

Examining the influence of motivational & product factors on CBA fans' watching intention

Sport Management

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Introduction

Basketball has become one of the most popular sports in China. With approximately 625 million basketball fans and over 650,000 million basketball courts, China has a huge basketball fan base and a great basketball consumption market. In this basketball market, the Chinese Basketball Association, known as the CBA league, is the top-level professional basketball league in China that was founded in 1995.

According to the latest statistic, approximately 12 million spectators watched the 19-20 season-opening match, and approximately 15 million spectators watched the 19-20 season final match (Xinhua News, 2020).

This study aims to adapt an academic scale to test the influence of different motivation and product factors on CBA fans' future watching intentions. In addition, this study also aims to discover the potential motives and product factors influencing CBA fans' spectating intentions.

Theoretical Background & Hypothesis Development

In the sports management literature, motives are described as the factors that drive sports fans to watch the game and the personal needs that they satisfy through watching the game (Byon, Cottingham & Carroll, 2010; Matsuoka, 2014; Duan, Liu & He, 2019).

Overall, motivation is important in predicting and understanding sports fans' behaviors. Since sports fans watch sports games for various reasons, sports management researchers have investigated the factors that motivate sports fans to watch sporting events to understand sports fans' spectating intention. This study adapted the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) and made adjustments

based on the scale to measure CBA fans' motivation.

Although motivation is a crucial factor that impacts sports fans' intentions, it is not the only factor that can significantly influence sports fans' intentions. Many previous studies have found that both the core and external products will impact sports fans' future intentions (e.g., Zhang et al., 1995; Greenwell et al., 2002; Smith, 2000).

The core product refers to the core product in spectator sport as the game itself (Mullin et al., 2007). The characteristics of the core product are related to team performance, the team record, and star players (Greenstein & Marcum, 1981). Along with the core product, researchers have been studying the external product. The primary difference between the core product and the external product is that the external product can be controlled and improved by the sports organizations. External product is defined as the promotions and entertainment activities provided by sporting events (Kim & Kang, 2005).

The quality of the sports product also impacts sports fans' intention. The most direct way to evaluate the quality of a sports product is through the level of satisfaction of sports fans with the sports product. Satisfaction indicates consumers' direct response to the product and service evaluation (Duan et al., 2020). Many research studies have shown that satisfaction with the sports product can significantly impact fans' intention to watch future sports games (Cronin et al., 1992; Cronin et al., 2000; Trail, Fink & Anderson, 2003; Kwon, Trail, & Anderson, 2005).

This study used core and external products as the moderators to examine the moderating effect between CBA fans' motivation and future watching intention.

Methodology

This study distributed an online questionnaire to collect data due to COVID-19. The online questionnaire consists of four parts: demographic information, motives, core, external product, and watching intention. Data were collected through the Weibo CBA fans community.

In order to assess motivation, instead of fully adopting the MSSC, this study only kept five motives: knowledge, drama, achievement, escape, and social, to avoid ambiguous overlaps between constructs. To assess fans' satisfaction with the core and external products, the study developed five question items for each product factor to measure the CBA fans' satisfaction with the core and external products.

A total of 400 questionnaire were collected. Among the collected questionnaire, 40 (10%) were rejected due to under and overtime responses and failed identification questions, resulting in 360 (90%) valid responses. The data were analyzed using SPSS 28.0.

Results

This study performed multiple regression analysis to examine whether each of the five motivation factors significantly influences CBA fans' future watching intention. The results indicated that all five motivation factors explained the variance of 67% of CBA fans' watching intention. Knowledge and achievement significantly influence the CBA fans' future watching intention.

After that, this study performed PROCESS MACRO to test whether CBA fans' satisfaction with CBA products will significantly moderate the relationship between each motivation factor and future watching intention. The results indicated that CBA fans' satisfaction with core and external products has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between all five motivation factors and future watching intentions. The novelty of this research is that this research has used fans' satisfaction with CBA products to examine the moderation effect

between CBA fans' motivation and CBA fans' watching intention.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to develop a motivation scale to examine the influence of different motivation factors and product factors on CBA fans' future watching intentions. First, this study has developed a sports fans' motivation scale based on previous studies on sports fans' motivation scale development (e.g., Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002; Trail & James, 2001). Combined with the previous scale, such as MSSC and SPEED (Trail & James, 2001; Funk, 2009), this scale contains the most commonly appeared motives: knowledge, drama, achievement, escape, and social interaction.

Besides the influence of motivation factors, this study also investigated whether satisfaction with core and external products influences the relationship between motivation and CBA fans' future watching intention. The results indicated that knowledge and achievement significantly influence CBA fans' future watching intention. The core and external products will significantly influence the relationship between motivation and CBA fans' future watching intention.

This study provides valuable information for CBA and online streaming platform marketing executives to understand CBA fans' needs for watching CBA games.

In this study, the quality of the response from the online questionnaire cannot be guaranteed due to the difficulty for respondents to concentrate on answering online questionnaires. In addition, the results might not be able to represent all the CBA fans biased due to the lack of female respondents.

Moreover, the scale used in this study lacks empirical evidence since the fans' satisfaction with core and external products has not been used as moderators in previous studies. Further tests will be needed to confirm the scale's reliability and validity for sports other than basketball.