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Promoting beach sports in fishing villages: lessons from teenage volunteers' practice in Tanmen Town

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Abstract. Coastal beach sports serve as an efficient method to rejuvenate fishing villages and develop local cultural tourism. By taking the case of beach sports activities organized by teenagers in Tanmen Town, Hainan as an example, this paper explores the process of organizing the activity in a period of seven days. Results show that youth volunteer activities can help establish opportunities of community interaction and neighborhood relations and increase online exposure of the village. However, there are various challenges faced by the project, such as improper choice of promotional medium, lack of connection with the local fishery culture and problems of sustainable operation. Thus, this paper will explore practical experience and limitations of the activity and present optimized strategies, such as integrated online-offline promotion, incorporation of local cultural elements, collaboration with local enterprises and complete preservation of event archives.

Keywords: beach sports, teenage volunteers, fishing village community, rural sports, community building

1. Introduction: background

1.1. Research background

Current rural revitalization drives encourage innovative integration of sports, culture, and tourism in rural regions [1]. Unlike purely score-oriented competitive sports, village-level community sports events aim to bring together local residents, strengthen neighborhood connections, and showcase indigenous village culture. An increasing number of youth and middle-school student volunteer teams have gained access to such rural practical programs [2]. Rather than merely acting as spectators or participants, these youth groups take on real organizational responsibilities and tackle on-site practical challenges within villages.

Tanmen Town is known to be one of the most beautiful fishing villages in Hainan province. Due to its superior beach resources and unique fishing village cultural background, Tanmen is a perfect place for holding beach sports events [3]. It is mainly organized and operated by the youth practice team, consisting of

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volunteers who are middle school students. The entire project includes pre-event training and one-day competition. There are three specialized subgroups that handle different responsibilities: the planning subgroup is responsible for designing games for competition and creating schedules; the logistics subgroup is responsible for preparing materials and providing on-site safety; the publicity subgroup is responsible for designing promotional posters and social media content. By cooperation with other teams, this event is aimed at people living in nearby villages and Qionghai locals. Before this project, all team members only learned about the related knowledge from textbooks or MOOCs without any practical experience with the dissemination of information in rural areas.

1.2. Research content

This report documents daily working procedures and reflects on student organizers' roles. Two core research questions run through the whole study. First, what practical difficulties confront youth volunteer teams organizing small-scale rural sports events, and how do time constraints shape community awareness and event attendance? Second, beyond delivering sports competitions, what positive impacts can beach sports generate for fishing-village communities, in terms of facilitating social cohesion and attracting tourist attention? It is expected that the practical experience summarized in this paper can serve as a reference for teenagers engaging in similar public-welfare practice projects.

1.3. Research methods

Participatory observation constitutes the primary data source for this study. Members of the publicity subgroup participated in every phase of event execution. Relevant materials were collected from the logistics subgroup, and competition rules as well as timetables were verified with the planning subgroup. Visual promotional materials were produced and released online, and audience feedback after the event was analyzed. Raw research materials include teamwork meeting notes, authentic participant registration data, and post-practice reflection documents from the project team. Recorded challenges covering site layout and participant safety management indirectly influence publicity implementation. Combining hands-on practical records with case analysis, this study assesses communication deficiencies as well as the rural-development value embedded in the Tanmen Beach Sports Event.

2. Body

2.1. Practice and bottlenecks of event communication and brand-building

2.1.1. Daily workflow of the student-led publicity group

Some of the main roles of the student in publicity subgroup are the creation of posters and publication of information on social media sites. This information helps to provide accurate information regarding the events that residents of nearby villages and Qionghai can use to gather more information and register themselves in the event. Communication within the subgroups is essential to guarantee the quality of the work being done. Information required by the publicity subgroup regarding materials and all information about the competition should be confirmed with respect to the information provided by the planning subgroup. Any misinformation passed through the subgroups can mislead potential participants using the posters and publications on social media sites.

2.1.2. Delayed publicity and its visible real-world results

The competition is scheduled on the sixth day of the whole project cycle. However, the first draft of posters is only finished on the third day, and revised posters are finalized in the early morning of the fourth day. Full-scale promotion is carried out with less than two days remaining before event commencement.

The extremely short promotion period brings multiple practical setbacks. The expected participant volume is 40, whereas actual on-site attendance reaches merely 20. Post-event comments under social-media posts show that numerous potential audiences receive activity information only after registration closes. The phenomenon demonstrates the adverse effect of delayed information release on information diffusion. Insufficient local exposure further prevents preliminary brand building for the event. Existing research indicates that rural community events depend heavily on adequate time for offline word-of-mouth dissemination among local residents [1].

2.1.3. Root causes behind the communication weaknesses

There are two types of contributing factors that result in communication inefficiencies. From within the group, the public relations sub-group does not create clear deadlines for the creation of promotional materials at the preparatory stage. There is no free time left for poster revision and proofreading among other groups. Differences in views among various sub-groups regarding the starting time of the competition and age-group classification complicate the process of promotional material creation. Besides, student organizers have no experience in terms of estimating the time needed for visual design.

Important insights are also obtained regarding communication strategies adapted for rural populations. Local villagers do not browse social-media platforms on a daily basis; community-activity information mainly spreads through offline word-of-mouth within villages [1]. A compressed promotion timeline leaves no room for such informal information circulation. Event branding cannot be accomplished by a single online post; repeated information exposure is required to raise local residents' awareness.

2.1.4. Practical improvements for future event promotion

For youth volunteer projects, publicity preparation should be initiated synchronously with overall project planning instead of being compressed into the pre-event final stage. Clear deadlines shall be defined for first-draft completion, inter-group review, and official release of promotional outputs. Given student teams' limited professional experience, timelines should be pre-examined by teachers or local community administrators to identify potential operational risks [4].

Apart from social-media distribution, organizers need to respect local residents' information-access habits. Supplementary offline channels such as village bulletin-board notices and community broadcasts can reach groups with low online-platform usage [1]. Warm-up content can be released prior to formal registration to accumulate continuous local brand impressions, for example, by introducing beach venues, game settings, and volunteer stories.

2.2. Real-world performance: sports events empowering rural development

2.2.1. Strengthening community connections through inclusive sports design

Even though there are weaknesses in public communication, the activity is very socially valuable. Beach volleyball, beach football, sandbag throwing, and many more games are organized. In designing the games, fun comes before winning. Age difference allows for kids and grownups to be able to play sports together.

Participants include not only local residents but also visiting tourists. The beach sports venue forms an informal public space, where previously unfamiliar individuals establish connections through sports engagement. Rural sports therefore function as a social bridge beyond pure competition purposes [3]. Local parents bring children to join sandbag-tossing activities; youngsters enjoy recreational time on the beach while

adult participants conduct casual conversations. Such interaction scenarios are rarely seen amid ordinary busy village daily life.

2.2.2. Gaining online exposure for the fishing-village destination

The festival creates further exposure to the unique appeal of the fishing village of Tanmen on the Internet. People attending the festival create pictures and brief videos from events taking place there and post them on their social media pages.

One notable shortcoming exists nevertheless: insufficient integration between event content and indigenous fishing-village culture. Posters and online publications focus predominantly on competition rules and registration guidance, with scarce application of local fishery-related symbols and narratives. Localized brand storytelling is therefore absent. Embedding fishery-culture elements such as fishing-boat patterns and fishermen's stories into promotional materials can strengthen localization features and extend the online communication influence [3].

2.2.3. Objective limits of this single-session event

A balanced evaluation should acknowledge inherent constraints of this one-off small-scale activity together with its positive effects. Coupled with insufficient pre-event promotion, the event produces limited direct economic impacts on local areas. Tourist arrivals are mostly spontaneous without systematic branding guidance. No stable cooperation is established with local homestay operators and specialty commodity vendors. Single-shot sports activities can create short-term online popularity, yet sustainable village development requires recurring event implementation and deeper linkage with local characteristic industries [1]. Youth-volunteer-led activities are mostly short-term summer-vacation projects. Once volunteer teams leave the locality, continuous operation and iterative upgrading of events become difficult.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Main research findings

Timeline management constitutes a critical challenge for the Tanmen Beach Sports Meeting. Delayed finalization of promotional materials creates an extremely short promotion window. Restricted information diffusion leads to attendance lower than projected. For youth practical projects, internal schedule planning and cross-team collaboration efficiency exert decisive influences on publicity performance. For rural-oriented events, multi-channel repeated information dissemination with sufficient time is essential to build basic community brand awareness [1]. Student volunteer teams possess innovative ideas but tend to underestimate time costs for design revision and cross-group coordination. External guidance from teachers or community practitioners helps formulate more realistic project timelines [4].

Despite communication challenges, the inclusive multi-age game designs will deliver social value for the village. The competition-based design enables interaction across ages and further strengthens the sense of community. The user-generated media provides additional exposure for the community of Tanmen and also helps in creating some advantages for the local tourism industry. However, the relationship of sports programming with the fishing village culture is very superficial. Benefits in economic terms are also not planned but occur by accident [5].

3.2. Suggestions for youth-organized rural sports activities

Drawing from practical experience, three targeted recommendations are proposed for similar youth-organized rural sports events.

First, optimize the publicity timeline. Promotional materials, including posters, shall be prepared, and warm-up publicity launched in the early project phase. Clear deadlines for drafting and approval should be set, with reserved revision periods. Online social media release shall be combined with offline poster distribution to accommodate local residents' information-receiving habits [1]. Before work plan finalization, student teams shall invite experienced teachers to review timelines and identify hidden risks. [4].

Second, embed indigenous cultural elements into event branding. Visual representations of local culture can be incorporated within poster design and activity arrangement, transforming ordinary sports competitions into carriers of regional cultural display [3]. Teenage organizers can collect local legends and cultural background through interviews with village residents.

Third, extend the local benefit value chain. When practical conditions permit, preliminary cooperation with local homestays and specialty merchants may be developed to convert short-term online popularity into sustainable community development dividends [1]. Complete event documents and practical summaries shall be handed over to local residents, enabling follow-up activity implementation after youth volunteers finish their field practice.

3.3. Research limitations

The students involved have limited theoretical understanding of rural development. The analysis is based on observations made at the field level. Data are gathered through the public subgroups' documents, media comments, and intra-team post-event analysis. No data are collected from questionnaires for all the participants and non-participants among the villagers. There is no long-term follow-up as far as brand effects or tourism impacts are concerned. Future projects related to this can use questionnaires and personal interviews.

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