

Exploring the Impact Mechanism of Rural Sports Events on Rural Economic Resilience: A Case Study of Guizhou's "Village Super League"

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Abstract:

In the context of rural revitalization and the need to boost endogenous drivers, enhancing rural economic resilience and self-recovery is crucial. This paper examines how sports events empower rural economic resilience, using the "Village Super League" in Guizhou as a case. The study finds that the "Sports+" model integrates sports with local industries, tourism, and community engagement to achieve this. The model drives coordinated development of cultural tourism, agriculture, and the digital economy through joint marketing, cross-sector partnerships, and shared digital platforms, promoting industrial diversification and resource integration. Operations employ new media and smart technologies—live streaming, digital ticketing, real-time data analytics—to improve efficiency and crisis responsiveness. Local governments facilitate efficient governance and multi-party collaboration via integrated service systems, digital platforms, and streamlined regulations. The event also fosters local employment through skill development, entrepreneurship support, and job placement, encouraging workforce return and income growth. Overall, rural sports events systematically enhance economic resilience, recovery, and transformation through industrial agglomeration, technological enablement, governance collaboration, and employment promotion, offering practical references for resilience construction in similar regions.

Keywords: Village super league, Rural sports events, Economic resilience.

1. Introduction

The report *Strengthening Innovation in Rural America*, released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2023, pointed out that "investment in labor skills in rural areas is more closely related to the improvement of innovation outcomes, and the investment effect is greater than that in urban areas." At the same time, China is undergoing a historic transformation from high-speed growth to high-quality development. This transformation began in the "13th Five-Year Plan" period, intensified during the "14th Five-Year Plan" period, and is expected to continue into the "15th Five-Year Plan" period and beyond. In the inaugural year of the "15th Five-Year Plan," China has shifted from consolidating and expanding the achievements of poverty alleviation to comprehensively promoting rural revitalization. The 2025 No. 1 Central Document proposed that issues concerning agriculture, rural areas, and farmers are a strategic priority concerning the overall Chinese path to modernization, emphasizing the enhancement of endogenous driving forces in rural areas through deepening reforms and technological innovation. In this critical period of consolidating the achievements of poverty alleviation and promoting rural revitalization, some scholars have pointed out that rural China still faces a series of issues such as labor shortage, widening urban-rural disparities, and insufficient endogenous driving forces in the rural economy, which have seriously impacted the stability and sustainability of the rural economic system, resulting in a limited capacity of rural economies to withstand external risks and shocks [1].

Scholar Patrícia S C et al. pointed out that sports events are economic stimulants and can improve social benefits [2]. Firstly, sports events improve the institutional system. In 2023, the General Administration of Sport of China proposed to vigorously develop the rural sports industry and boost the revitalization of rural industries. China's 2025 No. 1 Central Document called for developing income-enhancing rural industries, including deeper integration of rural culture and tourism. Secondly, sports events have popularized the digital economy. According to *China Tourism News*, Guizhou's "Village Super League" combines football matches, rural life, ethnic culture, local delicacies, and summer festivals to promote the development of rural tourism and the digital economy. This event format led to a 3.4-fold year-on-year increase and a 2.2-fold month-on-month increase in local orders in Rongjiang. Notably, wine and tourism orders have surged by 164 times compared to the previous year, with the total comprehensive tourism revenue for the entire season reaching 3.834 billion RMB [3]. The rise of Guizhou Village Super provides a rare research window and unique case study on how sports events can transform short-term traffic into

long-term economic vitality. The underlying mechanism deserves in-depth analysis.

Sports events have a significant impact on the resilience of host cities. In 2012, scholar Martin R pointed out that the hosting of sports events and the construction of urban resilience share similar goals. Both aim to promote sustainable development in the urban economy, society, and infrastructure, and serve as means or tools for sustainable urban development. Secondly, hosting events has a positive effect on urban resilience construction. Hosting events can stress-test urban systems and reveal urban resilience [4]. Furthermore, Martin R also pointed out that the similarity in economic construction goals mainly refers to how successful hosting of sports events brings vitality to urban community economic development, serving as a catalyst or lever for urban economic development, effectively addressing crises in urban economic development, and thereby enhancing urban economic resilience [4]. As a prominent example, while the "Village Super League" in Guizhou has brought significant economic development to the host region, existing literature on the internal mechanisms of Guizhou villages mostly focuses on macro policy governance and short-term economic benefits, with relatively insufficient in-depth research on the long-term mechanisms and sustainable paths for enhancing local economic resilience. Based on this, this paper focuses on the influencing factors and enhancement mechanisms of sports events on rural economic resilience, taking the "Village Super League" in Guizhou as an example, to provide possible empirical evidence and practical guidance for more rural areas.

2. Literature References

The concept of "Resilience" initially originated from natural disciplines such as engineering and disaster studies. As scholars extended its application to the economic field, its connotation was further expanded, typically referring to the ability of an economic system to quickly return to its previous growth trajectory after suffering external shocks [5]. In Martin's framework, regional economic resilience is conceptualized as resistance, recovery, re-orientation, and renewal [6].

In recent years, scholars have also conducted detailed discussions on the measurement and enhancement of rural economic resilience. In terms of measurement indicators, these include resistance, recovery, and evolutionary capacity [7]. Regarding the pathways to enhancing urban economic resilience, studies generally agree on the following important factors: first, diversification of industrial structure. A diversified industrial structure can disperse risks and strengthen the city's ability to adapt to aftershocks [8]; second, it can enhance regional innovation capability. Innovation factors are conducive to adaptive adjustments

to economic fluctuations and can significantly enhance regional economic resilience [9]. Finally, popularizing the digital economy. The digital economy can enhance urban economic resilience by improving economic operational efficiency, innovation, and entrepreneurship activity [3].

Sports events, as complex socio-economic activities, have increasingly become a focus of research on host-location economic impacts. Numerous studies have confirmed that events can serve as catalysts for local economic development. As research deepens, it becomes increasingly evident that the impact of sports event hosting on urban development is widespread. The expenditure of tourists at every stage serves as a driving force for local economic development, thereby exerting a significant influence on the region [10]. Furthermore, the host region can also reap long-term benefits such as mitigating tourism seasonality, creating employment and income, driving commercial investment, and promoting destination development [10,11]. Through literature review, it is found that the academic community is currently mainly focusing on the economic impact of sports events, but there are significant gaps and deficiencies in related research outcomes. In particular, two aspects urgently require in-depth study: The achievements are clearly fragmented and insufficient, and there are two aspects that urgently require in-depth research: Firstly, the misalignment of research subjects. Current research is mostly focused on the urban level, exploring the impact of large-scale events on urban economy, society, and management, while research on the rural area, a special field, is relatively scarce. The rural economic system is characterized by vulnerability and insufficient endogenous driving forces, and its resilience enhancement mechanism is fundamentally different from that of cities. Existing literature fails to effectively distinguish between urban and rural differences, making it difficult to deduce a resilience enhancement path that adapts to rural resource endowments and local customs. Secondly, there is a deviation from a research perspective. Existing literature often views sports events as mere "economic stimuli", focusing on short-term tourist consumption and industrial stimulation, while neglecting long-term value and sustainable development, resulting in insufficient revelation of the inherent mechanism by which events drive rural economic resilience.

3. Research Area and Research Methodology

3.1 Overview of The Study Area

Rongjiang County is located in the southeastern part of Guizhou Province, in the southern part of Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, approximately

122 kilometers away from the prefectural government seat. The total area of the county is 3316 square kilometers, with a total population of 385000 people. Rongjiang County is a tourism priority development area in Guizhou, a national cultural advanced county, the hometown of Gymnastics in Guizhou, and a pilot county of "Internet+" agricultural products out of villages and into cities. In August 2021, it was listed as a key assistance County for National Rural Revitalization by the National Rural Revitalization Bureau.

In 2023, Rongjiang County became popular due to the "Village Super League" intellectual property (IP). The local government regards the "Village Super League" as the core driver for promoting high-quality economic development and a central pillar of its rural revitalization strategy. Authoritative institutions such as the National Railway Administration have positioned Rongjiang as the "Village Super destination in Guizhou", demonstrating its representativeness as a sports-driven economic development model. As the "Village Super League" of Guizhou, through brand licensing and industrial integration, it drives the upgrading of diverse industries such as local cultural tourism, deep processing of agricultural specialties, intangible cultural heritage and cultural creativity, e-commerce live streaming, and light manufacturing, effectively converting the event's surge in public attention into sustained economic gains that enrich local residents and strengthen the county's fiscal capacity. According to the report of China News Network and Guizhou Provincial Government: from the beginning of the competition in May 2023 to the end of 2025, Rongjiang county's comprehensive tourism revenue has exceeded 27 billion yuan, received more than 23 million tourists, and driven more than 12000 people to achieve employment income at home, which indicates that the sports events in Guizhou, taking "Village Super League" as an example, have promoted industrial integration and upgrading and achieved economic development empowerment.

However, the economic development of Rongjiang County did not come overnight. In November 2020, the People's Government of Guizhou Province approved Rongjiang County to be removed from the list of poverty-stricken counties. As one of the last batches of counties to be lifted out of poverty nationwide, Rongjiang County had long been constrained by its geographical conditions, known as "eight mountains, one river, and one-tenth farmland." This adage reflects that mountains occupy the majority of the area, with relatively limited water bodies and arable land. Faced with a complex situation intertwined by the decline of the secondary industry supported by traditional wood processing, low industrial added value, and population outflow, Rongjiang County faced challenges of a weak industrial foundation and insufficient endogenous driving force in its early stages of development. Therefore, the

government adjusted its economic trajectory and planned cultural and sports events such as "Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) in the Mountains" and "Leli Dongnian + Bullfighting" for preheating. However, due to the limited influence of cultural symbols and the concentration of activities during holidays, these events failed to generate sustained social attention. Nevertheless, they accumulated experience for the future.

According to the data of Rongjiang county government in 2024, Rongjiang received 9.4618 million tourists, an increase of 24.36% over the same period last year; Comprehensive tourism revenue reached 10.803 billion yuan, an increase of 28.64% over the same period last year, which led to the rapid recovery of catering, accommodation and other service industries and created a large number of jobs. With the continuous expansion of the influence of the event, the economic effect of "Village Super League" gradually extends from the event itself to the upstream and downstream industrial chain and gradually forms an industrial ecosystem of "sports+cultural tourism+agriculture+digital economy" that cooperates with each other and integrates development. According to the official report of Douyin, E-Commerce orders have more than doubled; Rongjiang County's digital cultural tourism orders increased by 3.4 times year-on-year, of which liquor tourism orders surged 164 times year-on-year.

Over the past five years, Rongjiang has continuously innovated its event IP and developed its economy. The Guizhou-Guangzhou High-Speed Railway, Xiamen-Chengdu Expressway, Lijiang-Rongjiang Expressway, Jianjiang-Rongjiang Expressway, and Leizhou-Rongjiang Expressway have been successively completed and put into use, enabling Rongjiang to deeply integrate into the 3-hour economic circle of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area high-speed rail, providing a transportation foundation for the development of the cultural tourism industry. Furthermore, Rongjiang County has successfully hosted various derivative activities such as the "Village Super League" league and the "Village Super League" National Food Invitation Tournament, as well as the "Village Super League" international friendship matches in conjunction with the "Belt and Road". The "Village Super League" is now being comprehensively carried out in 88 counties across Guizhou Province. Rongjiang has centered its development strategy on the "Village Super," fostering an integrated industrial ecosystem that spans hospitality, accommodation, tourism, retail, and entertainment, promoting the continuous outbreak of the "super economy" effect. At the same time, the "Village Super League" case has been selected as one of nine national-level cases, including the 5th Global Best Poverty Reduction Case, the 2024 Asia-Pacific Intangible Cultural Heritage Promoting Sustainable Development Case, and the National Rural Public Service Typical Case. It is a typ-

ical case for studying the continuous development of rural economic resilience through rural sports events.

3.2 Research Methods

This paper adopts a single-case study method and a literature analysis method, taking Guizhou's "Village Super League" as the research object. The main reasons are as follows:

Firstly, the impact of rural sports events on rural economic resilience is complex and dynamic. The single-case study method can answer the question of "how" the impact occurs, and this can be analyzed in stages by constructing a theoretical model. Secondly, the literature analysis method can systematically and comprehensively demonstrate the impact of sports events on economic resilience, including various aspects of economic resilience, making the theoretical analysis more rigorous and persuasive.

4. Impact Mechanism

4.1 Industrial Synergy, Agglomeration, and Diversification

From the perspective of industrial synergy and structural optimization, and in terms of cost, Porter believes that the spatial agglomeration of enterprises leads to geographical concentration and specialized division of labor, which can form economies of scale through the sharing of equipment and supply chains, reducing costs and thereby enhancing the competitive advantage of enterprises and the resilience of the regional economy in the entire area [12]. Regarding the diversity of industrial structure, Xu Yuan and Zhang Linling propose that in the face of international financial crises, the more diversified the urban industrial structure is, the stronger the ability to resist risks, and the stronger the subsequent ability to adjust the industrial structure, the stronger the overall economic resilience [8]. The host region of the "Village Super League" has combined ethnic industries with health and wellness tourism and other derivative industries. Under the management model of villagers, a multi-industry agglomeration and linkage model of "sports + agriculture + culture + health + vacation" has been launched, improving the whole-chain industrial ecology and creating a four-season sports lifestyle integrating events, tourism, and vacation. This has provided a guarantee for the sustainable income of Rongjiang County's tourism and successfully created a regional public brand "Village Super Selection", which has increased the premium of agricultural products such as navel oranges by 40%. In 2023, Rongjiang County's total tourism revenue reached 8.398 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 73.94%; in 2024, the county achieved a comprehensive tourism revenue of 10.803 billion yuan, a year-on-year in-

crease of 28.64%. Since the launch of Guizhou's "Village Super," Rongjiang County has secured over 50 brand authorization partnerships and built a Guangdong Guizhou cooperative new media e-commerce intelligent logistics park, which solves the logistics bottleneck brought by Guizhou's "Village Super League" and realizes automatic sorting and intelligent distribution.

4.2 Resource Restructuring and Innovation

From the perspective of technological innovation, Filippetti et al. used patent and trademark data as indicators and found that regions with higher innovation indicators in Europe exhibit better employment performance and stronger economic resilience [13]. Furthermore, numerous scholars have further discovered that technological innovation enhances industrial resilience [14]. The Artificial Intelligence (AI) intelligent system of Village Super, by introducing tracking and capture technology and a 3D+AI intelligent system, can analyze players' movement trajectories in real time. Moreover, it creates an integrated commercial pathway linking match viewing, purchases of local specialty products, and travel itinerary bookings, achieving the integration of data analysis and commercial services.

In the face of sudden crises, Capodistrias observed, taking the European Food Bank as an example, that innovation helped the European Food Bank respond to emergencies quickly and effectively, enhancing its own risk resistance capability [15]. Similarly, in the face of the catastrophic flood disaster in 2025, the "Village Super League" demonstrated strong resilience. In late June, two consecutive catastrophic floods inundated the "Village Super League" stadium. However, just one month later, local measures such as organizational repair and event restart were implemented to resume the operation of the event, reigniting the "Village Super League" fever on July 26th. In the face of the flood disaster, team members and cheerleaders from various villages in Rongjiang County quickly participated in the production of boxed meals and the transportation of supplies, providing logistical support for rescue personnel and affected people, with a total supply of over 460,000 boxed meals.

In terms of knowledge sharing, some scholars have pointed out that knowledge spillovers and technology diffusion enhance the adaptability of regional economies and strengthen urban economic resilience [16]. According to data from the Organization Department of the Qiandongnan Prefecture Committee, Rongjiang County has implemented the "Ten Thousand People Action Plan for Rural Revitalization through New Media", training a cumulative total of 35,000 participants, and has cultivated over 2,200 local live streaming teams and 12,800 new media accounts.

4.3 Government Policies

The development of the Village Super League is also inseparable from the support of government policies. Fraser found that communities that established policy advisory committees recovered faster than ordinary communities. The government's measure of setting up policy advisory committees has enhanced the economic resilience of communities [17]. At the beginning of 2025, the Rongjiang County Government established mechanisms such as the "Public Legal Service Office" and the "New Media Special Team" to offer streamlined coordination and one-stop dispute mediation services for various disputes, thereby providing legal protection.

"Village Super League" has promoted the functional transformation of local governments from management-oriented to service-oriented, with the masses shifting from passive participation to active engagement, truly embodying the development concept of co-construction, co-governance, and sharing [18]. With government support, state-owned fixed assets investment plays a guiding role in various types of investment, providing infrastructure support for the development of the tourism economy and having a significant impact on its resilience [19]. The six food zones, over 300 agricultural specialty product stalls, and more than 1,600 public food stalls outside the "Village Super League" venues were all realized with the help of the innovative service-oriented government, which is characterized by "an innovative service-oriented governance model characterized by grassroots initiative supported by governmental facilitation." This positioning of a service-oriented government ensures the efficient development of "Village Super League", avoids inefficient monopolization, and achieves cooperation between the market and the government.

4.4 Labor Market and Employment Effect

From the perspective of labor mobility, Moro et al. believe that the stronger the connectivity of the employment network in a city, the faster the labor mobility, and the stronger the regional economic resilience [20]. From the perspective of labor scale, Xie et al. found that population contraction and a decrease in labor quantity significantly reduce the economic resilience of cities [21].

According to Guizhou human resources and Social Security Bureau, in 2025, Rongjiang will build an employment and entrepreneurship platform with "Village Super League" as the fulcrum, and plan more than 1500 free stalls to build a "employment and entrepreneurship Street", increasing the number of homestay beds from 5,958 to 11,000, and add more than 7000 service jobs; Collaborative initiatives involving multiple sectors launched volunteer programs to support the night-time economy to help 1179 new catering entities and more

than 2000 people return home for employment. Since 2025, with the help of the state and county governments, the limited liability company has taken the initiative to connect with Guangdong, Guangxi and other labor intensive areas, focusing on seasonal posts such as sugarcane harvesting, and facilitated direct transportation of workers from their hometowns to workplaces through the way of "government guidance+special vehicle transportation+whole process service", thus realizing "the right combination of increasing income and farming".

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summaries

Based on case analysis and literature review, this paper takes Guizhou's "Village Super League" - a rural sports event - as a typical case, analyzes multiple perspectives on how rural sports events promote rural economic resilience, and explores the specific impact mechanisms. The main conclusions are as follows:

Firstly, the tournament can promote industrial synergy and diversified development. Guizhou Village Super League, through the "Sports+" model, aggregates and integrates diverse industries such as cultural tourism, agriculture, and health care, building a full-chain industrial ecosystem, effectively diversifying economic risks, and enhancing industrial added value. Secondly, the tournament promotes resource restructuring and technological innovation. Village Super League integrates media communication resources, commercial sponsorship resources, and digital technology resources, and utilizes new media and AI intelligent systems to enhance business efficiency and crisis response capabilities, thereby accelerating knowledge spillover and technology diffusion. Thirdly, the success of the tournament is inseparable from the policy support and institutional innovation of a service-oriented government. Village Super League's dedicated service teams and public legal service platforms optimize the business environment and achieve efficient market and government collaboration. Fourthly, the tournament significantly stimulates the labor market. Village Super League has established an employment platform and created numerous service positions, such as in event operations, catering services, cultural tourism reception, and transportation support, effectively promoting labor force return and stable employment, enhancing the stability and resilience of the local economy.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the above conclusions, this paper proposes the following development suggestions:

To deepen industrial integration, regions can draw inspi-

ration from the "Village Super League" model, tailoring their approach to create "Sports+" industrial clusters based on local conditions. This will facilitate the deep integration of specialty agricultural products, intangible cultural heritage, and other elements with the events, thereby enhancing the added value of the industry. Secondly, innovation-driven development should be strengthened by increasing support for the rural digital economy and the application of smart technologies. This involves nurturing local talents in new media and e-commerce and leveraging technological innovation to enhance resilience in the face of unexpected shocks. Furthermore, local governments should continue to transition towards a service-oriented model, providing precise support in areas such as infrastructure, legal protection, and market regulation. At the same time, they should avoid excessive self-reliance and instead invigorate market participants. Finally, employment promotion ought to be prioritized. By utilizing events as platforms, initiatives such as entrepreneurial stall planning, skill training, and labor matching services can be implemented to attract migrant laborers back to their hometowns for employment and entrepreneurship, thereby stabilizing local human resources.

5.3 Outlook

This article has the following limitations: Firstly, it is necessary to investigate whether there are differences in the impact of different types of rural sports events in different regions on economic resilience, in order to form a more universally applicable theoretical framework. Secondly, technological innovation and labor employment in Rongjiang County are still in their infancy, and there is still much room for further improvement in terms of theories and frameworks. The impact on economic resilience requires continued follow-up and in-depth research. Thirdly, theoretical reasoning also needs to explore a quantitative evaluation system, incorporating more empirical data to more accurately assess the impact of events.

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