

## Exploring Narrative Style and User Engagement in Short Video News: A Case Study of ‘Sichuan Observation’ Douyin Account

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### Abstract

This study investigates the narrative structures and user engagement patterns of 15 popular short videos from the “Sichuan Observation” Douyin account. The sample includes the top three most-liked videos each year from 2020 to 2024. Using qualitative textual analysis and data visualization, the videos are grouped into three themes: emotional resonance and individual expression, socio-political conflicts and collective emotions, and positive energy through personal struggle and family education. Results show that narrative style strongly shapes user participation: emotional stories evoke empathy, conflict videos spark debate, and positive narratives promote value sharing. These findings demonstrate how storytelling drives likes, comments, and shares, extending the reach of short video news. The study offers both theoretical insight and practical guidance, suggesting that media practitioners can use concise plots and emotional design to strengthen audience connection and communication impact.

**Keywords:** *Douyin short videos, narrative style, emotional resonance, user engagement, positive energy*

### 1. Introduction

Sichuan Province is located in southwestern China, covering an area of approximately 486,000 square kilometers with a population of around 83 million. The province has diverse topography, and Chengdu, the capital, serves as the economic, cultural, and transportation hub of the southwestern region. Sichuan’s traditional media, such as Sichuan Radio and Television Station and Sichuan Daily, hold significant influence in the region. Meanwhile, short video platforms have also risen, with Sichuan Observation being one of the leaders.

Founded in 2017 under Sichuan Radio and Television Station, Sichuan Observation is dedicated to integrating traditional and digital new media to disseminate local news and cultural features. Through platforms like Douyin (TikTok), Kuai shou, and Weibo, Sichuan Observation has rapidly gained a large following, especially during the pandemic when short video platforms became the primary channel for information dissemination. Douyin’s precise recommendation algorithm and high interactivity have significantly boosted Sichuan Observation’s influence, making it as well as an important representative as local media in the new media era.

In recent years, the rapid rise of short video platforms has profoundly reshaped the media landscape in China. As audiences’ attention becomes increasingly fragmented, short video platforms such as Douyin have emerged as crucial channels for news dissemination and public opinion formation. Unlike traditional media, which emphasize authority and comprehensiveness, short video platforms rely on immediacy, interactivity, and algorithm-driven distribution to engage users. This shift has posed both challenges and opportunities for local mainstream media. On the one hand, traditional media organizations face the risk of audience loss and declining influence. On the other hand, by actively participating in short video platforms, they can expand their reach, attract younger audiences, and enhance their ability to influence public discourse. Therefore, examining how Sichuan Observation adapts to this evolving media ecosystem and utilizes narrative strategies to strengthen its communication power not only reflects the transformation of local mainstream media but also provides valuable insights for the sustainable development of China’s media industry in the digital age.

## 2. Research Question

- 1) What narrative styles are employed by Sichuan Observation in producing short video news content on the Douyin platform?
- 2) How do different types of short video news content from Sichuan Observation influence patterns of user engagement on Douyin?
- 3) What specific elements within these narrative styles explain their effectiveness in attracting and sustaining user engagement?

## 3. Literature Reviews

### 3.1 Narrative Theory

Narrative theory provides a framework for short-video news dissemination by emphasizing how narrative structure, character development, and audiovisual design simplify complex information, transforming it into emotional resonance that drives interaction. Recent studies have shown that concise, fast-paced storytelling maintains coherence, while suspense and emotional cues foster immersion, prompting likes, comments, and shares (Couldry, 2008). On Sichuan Observation's Douyin account, narrative strategies often rely on visual effects and emotional intensity to capture attention and facilitate engagement (Jenkins, 2006). Moreover, rapid pacing and heightened emotions improve memorability and willingness to share, expanding dissemination (Liu et al., 2023). Yet much existing work focuses on macro-level narrative strategies, with limited exploration of the micro-level mechanisms linking visuals, affect, and engagement—this study aims to address that gap.

### 3.2 Social Media Engagement Concept

Social media engagement is key to understanding user interaction, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Brodie et al., 2011). Cognitive engagement involves content processing, emotional engagement refers to affective resonance that drives sharing, and behavioral engagement manifests as likes, comments, and reposts (Van Doorn et al., 2010). On short-video platforms, these dimensions act synergistically: algorithms amplify affective responses, guiding users through a “cognition–emotion–behavior” chain of deeper interaction (Pariser, 2011). Recent studies show that narrative design and algorithmic curation jointly shape engagement, yet the micro-mechanisms linking emotional triggers and behavioral outcomes remain underexplored (Zhang et al., 2022), a gap this study seeks to address.

### 3.3 News Concept

News, as a core element of social communication, has long been debated regarding its definition. highlighted that news represents more than just newly changed facts, reflecting societal ideologies. In the modern era, technological advancements, particularly the rise of the internet, have significantly transformed news dissemination, providing unprecedented opportunities for development (Bandura, 2009). Local news, which traditionally conveyed regional events, has expanded its reach through emerging platforms like Douyin, enabling more interactive and immediate dissemination (Zhang, 2012). These platforms allow content to engage a broader audience, enhancing its emotional impact and social influence. As the dissemination of news increasingly shifts to online platforms, the speed and interactivity of news delivery have risen, affecting public opinion and social change. This transformation requires continual adaptation to the evolving digital environment, ensuring that news retains its ability to shape culture and influence society (Wakefield et al., 2010).

### 3.4 Storytelling Style Concept

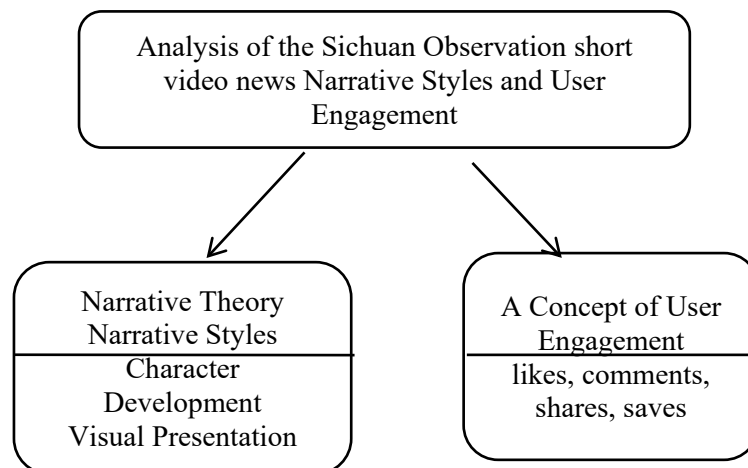
Narrative style comprises how stories structure information, control pacing, and cue emotion through the integration of text, visuals, and sound, thereby shaping reception and affect (Podara et al., 2021). Linear storytelling clarifies causality and supports character–dilemma–resolution arcs that aid comprehension and engagement in digital news forms (Kulkarni et al., 2023). Nonlinear narration disrupts chronology to heighten tension and emotional depth, often deepening character development (Saber, 2023). Cyclical or looped structures mobilize repetition to prompt reflection and re-evaluation of meaning (Richardson, 2025). Choosing among these styles steers emotional arousal and shareability; in Sichuan Observation's Douyin clips, streamlined linear beats aid clarity while inviting interaction.

### 3.5 Related Literature Review

The rise of short-video news, particularly on platforms like Douyin, has reshaped communication by fostering interactivity and user engagement (Ning, 2018). By offering diversified content and user-friendly experiences, Douyin meets audiences' cognitive and emotional needs, transcending geographical limits and enhancing dissemination efficiency (Zhang, 2024). Interactivity is manifested through likes, comments, and shares, making users active participants in the communication process rather than passive receivers (Wen, 2023). The narrative style of short-video news emphasizes simplicity, emotional resonance, and efficiency, often employing quick edits and emotive music to amplify impact (Liu et al., 2023). Nonlinear and fragmented storytelling further sustains audience attention and deepens emotional connections. However, while existing research has highlighted these features, there remains a lack of systematic analysis on how narrative style drives user participation—a gap that this study seeks to address.

### 3.6 Theoretical Framework

This study aims to explore the narrative strategies of Sichuan Observation on Douyin and their impact on user interaction. In order to better understand the research question, this paper constructs an integrated theoretical framework based on narrative theory and the concept of social media participation. The framework is used to analyze the relationship between the creation of short video news content by Sichuan Observation on the Douyin platform and user interaction. See the Figure below.



**Figure 1** Theoretical Framework Diagram

## 4. Methodology

This study adopted the case analysis method to examine 15 selected videos, which were divided into three groups for systematic analysis.

### 4.1 Source of information

The data for this study were drawn from official videos released by the “Sichuan Observation” account on Douyin between 2020 and 2024. All cases were identified through the account’s verified content on the Douyin platform, with engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and saves taken directly from the official video pages and cross-verified using Feigua Data (飞瓜数据), a widely used third-party analytics service that provides publicly accessible statistics and historical rankings for Douyin. In total, fifteen videos were included, corresponding to the top three most-liked items in each calendar year during the five-year period. These fifteen videos are listed in detail in Table 1, including their titles, release dates, and engagement metrics, and they cover

a range of thematic categories from emotionally resonant stories to social and political conflicts and positive energy narratives. The reliance on official platform data and external verification ensures the reliability and representativeness of the dataset while providing a robust foundation for subsequent textual analysis of narrative style and user interaction.

#### 4.2 Sampling Rationale

The decision to select the top three most-liked videos each year from 2020 to 2024 was guided by both methodological and theoretical considerations. First, focusing on the highest-ranking items ensures temporal balance across the five-year period, preventing the dataset from being skewed by isolated surges of popularity or by platform-level algorithmic adjustments in a single year. Second, the use of the most-liked videos highlights information-rich cases that are directly aligned with the central research question, namely, how narrative strategies in short video news can mobilize large-scale user engagement on a platform whose visibility is heavily mediated by algorithmic recommendation. By emphasizing high-engagement items, the study is able to capture instances where storytelling clearly resonated with audiences, offering valuable insights into the mechanisms of emotional arousal, identification, and value sharing. However, this sampling strategy also has limitations: it risks under-representing videos that may be journalistically significant but attract only moderate levels of engagement, such as niche reports or investigative pieces with narrower audiences. In acknowledging this limitation, the study positions its findings as patterns observed within “headline” or high-impact cases rather than generalizations about the entire spectrum of content on Douyin. Future research could complement this approach by employing stratified or mixed sampling designs to test the stability of these findings across lower-engagement tiers, but within the present scope, the top-three criterion remains a methodologically coherent and theoretically justified strategy for linking narrative style with demonstrable user participation.

#### 4.3 Data Collection

The data for this study was collected through the Feigua Data platform (<https://dy.feigua.cn/app/#/workbench/index>) and the Douyin app (<https://www.douyin.com/>) to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data.

#### 4.4 Research Methods

This study adopts textual analysis as a qualitative method to examine the deeper meanings and communicative functions of the fifteen selected short video news items from the “Sichuan Observation” Douyin account, ranked among the top three by likes in each year from 2020 to 2024. The analysis focused on multiple dimensions including narrative structure and pacing, visual design such as framing, color and editing, textual elements including titles, hashtags and subtitles, and audio features such as background music and voice-over, while also considering identity framing and explicit engagement prompts. By systematically coding these aspects, the study explored how different narrative techniques contributed to dissemination and interaction. Nevertheless, this approach has limitations: the sample size is small and restricted to high-engagement videos, which may not fully represent the diversity of all content on the platform; in addition, textual analysis involves interpretive subjectivity, though repeated viewing and cross-checking were used to enhance reliability. These constraints indicate that the findings should be read as illustrative of typical high-impact cases rather than universally generalizable conclusions.

#### 4.5 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case study design, combining purposive sampling with textual analysis to investigate how narrative strategies influence patterns of user engagement. After identifying the fifteen cases through Douyin and Feigua Data, each video was systematically reviewed multiple times and analyzed with reference to a predefined coding framework grounded in narrative theory and social media engagement research. The analysis focused on narrative structure and pacing, visual design including framing, shot duration, and color use, textual elements such as titles, hashtags, and calls-to-action, audio features including background music and voice-overs, identity and conflict framing, and engagement affordances such as explicit prompts and pinned comments. Engagement indicators were treated as descriptive outcomes and triangulated with coded narrative features to explore contrasts among the three thematic categories presented in Table 1. By integrating data verification, purposeful sampling, and transparent coding procedures, the research design provides a coherent

approach for uncovering how local media adapt storytelling strategies on Douyin to strengthen communication effectiveness and user interaction.

**Table 1** Categorization and Performance Metrics of the 15 Short Video Cases on Douyin

Category	Case Name	Basic information
1. Emotional resonance and individual emotional expression	The Dog's Escape Running Towards Its Owner	Release Date: August 21, 2020 Likes: 9,476,000 Comments: 264,000 Saves: 39,000 Shares: 76,000
	Hospital Director's Passing, Wife's Heartbreaking Farewell	Release Date: February 19, 2020 Likes: 8,455,000 Comments: 832,000 Saves: 29,000 Shares: 185,000
	3Cat Left Alone for the New Year Runs Toward Returning Owner	Release Date: February 15, 2021 Likes: 7,480,000 Comments: 265,000 Saves: 51,000 Shares: 99,000
	Foreign Man Cuts in Line, Shouts "Chinese People Get Out"	Release Date: April 1, 2020 Likes: 7,939,000 Comments: 3,707,000 Saves: 16,000 Shares: 129,000
	U.S. Announces Financial Sanctions Against Russia	Release Date: February 22, 2022 Likes: 1,846,000 Comments: 89,000 Saves: 35,000 Shares: 90,000
2. Social and political conflicts, collective emotions	U.S. Military Escorting Pelosi's Taiwan Visit—Shoot Down If Interception Fails	Release Date: July 30, 2022 Likes: 5,563,000 Comments: 622,000 Saves: 111,000 Shares: 256,000
	"Punishing" Taiwan Independence	Release Date: May 23, 2024 Likes: 1,945,000 Comments: 210,000 Saves: 58,000 Shares: 395,000
	Convenience Store Left Unlocked, Man Pays Voluntarily in the Dark	Release Date: January 28, 2021 Likes: 6,029,000 Comments: 171,000 Saves: 18,000 Shares: 8,886
3. Positive energy, personal struggle, and family education	2,000 Teachers and Students Trek for Miles to Honor Fallen Heroes	Release Date: April 3, 2021 Likes: 7,231,000 Comments: 259,000 Saves: 12,000 Shares: 26,000
	Elderly Man Waves National Flag on the Street	Release Date: September 18, 2023 Likes: 2,112,000

Category	Case Name	Basic information
		Comments: 71,000 Saves: 32,000 Shares: 62,000 Release Date: September 8, 2022 Likes: 1,882,000
	Firefighter's Feet	Comments: 133,000 Saves: 26,000 Shares: 27,000 Release Date: January 4, 2024 Likes: 1,539,000
	Taxi Driver Father Raises Four Children into Top Universities	Comments: 106,000 Saves: 301,000 Shares: 1,200,000 Release Date: February 10, 2024 Likes: 2,570,000
	Fireworks from a Plane on Lunar New Year's Eve	Comments: 120,000 Saves: 86,000 Shares: 659,000 Release Date: October 21, 2023 Likes: 2,215,000
	Boy Survives Amid the Rubble	Comments: 203,000 Saves: 69,000 Shares: 400,000 Release Date: October 26, 2023 Likes: 1,646,000
	The More Successful China Becomes, the More Successful the World Will Be	Comments: 117,000 Saves: 46,000 Shares: 74,000

The data was collected by the author.

Note:

1) Emotional resonance and individual emotional expression

This group includes videos that emphasize personal relationships, touching moments, and emotional storytelling. They evoke viewers' empathy and compassion through vivid depictions of loyalty, love, and separation.

2) Social and political conflicts, collective emotions

Videos in this category reflect issues of public concern, national identity, and geopolitical tensions. They often feature confrontational or controversial scenarios that trigger strong collective emotional responses such as anger, unity, or patriotism.

3) Positive energy, personal struggle, and family education

This group contains videos that promote social values such as honesty, perseverance, patriotism, and dedication to family or community. These stories highlight inspirational acts and role models, fostering social cohesion and positive public sentiment.



## 5. Result

This chapter presents the research results according to the two research objectives, with the findings grouped and analyzed under each objective for clarity and coherence.

### 5.1 Overall Description of Narrative Styles and User Engagement

Table 2 presents the narrative styles and user engagement characteristics of 15 Douyin short videos. Each category demonstrates distinct storytelling features and interaction patterns: emotional videos emphasize resonance and empathy, conflict videos stimulate collective emotions and debate, while positive energy videos highlight the dissemination of value and social cohesion.

**Table 2** Narrative Styles and User Engagement Characteristics of Douyin Short Videos

Category	Case Name	Narrative Styles	User Engagement
1. Emotional resonance and individual emotional expression	The Dog's Escape Running Towards Its Owner	Crisis - Action - Redemption	1. Intense emotional resonance
	Hospital Director's Passing, Wife's Heartbreaking Farewell	Separation - Waiting - Reunion	2. Audience emotional projection
	3Cat Left Alone for the New Year Runs Toward Returning Owner	Personal death - Emotional collapse	3. Deep sympathy and identification
	Foreigners cut in line, while Chinese people leave.	Sudden conflict - Verbal climax - Identity opposition	1. High political engagement
2. Social and political conflicts, collective emotions	The United States has announced financial sanctions against Russia.	Official announcement - Public response - International reaction	2. Intense emotions, clear stance
	If the US military escorts Pelosi's visit to Taiwan and cannot be stopped, it can be shot down.	Authoritative statement - Military warning	3.Support/oppose interaction expression
	A man took advantage of an unlocked convenience store to pay 2000 yuan by scanning the code himself.	Misstep - Reversal - Interpretation	
	Teachers and students hiked 100 miles to pay tribute to fallen heroes.	Gather and depart - Arduous journey - Memorial ceremony	1.Social positive energy
3. Positive energy, personal struggle, and family education	An elderly man waved the five-star red flag on the street.	Commemoration day appearance - Emotional outburst	2.Sharing individual and collective efforts
	A firefighter's feet.	Heroic sacrifice - Emotional eruption	3.Discussion and dissemination of positive values
	A taxi driver father raised four college students.		
	Watching fireworks on a plane on Chinese New Year's Eve.	Personal account - Achievement statement	
	A boy who survived in the rubble.		

Category	Case Name	Narrative Styles	User Engagement
	The more successful China is, the more successful the world will be.		
The data was collected by the author.			

### 5.2 Narrative Style and Interaction Analysis

Based on Research Question 1, emotional resonance and individual emotional expression are at the core. These videos trigger strong emotional resonance from the audience through deeply emotional scenes, such as crisis situations, farewell moments, parting, or reunion. The narrative style of the videos often utilizes sudden emotional shocks and delicate emotional portrayals, emphasizing the expression of individual emotions and social emotional resonance. Typical examples include "The Dog Running Towards Its Owner After Escaping," "The Cat Running Towards Its Owner After Spending the New Year Alone," and "The Director's Death and the Wife's Heartbreaking Farewell." These videos evoke deep sympathy and emotional identification from the audience through warm images and touching stories.

The narrative style in these videos is highly focused on emotional expression, usually using a "crisis-action-redemption" or "parting-waiting-reunion" structure. This design allows the audience to quickly understand the emotional ups and downs of the story while deepening emotional immersion through visual and auditory interplay. For example, the use of slow-motion, black-and-white images, or touching background music further enhances the emotional intensity of the video, deeply moving the audience. Additionally, these videos highlight the courage shown by the characters in times of danger, showcasing the brilliance of human nature and encouraging the audience to remain steadfast and brave when facing adversity.

From the perspective of User Engagement, these videos greatly attract viewers' emotional projection due to their authenticity and resonance, stimulating audience engagement. In the comment sections, viewers often share personal experiences and express emotional identification with the video content, creating widespread interaction on social platforms. This interaction is not only reflected in comments and likes but also in viewers' shares, further amplifying the video's reach and forming a "emotional resonance—emotional identification—interaction sharing" dissemination model. As a result, these videos have gained massive views and discussions in a short period, significantly enhancing the video's social influence and emotional penetration.

Through the analysis of these videos, it is clear that emotional resonance and individual emotional expression play a crucial role in the dissemination and user engagement of short video news. Not only does it enhance the emotional connection between the audience and the content through profound emotional expression, but it also drives the broad dissemination of information through strong social interaction. This provides valuable experience and theoretical support for the future content creation and interaction strategies of short video news.

### 5.3 User Engagement

Based on Research Question 2, this study explores how videos focusing on positive energy and personal struggle influence User Engagement. These videos primarily showcase personal struggle stories, family education, and the spread of positive social values, which stimulate emotional resonance and value alignment from the audience, thereby increasing user participation. Unlike videos focused on emotional resonance and individual emotional expression, these videos convey social positive energy and a sense of hope in life by displaying touching stories of ordinary people or personal struggles. This, in turn, promotes emotional projection and value discussions among users.

From the perspective of User Engagement, the dissemination effect of positive energy and personal struggle videos is significant. These videos, by showcasing individual effort and social responsibility—especially through positive examples in family and society—trigger emotional resonance and identification from users. Viewers often share their own struggle stories, support for personal efforts, and concerns about social justice in the comment sections. This interaction is not only reflected in likes and shares but also in personal experience sharing, which creates a positive discussion atmosphere. Through this process, video content gains broader dissemination and influence on social platforms, forming a "emotional warmth—social consensus—positive guidance" virtuous interaction cycle.



Especially under the theme of family education and personal struggle, the audience generally shows high levels of engagement. Many viewers not only express approval of the video content but also share their own stories of effort or views on social responsibility, fostering collective emotional identification and value discussions. This interaction pattern drives the spread of video content, leading to rapid increases in likes, shares, and comments within a short time, thus creating broader social recognition and resonance with values.

Positive energy and personal struggle videos, through their uplifting emotional expression and spread of social positive energy, not only stimulate emotional identification from users but also promote deeper interaction and participation, making a significant impact and far-reaching social effects on short video platforms. These videos not only strengthen users' recognition of positive values but also guide the deepening of mainstream social values through interactive dissemination.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Conclusion

This study shows that Sichuan Observation's short video news on Douyin mainly follows three narrative styles: emotional expression, social and political conflict, and positive energy with personal struggle. Each type uses distinct techniques, such as slow motion and music in reunion scenes to evoke empathy, confrontational dialogue and national symbols to arouse collective emotions, or inspirational storytelling to highlight family values and perseverance. These narrative choices are closely linked to user engagement patterns. Emotional videos generally receive the highest likes and comments as audiences connect personal feelings to the stories. Conflict videos spark heated debates and produce large volumes of comments that reflect strong political stances. Positive energy videos, though lower in comments, achieve wider dissemination through higher sharing rates, spreading uplifting values. The findings also reveal that specific elements including editing rhythm, background music, textual cues, identity framing, and explicit prompts effectively drive interaction. Together, they form a pathway of "emotional resonance → identification → sharing," where emotional triggers lead to recognition and further diffusion. Overall, the results demonstrate that emotion- and value-driven storytelling significantly enhances both participation and dissemination on short video platforms, providing practical guidance for optimizing narrative strategies in digital news communication.

### 6.2 Discussion

This study supports Narrative Theory, showing how structured plots, emotional cues, and character-focused storytelling sustain audience attention and stimulate interaction. For example, in *The Dog's Escape Running Towards Its Owner*, the reunion scene enhanced by slow motion and warm background music triggered strong empathy, which explains why viewers filled the comments with personal pet stories. In politically charged cases such as *Foreign Man Cuts in Line*, Shouts "Chinese People Get Out", the confrontational dialogue and national identity cues not only attracted 7.94 million likes but also sparked 3.7 million comments where supporters and critics debated intensely, illustrating how narratives extend engagement from individual emotion to collective discourse.

The findings also align with Social Media Engagement Theory. Videos emphasizing resilience and values, such as *Taxi Driver Father Raises Four Children into Top Universities*, demonstrate how positive energy and family struggles lead to multi-level participation. Cognitively, users process and evaluate the story by comparing it to their own experiences; emotionally, they resonate with perseverance and sacrifice; behaviorally, they act through platform operations such as liking, commenting, and especially sharing, with this case generating 1.2 million shares. This shows how uplifting narratives are translated into tangible engagement behaviors.

At the same time, not all narrative styles are equally effective for all audiences. Some viewers may find conflict-based videos divisive or politically sensitive, reducing their willingness to participate, while others may perceive highly emotional content as overly dramatized, which can weaken credibility. Recognizing these counterpoints highlights that narrative-driven engagement depends not only on story design but also on audience expectations, cultural background, and algorithmic distribution.

Taken together, the results suggest that emotional resonance, identity framing, and value-oriented storytelling interact with engagement mechanisms to produce layered participation. Narrative strategies therefore serve not only as tools for audience immersion but also as instruments for public debate and collective awareness. For practitioners, this indicates that optimizing short video news requires balancing emotional

intensity with inclusivity, ensuring content both resonates personally and contributes to meaningful public dialogue.

## 7. Suggestions

From a theoretical perspective, this study confirms the explanatory power of Narrative Theory and Social Media Engagement Theory by showing how narrative design drives user participation through emotional resonance, cognitive recognition, and behavioral interaction. Future research should move beyond general calls to “optimize narrative techniques” and instead examine concrete strategies, such as testing how optimistic background music in positive-energy videos can strengthen uplifting emotions and increase share rates, or how carefully staged confrontational scenes in political videos can mobilize engagement without alienating certain viewers. Such targeted studies would enrich the theoretical framework connecting narrative structures with multi-level engagement.

At the practical level, Sichuan Observation’s experience demonstrates that traditional news values can be effectively adapted into social media contexts by combining concise structures with audiovisual intensity. For content creators, specific practices include pairing reunion or perseverance scenes with emotionally congruent music, using subtitles and captions to emphasize key values, and designing share-friendly formats that invite audiences to relate the content to their own experiences. Importantly, platforms should leverage recommendation algorithms not only to expand reach but also to sustain attention by balancing immediacy with emotional depth. These findings suggest that other media organizations—whether national broadcasters or international news agencies—can apply similar strategies to strengthen audience connection, enhance credibility, and improve dissemination effectiveness in the digital environment.

In terms of future research, cross-cultural comparisons are particularly valuable. For example, comparing Douyin in China with TikTok in other countries could reveal how narrative strategies and user engagement patterns shift across cultural and political contexts. Such studies would clarify whether emotional storytelling, identity framing, and value-based engagement observed in China operate similarly or differently in global settings. By extending beyond a single case, future work could both refine theoretical understanding and offer practical guidance for media institutions worldwide to adapt narrative strategies to diverse audiences and digital ecosystems.

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