-video

platforms have accumulated massive user content and public communication data. At the same time, the local converged media center and cultural-tourism department have disclosed statistics on tourists and industries, providing good data availability and rich empirical materials for mechanism analysis. Second, the event development trajectory is clear. It has experienced a complete development stage from local spontaneous county-level organization to nationwide communication and international exchange cooperation, facilitating observation of the differentiated impact of short-video digital marketing on audience viewing behavior at different stages. Third, the event has a natural cultural foundation of Dong and Miao intangible cultural heritage [8]. Unlike most ordinary mass sports events in China, its cultural attributes are a key element driving short-video communication and audience emotional involvement, which helps identify the unique internal logic of short-video marketing in mass sports events and explore causal relationships among variables [9].

This theoretical sampling does not pursue statistical representativeness but values the explanatory value of the case for the research question. The typicality of the Village Super League can help this study deeply analyze the internal mechanism by which short-video digital marketing affects spectator behavior. However, whether the relevant conclusions can be directly transferred to other mass sports events still needs further verification through multiple case studies [10].

3.2 Research Methods

3.2.1 Literature review method

Around the core theme of this study, literature searches were conducted in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database using keywords such as “Village Super League,” “rural sports events,” “short-video communication,” “digital marketing,” and “spectator behavior.” Journal articles and conference papers in the fields of mass sports, sports communication, and consumer behavior were systematically reviewed. At the same time, policy documents issued by Guizhou Province and Rongjiang County were collected, including the Work Plan for Promoting the Integration of

Culture, Tourism and Sports in Guizhou Province (2025–2027) and other official policy texts. Authoritative media reports and local government public statistical bulletins were also organized, and public statistical data such as Village Super League communication volume, tourist reception, and tourism revenue were collected. The above literature, policies, and materials were classified, read, and summarized to clarify existing research progress and theoretical foundations, providing theoretical support and factual basis for framework construction and mechanism analysis.

3.2.2 Semi-structured interview method

To obtain first-hand qualitative materials from audiences, event operators, and local participants, the research team conducted field research in Rongjiang County, Guizhou Province, in February 2025 and used purposive sampling to select 15 respondents for semi-structured interviews. The interviewees were divided into three groups: the first group was event operation-related personnel, including staff of the Village Super League publicity task force, business personnel of the county converged media center, and the head of the cheerleading association; the second group was out-of-town tourists and local on-site spectators; the third group was local villagers and business operators around the stadium.

Before the interviews, an interview outline was designed. The outline covered dimensions such as short-video contact channels, content attraction points, decision-making process from online to offline, use scenarios of short videos during spectating, and opinions and suggestions on event operations. The interview process was mainly based on open questions, with flexible follow-up according to respondents' answers. Each interview lasted 30–60 minutes. Before the interviews, the research purpose was explained to respondents, and informed consent was obtained before recording, while on-site notes were taken. All respondents were anonymized, personal identity information was desensitized, and ethical norms of qualitative research were strictly observed. After the interviews, recordings were transcribed verbatim into text to form an original interview database. Specific interview information is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Basic Information of Interviewees

No.	Interviewee category	Interview time	Interview location
OP01	Event operation personnel	2025-02-16	Rongjiang County Converged Media Center

OP02	Event operation personnel	2025-02-16	Rongjiang County Converged Media Center
OP03	Event operation personnel	2025-02-17	Village Super League Stadium Office
OP04	Event operation personnel	2025-02-17	Village Super League Stadium Office
AU01	Out-of-town tourist (on-site spectator)	2025-02-17	Village Super League Football Stadium Stands
AU02	Out-of-town tourist (on-site spectator)	2025-02-17	Village Super League Football Stadium Stands
AU03	Out-of-town tourist (on-site spectator)	2025-02-18	Square around the stadium
AU04	Out-of-town tourist (on-site spectator)	2025-02-18	Square around the stadium
AU05	Local on-site spectator	2025-02-17	Village Super League Football Stadium Stands
AU06	Local on-site spectator	2025-02-18	Village Super League Football Stadium Stands
AU07	Local on-site spectator	2025-02-18	Square around the stadium
LO01	Local villager	2025-02-19	Village residence
LO02	Local villager	2025-02-19	Village residence
LO03	Stadium merchant	2025-02-18	Stadium shop
LO04	Stadium merchant	2025-02-18	Stadium shop

3.2.3 Thematic analysis method and coding strategy

This study uses the thematic analysis method proposed by Braun and Clarke to process interview transcripts [11], following a three-level coding process of open coding–axial coding–core theme extraction. To reduce subjective bias caused by single-person coding, two researchers independently coded all interview texts. After coding, the results were compared. For inconsistencies, the original interview texts were reviewed again, and coding consensus was reached through discussion, thereby improving the credibility of qualitative analysis.

The first step was open coding. All transcripts were read thoroughly, respondents' original expressions were decomposed line by line, and initial codes were extracted. For example, "I only learned about the Village Super League after scrolling into a goal highlights video," "I was moved by the grandmother's story," and "friends invited me to go to Rongjiang together" all came from respondents' original words,

forming a large number of initial codes.

The second step was axial coding. A large number of scattered initial codes were classified and clustered, internal connections among codes were sorted out, and higher-order categories were integrated, such as "emotional touch," "short-video information acquisition," and "socially driven travel intention."

The third step was core theme extraction. Based on the previously constructed SIPS theory and the analytical framework of "content triggering–experience construction–behavior transformation," higher-order categories were assigned to three core themes, completing the connection between coding and the theoretical framework and extracting the internal mechanism by which short-video digital marketing affects spectator behavior in mass sports events.

To ensure traceability, the coding process retained corresponding examples of original interview statements, initial codes, and higher-order categories. Some coding examples are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of Partial Thematic Coding

Original interview statements (excerpts)	Open coding (initial codes)	Axial coding (higher-order categories)	Core themes
At first, I saw a Village Super League video while scrolling Douyin, and only then did I know this competition existed.	Incidental short-video browsing; moved by character stories	Emotional narrative triggers attention	Content triggering
I watched the live stream at home and watched comments with my family; it felt like being at the scene.	Online live streaming; feeling of being on site	Remote immersive experience	Experience construction
After watching the match, I took many videos and posted them on Douyin, recommending friends to visit when they have time.	Shooting short videos on site; recommending to others	UGC co-creation and communication after offline experience	Behavior transformation

4. Mechanism of Short-Video Digital Marketing's Impact on Spectator Behavior

Based on the above three-dimensional analytical framework of content triggering — experience construction — behavior transformation,

combined with first-hand semi-structured interview materials and public communication and cultural-tourism statistical data, this chapter analyzes layer by layer the internal path by which short-Form video digital marketing affects spectator behavior in mass sports events. It also

explains the “communication–spectating” interactive cyclical feedback mechanism and compares the differentiated logic of short-form video marketing between mass sports events and professional sports events. All interview quotations in this chapter are marked with respondent numbers and interview dates. The original data come from field research in Rongjiang in February 2025.

4.1 Content Triggering: Resonance Effect of Emotional Narratives and Symbolic Communication

Content triggering corresponds to the Sympathize and Identify stages of the SIPS model in the analytical framework. Audiences’ attention to events does not all come from active search. Most users encounter fragmented content while browsing short-video platforms, and emotional touch completes the transformation from incidental attention to spectating motivation. From the perspective of communication psychology, short-video media follow a cognitive processing logic of “emotion before reason,” and emotional feelings preferentially drive user information involvement. This is also a typical feature distinguishing short videos from traditional text reading [9]. The Village Super League operation team did not adopt a grand official propaganda narrative but instead chose small figures and everyday scenes as communication entry points, relying on individual stories to complete emotional narratives and leverage public emotional resonance.

The short video of a 95-year-old Dong grandmother, called by netizens the “largest shareholder” of the Village Super League, is a highly representative case. This single video alone exceeded 500 million views on Douyin. The video did not deliberately exaggerate the intensity of football competition but recorded the simple state of an ordinary elderly person caring about the local ball game. Many respondents mentioned that their first contact with the Village Super League was precisely this short video. One respondent said: “I was not very interested in folk football at first. When I scrolled to the grandmother’s clip, I was moved by that pure local sentiment, and only then did I actively search for more videos about the Village Super League.” Individual stories reduced the psychological distance between ordinary audiences and rural events, aligned with uses

and gratifications theory, and audiences obtained emotional identification while watching short videos, thereby generating willingness to learn more about the event.

Ethnic cultural symbol communication is another important path of content triggering. The Village Super League embeds intangible cultural heritage elements such as Dong Grand Song, Miao embroidery costumes, and ethnic songs and dances into the event process. Halftime performances are spontaneously arranged by local villagers, and cheerleading costumes all use local Miao embroidery craftsmanship. The football field simultaneously becomes a site for ethnic cultural display. A tourist from Hunan said: “I have watched the Hunan Super League and can feel the vitality of folk football, but the unique rural flavor of the Village Super League is very moving. The handwritten chalkboard posters at the stadium clearly write the event’s origins and participating teams. This down-to-earth atmosphere is difficult for other events to replicate.” Unlike the didactic output of traditional cultural-tourism promotional films, short videos transform ethnic culture into visible and perceptible symbols through on-site recordings. Audiences do not passively receive cultural introductions but spontaneously develop empathy while watching clips.

Driven by both emotion and cultural symbols, the platform topic matrix further amplifies communication effects. A series of topic tags such as “Guizhou Village Super League” encourage ordinary users to produce UGC content. Many audiences initially only scrolled into goal highlights and stadium sidelights. After being emotionally touched, they actively searched for related short videos and browsed comment sections, cross-verifying information authenticity and event value from multiple sources, completing the “Identify” stage in the SIPS model, and shifting from occasionally seeing short videos to actively following the event. From the perspective of diffusion of innovations theory, emotional and localized narratives accelerate the diffusion of event information among audiences in different circles and effectively shorten the psychological process from information exposure to identity formation [12].

However, it should be objectively noted that the content triggering stage only completes psychological interest arousal. Emotional resonance alone is not enough to support

sustained audience attention, let alone directly drive offline travel behavior. Interest still needs to be consolidated through immersive scenario experience.

4.2 Experience Construction: Full-Process Coverage of Scenario-Based Content and Immersive Narratives

Experience construction corresponds to the Participate stage of the SIPS model. After audiences develop initial interest through short videos, short-video media further build “virtual presence” spectating experiences for online audiences through live streaming, fragmented clips, and full-cycle scenario content supply, completing deep psychological involvement of viewers.

High-definition real-time live streaming is the most important means of constructing a sense of remote presence. Even if audiences cannot arrive at the Rongjiang stadium, they can synchronously feel the lively atmosphere through live streaming. Online users interact in real time with other netizens through bullet comments, forming an online collective spectating scene. Some interviewees mentioned that watching live streams at home and discussing matches synchronously with relatives and friends could also provide emotional experiences close to being on site. Public data show that during the 2025 National Day holiday, the Douyin heat value of the Village Super League reached 28.353 million, and cumulative online live-stream views exceeded 600 million, with a single live stream of the finals exceeding 100 million views. One respondent said: “When I can’t go to the scene, I watch the Douyin live stream. People online constantly update on-site clips. When watching, it feels as if I am sitting in the stands.” Short-video live streaming breaks physical spatial constraints and provides alternative spectating experiences for remote audiences.

Short-video platforms form a complete content loop of “pre-match buildup—in-match explosion—post-match extension,” achieving full-cycle scenario coverage of the event. Before the match, ethnic cultural performance previews are released; during the match, staff, ordinary tourists, and local villagers clip and quickly distribute goal moments and interesting sidelights at any time; after the match, replay highlights and post-match folk activity clips continue to spread. Content is no longer limited

to the 90-minute football match itself. Scenes such as the halftime sour soup fish food competition, villagers’ spontaneous artistic performances, and post-match bonfire parties are all cut into short videos for outward communication.

It can be found that Village Super League short-video communication has jumped beyond the boundary of simple sports event broadcasting, integrating football competition, folk performances, local food, and urban-rural interaction, shaping a composite experience of a “rural carnival.” This forms a clear distinction from professional event short-video content: professional event short videos mostly revolve around player competition, tactics, and match outcomes, while in Village Super League short videos, folk customs, food, and villagers’ carnival even rival the football match itself. According to the viewpoint of the experience economy, when the experience provided by media has uniqueness and emotional value, audiences are willing to invest more time, emotion, and even money to obtain it [11]. The multi-scenario experience constructed by short videos continuously strengthens audiences’ psychological involvement, laying a psychological foundation for subsequent online interaction and offline travel behavior transformation.

As shown in Figure 2: stimulus source (short-video digital marketing) → content triggering (Sympathize–Identify) → experience construction (Participate) → behavior transformation (Participate–Share). The solid line represents the main transmission path; the dotted line represents behavioral feedback (communication–spectating cycle). Behavior transformation generates UGC content that flows back and re-enters the content triggering stage, forming a cyclical closed loop.

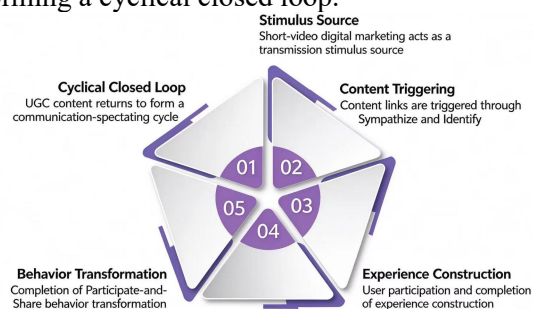


Figure 2. Transmission Mechanism of Spectator Behavior in Short-Video Digital Marketing

4.3 Behavior Transformation: Formation of the Chain from Online Attention to Offline Arrival

The behavior transformation stage covers the Participate and Share links of the SIPS model. It is the ultimate destination of short-form video digital marketing, realizing behavioral leaps from online cognition to online interaction, offline spectating, and sustained communication. Traffic data can intuitively reflect the actual effects of behavior transformation: the annual tourist reception of Rongjiang County was 5 million in 2022 and increased to 9 million in 2024, an increase of 80%. Since the start of the Village Super League, it has cumulatively attracted nearly 20 million tourists and driven the county's comprehensive tourism revenue to exceed 24 billion yuan [10]. Behind the huge passenger flow and consumption scale, short videos play an intermediary role connecting online cognition and offline action.

From the interview materials, the complete audience behavior path can be divided into three stages: first, the attention stage, in which audiences see short videos and develop interest; second, the action intention stage, in which they actively search for information such as transportation, accommodation, and event time, weigh time and economic costs, and form travel intention; third, the experience diffusion stage, in which audiences arrive at the site, complete offline experience, shoot pictures and videos, publish them on short-video platforms, and generate UGC content for outward sharing.

The driving effect of short videos on offline travel is reflected in two aspects: on the one hand, scenario-based content renders the stadium atmosphere and raises audiences' psychological expectations for on-site experience; on the other hand, a large number of official accounts and self-media continuously publish travel guides and accommodation guides, effectively reducing the cost of information search for audiences. Many tourists do not travel impulsively but make decisions to go to Rongjiang County after comparing information from multiple sources on short-video platforms. Respondent said: "After seeing the videos, I really wanted to come, but I would not just set off directly. I watched many bloggers sharing food, accommodation, and transportation conditions, and only planned the trip during holidays."

After completing online or offline experience, the role of the audience changes. They are no

longer merely recipients of short-video content but also become content producers. Tourists and local villagers shoot and upload stadium experiences, food, and folk activities, completing content co-creation. A Village Super League publicity officer introduced: "During matches, not only our official team is filming. Local villagers and bloggers who come to travel are all shooting videos and posting them online. It is equivalent to countless small communication nodes." Massive UGC content further enriches the content pool and drives continued fermentation of topics.

4.4 Formation Mechanism of the "Communication-Spectating" Interactive Cycle

Based on the above analysis, the Village Super League has formed a unique "communication-spectating" interactive cycle, in which communication output and audience spectating behavior empower each other, forming a dynamic closed loop. The complete cycle logic is: short-video digital marketing outputs emotional and scenario-based content, completing content triggering for audiences; audiences form spectating motivation and watch online or travel offline to the site; audiences produce a large amount of UGC material during spectating; these folk materials again become content resources for digital marketing, are re-released on short-video platforms, and a new round of content output continues to reach more potential audiences, cycling repeatedly and continuously amplifying communication effects. Local ethnic cultural resources are the underlying foundation for the sustained operation of this cycle. Intangible cultural heritage resources such as Dong Grand Song, Lusheng dance, and Miao embroidery continuously provide a steady stream of original material for short videos. Halftime artistic performances and post-match bonfire parties at the stadium are all spontaneously participated in by ordinary people, continuously producing real scenes available for editing. At the operational level, the Rongjiang publicity task force draws personnel from the converged media center, cultural-tourism investment enterprises, and township new media service stations to quickly collect, edit, and distribute materials on site, ensuring that vivid scenes occurring in folk settings can be efficiently converted into short video products and promoting the continuous

operation of the cycle. A spectator said: “Many viral clips were not planned in advance by officials. Whatever happened on site, we captured and edited it as soon as possible. Spontaneous stories from the people are the easiest to become popular.”

As the Village Super League gradually carries out external exchanges, this “communication–spectating” cycle has also begun to extend to cross-cultural communication. Short videos are distributed across platforms overseas. Clips of rural stadiums, handmade team signs, and folk food have become windows for overseas users to understand Chinese rural society. However, it should also be noted that in cross-cultural contexts, whether local emotional narratives can continue to achieve emotional triggering still requires longer-term observation.

4.5 Deepening the Unique Logic of “Village Super League” Short-Form Video Digital Marketing

Comparing the Village Super League with mature professional events such as the Chinese Super League and CBA reveals a completely different underlying logic of short-video marketing for mass sports events. The core focus of professional event short-video marketing is star players, competitive suspense, and commercial sponsorship exposure. Content production has a mature industrialized process and places more emphasis on commercial monetization and enhancement of event IP value. In contrast, the differentiation of the Village Super League can be summarized in three points are shown in Table 3.

First, in communication logic, emotional resonance takes priority over competitive value. Professional events rely on star players’ competitive level to capture audience attention; the core that moves audiences in the Village Super League is ordinary people’s stories and local community emotions. The short video of the 95-year-old Dong grandmother achieved massive communication, while many professional event hot spots come from star goals and on-field conflicts. The sources of attention are essentially different. This emotional barrier built on human warmth and localness is also the key that ordinary mass sports events are difficult for professional events to replicate.

Second, the communication model relies on all-domain resonance instead of channel push. Professional events mostly rely on copyright

purchasing and official channel distribution to complete content push, belonging to a top-down channel push model. The Village Super League has formed a relay communication path of “self-media creating heat—local new media expanding volume—central media completing value framing.” UGC self-media first ferments, and mainstream media follow up to empower. It is a communication effect grown from the bottom up, highly consistent with the grassroots character of mass sports events.

Third, the experience construction dimension breaks through the single narrative of stadium competition. The vast majority of professional event short-video lenses focus on player confrontation on the field; in Village Super League short videos, content outside the stadium, such as post-match bonfire parties, villagers’ artistic performances, and local food, often receives extremely high traffic. Many respondents said that bonfire parties and folk performances were the parts they were most willing to shoot and share. Short-video media expand the Village Super League from a football match into a composite experience entry point integrating sports, ethnic culture, and rural life.

Table 3. Comparison of Short-Form Video Marketing Logic between Mass Sports Events and Professional Sports Events

Comparison dimension	Mass sports events represented by the Village Super League	Professional sports events such as CSL and CBA
Core driving source	Local emotions, local ethnic culture, community belonging	Star IP, competitive suspense, on-field confrontation
Communication path	UGC first, all-domain resonance, bottom-up diffusion	Copyright distribution, official channels mainly, top-down push
Core audience demands	Feeling rural atmosphere, cultural experience, collective carnival	Appreciating high-level competition, following star idols
Behavior transformation logic	Experience-driven, audience co-creates UGC to feed back into communication	Event IP loyalty-driven, audience mainly consumes content

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusions

Taking Guizhou Village Super League as a single case, based on the SIPS consumer behavior model, this paper constructs a three-dimensional analytical framework of “content triggering—experience construction—behavior transformation.” Combined with literature and

field semi-structured interview data, it systematically explores the internal mechanism of short-form video digital marketing on spectator behavior in mass sports events. The main research conclusions are as follows.

First, short-form video digital marketing drives the iteration of spectator behavior in mass sports events through three paths. Content triggering relies on emotional narratives and ethnic cultural symbol communication to arouse audience emotional resonance. Audiences complete identification through information search, realizing the transformation from incidental attention to active following. Experience construction relies on immersive live streaming and full-cycle scenario-based short-video content to build a sense of virtual presence for remote online audiences, achieving deep psychological involvement. Behavior transformation realizes online interactive behaviors such as liking, commenting, and forwarding, and further promotes offline on-site spectating and cultural-tourism-sports consumption. After completing the experience, audiences produce a large amount of UGC content, forming a “communication–spectating” interactive cycle through “behavioral feedback,” continuously expanding the event’s communication influence.

Second, short-video marketing of mass sports events has a unique logic different from professional events such as CSL and CBA. Mass sports events take local emotions and local ethnic culture as their core driving force, adopt a UGC-first all-domain resonance communication model, and audiences pursue collective carnival and cultural experience. Professional events rely on star IP and competitive suspense and complete distribution top-down through copyright channels. The underlying logic of the two are different, and mass sports events cannot simply copy the short-video marketing model of professional events.

Third, the Village Super League phenomenon offers implications for digital operations of rural sports events in China: the core competitiveness of short-video marketing for grassroots mass sports events lies not in competitive level but in local community culture and the real stories of ordinary people. In digital marketing, it is necessary to balance traffic heat with the event’s original character, use data to achieve refined operations, connect the value transformation chain of sports–culture–tourism, and promote

long-term sustainable development of rural sports events.

Through the above mechanism analysis, it can be seen that short-form video digital marketing has promoted Guizhou Village Super League to achieve phenomenal communication and complete the leap from a local rural event to a national mass sports IP. However, traffic dividends are not equivalent to long-term sustainable development. After becoming popular, grassroots events also face realistic contradictions such as maintaining local authenticity, converting traffic value, content innovation, and balancing commercialization with rural character. The above case analysis can yield useful theoretical implications and propose actionable optimization paths for the real operational dilemmas of the Village Super League.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

First, it supplements the explanatory path for audience spectator behavior in mass sports events. Previous domestic sports audience research mostly focused on professional events, emphasizing motivations such as competitive appreciation and star worship [12]. This study confirms that the starting point of spectator behavior in mass sports events is not high-level competition but emotional resonance and local cultural symbol stimulation. In the short-video social media environment, audience behavior is no longer simply “watching an event” but forms a cyclical closed loop of “content triggering–experience construction–behavior transformation–behavioral feedback.” Audiences have the dual identity of information receivers and content co-creators, which differs from the behavior mode of professional sports event audiences who mainly consume content and can provide an analytical reference for future research on rural mass sports audience behavior. Second, it verifies the applicability of the SIPS model in the context of mass sports events. Previously, the SIPS model was mostly applied in e-commerce and short-video mass consumption fields. This study transfers it to sports spectating behavior and reconstructs it in combination with the case context into a three-dimensional framework of “content triggering–experience construction–behavior transformation.” Compared with the traditional AISAS linear behavior model, audience behavior in mass sports events under social

media is a cyclical iterative process. Emotional resonance is the starting point of the entire behavior chain rather than forced external information exposure, expanding the application boundary of the SIPS model in sports disciplines. Third, it clarifies the differentiated mechanism of short-video marketing between mass sports events and professional events. Professional events rely on stars, competitive suspense, and copyright distribution to build communication advantages; mass sports events rely on local rural culture, community emotions, and UGC all-domain resonance to break out. The two have essential differences in driving logic, communication paths, and audience demands. Mature short-video operation experience of professional sports cannot be directly copied to rural mass sports events. This has reference significance for subsequent theoretical research on rural sports IP.

5.3 Practical Optimization Strategies

5.3.1 Balancing local authenticity and traffic demands, avoiding risks of over-commercialization and performativity

Grassroots character is the core competitive barrier of the Village Super League. During interviews, many respondents expressed common concerns: after the influx of traffic, deliberately creating dramatic effects to gain short-video heat and over-commercialization would dissolve the original “village flavor” of the Village Super League. One respondent said: “Everyone likes the Village Super League because they like that it is ordinary people’s own ball game. If people specially perform for short videos, the flavor changes.” Therefore, event operations should grasp the boundary of content production, reduce deliberately arranged and staged short-form video content, and return the focus of content mining to the real stories of ordinary villagers, players, and on-site spectators. At the same time, narrative levels should be enriched, and repeated concentration on a few viral themes should be avoided to prevent content homogenization. In traffic operations, do not pursue one side of playback indicators. Cultural authenticity and mass participation should be included in content quality evaluation standards to preserve the core of local folk events.

5.3.2 Optimizing the content tag system based on user data to achieve refined digital marketing

Short-video platforms accumulate large amounts

of behavioral data such as user likes, comments, forwards, and dwell time. These data can be used to identify content preferences of different audience groups. Combined with the logic of the Share stage of the SIPS model, differentiated content push can be made for different audience groups: for potential users who have not yet developed interest, push short videos of character stories and ethnic culture to complete emotional triggering; for audiences who have already developed attention, push live streams and event sidelights to strengthen immersive experience; for users who have already visited Rongjiang County, encourage them to produce UGC content and set lightweight topic incentives for secondary communication. Continue to deepen cooperation with short-video platforms, use the backend data of platform to iterate content tags, and distinguish the needs of different groups such as competitive sports fans, cultural-tourism tourists, and ethnic culture enthusiasts. Commercialization attempts should be prudent, prioritizing cooperation projects highly related to local industries to prevent external commercial logic from eroding the grassroots attributes of the event.

5.3.3 Deepening sports–culture–tourism integration and improving the traffic value conversion chain

Short videos have brought huge exposure, but the conversion chain from traffic to industrial value still has shortcomings. At present, Rongjiang County has cultivated more than 2,200 livestreaming teams and more than 22,000 new media accounts, and built the “Village Super League Select” platform to promote local agricultural specialty products, possessing a good industrial foundation. However, current traffic is more inclined to short-term culture and tourism consumption such as catering and accommodation, while the communication and conversion of cultural products such as intangible cultural heritage cultural and creative products and ethnic handicrafts still have room for improvement.

In the digital-intelligence era and under the background of sports–culture–tourism integration, short-video marketing should be actively promoted to deeply bind with local intangible cultural heritage inheritance and agricultural product e-commerce. On the one hand, develop ethnic cultural and creative products combined with the Village Super League IP and expand sales through short-video

live streaming and influence store visits. On the other hand, promote linkage between the event IP and village tourism, guide stadium traffic to surrounding ethnic minority villages, and let ordinary farmers and craftspeople share the traffic dividend, rather than concentrating benefits only among a few merchants around the stadium, truly realizing sports event empowerment of rural revitalization.

5.4 Research Outlook

This study still has some limitations: it adopts a single-case research design, and the interpretation of the conclusions needs to be further tested in other similar events through multiple cases; the interview sample is relatively small, and the behavioral mechanism of purely online spectator groups is not sufficiently explored; it focuses only on short-form video digital marketing as the core variable, while the interaction between other media channels such as WeChat and traditional media and short videos could also be considered.

Future research can be expanded in the following directions: select different types of rural mass sports events such as Village BA and other rural marathons for multi-case comparative research to test the three-dimensional mechanism framework proposed in this paper and further identify the boundary conditions of short-video marketing in mass sports events; adopt mixed research methods, combine questionnaire-based quantitative research, and verify the path hypotheses of short-form video digital marketing on spectator behavior with large samples; further conduct cross-regional comparisons to explore the differentiated effects of short-video marketing in mass sports events under different economic levels and different ethnic cultural backgrounds, enriching research on mass sports audience behavior in the digital age.

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