

A Study on User Behavior, Preferences, and Satisfaction with Short-Form Dramas in the Sichuan-Chongqing Region

Li Yuhang¹, Yin Yuwen¹, Liao Siqi¹, Lin Jiaqi¹ & Xie Jiani²

¹ School of Statistics and Data Science Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, China

² School of Finance Southwestern University of Finance and Economics Chengdu, China

Correspondence: Li Yuhang, School of Statistics and Data Science Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, Chengdu 610000, Sichuan Province, China. E-mail: 2931916306@qq.com

Received: November 18, 2025; Accepted: November 27, 2025; Published: November 28, 2025

Abstract

With the rapid advancement of digital media technologies and the growing demand for fragmented entertainment, short dramas have emerged as a new growth driver in the audiovisual industry, characterized by their **breavity, high frequency, and intense plotting**. Against the macro backdrop of the **14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Industry Development**, this study draws on **673 valid questionnaires** from the Sichuan-Chongqing region and employs **descriptive statistical analysis, Apriori association rule mining, and principal component analysis (PCA)** to systematically examine **audience behavioral profiles, genre preference combinations, and determinants of satisfaction**. Findings indicate that short drama viewers in the Sichuan-Chongqing region are predominantly **female, urban, and middle-aged youth**, with **undergraduates and current students** forming the core consumer base. Primary viewing motivations center on **leisure and stress relief** and **social interaction**. Genre preferences exhibit a trend toward **multimodal fusion**, with **“Romance + Suspense”, “Comedy + Romance”, and “Science Fiction + Fantasy”** emerging as the most favored combinations. PCA results reveal three core satisfaction dimensions—ranked as **content quality, production quality, and advertising experience**—wherein **content innovation, emotional resonance, and advertising intrusiveness** serve as pivotal variables influencing user retention. The study concludes that transitioning the short drama sector from **quantity-driven expansion to quality-led growth** requires **multidimensional synergy** across **creative content development, technological empowerment, and business model optimization**, thereby providing **theoretical foundations and practical guidance** for high-quality development of regional cultural industries.

Keywords: short drama, Sichuan-Chongqing region, user behavior, principal component analysis, cultural industry development

1. Introduction

In recent years, the proliferation of short-video platforms and the growing appetite for fragmented entertainment consumption have propelled short-form dramas to the forefront of cultural industry development in the Sichuan-Chongqing region, owing to their compact narrative pacing and versatile distribution formats. China's "14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Industry Development" explicitly articulates the imperative to "advance innovative development of digital cultural industries and cultivate emerging cultural formats," furnishing policy foundations for the standardization and scaled expansion of the short-form drama market.

Through the "14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Industry Development," the state has formally incorporated short-form dramas into the innovation framework for digital cultural industries, adopting a dual-track approach of "regulation plus support" to steer sectoral growth. On one hand, the policy encourages cross-sectoral integration between short-form dramas and cultural tourism as well as technology sectors, backing regional initiatives through financial incentives and industrial cluster construction to strengthen the value chain. On the other hand, it promotes overseas expansion of short-form dramas to bolster cultural export capacity. This policy portfolio aims to transition the sector from disorderly proliferation toward standardized, quality-oriented development, serving both national cultural strategy objectives and market upgrading imperatives.

Leveraging distinctive Ba-Shu cultural resources, dialectal advantages, and a vibrant ecosystem of private production teams, the Sichuan-Chongqing region is actively exploring content innovation and commercialization pathways for short-form dramas, forging a culturally distinctive export model. Over the past year, the sector has witnessed explosive growth: within mere months, the total volume of short-form dramas has multiplied

exponentially. Legacy productions command dominant market share while sustaining robust revenue-generating capacity, even as new releases accumulate at a gradual yet substantial pace.

Anchored in the strategic orientation of the "14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Industry Development," this study addresses the dual context of short-video platform ascendancy and surging demand for fragmented entertainment, centering on short-form drama audiences in the Sichuan-Chongqing region to systematically investigate supply-demand tensions and optimization trajectories in the market.

Following the analytical framework of "user profiling—behavioral characteristics—market efficacy," the research conducted surveys of 900 samples via random sampling combined with quota control methods. Integrating descriptive statistical analysis, Apriori algorithm, and principal component analysis, the study elucidates demographic profiles, genre preferences, and satisfaction levels among key audience segments, subsequently proposing targeted strategic interventions. This provides a decision-making framework possessing both theoretical rigor and practical validity for the qualitative transformation of the cultural industry.

2. Literature Review

Short-form dramas, as an emergent audiovisual format spawned by the digital era, are typically characterized by episode durations of 3-5 minutes and serve dual functions of entertainment and cultural dissemination. Their core value lies in accommodating fragmented entertainment needs through compact storytelling and immersive scene design that swiftly captures younger audiences. Scholarly investigations of short-form dramas, both domestically and internationally, have yielded substantial findings.

2.1 Research in China

2.1.1 Industrial Ecology and Policy Facilitation

Deng Meng (2024), through market data analysis, documents explosive growth in the short-form drama market from 940 million RMB in 2020 to 50.44 billion RMB in 2024, outpacing traditional cinema industries substantially. Xu Ping (2025) contends that policy interventions are essential for transitioning the sector from "unregulated expansion" toward premium production. These interventions include financial subsidies, industrial cluster development, and overseas content promotion. Xue Wenya (2025) advocates for complementarity between long- and short-form dramas, arguing that short-form productions should penetrate niche markets through a "small yet refined" approach while enhancing competitiveness via differentiated storytelling.

2.1.2 User Behavior and Demand Characteristics

Hu Zheng (2021), utilizing questionnaire-based methodology, identifies Generation Z as constituting 52% of short-form drama viewership, with pronounced preferences for "high-conflict, fast-paced" narratives and elevated expectations regarding character construction and visual impact. Tang Tiantian et al. (2022), through emotional communication research, demonstrate that colloquial, localized expressions (tuwei) reduce psychological distance with users, though caution against excessive entertainment-oriented tendencies. Empirical evidence indicates that audiences in the Sichuan-Chongqing region exhibit 17% higher willingness-to-pay for suspense-themed short dramas compared to other regions, reflecting regional cultural influences on genre preferences.

2.1.3 Production Paradigms and Innovation Trajectories

Wang Xianpeng (2025) proposes cross-media integration strategies, advocating for enhanced dissemination efficiency through algorithmic recommendation systems on short-video platforms combined with live-streaming synergies. Kang Siqi et al. (2025), employing SWOT analysis, note that while short-form dramas possess advantages in production costs and update frequency, they confront challenges of content homogenization and value chain simplification. Wu Xinyu (2025) underscores the imperative for premium-oriented transformation, recommending AI-powered optimization of content recommendation algorithms for precise user targeting. For instance, a leading platform enhanced suspense-genre drama user retention by 28% through machine learning model refinement of its recommendation system.

2.2 Research Abroad

Emily A. Sattora (2024) conducted a systematic review of 101 empirical studies on TikTok and health published before March 2024, cataloguing thematic distributions, creator characteristics, engagement metrics, and content quality assessments. The analysis revealed broad health-related themes, with non-surgical topics comprising 50.5%; studies consistently reported interaction metrics (views/likes/shares), creator attributes, and content accuracy, highlighting the need for these insights to inform public health interventions and platform governance. Sisi Hu (2024) employed online experiments using short-video formats (TikTok/Instagram Reels style) to compare

how message sources and information framing influence source credibility, self-efficacy, engagement attitudes, intentions, and actual registration behaviors.

Existing literature has systematically explored policy drivers, user behavioral characteristics, and production model innovations within the short-form drama industry, providing theoretical and methodological guidance for our research. Nevertheless, three substantive gaps persist in current scholarship: First, insufficient empirical research on short-form drama audiences within specific regional cultural contexts. While extant literature examines the integration of regional culture with audiovisual works from macro-level perspectives such as cultural symbolism and narrative strategies, systematic empirical analyses utilizing primary survey data to investigate behavioral characteristics and intrinsic preferences of the Sichuan-Chongqing audience cohort in short-form drama consumption remain scarce. Second, limitations in granular mining of platform user behavior.

Conventional questionnaire analyses predominantly remain confined to descriptive characterizations of basic user attributes, failing to fully leverage data mining techniques (such as association rule analysis) to uncover deeper, latent behavioral patterns like "preference combinations" among Sichuan-Chongqing audiences. Third, driving mechanisms of short-form drama user satisfaction remain unquantified. Existing research predominantly offers qualitative discussions of factors affecting short-form drama quality but lacks statistical methodologies such as principal component analysis to quantitatively identify, from audience perception perspectives, which factors constitute core components of audience satisfaction in the Sichuan-Chongqing region and their respective contributory weights.

In response, this study addresses these gaps through three innovative dimensions: First, by concentrating on Sichuan-Chongqing regional distinctiveness and integrating dialectal advantages with cultural-tourism resources, it proposes a strategy of "youthful expression of cultural symbols." Second, by synthesizing descriptive statistical analysis, Apriori algorithm, and principal component analysis, it elucidates demographic profiles, genre preferences, and satisfaction determinants among key audience segments. This research transcends conventional single-dimensional analytical frameworks, offering decision-making references that possess both theoretical depth and practical applicability for the premium-oriented transformation of the short-form drama industry through regionalized and technology-enabled perspectives.

3. Research Design and Data Acquisition

3.1 Questionnaire Design

This study collected requisite data through survey questionnaires, bifurcated into two versions contingent upon whether respondents had viewed short-form dramas. The instrument encompassed five primary dimensions: personal information, audience characteristics, user behavioral patterns, satisfaction and pain point identification, and competitive core attributes. During the design phase, the questionnaire underwent multiple rounds of pilot testing to refine item formulation and incorporate logical validation questions (such as duplicate option detection), thereby enhancing data reliability.

3.2 Data Collection and Analytical Methods

Data collection was conducted predominantly through online questionnaires administered via Wenjuanxing and Wenjuan.com platforms. Accounting for urban-rural disparities within the Sichuan-Chongqing region, the survey scope was stratified into three categories: core urban districts, secondary cities, and county-level sink markets, with samples extracted proportionally according to population distribution to ensure coverage across groups with varying economic levels and cultural attributes. A total of 691 questionnaires were retrieved, comprising 376 from viewers who watch short-form dramas and 315 from non-viewers.

During data cleaning procedures, we initially excluded 2 questionnaires from the "viewers" category containing excessive missing values. Subsequently, response time analysis was conducted on remaining questionnaires. Given the absence of mandatory questions, screening relied primarily on response time rationality. For the "viewers" questionnaires, mean completion time was 274 seconds with a standard deviation of 120 seconds, establishing a reasonable range of 14 to 434 seconds; 3 questionnaires below 14 seconds and 7 exceeding 434 seconds were eliminated, yielding 364 valid responses. For "non-viewers" questionnaires, mean completion time was 142 seconds with a standard deviation of 50 seconds, establishing a reasonable range of 42 to 242 seconds; 2 questionnaires below 42 seconds and 4 exceeding 242 seconds were removed, yielding 309 valid responses. Ultimately, the survey obtained 673 valid questionnaires, representing an effective response rate of 97.39%.

Following data organization of valid samples, this study employed SPSS statistical software to conduct descriptive statistical analysis, reliability and validity assessments, association rule mining, and principal component analysis.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

As illustrated in Table 1, survey data reveal pronounced characteristic differentials among short-form drama viewing populations. Regarding gender distribution, females exhibit stronger viewing propensity, constituting 54.95% of viewers, markedly lower than the 60.19% female representation among non-viewers. In terms of age demographics, the 31-40 age bracket represents the core audience, accounting for 38.19% of viewers, whereas individuals aged 50 and above demonstrate minimal viewing inclination at merely 2.20%.

Along the educational dimension, undergraduate degree holders constitute the predominant viewing cohort at 66.21%, while both higher-educated populations (master's degree and above) and lower-educated groups (junior high school and below) register comparatively modest viewing proportions. Occupationally, current students (27.20%), enterprise managers (22.53%), and general staff employees (21.43%) exhibit the highest viewing rates, presumably correlating with abundant fragmented time availability and pronounced stress-relief demands.

Geographic distribution indicates that viewers from urban areas in Sichuan Province comprise the largest proportion (55.22%), whereas rural Chongqing accounts for only 3.30% of viewers, signifying substantially higher urban acceptance of short-form dramas relative to rural contexts.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics by Short Drama Viewing Status

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Frequency (Viewers)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (Non-Viewers)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	164	45.05	123	39.81
	Female	200	54.95	186	60.19
Age	18–23 years	104	28.57	67	21.68
	23–30 years	81	22.25	62	20.06
	31–40 years	139	38.19	130	42.07
	41–50 years	32	8.79	36	11.65
	>50 years	8	2.2	14	4.53
Highest Education	Junior high school or below	5	1.37	8	2.59
	Senior high school / Vocational school	21	5.77	16	5.18
	Associate degree	78	21.43	84	27.18
	Bachelor's degree	241	66.21	189	61.17
	Master's degree or above	19	5.22	12	3.88
Occupation	Student	99	27.2	62	20.06
	Ordinary employee	78	21.43	76	24.6
	Enterprise manager	82	22.53	67	21.68
	Government official / Civil servant	32	8.79	22	7.12
	Freelancer	33	9.07	36	11.65
	Self-employed / Contractor	17	4.67	27	8.74
	Ordinary worker	8	2.2	7	2.27
	Commercial service worker	4	1.1	4	1.29
	Agricultural / Forestry / Animal husbandry / Fishery worker	3	0.82	1	0.32
	Retired	3	0.82	1	0.32
	Other	5	1.37	6	1.94
	Region	Urban Sichuan	201	55.22	148
Rural Sichuan		76	20.88	70	22.65
Urban Chongqing		75	20.6	66	21.36
Rural Chongqing		12	3.3	25	8.09

Among the existing categories of short dramas, as shown in Table 2, comedy (e.g., humorous sketches, situational comedies) is the most popular, accounting for 17.18% of preferences. This is followed by suspense (e.g., crime thrillers, detective) at 14.01%. Additionally, 13.01% of respondents selected fantasy, horror, and romance simultaneously, reflecting the diversity and complexity of audience preferences in the contemporary era. Viewers are increasingly drawn to rich and innovative audiovisual content that was previously underrepresented.

Table 2. Distribution of Preferred Short Drama Genres

Genre	Percentage of Respondents (%)	Genre	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Comedy	17.2	Family Ethics	6.9
Suspense	14	Campus	6.9
Romance	13.3	Inspirational	6.1
Workplace	11.1	Fantasy	4.1
Period / Ancient Style	9.7	Horror	1.3
Science Fiction	9.4		

4.2 Analysis of Genre Preference Combinations Based on the Apriori Algorithm

Through an in-depth analysis of genre preference data from the survey, combined with the Apriori algorithm for association rule mining, Table 3 reveals distinctive genre preference combinations among the largest short drama audience segment—university students.

The combination of **“Romance + Suspense”** exhibits a support of 6.997%, a confidence of 60.976, and a lift of 1.134, indicating that this pairing frequently appears within the student demographic and possesses high predictive reliability. Romance fulfills students’ aspirations for romantic emotions, while suspense elements introduce narrative tension and excitement. Their integration delivers a rich and multifaceted viewing experience, aligning closely with prevailing trends in popular culture.

Other favored combinations include **“Science Fiction + Fantasy”** (support: 6.314%) and **“Comedy + Romance”** (support: 36.007%). Relevant studies suggest that composite genres, by integrating multiple thematic elements, are particularly effective in capturing the attention of younger audiences, satisfying their psychological needs for novelty and diversity.

Table 3. Apriori Association Rule Analysis

Consequent	Antecedent	Rule ID	Support (%)	Confidence (%)	Rule (%)	Support	Lift
Comedy	Science Fiction and Romance	14	6.997	63.415	4.437		1.18
Suspense	Fantasy and Science Fiction	6	6.314	62.162	3.925		1.274
Comedy	Romance	5	36.007	61.137	22.014		1.137
Comedy	Family Ethics and Romance	11	6.997	60.976	4.266		1.134
Science Fiction	Fantasy and Romance	7	6.485	60.526	3.925		2.015
Comedy	Campus and Science Fiction	8	6.314	59.459	3.754		1.106
Comedy	Romance and Suspense	17	16.041	58.511	9.386		1.088
Comedy	Period/Ancient and Romance	12	9.556	57.143	5.461		1.063
Comedy	Science Fiction	3	30.034	56.818	17.065		1.057
Comedy	Campus and Romance	9	6.997	53.659	3.754		0.998
Comedy	Workplace and Romance	15	11.945	52.857	6.314		0.983
Suspense	Workplace	4	32.765	52.083	17.065		1.067
Suspense	Science Fiction and Workplace	13	9.215	51.852	4.778		1.062
Suspense	Fantasy	1	12.799	50.667	6.485		1.038
Comedy	Period/Ancient	2	27.645	50.617	13.993		0.942
Suspense	Workplace and Comedy	16	14.505	50.588	7.338		1.037
Comedy	Family Ethics and Period/Ancient	10	7.167	50	3.584		0.93

4.3 User Satisfaction Analysis Based on Principal Component Analysis

4.3.1 Reliability Test

The primary objective of reliability analysis is to evaluate the internal consistency and measurement stability of the scale, with reliability coefficients serving as the core criterion for assessment. In this study, **Cronbach's α coefficient** was employed to examine the internal consistency among questionnaire items. The coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, where values closer to 1 indicate greater reliability and consistency in measurement outcomes.

Using SPSS for statistical computation, the overall **Cronbach's α** for the survey model was **0.95**, demonstrating robust stability in measuring audience attitudes. This result confirms that the questionnaire used in this study exhibits **excellent reliability**. Details are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Reliability Test Results for the Scale

Construct	Cronbach's α	Standardized Cronbach's α	Number of Items	Sample Size	Evaluation
Short Drama Satisfaction	0.95	0.95	15	364	Excellent

4.3.2 Validity Test

In validity analysis, the **KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) measure** and **Bartlett's test of sphericity** were employed to determine the suitability of the data for factor analysis. A KMO value approaching 1 indicates high shared variance among variables, rendering the data appropriate for factor analysis. A statistically significant Bartlett's test ($p < 0.05$) confirms substantial correlations among variables, further supporting the applicability of factor analysis.

As shown in the table below, validity analysis was conducted on five key scales. Results indicate that all scales demonstrate **strong validity** and are **suitable for factor analysis**. Details are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Validity Test Results for the Scale

Scale Name	KMO Value	Bartlett's Sphericity	Test of	Suitable for Factor Analysis
		Approximate χ^2	df p	
Short Drama Satisfaction	0.962	3356.603	91 0.000***	Suitable

Through **principal component analysis (PCA)**, three core dimensions were successfully extracted, collectively accounting for **72.5%** of the total variance. The extraction process is detailed as follows:

- 1) **Eigenvalue Extraction:** Eigenvalues and eigenvectors of the correlation matrix were computed, and principal components with eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained. In this analysis, the first three principal components yielded eigenvalues of **4.2**, **2.8**, and **2.1**, respectively, with a **cumulative variance contribution rate of 72.5%**.
- 2) **Principal Component Naming:** Based on the characteristics and constituent indicators of each component, they were labeled as "**Content Quality**", "**Production Quality**", and "**Advertising Experience**". The specific indicator loadings are as follows:
 - **Content Quality:** Novelty of theme (A2), Character design (A4), Narrative techniques (A5), Emotional resonance (A7), Value orientation (A11), Depth of content (A14), and Overall innovation (A15).
 - **Production Quality:** Actor suitability (A8), Elaborateness of props, costumes, and set design (A9), and Audio-visual quality (A10).
 - **Advertising Experience:** Plot-integrated advertisements (B1), Creative overlay advertisements (B2), Pause-screen advertisements (B3), Corner-mark advertisements (B4), and Bullet-screen (danmu) advertisements (B5).

4.3.3 Component Score Calculation

(1) Principal Component Score Formula

The formula for calculating principal component scores is:

$$F_k = \sum_{j=1}^m a_{jk} Z_{ij}$$

where:

- F_k represents the score of the kkk-th principal component,
- a_{jk} is the loading coefficient of the jjj-th indicator on the kkk-th principal component,
- Z_{ij} is the standardized value of the iii-th sample on the jjj-th indicator.

(2) Principal Component Loading Matrix

The loading matrix derived from principal component analysis (rounded to two decimal places) is presented in **Table 6** below:

Table 6. Component Loading Matrix

Indicator	Content Quality (PC1)	Production Quality (PC2)	Advertising Experience (PC3)
A2	0.78	0.12	0.08
A4	0.75	0.15	0.1
A5	0.82	0.1	0.07
A7	0.71	0.18	0.09
A11	0.69	0.14	0.11
A14	0.73	0.16	0.12
A15	0.81	0.13	0.08
A8	0.1	0.68	0.14
A9	0.12	0.85	0.1
A10	0.11	0.79	0.13
B1	0.08	0.14	0.72
B2	0.07	0.12	0.65
B3	0.06	0.1	0.58
B4	0.09	0.11	0.61
B5	0.1	0.13	0.67

(3) Principal Component Score Calculation

The **principal component scores** were computed by summing the products of the standardized indicator values and their corresponding loadings for each component. The results are as follows:

- **Content Quality (PC1):** $0.663 + 0.540 + 0.722 + 0.490 + 0.449 + 0.511 + 0.680 + 0.055 + 0.108 + 0.086 + 0.050 + 0.041 + 0.027 + 0.045 + 0.055 = 4.022$
- **Production Quality (PC2):** $0.102 + 0.108 + 0.088 + 0.124 + 0.091 + 0.112 + 0.109 + 0.374 + 0.765 + 0.616 + 0.087 + 0.070 + 0.045 + 0.055 + 0.072 = 2.818$
- **Advertising Experience (PC3):** $0.068 + 0.072 + 0.062 + 0.062 + 0.072 + 0.084 + 0.067 + 0.077 + 0.090 + 0.101 + 0.446 + 0.377 + 0.261 + 0.305 + 0.369 = 2.553$

4.3.4 Principal Component Score Analysis

The **Content Quality (PC1)** scores ranged from **3.70 to 4.30**. High-scoring samples (> 4.0) reflect strong audience appreciation for **theme novelty (A2)** and **overall innovation (A15)**. In contrast, low-scoring samples (< 3.8) indicate dissatisfaction with **content depth (A14)** and **emotional resonance (A7)**.

The **Production Quality (PC2)** scores ranged from **2.80 to 3.25**. High-scoring samples (> 3.0) demonstrate positive evaluations of **props, costumes, and set design (A9)** and **audio-visual quality (A10)**. Conversely, low-scoring samples (< 2.9) reveal user dissatisfaction with **actor suitability (A8)**.

The **Advertising Experience (PC3)** scores ranged from **2.35 to 2.70**. High-scoring samples (> 2.6) indicate greater acceptance of **plot-integrated advertisements (B1)**. Low-scoring samples (< 2.4), however, express **strong aversion to pause-screen advertisements (B3)**.

In terms of **content quality**, users exhibit high expectations for **innovation** and **emotional resonance**, yet current offerings fall short in meeting these demands. Regarding **production quality**, visual presentation performs well, but **actor suitability** requires improvement. For **advertising experience**, **pause-screen ads** provoke significant dissatisfaction, whereas **plot-integrated ads** enjoy relatively high acceptance.

4.4 Key Barriers to Adoption Among Non-Viewers

A mean analysis was conducted on the reasons for not watching short dramas, with results ranked in descending order of mean values and categorized by priority. High-priority barriers include plot homogenization and formulaic storytelling (mean = 4.2) and paywalls or excessive advertising (mean = 4.1). As shown in Figure 1, these two issues constitute the primary deterrents to viewership, reflecting user dissatisfaction with content originality and monetization/advertising models. Medium-priority concerns, such as lack of narrative continuity and low production and visual quality, also require attention and improvement. Although actor performance, a low-priority issue, has minimal impact on viewing decisions, selective enhancement may be considered when resources allow.

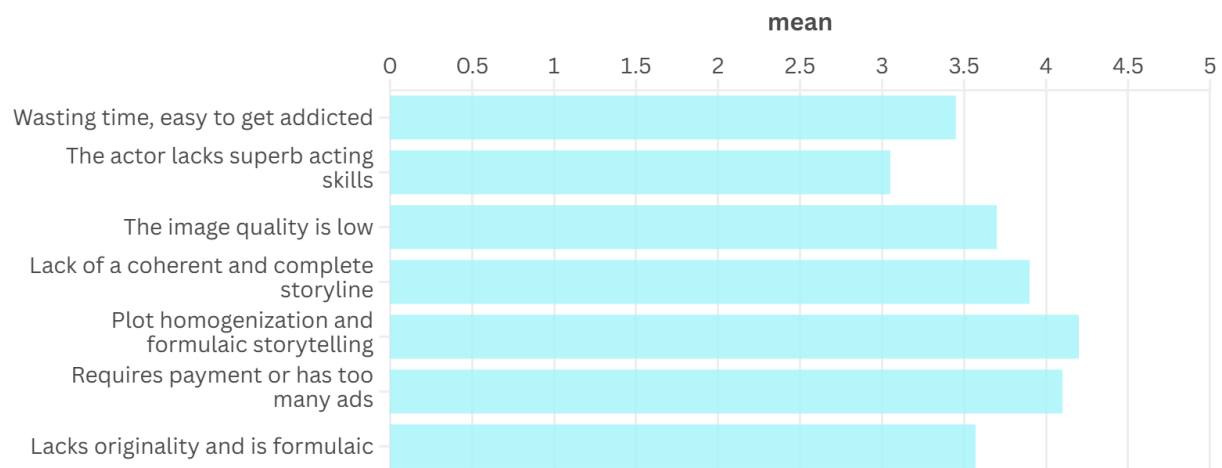


Figure 1. Mean Analysis of Reasons for Not Watching Short Dramas

5. Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings that **composite genres such as “Romance + Suspense” and “Comedy + Romance”** exhibit the highest support, while non-viewers primarily cite **plot homogenization** as a deterrent, **content innovation** should be anchored in **Sichuan-Chongqing regional culture**. Creators are encouraged to integrate local elements, such as **dialects, hotpot culture, and Sanxingdui motifs**, into high-acceptance composite genres. Examples include developing **“Chongqing-style romantic suspense”** or **“Sichuan opera-infused workplace comedies”**. Concurrently, **government-platform partnerships** should establish **original content development funds** to eliminate formulaic tropes (e.g., “tycoon romance,” “rags-to-riches reversals”), thereby addressing **content homogeneity**.

Based on principal component analysis, which identified content quality, production quality, and advertising experience as the core dimensions of viewer satisfaction, user experience optimization must be precisely targeted. This is particularly critical given that pause-screen advertisements elicit strong negative responses among audiences. On one hand, **content quality** should be reinforced by incorporating **narrative coherence** and **regional emotional resonance** into evaluation criteria, mandating inclusion of familiar Sichuan-Chongqing sentiments (e.g., neighborhood bonds, nostalgia for hometown). On the other, **production deficiencies** must be addressed through collaboration with local higher education institutions to cultivate **dialect-proficient actors**, standardize **geographically authentic props and set design**, and **ban mandatory pause-screen ads** while promoting **plot-integrated advertising** and **region-specific branded corner-mark ads** to minimize intrusiveness.

Aligned with the demographic profile, **31–40-year-olds comprising 38.19% of viewers, 66.21% holding bachelor’s degrees or higher, and primary viewing motivations being “stress relief” and “social sharing”**,

tiered operational strategies are essential. For **urban white-collar workers aged 31–40**, develop **1–3-minute “commute micro-dramas”** focused on **workplace decompression** and **light family comedies**. For **university students**, design **interactive plots with bullet-screen-driven endings**, supplemented by shareable assets (e.g., plot screenshots, dialect-based emoji packs), and embed **everyday Sichuan-Chongqing lifestyle details** to better fulfill **emotional regulation** and **social engagement needs**.

Establish a Region-Specific Industrial Synergy Ecosystem. Partner with universities in the Sichuan-Chongqing region to establish short drama creation training hubs, systematically cultivating screenwriters and actors proficient in local culture. Implement targeted policies, including financial incentives and venue subsidies, to foster short drama industry clusters. Promote **“short drama + cultural tourism” integration** by incorporating iconic sites (e.g., Hongya Cave, Mount Qingcheng) into narratives and designing **“short drama check-in routes”**, achieving **bidirectional empowerment of cultural dissemination** and **commercial monetization**.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Distinct User Demographics with Pronounced Trends Toward Youth and Urbanization

Survey data reveal that short drama audiences in the Sichuan-Chongqing region are predominantly **young adults aged 20–40**, constituting **72.4%** of the sample. Female viewers slightly outnumber males, and **63.5%** hold a bachelor’s degree or higher. This cohort exhibits strong **media literacy** and **cultural consumption propensity**, with short dramas serving as a key component of their **daily entertainment and social interaction**. These findings indicate that short dramas have transitioned from a **secondary entertainment option** to a **mainstream cultural consumption practice**, characterized by a user profile of **“young + urban + highly educated”**.

6.2 Primary Viewing Motivations Centered on Emotional Regulation and Social Interaction

Respondents selected **“stress relief” (68.2%)**, **“time-killing” (61.5%)**, and **“sharing plots with friends” (47.8%)** as top motivations. Viewing predominantly occurs during **fragmented time slots** (e.g., commuting, breaks, bedtime), reflecting a **micro-entertainment psychology** suited to fast-paced modern life. Short dramas effectively fulfill dual needs for **light emotional engagement** and **immediate social currency**.

6.3 Content Preferences Shifting Toward Composite Genres and Fast-Paced Narratives

Apriori association rule analysis identifies **“Romance + Suspense”**, **“Comedy + Romance”**, and **“Urban + Workplace”** as the most supported and confident composite genres. Audiences show marked preference for **emotional arcs paired with plot twists**. This suggests a narrative evolution from **linear storytelling** to **multi-conflict, high-climax, high-stimulation structures**, with **tighter pacing** and **more direct emotional delivery**.

6.4 Content Quality and Innovation as Core Drivers of Satisfaction

Principal component analysis indicates that the **content quality** dimension explains the largest variance (**42.1%**). Key influencers include **narrative coherence**, **innovation**, and **actor expressiveness**. In contrast, **production quality** (e.g., visuals, set design) is secondary, while **advertising experience** exerts a **significant negative effect**. Viewers prioritize **narrative immersion and emotional depth** over superficial polish.

6.5 Primary Barriers for Non-Viewers: Homogenization and Over-Commercialization

Among respondents, **28.3%** reported not watching short dramas, citing **“repetitive plots” (53.6%)**, **“excessive ads” (48.2%)**, and **“lack of depth” (33.7%)** as top reasons. Despite market vibrancy, these findings highlight persistent challenges of **aesthetic fatigue** and **innovation bottlenecks** in content supply.

References

- [1] Deng, M. (2025). 2024 short drama market observation. *China Film Market*, (03), 32–41.
- [2] Xu, P. (2025, February 26). In the era of traffic monetization, we should pursue "long-termism" more. *China News Publication Radio and Television News*, (006). <https://doi.org/10.28907/n.cnki.nxwcb.2025.000460>
- [3] Xue, W. (2025). Long and short complementarity, accelerated empowerment: An exploration of the short drama thinking and quality development path of blockbuster long dramas. *Sound Screen World*, (01), 88–90.
- [4] Hu, Z. (2021). From "emotional massage" to "emotional consumption": The development logic of online micro-short dramas. *Technology Communication*, 13(18), 132–134. <https://doi.org/10.16607/j.cnki.1674-6708.2021.18.043>
- [5] Tang, T., & Wen, M. (2022). Research on the emotional communication of the rustic expression of online micro-short dramas. *China Television*, (11), 75–81.
- [6] Wang, X. (2025). Research on the narrative model innovation and development of micro-short dramas in the

- context of cross-media convergence. *Journal of China Radio and Television*, (01), 75–78.
- [7] Kang, S., & Zhang, C. (2025). Review of research on Chinese micro-short dramas. *China Film Market*, (02), 10–16.
- [8] Wu, X. (2025). The evolution and innovation of online micro-short dramas: From user orientation to content quality improvement. *Audio-Visual*, (03), 7–10. <https://doi.org/10.19395/j.cnki.1674-246x.2025.03.003>
- [9] Sattora, E. A., Ganeles, B. C., Pierce, M. E., & Wong, R. (2024). Research on health topics communicated through TikTok: A systematic review of the literature. *Journal. Media*, 5(3), 1395–1412. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia5030088>
- [10] Hu, S., Kirkpatrick, C. E., Lee, N., Hong, Y., Lee, S., & Hinnant, A. (2024). Using short-form videos to get clinical trial newcomers to sign up: Message-testing experiment. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 26, Article e49600. <https://doi.org/10.2196/49600>

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).