
The Role of 'Village BA' in Enhancing Rural Sports Public Services: A Case Study of Rural Revitalization in Guizhou-China

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Abstract

Rural revitalization is a critical strategy for advancing rural development in China, with rural sports public services playing a key role in this process. This study focuses on the phenomenon of 'Village BA' in Guizhou, a local basketball competition that has gained significant popularity and is a key player in the rural revitalization process, largely due to the active community engagement. The study aims to analyze its success factors and impact on developing rural sports public services within the broader context of rural revitalization. Using empirical research methods, the study identifies several reasons behind the widespread appeal of 'Village BA,' including its deep cultural resonance and the crucial role of community engagement. Additionally, the study highlights the significant value that such events contribute to fostering competition and participation in rural sports services. The research also uncovers several challenges in the current 'Village BA' model. These include misalignment between the nature of sports and rural characteristics, inadequate sports infrastructure, insufficient safety measures, organizational management challenges, and limited service offerings. To address these issues, the study recommends developing more diverse and inclusive sports services, enhancing rural sports infrastructure, and creating an innovative 'sports+' development model that integrates sports with other sectors. Furthermore, it advocates for a diversified and coordinated supply of sports services to comprehensively promote the growth of rural sports public services. These strategies are intended to support the overall goal of rural revitalization by improving the quality of life and fostering community engagement through sports.

Keywords: *Rural revitalization, Village BA, Rural sports public service, Sports infrastructure*

A. Introduction

Under China's rural revitalization strategy, rural areas are experiencing significant changes aimed at improving the quality of life for residents and bridging the development gap between urban and rural regions (Liu et al., 2019). A vital aspect of this strategy is enhancing rural sports public services, which are crucial in promoting community engagement, fostering public health, and driving social and economic development (Zhang et al., 2020). Despite these efforts, rural sports services in China continue to face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited organizational capacity, and insufficient resources (Li & Zhao, 2019). These issues highlight the need for sustainable approaches to rural sports development that align with the overall goals of rural revitalization (Wang et al., 2021).

A prime example of rural sports success is the "Village BA" basketball competition, held annually in Taipan Village, Guizhou Province. This grassroots event has attracted nationwide attention for transforming local rural entertainment into a large-scale sports competition, creating a unique cultural identity for the region (Chen et al., 2021). The event underscores the potential of rural sports to contribute to rural development by enhancing public services and

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fostering community pride. However, despite its popularity, "Village BA" still faces challenges such as weak organizational management, inadequate facilities, and logistical barriers, raising questions about the sustainability and scalability of similar initiatives in other rural areas (Li, 2020).

Previous research on rural revitalization and sports public services has focused on the role of sports in improving health and fostering social capital. Scholars like Zhang et al. (2020) and Li (2019) emphasize the importance of rural sports in linking traditional rural lifestyles with modern public service systems. However, a gap remains in the literature regarding the opportunities and challenges associated with rural sports events like "Village BA." While existing studies have identified organizational inefficiencies and infrastructure weaknesses as major challenges, there has been limited attention to how these events can be optimized to align with rural revitalization strategies (Zhou & Chen, 2021). This study seeks to fill this gap by using "Village BA" as a case study to explore the broader implications of rural sports development in China.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the role of "Village BA" in enhancing rural sports public services and its contribution to rural revitalization. Specifically, the study aims to analyze the factors behind the event's success, identify its challenges, and propose strategies for improving rural sports services. It will also provide policy recommendations that align rural sports development with the broader goals of China's rural revitalization strategy (Chen et al., 2021). By examining this unique event, the study argues that rural sports can catalyze social cohesion and community identity and enhance public services in rural areas. In contrast to earlier research, which primarily focused on the socio-economic benefits of rural sports, this study takes a more comprehensive approach by considering the organizational, infrastructural, and policy dimensions. The findings are expected to contribute valuable insights and provide actionable recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders involved in rural development.

B. Methods

This study adopts a qualitative case study design to explore the role of "Village BA" in enhancing rural sports public services within rural revitalization in Guizhou, China. The case study approach is ideal for profoundly investigating this unique event, allowing the researcher to gain insights into its cultural, social, and organizational significance. The research uses multiple data sources, including interviews, observations, and document analysis, to comprehensively understand the case.

The research procedure was divided into three phases. First, a preliminary investigation and literature review were conducted to establish a theoretical foundation and frame the research questions. This stage involved identifying key concepts from previous studies on rural sports and developing interview guides and observational tools. The second phase involved fieldwork over three months during the annual "Village BA" event in Taipan Village. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants, including local government officials, event organizers, participants, and residents, ensuring diverse perspectives. The third phase focused on synthesizing and analyzing the collected data. After the fieldwork, all interviews, observations, and documents were systematically organized and prepared for analysis.

Data collection employed three primary techniques: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 stakeholders, allowing for flexibility in exploring topics like the event's organizational structure, cultural importance, and logistical challenges. The interviews, lasting 45 to 90 minutes, were recorded with consent and transcribed for analysis. Participant observation provided real-time

insights into the event's operations, community involvement, and infrastructure, while detailed field notes captured the logistics and challenges of organizing a rural sports event. Document analysis included reviewing official reports, local policy documents, and media coverage, providing broader context and policy insights related to rural sports development.

Data analysis was done using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. Interview transcriptions were imported into NVivo software and coded based on predefined and emerging themes. Themes such as "community engagement," "sports infrastructure," "organizational challenges," and "cultural significance" were identified through an iterative process. Inductive and deductive coding were used, allowing themes to emerge from the data while guided by theoretical frameworks on rural sports services and revitalization. To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, data triangulation was employed by cross-checking information from interviews, observations, and document analysis. Finally, the findings were synthesized to provide insights into how rural sports events like "Village BA" contribute to rural development, and strategies were proposed to address the challenges identified.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Village BA Successful Practice

The Origin of Village BA

The "Village BA" basketball tournament became popular on June 6th, 2022, because of a new basketball match. Netizens referred to the naming rules of "NBA" and "CBA" and called it "Village BA." When the "Village BA" originated, it can't be traced back. In fact, in the 1930s, country basketball rose in Taijiang County. In the spring of 2023, a small village with less than 1200 people again caused a hot discussion on the whole network. This time, the reason was a "village BA" basketball game full of local flavor. According to the data, Taijiang County has received more than 2 million tourists since July last year, and the tourism income has reached 2.3 billion yuan. By the end of August 2023, the number of page views of the whole network had reached more than 30 billion. The nostalgia, purity, and freshness of this phenomenal sports event have become social topics, reflecting the demand of rural people for a better life in the new era. They are no longer just pursuing existence but paying more attention to the quality of life. The rise of "village BA" makes more people pay attention to the spiritual world of ordinary people in rural areas, which reflects the strong demand for high-quality spiritual and cultural life in rural areas. This change in demand provides a broader space for developing rural sports public services (Gao, Ren, Lu & Zhang, 2024).

Village BA Hot Out of The Circle Reasons

First of all, one of the reasons for the success of the "Village BA" basketball tournament is its unique operation mode. For example, the "Village BA" basketball tournament was initially organized by a basketball team spontaneously organized by villagers. The competition is usually held on the annual "June 6th" Eating New Festival, making full use of traditional festivals as an opportunity to have the competition, attracting wanderers back to their hometown to participate in the competition, and increasing the particularity and attraction of the event. At the same time, the competition pays attention to maintaining local cultural characteristics, including using local dialects, wearing traditional national costumes, performing local traditional songs and dances, etc., to show the unique artistic charm of small mountain villages in Guizhou, convey the feelings of returning to the countryside, and stimulate people's emotions and resonance. "Village BA" bears homesickness, highlights the new look of rural culture, and promotes the revitalization of rural culture. This unique mode of operation reflects the growing demand for the spiritual culture of the people and the cities at this stage. People seek a more colorful way of cultural

entertainment, and the "Village BA" basketball match provides them with such an opportunity. This is in line with the difference in cultural needs between urban residents and rural residents and also reflects the contradiction that audio, video, audio, and video tend to be urban residents at this stage, and the enthusiasm and initiative within the event, which is the main reason why rural events can have deep contact with the people, be full of vitality and attract the public. Secondly, in the way of organization, the villagers organize competitions under collective deliberation to ensure extensive participation and joint decision-making in the village, which further guarantees the public welfare and publicity of the competitions, and at the same time, breaks the tradition that the government holds more top-down sports events. In addition, the "Village BA" basketball tournament cooperates with relevant local departments and organizations to jointly organize the competition. This includes facilities, safety measures, publicity, and other aspects (Zhang & Wu,2024).

2. The Rise of Village BA and the Importance of Rural Sports Competitions

Boost Rural Residents' Enthusiasm for Sports Participation

Holding rural sports events can improve people's awareness of sports and health, create a good sports atmosphere, and expand the number of rural sports participants. At the same time, rural sports events can also strongly influence and appeal to attract villagers to watch the games, enhance the atmosphere of physical exercise, and stimulate villagers' enthusiasm to participate. However, it is worth noting that in most rural areas, the awareness and confidence of rural residents to participate in sports could be higher. Many still think farm work is sports, so they don't need extra physical exercise. This concept goes deep into the psychology of some rural residents. "Village BA" is a hot network, and its scene is as hot as CBA, comparable to NBA. This phenomenon has been widely reported in major media, including Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily, and CCTV, as well as over 100 media outlets such as TikTok. The number of people watching the live webcast exceeded 100 million. The competition was spread by self-media platforms, and many views, likes, forwards, and comments were obtained. These data quickly formed an "emotional contact" and an "emotional mass" in the circle. The village BA's success has positively contributed to improving rural people's participation and attention in sports.

Foundations for Developing Rural Sports Public Services

As far as "Village BA" is concerned, it maintains the local flavor and makes people, money, and things compatible simultaneously, laying an essential foundation for the long-term healthy development of rural sports public services. First, the "Village BA" basketball tournament has a long history and a solid mass base, and the holding of the tournament has cultivated a large number of local sports professionals. These people not only understand sports but also cultivate organizers who are keen on basketball games. They have trained a high-level and hard-quality management team for a long time and provided powerful human resources for the development of rural sports. Second, under the villagers' collective discussion, the stadium resolutely resists commercialization and retains a unique "village" flavor. There is no admission fee or support from sponsors in the stadium, and commercial experience is conducted around the stadium. Various shops, such as the "Village BA" offline experience store and theme restaurant, are established outside the stadium, which not only earns part of the competition funds but also meets the needs of different tourists. Through "promoting tourism by competition and making up the competition by tourism," resources are complementary (Zhu& Xiao,2024). Third, "Village BA" and the local government and villagers jointly funded the renovation and expansion of the existing basketball field, which made it look brand-new, and the audience increased to more than 20,000. At the same time, it gradually improved the matching facilities such as dressing rooms, parking lots, and snack streets. These investments and improvements provide better venues and facilities for future rural sports.

Local Culture Drives Rural Cultural Revitalization

The Party's Report to the 20th CPC National Congress is vital in inheriting and carrying forward Chinese excellent traditional culture, building beautiful countryside, promoting the construction of a rural public cultural service system, and guiding farmers to participate in artistic creation and inheritance. As a concrete case, "Village BA" effectively combines local culture with sports. The innovative league connects the village with the city, allowing villagers to show their talents and creativity. This form stimulates the villagers' creativity and spreads the village's sports culture. Therefore, the revitalization of rural culture should not only ask for the needs of the masses but also ask them for advice and find ways to realize them. By protecting and developing rural culture, integrating regional cultural characteristics, and creating a traditional rural atmosphere, we can promote rural areas' development, improve rural residents' quality of life, and revitalize rural culture (Chen, 2024).

3. Challenges and Issues in Village BA Development

Low Compatibility Between Sports and Rural Areas, with Limited Villager Participation

By the end of 2020, according to the National Bureau of Statistics of China data, the rural population in China accounts for about 42% of the total population, and about 580 million people live in rural areas. The proportion of elderly people aged 60 and above in the rural population is 18.3%, while the proportion of the rural population under 15 is 15.4%. Carrying out sports activities with high intensity is not suitable for rural people. The main reasons are: First, rural people's age structure and physical quality are essential factors. The main population in rural areas is the elderly and children, and their physical strength and muscular endurance are relatively weak. These people usually engage in manual labor, such as farm work. Still, their physical fitness level may not be suitable for high-intensity competitive sports because of their low labor intensity. Secondly, the infrastructure in rural areas is relatively weak. The lack of sports venues, equipment, and professional venues has limited the development of competitive high-intensity sports. Coupled with the inconvenient transportation conditions in rural areas, it is difficult for villagers to participate in large-scale competitive activities, limiting the opportunities for the rural population to participate in competitive sports. In addition, interest and cultural factors will also lead to people's low interest in competitive sports and prefer other sports activities or leisure and entertainment. Finally, due to the limited time and space, the life rhythm of rural people is relatively tight, and most people's time is spent on farmland work and family life, so they can't spare enough time for high-intensity competitive sports and professional training. In this case, the "Village BA" participants mainly include young people such as village residents, migrant workers, basketball fans, and students. In contrast, more old people and children can only participate as spectators and cannot participate in exercise activities. This will not only affect the experience of sports events of spectators and players but also affect the experience of sports events of spectators and players, making it challenging to balance the supply and demand of rural sports and unable to continuously meet the needs of rural sports in promoting rural revitalization. The lack of a specific mass base also means the lack of real supporters and fans, quickly leading to the imbalance between the nature of sports and the rural fit. It ultimately hinders the construction of rural sports public services (Chen, 2024).

Weak Sports Infrastructure and Lack of Security

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China put forward an increase in investment in rural sports facilities, strengthened infrastructure construction, and improved the construction level of rural sports public service facilities to meet the physical exercise needs of farmers. However, constructing rural sports public service facilities in China needs multiple problems. On the one hand, rural sports facilities are imperfect, lack investment, are damaged, and have inadequate maintenance and management, which directly affects the availability and safety of facilities, leading to the slow progress of the renewal and improvement of sports

facilities. On the other hand, the uneven distribution of rural sports facilities has brought great difficulties to constructing sports venues. In addition, the aging and occupation of some infrastructure have brought restrictions and security risks to holding rural sports events. For example, "Village BA" basketball is easy to cause security problems because of its simple sports infrastructure, so some issues need to be dealt with and solved. First, the stadium is open-air, greatly influenced by climatic conditions. Players' training or competition in sunshine, high temperatures, cold, wind, and rain will impact players' performance and safety. Secondly, because the distance between the stadium and the auditorium is close, the audience is easily injured by the collision of players. At the same time, there is a risk of falling when the audience takes dangerous actions such as building ladders, standing on the roof, climbing fences, and climbing trees in the open-air stadium. Finally, due to the large audience and crowded audience, mass accidents such as shoving and trampling are prone to occur. The weak rural sports infrastructure affects the safety of sports activities and restricts the development of rural sports. The transformation and upgrading of "Village BA" through the joint efforts of the government and villagers is only a case, and the sports facilities in most rural areas are lacking and crude, which limits the development of rural sports public services (Jason, 2024).

Challenges in Management and Promotion

Undoubtedly, the difficulty in organizing and managing sports events is a significant challenge for the sustainable development of "Village BA." This is because the organization and management of the competition involve many aspects and links, including venue selection, schedule arrangement, team management, and referee assignment. All these tasks require professional personnel to be responsible, and they need good organization and cooperation to ensure the smooth progress of the competition. The first challenge of competition between organization and management is combining and overcoming limited marketing. This is because limited marketing may affect the competition's popularity, audience participation, and income sources, and the competition organizers need to meet these challenges through innovative publicity strategies, establishing partnerships, and finding diversified income sources. For example, the organization and participants of the "Village BA" basketball tournament are mainly from villages and towns, and these residents are primarily engaged in activities such as farming, going out to work, and going to school, and there are few related professionals. The initial report has been fully reported, people's curiosity about new things has gradually weakened, and the attention of media reports will also decline. The media may shift its attention to other more eye-catching news events, resulting in fewer follow-up reports. "online celebrity reporting benefit" has the characteristics of rapid rise and disappearance. Therefore, only through effective organization and management and innovative publicity strategies can we think about how to turn the ever-changing traffic into lasting promotion power to ensure the long-term success and development of the event.

4. Developing Rural Sports Public Services through 'Village BA' Events

Develop Unique Brands and Create Diverse Sports Services

Rural areas are rich in natural resources and cultural heritage, and rural sports can create a unique sports brand image according to the local characteristics and humanistic environment. As characteristic sports events, traditional sports venues, farming culture, etc., determine the characteristics and positioning of the brand and highlight the unique charm of rural areas by designing personalized signs and slogans. First, we should establish cooperative relations with local rural sports organizations, government agencies, and farmers' cooperatives to promote brand development, such as holding sports events, training courses, and promotion activities. For example, in the successful case of "Village BA," it can be found that sports events combined with local traditional culture are more easily recognized. "Village BA" is a characteristic brand based on basketball culture. Integrating basketball culture into rural planning and construction

endows rural brands with unique characteristics and values and is conducive to the sustainable development of rural sports; adapting to the existing conditions in rural areas and relying on local sports to carry out rural sports events can more effectively play the role of rural sports events and promote the joint development of related services, tourism, and catering industries (Chen & Shen, 2023; Chen & Chen, 2023). By building the characteristic brand of rural sports and establishing and perfecting the public service system of rural sports, we can promote the diversified development of rural sports services, meet the different needs of rural residents, improve the level of rural sports services, enhance the physical and mental health of rural residents and promote the sustainable development of rural revitalization.

Improve Rural Infrastructure and Build a Safety Net

Infrastructure plays a vital role in the development of rural sports. To realize the standardization of rural sports infrastructure, we must pay attention to constructing advanced facilities and improving basic facilities. Only by introducing modern facilities, providing professional venues, and building sports facilities can we meet the development needs of rural sports. Promoting and upgrading rural sports facilities should adhere to the principle of "government leading and villagers participating." First, we should establish and improve relevant laws and standards and clarify the safety requirements of rural sports facilities and the responsibilities and obligations of the responsible subjects. Through the formulation of explicit norms and standards, the safety of sports facilities is regulated and supervised to ensure that they meet the safety requirements. To improve the infrastructure level for sports facilities, we must start from the perspective of planning and construction. Secondly, the location and layout of sports facilities should be rationally planned, considering the local population and needs and the functions and frequency of use of facilities. Pay attention to the construction of infrastructure, including improving supporting facilities such as power supply, water supply, and ventilation, to ensure the regular operation and use of facilities. At the same time, we should also consider constructing barrier-free facilities to provide a convenient environment for the disabled. In addition, we should strengthen the monitoring and testing of stadiums or fitness venues and conduct regular safety assessments and investigations into hidden dangers. Through regular monitoring and testing, the potential safety hazards of sports facilities are found in time, and measures are taken to repair and improve them to ensure the safety of the facilities. In addition, the training of stadium staff should be strengthened to ensure that they have safe operation skills and emergency response capabilities. Through training and assessment, staff's safety awareness and emergency handling ability are improved, and various safety problems are effectively dealt with. Finally, promoting multi-party cooperation is also the key to improving sports facilities' safety and the infrastructure construction level. The government should increase capital investment and policy support to encourage the construction and transformation of sports facilities, and government departments at all levels need to coordinate and cooperate to form a joint force. At the same time, we can encourage the participation of the public and enterprises and support the construction of sports facilities through donations and sponsorship (how to do the safety protection path). For example, the "Village BA" was built according to local conditions, which not only increased supporting facilities such as lighting, awning, and audience seats but also improved the emergency plan, maintained the order of the competition site, and made efforts to ensure the safety of the competition. Such efforts are aimed at maximizing the mass base of basketball and playing an exemplary role. In addition, we are constantly improving the construction and transformation of rural sports infrastructure, increasing the number, type, scale, and function. While paying attention to the construction of sports infrastructure, we should do an excellent job in safety awareness, monitoring, equipment, training, and potential safety hazards to reduce safety risks. Standardization, standardization, and safety supervision of rural sports infrastructure are the cornerstones of the sustainable development of rural sports. We must consider planning, construction, maintenance, and cooperation to realize this goal.

Building a Multi-Innovative 'Sports+' Development Model

If rural sports want to break the circle and qualify, they must find and shape their unique characteristics to win more attention and realize rural development. Taipan Village, Guizhou Province, has successfully found a village revitalization model with competition as the medium by building a "village BA" basketball brand with high popularity and reputation. Through the radiation-driven effect of "Village BA" basketball brand, health, industry, tourism and leisure, unique agricultural products, ecology, Internet, national characteristic culture, and rural economy are subtly combined, and "sports+" is successfully used as the "nuclear engine" for rural revitalization, which injects new development impetus into rural economy and realizes the synchronous development of primary, secondary and tertiary industries. The main types of rural "sports+" development model are: first, "sports+health"; by introducing various fitness facilities and projects, farmers are encouraged to participate actively in physical exercise, improve their physical fitness, and enhance their health awareness. We can organize activities regularly, carry out sports training, provide health consultation and other services to promote the healthy lifestyle of rural residents and improve the supply content of rural sports public services. The second is "sports+industry," which uses the rich sports capital in rural areas to build a sports industry chain. For example, the "Village BA" will create a sporting goods store and an official offline experience store, which will not only provide employment opportunities and entrepreneurial platforms but also promote the development of related industries around the stadium, create an "industrial revitalization" road in rural revitalization, and promote rural economic development; The third "sports+tourism and leisure" is to make use of the natural environment and human resources in rural areas to create products that combine sports with tourism (Jiang,2023). It can create outdoor sports venues, fitness rural tourism routes, etc., to attract urban residents to the countryside for sports, leisure, and tourism. For example, the "Village BA" explosion attracts people from all parts of the country to visit and punch in, promoting rural tourism development. Fourth, "Sports+Agricultural Special Products," "Village BA" awarded the local unique agricultural products such as Taijiang Carp Kissed Rice, Yellow Cattle, Rice Fish, Sturgeon, Tomato Juice, and other agricultural special products as prizes, which were unique and successfully brought to the market. Fifth, "sports+ecology," through sports, improves rural residents' awareness of protecting the ecological environment (Kuang, 2023). We can organize sports activities with the theme of environmental protection, such as hiking in mountains and rivers, outdoor expansion, etc., strengthen the construction of ecological civilization, protect farmland, water sources, and natural ecological environment, and cast "ecologically livable"; "Through the innovative development model of" sports+," "village BA "combines sports with health, industry, tourism, culture, and rural development, forming a system of mutual promotion and common development. This model not only expands sports' influence and social benefits but also positively contributes to local economic growth and social progress. "Village BA" is a successful case that proves that basketball matches can deeply understand and release the massive potential in rural areas, and this model provides a feasible and innovative way to promote rural sports public service in rural revitalization (Pu & Deng, 2023).

D. Conclusion

In rural revitalization, developing public services for rural sports has become crucial in enhancing the quality of life in rural areas. The "Village BA" case study in Guizhou demonstrates how a rural sports public service model tailored to local characteristics and needs can be successfully implemented. By integrating innovative practices in rural sports events, fostering a unique local cultural atmosphere, and establishing a "sports+" framework, "Village BA" has effectively addressed rural residents' demand for sports activities while also contributing to the economic and cultural value of the region. However, despite its success, challenges still must be

addressed in the organization, management, and supply of rural sports public services. The study highlights the need for a diversified and characteristic approach to developing these services, ensuring they are adaptable to specific local conditions rather than replicating models without consideration of regional differences. Moving forward, rural sports public services must be rooted in culture, prioritize the involvement of local farmers, and focus on talent development, industry support, and community-driven sports events as critical strategies. The rise of events like "Village BA" across China offers a promising outlook for rural sports development, contributing to rural revitalization and to China's broader goal of becoming a sports powerhouse and achieving a "Healthy China." This case provides valuable insights for other regions. It serves as a model for fostering sustainable rural sports development, meeting the diverse needs of rural populations, and promoting social cohesion and cultural identity.

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