

Research on the Influencing Factors of CBA Spectators' Behavioral Intention to Watch the Game

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Abstract: *The development of basketball is rapidly changing, and the number of people who like to watch basketball games is increasing year by year. As an important basketball event in Asia, the number of spectators who watch CBA games on site is increasing. The CBA league is facing great opportunities and challenges, and watching NBA games on line is directly impacting on the audience's visual experience and game cognition in the Chinese market of CBA. In this context, it is especially important to improve the audience's intention to watch the game. This paper adopts a qualitative research method through the literature and brings together the views of many scholars to find out that viewers' behavioral intention is influenced by four factors: motivation, social media marketing, game service quality and satisfaction. It lays the foundation for the author's future quantitative research.*

Keywords: *behavioral intention, CBA viewers, influencing factors*

1. Introduction

As one of the popular sports in the world, basketball has a large audience. At present, all countries in the world take the creation of unique professional basketball league as an important means to popularize basketball and improve the level of basketball in their countries. The American NBA league is the professional basketball league with the highest competitive level, the largest scale and the widest audience in the world, which has a strong cultural heritage, perfect operation system and sound management system, and the NBA league is beyond the reach of other professional basketball leagues in the world. Since the NBA began its global expansion in the 1980s, NBA games have been broadcast in more than 200 countries and regions around the world, and has become one of the most influential professional sports leagues in the world.

China's CBA league is the top professional basketball league in Asia. The reform process of the CBA league has been accelerating in recent years and has already achieved some results. From 2016 to 2017, the CBA League has experienced reform initiatives such as the establishment of the CBA Company, the delinking of the China Basketball Association from the Basketball Sports Administration Center of the State General Administration of Sports, and the acquisition of the CBA Company's independent operating rights of the CBA League. All these reform initiatives have made the CBA league develop in the direction of real marketization. However, there is a big gap between the competitive level, management system and operation system of CBA league and NBA league. The marketization of our professional basketball league has just begun, and the CBA league not only has to take up the important task of revitalizing professional sports and promoting the development of the sports industry, but also shoulders the glorious mission of cultivating basketball professionals and improving the competitive level of basketball in China, which is a long way to go for the future development of the CBA league.

The marketization of professional sports league is in line with the historical trend and the development trend of the times, although the CBA league has been developed for more than 20 years, the operation effectiveness of the CBA league needs to be improved due to many factors. With the continuous adjustment of the national development direction of the sports industry, the development of professional sports has ushered in a spring. 2014 State Council Document No. 46, "Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of the Sports Industry and Promoting Sports Consumption" was issued. This document pointed out the future development direction of professional sports in China from a policy perspective. The 2019-2020 season of CBA league is in the context of a new era, the CBA company has repackaged the CBA tournament from different perspectives such as tournament operation, fan experience, business development and brand promotion. Under this reform trend, the

CBA league has entered the 2.0 era. However, the reform of CBA league is not a smooth sailing. The league has also exposed many new problems in the new season. For example, the CBA League has problems such as low game quality and low audience attendance, which need to be solved urgently. Therefore, the development of CBA league needs more time to explore.

The development of CBA league has completed the initial transformation of marketization and professionalization. With the development of marketization in China, the CBA League is facing great challenges as other domestic sports leagues and foreign leagues represented by NBA are competing for the Chinese sports market rapidly and strongly. From the market level, China has a huge population base and the number of spectators watching CBA games is increasing year by year, but the number of live spectators in the CBA league still accounts for a minority. Zhong Huamei et al.'s (2020) micro-evidence survey based on CGSS2015 shows that: of the 8,505 samples from 28 provinces/municipalities/autonomous regions across the country, the number of viewers who never watched the games on-site amounted to 7,015, accounting for 82.48%; those who watched the games on-site a number of times per year or less amounted to 1,113, accounting for 13.09%; those who watched the games on-site several times per month accounted for 2.93%; and those who watched the games on-site every week accounted for 2.93%. Or 2.93%; 1.18% of those who watch the game live several times a week; and 0.33% of those who watch the game live every day. [1] This shows that the overall market base for on-site viewing of sports events in China is relatively small, and the number of on-site viewers needs to be increased.

Only if the CBA league maximizes the audience's needs and the CBA market cultivates the audience's awareness of actively watching the game, the CBA audience can actively promote the positive development of the CBA league. Therefore, this paper starts from the audience's point of view and explores in depth what factors influence the behavioral intention of CBA audience. The main purpose of this paper is to enhance the number of CBA league live spectators, gradually grow the economic share of the sports market, and provide a theoretical basis for the development of China's sports industry.

2. Literature review

Behavioral intention refers to the subjective chance that an individual wants to engage in a certain behavior, and it reflects the degree to which an individual is willing to put in effort and perform a certain behavior. This paper searches the literature related to spectators watching sports games to find out the influencing factors on CBA spectators' behavioral intention to watch games.

2.1 *The Influence of Viewing Motivation on CBA Spectators' Intention of Watching Behaviour*

By analyzing the literature, Wei Wei (2011) summarized spectators' motives for watching matches into three categories: affective, cognitive and behavioral motives. Emotional motivation dimension includes leisure and entertainment, self-motivation and cathartic pressure. Cognitive motivation dimension includes knowledge acquisition and aesthetic needs. Behavioral motives include release needs, companionship needs, group belongingness acquisition, family and economic motives. These three types of motives have a positive influence on spectators' viewing behavior. [2] Chen Zhibin (2014) and others obtained through empirical research that the main motives driving soccer fans to go to live matches are love of the game, support for the players, experience of the live atmosphere, obtaining a sense of belonging to a geographical area, catharsis of negative emotions, and support for the cause of Chinese soccer. His regression analysis shows that all six motives are significantly related to fans' purchasing behavior. Except for catharsis of negative emotions, which negatively affects purchasing behavior, the other five motives positively affect purchasing behavior.[3] This shows that the motivation to watch the game has a significant effect on the behavioral intention of the spectators.

Amalia et al. (2014) did a study on motivations, attitudes and behavioral intentions of spectators at live soccer matches and the results showed that self-identification, access to information, promotion in the community and money issues can have a significant impact on spectators' behavioral intentions to watch matches live. Therefore, sports clubs need to strategically improve these five factors to attract more spectators. [4]

Zhang Lei et al. (2017), in constructing and validating the spectator viewing motivation model, proposed that the spectator's motivation to watch the game has a positive impact on the actual viewing behavior. The stronger the spectators' motivation to watch matches, the more likely they are to watch

matches in the future, and the more likely they are to care about sports entertainment and sports consumption. [5]

Taken together, the above scholars' viewpoints suggest that spectator motivation has a positive influence on spectators' intention to watch the game.

2.2 Impact of social media marketing on CBA viewers' behavioral intention to watch games

Hughes C (2019) stated that social media marketing can drive consumers' online brand engagement behavior. [6] At the level of purchase behavior, Sokolova K (2019) noted that influencer credibility and quasi-social interactions significantly enhance consumers' purchase intentions; [7] Youssef C (2020) examined the influence of fashion influencers on consumers' purchase intentions using the fashion domain as an entry point and the theory of planned behavior; [8] Kim H (2021) used the social presence level and quasi-social interaction as mediators to explore the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention. [9] In addition to separate studies, some scholars have also combined the two levels of content. Trivedi J (2020) proposed that brand admiration and brand attitude play a mediating role in the process of influencer marketing to facilitate the occurrence of consumer purchase behavior. [10]

Yang Xingjun establishes an analytical model of social media marketing's influencing factors on consumers' purchase intention based on SOR theoretical perspective, collects a total of 300 questionnaires through online and offline, and utilizes R language software to conduct empirical analyses and puts forward relevant countermeasure suggestions. He points out that: shaping corporate brand can reduce the user's perceived risk; strengthening fan interaction can enhance consumer brand stickiness; enhancing the fun of social media advertisement content can drive consumer sentiment; online reviews can satisfy consumers' correct understanding of the company. [11] It is further shown that social media marketing has a positive promotion effect on consumers' purchase intention behavior. Social media marketing is widely used in brand sales. However, the CBA league as a product has just started its social media marketing.

Chi Xin et al. (2016) argued that social media marketing model provides quality content to encourage customers to generate purchasing power. Compared with traditional marketing strategies, social media marketing strategies have many advantages in identifying audiences and increasing brand loyalty. [12] Xinjie Chen (2019) points out that with the rapid growth of short videos and accelerating information sharing, the asymmetry of information between consumers and merchants is gradually decreasing. Consumers are more likely to actively obtain valuable information. He argues that social media marketing focuses on influencing people's ideas and spirit, and that social media marketing realizes product quality improvement by engaging in new information dissemination, thus increasing brand awareness and brand loyalty, and increasing the market penetration of products. [13]

In conclusion, social media marketing marketing has a positive impact on behavioral intention. Although social media marketing is less involved in the field of sports spectators, there are similarities between spectators and consumers in terms of attributes. Therefore, this paper can assume that social media influence has a positive impact on viewers' behavioral intention.

2.3 Influence of Service Quality on CBA Spectators' Behavioral Intention

In his article, Wang Xuefeng (2012) analyzed the influencing factors of Nanjing sports spectators' live viewing. After research and data analysis, he found that the social attributes of the spectators, the sports competition itself, the prestige of the game, the spectators' personal sports experience, the comfort of life, the comfort of watching the game, as well as the popularity of the game and the economy were the eight influencing factors that played a major role. When analyzing the influencing factors of live sports spectators, it is necessary to analyze the social class, gender, ticket pricing, and the level of the game in a number of ways. This can better organize all kinds of competitions and improve the audience's on-site viewing rate. [14] Li Xiangqian et al. (2012) analyzed the main influencing factors of fans' viewing in China's professional soccer league. He found that there are various factors influencing fans to watch soccer matches on site. He believes that the existence of fake football and black whistles are the most important factors affecting the fans' viewing of matches. At the same time, the level of the game, the service level of the tournament, the good and bad of the game venue and the personal family factors of the fans have different degrees of influence on the fans to watch the soccer league on the spot. [15] Su Ronghai and Xu Maozhou (2017) found that control beliefs had a high predictive power for college students' intention to watch Chinese Super League matches on-site when

studying their intentions and behaviors. Among them, the control beliefs included time, money, transportation, going in pairs, promotions, team strength, and tournament attention. These factors have a greater influence on college students' live game viewing behavioral intentions. [16] Li Song (2017) mentioned in his article that the quality of tournament services perceived by on-site spectators and the satisfaction of spectators have a direct effect on the intention of viewing behavior. This indicates that the better the event service quality and the higher the spectators' satisfaction, the more likely the spectators are to arrive at the site to watch the match. Therefore, service quality and spectator satisfaction need to be taken into account when studying the factors influencing spectators' live viewing behavioral intentions. [17]

Zhao Fengmei (2020) used the SPORTSEVER and TEAMQUAL tournament service quality perception models to study behavioral intention. She combined the specificity of basketball to study the service quality of mass basketball events in terms of six dimensions: tangibility, responsiveness, reliability (pre-game and in-game), accessibility, safety, and empathy, and put forward hypotheses for the participants' continuous participation behavioral intention. She finally concluded that the perceived service quality of the tournament had a significant positive relationship with basketball hobby level and intention to participate behavior. [18]

In summary, service quality has a positive effect on spectators' behavioral intention.

2.4 The effect of satisfaction on CBA viewers' behavioral intention to watch the game

Kyriaki Kaplanidou and Heather J. Gibson (2010) verified the effect of spectator satisfaction on spectators' intention to watch a sporting event through an experiment. They found a mediating effect between satisfaction and re-viewing intention, event image, and intention. Therefore, enhancing spectator satisfaction with an event is an important driver of positive attitudes and behavioral intentions toward the event. [19] Kyriaki Kaplanidou and Heather Gibson (2012) did another study. By comparing the initial and re-attendance intentions of spectators of youth soccer matches, they found that spectators' satisfaction with the event and their perceptions and experiences of the event had a significant impact on their re-attendance intentions. [20]

Spears (2004) argued that positive behavioral intentions of spectators can lead to future return to sporting events and spread positive word-of-mouth to potential consumers. [21] Lee (2015) surveyed 224 spectators at a men's professional basketball game in South Korea and concluded that spectator satisfaction with the sporting event had a positive impact on team identification and intention to return. [22] Koo (2014) used a marathon as the subject of his study and determined that race participants' satisfaction had a significant positive effect on their behavioral intentions. [23]

Cao, Ping & Zhang, Yu (2011) mentioned that the main way to increase spectator satisfaction can be through sports events to increase their attention and a series of revenue status of the event to attract consumer groups. Satisfied spectators will be tempted to buy tickets to the event again. Spectators will spread the word by word of mouth, which will ultimately increase the sales of tickets to the event and increase the reach of the event. [24] This shows that satisfaction has a significant intention on the significance of spectating for the sports consumer.

In summary, spectator satisfaction also has a positive effect on the spectator's behavioral intention to watch the event.

3. Conclusion

CBA game viewers through the above literature combing, CBA viewers' behavioral intention to watch the game is influenced by various factors. These factors mainly include four factors: spectator viewing motivation, social media marketing, event service quality, and satisfaction. Although some of the literature did not take CBA viewers as the research object, sports competitions all have a high degree of similarity. Therefore, with reference to the research results of various scholars, the author will follow up the CBA audience to investigate the audience's knowledge of the CBA league and the audience's behavioral intention to go to the scene to watch CBA games. At the same time, this paper will deeply study the path relationship and the degree of influence of CBA spectators' behavioral intention to watch the game with the motivation to watch the game, social media marketing, service quality, and satisfaction. This study will provide suggestions and countermeasures for expanding the influence of CBA league matches, cultivating spectators' awareness of sports consumption, promoting more spectators to go to live matches, and enhancing the level of China's sports consumption market.

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