

Strategies to Promote the Chinese Basketball Association

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Abstract. CBA league is the highest-level basketball league in China. In recent years, the CBA league has faced many difficulties, such as how to ensure its exposure and popularity in the post-epidemic era. Especially after the emergence of COVID-19, the ticket revenue of the CBA league has been greatly reduced; After the emergence of the National Basketball Association and even the National Basketball league, the influence of the CBA league declined. This research aimed to discuss how to enhance the influence and popularity of the CBA league in the Chinese market. This article went through the analysis of Marketing Mix theory, according to the actual situation of the CBA league, from the four elements of the Marketing Mix theory in the analysis of the CBA league on these elements of consumer impact degree. At the same time, this article applied the SWOT analysis method, respectively from the internal and external advantages and disadvantages of CBA league analysis. The conclusion of this exploration was that the CBA league has great advantages in the two aspects of place and product, but under the influence of reality, there were different negative effects on promotion, place, and product. Therefore, the CBA league needs to be changed from inside to outside under the current background.

Keywords: CBA League, SWOT analysis, Marketing Mix theory, Sports Management.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The CBA league is the highest-level Basketball league in China. In the years of development, all aspects of the CBA league have gradually become professional. But due to some reasons, there are a lot of problems in the CBA League. First of all, since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019, the CBA league has been suspended for 132 days due to the outbreak of COVID-19 [1]. Although COVID-19 has been effectively controlled during the 2021-2022 season, the CBA league has seen a decrease in attention and revenue due to the Chinese government's COVID-19 control policies. The COVID-19 control policy requires people to have a negative nucleic acid test report to travel to and from each city; Every entertainment and sports venue needs to control the number of people in the stadium to ensure that there is no crowded situation. Such requirements have reduced the offline ticket revenue for each CBA game and the willingness of fans to attend matches. Meanwhile, to ensure that the league can proceed smoothly as planned, the CBA league has changed the game system from home-and-away to a tournament system, which has also discouraged many fans who support their hometown teams from attending matches. Secondly, the CBA league is facing the outflow of outstanding players, which is due to two reasons. First, the CBA develops young players through the youth training system of each club, instead of selecting them from the lower leagues. Second, the CBA league's transfer system: clubs have the first right to renew the contract of maximum salary players, which reduces the flow of players. Many players who cannot complete the transfer in China choose to leave the CBA league and go to foreign leagues. A good example is Zhou Qi, a Max contract player who decided to move to the Australian League after failing to reach an agreement with the Xinjiang Club of the CBA league in the 2020-2021 season.

1.2 Research Gap

In recent years, the CBA league, as a well-known league in China, has often become the object of exploration. In the past explore, some papers have analyzed the current situation of the CBA league brand and put forward the strategy of league brand construction: improve the enjoyment and quality

of the game, improve the service quality of the game, improve the satisfaction of consumers; Create Chinese characteristic culture, dare to build a characteristic brand; Clear brand positioning and increase promotion efforts; Enhance the brand awareness of CBA league and the reputation of consumers [1]. In addition, some papers, from the professional perspective of basketball, put forward suggestions on how to improve the three-point shooting rate, and free throw rate, and assist a number of players through quantitative analysis and analysis of nine influencing factors [2]. Now Under COVID-19, many new policies have emerged, such as: limiting the number of people admitted to public entertainment venues such as arenas and gymnasiums; the nucleic acid test for the new crown epidemic must be negative before taking public transportation such as planes and trains. Due to policy restrictions, the CBA league has also undergone tremendous changes. In order for the CBA league to play in a normal and stable manner, it chooses to adopt the game mode of the tournament system. That is to say, in each stage of the game, each team will only hold the game in one place, and will not return to the hometown of each team to hold the game. Moreover, whether spectators can watch each game on the spot also needs to be adjusted according to the situation of the new crown epidemic. On the one hand, this means that the willingness and probability of spectators to go to the game to watch the game is greatly reduced, and at the same time, the audience is more reluctant to bear the risk of going to the game. On the other hand, in the case of COVID-19, the audience can only understand and watch the CBA league games through online live broadcasts and online reports, but this part is the short board of the CBA league because the CBA league has always had broadcasting rights Instability, poor broadcast quality, untimely and poor network publicity. This phenomenon has a very negative impact on the attention of the CBA league in China.

Although there are a lot of explores on the CBA league, how to promote the CBA league in the case of COVID-19 and serious external competition is a vacancy in the CBA league explore. In order to fill such a explore gap, this paper sets up a explore question: How to promote the CBA league?

1.3 Structure of The Paper

In order to solve the exploration question, this paper will complete a SWOT analysis on CBA. Before analysis of CBA, a literature review will be written based on the MMT, and then an exploration design will be concluded on the method part after giving a specific introduction on CBA a SWOT will be applied as the qualitative analysis on CBA, after that the results and discussion will be written.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition

Marketing Mix theory is a 4PS-centered marketing mix method, which means that enterprises can realize the purpose of improving sales performance through reasonable combination and collocation of various resources. In 1953, the famous American marketing master Neil Borden put forward the term "marketing mix" for the first time in the opening speech of the American Marketing Association [3]. Then in 1960, Jerome McCarthy summarized the basic marketing elements and divided them into four categories. In 1967, Philip Kotler further confirmed the 4PS-centered Marketing mix approach in his book: *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning and Control* [4]. In 1986, Philip Kotler put forward two other elements in "On Big Marketing" published in *Harvard Business Review* (March-April issue): Political Power and Public Relations [5]. Then, Philip Kotler added four elements to the six: Probing, Partitioning, Prioritizing and Positioning [6].

Marketing Mix theory includes four main elements: Product, Price, Place and Promotion, which is the frequently mentioned 4P theory [7]. Products: Products include not only the goods yielded by enterprises but also various intangible services [8]. When designing products, enterprises need to consider the combination of different categories of enterprise products and the proportion of various products in the product mix is the optimal collocation, and also need to consider the function, appearance, packaging and quality of the product itself and other details [9].

Price is the enterprise according to the cost, target profit space, consumer consumption ability and other factors to determine the price. Of course, in the design of the price at the same time also want to formulate a reasonable discount proportion, payment methods and so on. At the same time, enterprises should also adjust prices according to changes in the market. For example, prices in off-season and peak season need to be adjusted accordingly.

Place refers to the sum of all the links between the product and the consumer. Different industries and different groups choose different Place There are generally two kinds of channels. The direct channel is selling directly to customers. The indirect channel is that businesses and consumers have previously traded goods through dealers and sales networks [10].

Promotion refers to a series of promotion programs that enterprises perform for consumers with the purpose of increasing sales volume. At the same time, it also refers to the advertisements that enterprises utilize various means to interact with the target market and promote their brand image and product characteristics.

2.2 Important Results

Good product quality can bring benefits to the product. Firstly, in the analysis of the marketing strategies of ZARA, through market exploration, it is found that excellent product design and quality meet customers' pursuit of comfort and practicality [11]. Secondly, in the exploration of the marketing strategies of Chanel in China, it is shown that when the fact that product quality of Chanel is maintained at the high-end level in the industry is reported in the Chinese market, the reputation of the products increases of Chanel. Third, an analysis of TikTok's marketing strategy also found that the improvement of video quality after raising the audit threshold can enhance user engagement [12].

Different pricing in different situations can attract more consumers. For example, in the exploration of the operation strategy of Haidilao hotpot, it is found that different pricing methods in different regions of the world can attract more customers, which means that higher pricing is acceptable for places with good economic development. And for places with poor economic development, lower pricing can boost sales [13]. For example, in the investigation of the marketing strategy of paying for audio knowledge, it is found that it is acceptable to charge higher prices for products with high public usage because public demand for such products is higher [14].

Diversified sales channels can enhance consumers' purchase intention. For example, in the exploration of the marketing strategy of Apple in Yan 'a City, it is found that consumers are very willing to buy agricultural products through online e-commerce channels because this e-commerce platform can supervise product quality and consumers will enjoy the convenience of online shopping [15].

In the Internet era, the promotion of products on network platforms can increase the popularity of products and attract more consumers. For example, in the promotion of the urban amateur basketball league, numerous local consumers can be attracted to watch the game through the video released by the online media [16].

2.3 Summary

These four elements will have a positive impact on consumers at different levels. Product quality assurance can attract more consumers, increase consumers' desire to buy and the favorable degree to the brand; Reasonable differential pricing can attract consumers of various consumption levels; Online sales channels can enhance consumers' purchase intention and consumers' attention; Promotion of products through the Internet can increase the popularity of products.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This paper applies the qualitative analysis method and SWOT analysis to analyze the CBA league. SWOT analysis method and qualitative analysis method have strong logic, which means that the

object of exploration: CBA league can be a more complete analysis and exploration. For example, SWOT analysis starts from four aspects: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the exploration object. SWOT analysis makes clear the current situation of the exploration object and anticipates the future development of the exploration object from these four perspectives, and also puts forward more comprehensive suggestions. That's why this paper applies qualitative analysis and SWOT analysis.

3.2 CBA league

Management Center of the National Sports Administration of China. It is also the highest-level Basketball league in China. In years of development, the CBA league has become a professional league through a series of reform measures. CBA League was established in 1954 on the basis of the national league, and since 1995 began to reform so that it began to have a professional direction. In 1995, the National Basketball League of men, the predecessor of CBA, began to implement a home-and-away, cross-year new competition system. On December 10, 1995, the first game of CBA kicked off. The CBA, then called the "A-A League," started with 12 teams. From 1995 to 2004, 555 Cigarettes, Hilton, MOTOROLA, Uni-com New Time were the title merchants of CBA, and from 2005, it was officially named China Basketball Professional League of men. Since 2015, the CBA has remained unchanged with 20 teams. However, the current situation of CBA league development is not optimistic. From the internal analysis of the CBA league, on the one hand, the player transfer clauses formulated by the CBA Company and the Chinese Sports Administration Center restrict the personnel flow in the player market, and also lead to the domestic outstanding athletes participating in overseas leagues, for example: Unable to reach an agreement with the Xinjiang club, Zhou went to the NBL league last year. Meanwhile, the CBA league is influenced by China's sports system and every club has its own youth training system, which makes it difficult for college players in the Chinese University Basketball Association to appear in the CBA league. On the other hand, the CBA league in the network broadcast on the one hand is a great lack. The clarity and professionalism of CBA broadcasts have long been questioned because even when viewers on online media tune in to the highest resolution, the pictures are not very clear. Compared with the NBA league, CBA league broadcast quality is relatively low [17] From the CBA league faces an external environment to analyze. On the one hand, under the influence of COVID-19, the number of spectators watching CBA matches offline has decreased a lot due to the dual role of China's policies and the individual will of the audience. On the other hand, other leagues are carving up the Chinese market, such as NBL League, East Asia Super League, and The Philippine Basketball Association. In the 2020-2021 season, Zhou Qi and Liu Chuanxing left the CBA League to join the South East Melbourne Phoenix and Brisbane Bullets of the National Basketball League respectively; During the 2022 window, Zhu Songwei, one of the 2021-2022 All-Stars, The Winged Hong Kong Bay Area Winged Dragons Basketball Club, which left the CBA League and joined the East Asia Super League. In the past explorations on the CBA league, the exploration usually focused on the CBA league itself and the differences between the CBA league and other leagues. In terms of the CBA league itself, topics such as the tactical system of each CBA league team [18], the relationship between the CBA league and fans: and how to build team culture and fan culture are often mentioned. From the difference from other leagues, the CBA league and NBA league gap and difference are very topical.

3.3 SWOT analysis

3.3.1 Strength

CBA has advantages in the product. For the CBA league, PRODUCT in Marketing Mix theory has an advantage. Among the 12 teams in the CBA league, there are always teams and players who are highly regarded, which ensures the popularity and popularity of the CBA league in China. For example, in the 2021-2022 season, the Liaoning Flying Leopards club and Guangdong Hongyuan club, as the two teams with the most fans and attention in the CBA league, contributed very high ratings this season. In the semi-final of the 2021-2022 season between Liaoning Flying Leopards and

Guangdong Hongyuan Team, the audience rating of the third game reached 7.7976% [19]. In addition, the highest viewership in CBA history also occurred in the opening game between Liaoning Flying Leopards and Guangdong Hongyuan Team on November 2, 2019. At that time, the viewing data released by CCTV-5 showed that 41.32 million people watched the game, and the total number reached more than 50 million when combined with more than 10 million viewers from broadcasters such as Tencent Video and Youku Video [20]. However, this advantage does not play a particularly big role in the promotion of the CBA league in the Chinese market, because there are more than 10 teams in the CBA league, which don't have a high number of attention and fans.

3.3.2 Weakness

The main disadvantage within CBA is the promotion in the Marketing Mix theory. The CBA league, China's top domestic league, has been having a lot of problems with broadcasting games. In particular, the broadcast quality of the CBA league is very poor. Even if the audience opens the membership and utilizes the highest high-definition picture quality, it is difficult to compare with the game quality of the NBA League [21]. In addition, the commentary of the CBA league broadcast is also very unprofessional [22]. These two points have a very negative impact on the ratings of the CBA League.

3.3.3 Opportunity

CBA League has a very good innate advantage in place, that is, as a Chinese league, the CBA league is highly concerned by Chinese football fans, and the Chinese market has a very large consumer base. But even the naturally favorable market environment has hardly helped the current popularity of CBA, as many Chinese fans are disappointed by the league's nonprofessional and low viewing value.

3.3.4 Threaten

Now, firstly, in terms of product, the CBA league cannot guarantee that excellent players can stay in the CBA league because, in addition to the EASL league, more and more foreign leagues attempt to develop the Chinese market. For example, the NBL league signed Zhou Qi, a star player of the CBA league, for the 2021-22 season, which greatly increased the interest of Chinese fans in the NBL league. In the off-season following the 2021-22 season, the Late Wing Dragons, a team directly managed by the NPA League, signed a number of outstanding and highly regarded players from the CBA, such as Zhu Songwei, who was selected as an All-Star [23]. This will have a huge impact on the CBA league, because once other leagues sign their star players, the biggest selling point of the CBA league will be gone, and the competitiveness of the CBA league in many leagues will also be gone. The most important way to promote the CBA league is through network broadcast and Internet publicity, which makes many viewers who love to watch games lose their enthusiasm for the CBA league.

4. Results & Discussion

The advantage of CBA is mainly in Product. First of all, in terms of product, there are always teams and players who can bring heat to the CBA [24]. For example, in the early five years of playing in the CBA League, Yao Ming not only contributed outstanding statistics but also made Chinese fans pay great attention to this talented interior player [25]. Take Guo Ailun and Zhou Qi for example. These two players regularly appear on the top searched lists on Chinese social media. It can be said that they are the two stars of this generation whose every move is followed by fans. The advantage in a product also enables the CBA league to compete with overseas leagues like NBA League to some extent.

The main disadvantages of the CBA league are highlighted in promotion and place. First of all, in terms of promotion, the CBA league has a very negative impression on the public. For a long time, there have been doubts about the decisions of the referees in the CBA League, so the fairness of CBA

League matches and the enjoyment of the matches have declined a lot. Of course, a large part of these problems is also yielded by the insufficient professionalism and immaturity of the CBA league. Secondly, in terms of place, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the CBA league can only allow consumers and fans to participate in the CBA league by watching live matches online, which makes the CBA league lose a lot of attention. At the same time, when the CBA league faces the competition of other leagues, it is not completely guaranteed that the star players of the CBA league will leave, which makes the CBA league not advantageous in the competition with overseas leagues in the future.

Therefore, first of all, the CBA league needs to ensure that the games of these hot teams have enough reports and publicity before the start of the game, so as to attract more viewers; At the same time, the CBA league also requires each club to publish the relevant consultation of each team on each social media, so as to ensure that all teams have certain popularity. Second, the CBA league needs to cooperate with more professional broadcasting platforms and the employment and management of commentators should be stricter. Third, the CBA league needs to create more selling points in line with the Chinese market so as to maximize profits in the Chinese market. Fourth, the CBA league should adjust the player transfer system, so as to make the player trade market circulate and give players more choice space.

5. Conclusions

In this paper, under the background of the exploration of the CBA league's competition system after the outbreak of COVID-19, the question of "how to promote the CBA league under the management policy of COVID-19" was explored. By sorting out how the Marketing Mix theory affects consumers' purchase desire, and using the SWOT analysis method, this paper analyzes the internal advantages, internal disadvantages, external advantages, and external disadvantages of the CBA League.

This article from the theoretical point of view is a very objective analysis of the CBA league currently in the environment, and CBA league from the inside advantages and disadvantages also clear that the CBA league is in a very dangerous stage. From a practical point of view, this article provides methods to solve the current problems and enhance the influence of the CBA league. Admittedly, this article also has some deficiencies. For example, when providing opinions to the CBA league, it did not consider that the CBA league is not only controlled by the CBA company but also managed by the Chinese Sports Administration Center. This management model makes it difficult to implement suggestions for improvement and to change the status quickly.

In the future exploration, by learning the differences between national sports systems in different countries, as well as various advantages and disadvantages, this paper can make up for the problem that the CBA league cannot make some changes without the control of the CBA league by investigating the sports system in China.

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