

THE EFFECTS OF MATCH-VIEWING EXPERIENCE, BRAND PERCEPTION AND BRAND EMOTION ON FANS' INTENTION TO SUSTAIN CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR IN THE CHINESE PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL LEAGUE

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of viewing experience, brand perception, and brand emotion on fans' sustained consumption intentions in the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA). Using the S-O-R framework and structural equation modeling, findings reveal that viewing experience positively influences brand perception ($\beta=0.65$) and brand emotion ($\beta=0.76$), with brand emotion showing a stronger mediating effect (indirect effect=1.049). Emotional engagement is critical for fostering fan loyalty, as positive experiences enhance brand awareness, strengthen emotional ties, and drive repeat viewing and promotional behaviors. Recommendations include modernizing facilities, enriching in-game interactivity, offering personalized services, and leveraging AI and big data for improved ticketing and fan insights. Strengthening branding through storytelling, cross-industry collaboration, and social media engagement can further enhance emotional resonance. This study provides actionable insights for CBA and similar leagues to boost fan engagement and market position through innovation and emotional connection.

Keywords: Match-Viewing Experience, Brand Emotion, Brand Perception, Fans' Intention to Sustain Consumption Behaviour, Chinese Professional Basketball League.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, China's economy has achieved significant and steady improvement, and along with this process, people's consumption ability has continued to increase, clearly signaling that China is steadily stepping into a new era of the third consumption upgrade.

The most distinctive feature of this era is that it has gradually shifted from focusing on the satisfaction of material needs to the deep pursuit of personalized, high-quality life experiences, with the core driving force being the flourishing rise of the "experience economy".

The arrival of the experience economy has fundamentally subverted the single mode of "production - sales" that has been inherited since the era of agricultural economy, and constructed a new business ecology that focuses on consumers and emphasizes interaction, participation and emotional experience.

In this context, consumer demand is increasingly diversified, personalized and fast-changing trend, they are no longer satisfied with the basic functional needs, but more in pursuit of emotional experience, cultural resonance and unique personalized expression behind the product.

This change puts forward higher requirements for enterprises, not only need to continue to innovate in products and services to meet the growing quality needs of consumers, but also need to work on branding, cultural communication, etc., to create a brand image with deep cultural heritage and strong emotional resonance, in order to win the recognition and loyalty of consumers.

As a kind of representative experiential commodities, sports events have won the enthusiastic pursuit of consumers by virtue of their unparalleled spectacle, strong emotional contagion and high degree of interactivity.

In the fast-developing sports market, the basketball industry, with its profound historical background and broad mass base, has taken the lead in enjoying the incremental dividends brought by market expansion, and has successfully built an event economic ecosystem with rich content and increasingly perfect structure.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on match-viewing experience in the field of sports events mainly comes from the experience economy and experience marketing. In foreign research, Pine (1998) believes that sports events are a "special" product provided by consumers. In the process of consumption, its essence is to enjoy the actual experience, and its value is mainly reflected in the unique feelings formed by the spectators themselves¹.

According to Schmitt's (1999) research, the experience of watching a game is not generated by oneself, but is induced passively after receiving external stimuli. match-viewing experience are subjected to external stimuli in the process of watching the game and produce a subjective psychological experience²Horbel (2016) believes that the match-viewing experience is a value perceived by consumers watching sports during the sports competition, which includes factors such as inner pleasure, overall atmosphere, and communicative interaction³.

In this study, the roles of CBA audience and consumers have great agreement. CBA audience has become the role of consumers before and after the game. Along with the rapid development of sports and entertainment, Keller⁴points out that brand perception significantly influences consumer behaviour, and therefore it is a variable for assessing the effectiveness of sports sponsorship in the consumer's perspective. Consumers' brand perception is determined by consumers' memories about branded things.

Consumers can acquire and perceive specific attributes of a product or service, from experiencing the event to understanding the brand of a CBA event, and subsequently can form beliefs or emotions that are consistent with the particular cognitive structure of the brand, word-of-mouth or the psychology of personal experience may be interfered with by the memory

factor as the basis of brand recognition. Macdonald and Sharp ⁵ point out that brand awareness is the primary stage in the form of brand nodes and brand associations that consumers build in their memory. Brand perception increases the likelihood that consumers will consider the brand and becomes an important factor in consumer decision making.

In addition, scholar Moisescu ⁶ emphasised that even if consumers do not form any brand associations in their memory, then brand perceptions influence consumers' decision-making judgement to purchase a brand.

Brand perception is an important measurement variable in sports consumption research. Regarding brand emotion, foreign academics have not yet formed a unified definition. Some scholars tend to start from the psychological cognitive dimension of consumers and distinguish brand emotion from emotions, moods and other psychological states for in-depth discussion.

By systematically combing the existing literature, brand emotion is defined as the emotional tendency and reaction held by consumers to a specific brand. In the context of sports events, brand emotion covers the deep emotional connection of spectators to the event itself, sponsor brands and athletes' personal brands.

Western research on sports consumption behaviour began at the beginning of the 20th century, with the development of the sports industry and the continuous improvement of scientific research methods, the academic research results of sports consumption behaviour have gradually increased, scholars in sociology, economics, psychology and other disciplines on the basis of a wide range of sports consumption behaviour related research, the current focus of sports consumption behaviour research for the team identity and sports consumption motivation research.

3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: Match-viewing experience positively influences Fans' Intention to Sustain Consumption Behaviour

H2: Match-viewing experience positively influences on Brand Perception

H3: Brand Perception positively influences Intention to Fans' Intention to Sustain Consumption Behaviour

H4: Match-viewing experience positively influences Brand Emotion

H5: Brand Emotion positively affects Intention to Fans' Intention to Sustain Consumption Behaviour

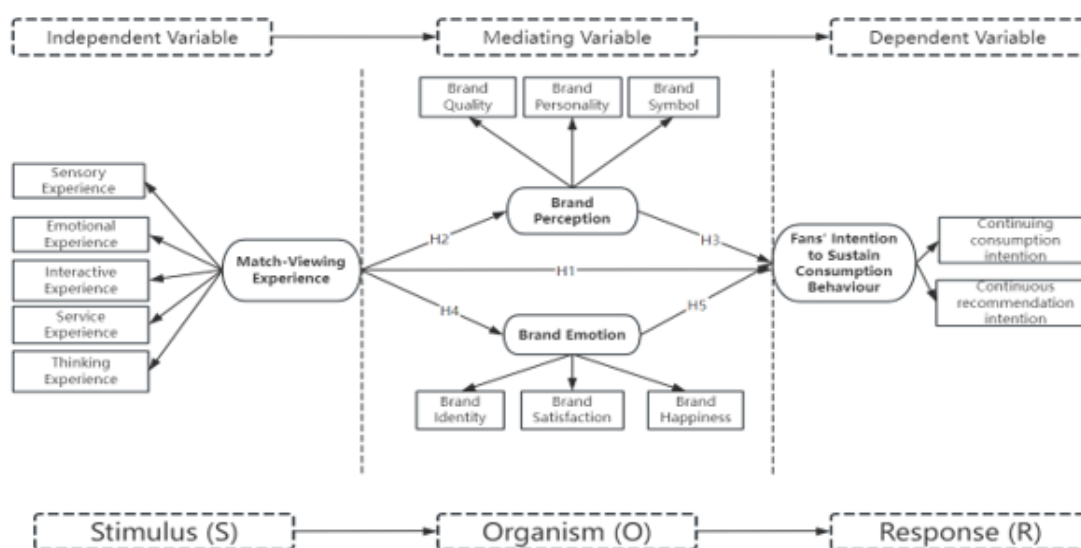


Figure 1: Variable structure diagram

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

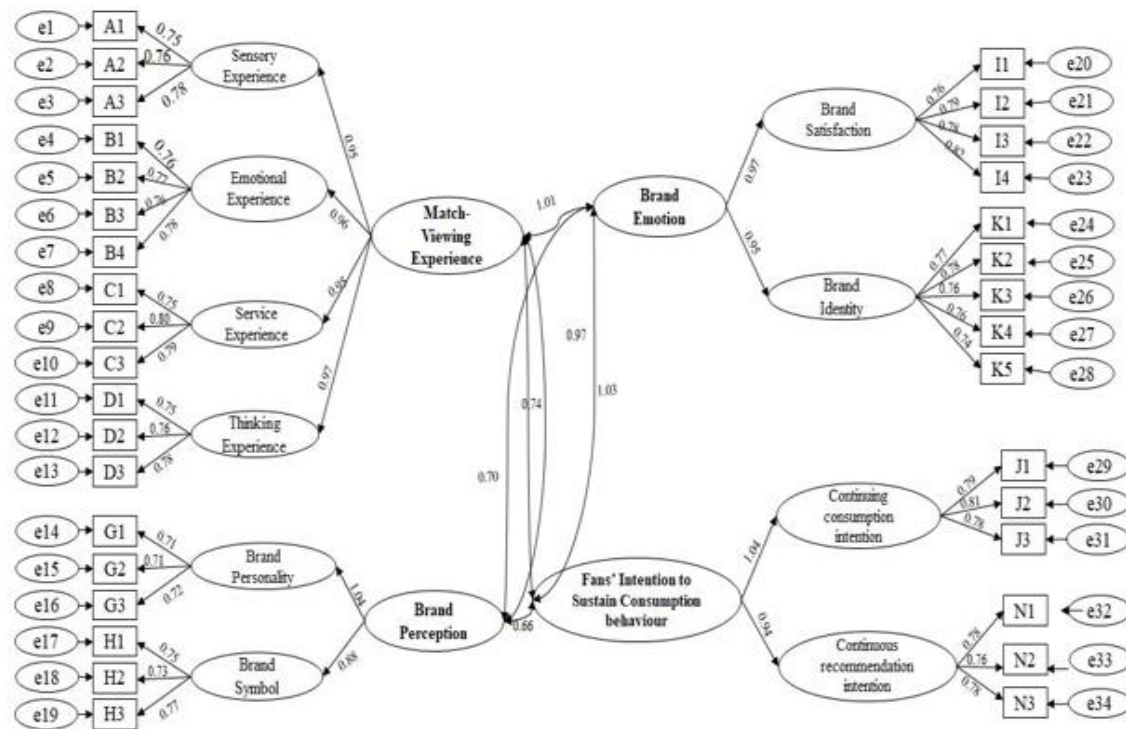
This study adopts a combination of economics, management and statistics, using the paradigm of structural equation modelling analysis to test the hypotheses through econometric and statistical analyses, specifically the use of descriptive statistical analyses is aimed at exploratory research before testing the analyses to provide an intuitive reference of data for the hypotheses to be established; analysis of variance (ANNOVA) is used to clarify the aggregation of questions on the questionnaire; correlation analysis and factor analysis are used to explore the factor underlying relationships between them; structural equations were employed to test the established models and underlying theoretical hypotheses.

Measurement in this study is based on the results of the questionnaire, i.e., based on the four variables obtained based on quantitative research, the measurement and type dimensions of the variable scales are used as the theoretical basis of this study and the basis of the development of the scales; the scales are redefined by the scholars and experts based on the opinions and the reliability and validity of the scales are tested through the questionnaire survey.

5. STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING

The questionnaire was distributed in the region, and the members of each local CBA tournament watching activity group were the main selected research objects, and the questionnaire star was the main form of research, which was distributed through the use of links, QR codes and other channels, and the questionnaire was divided into 5 parts. The first part is the basic information of the respondents, the second part is the measurement scale of the viewing experience, the third part is the measurement scale of the brand cognition, the fourth part is the measurement scale of the brand emotion, and the fifth part is the measurement scale of the intention of continuous consumption behaviour.

This research mainly uses online questionnaire survey, adopting centralised distribution method, a total of 400 questionnaires were retrieved, screened by answering time, and the effective sample size of 333 was determined based on the average length of this sample.



CBA tournament brand continuous consumption behaviour intention mechanism model analysis results

In Figure , the mechanism model of CBA event brand continuous consumption behaviour intention is 1.845, which is in the range of 1.0-5.0; RMSEA is less than 0.08, RMR is less than 0.05, NFI, TLI, CFI and AGFI are all greater than 0.9, and the fitting indexes are all in the range of the requirements of the judging criteria, which indicates that the CBA event brand continuous consumption behaviour intention The fitting results of the mechanism are acceptable, have good convergent validity, and can be analysed by structural equation modelling.

6. MEDIATED EFFECTS TEST

Based on the correlation analysis mentioned above, a two-mediation model is established, in which match-viewing experience is the independent variable, brand cognition and brand emotion are the mediator variables respectively, and intention to continue consumption behaviour is the dependent variable. As shown by the test results in the figure, the correlation coefficient between viewing experience and brand cognition is 1.01, and it is significant at the level of 0.001, and the correlation coefficient between brand cognition and the intention of

continuous consumption behaviour is -0.09, and it is significant at the level of 0.01, and it can be concluded through the calculation of the correlation coefficient, that the magnitude of the indirect effect played by the brand cognition as a mediator variable is $1.01 \times (-0.09) = -0.091$, so it can be reasoned that brand cognition plays a partially mediating role in the match-viewing experience and the intention of continuous consumption behaviour. At the same time, as shown by the test results in the figure, the correlation coefficient between match-viewing experience and brand emotion is 0.98 and is significant at the 0.001 level, and the correlation coefficient between brand emotion and intention to continue consumption behaviour is 1.07 and is significant at the 0.001 level, and it can be concluded through the correlation coefficient calculations that the size of the indirect effect played by brand emotion as a mediator variable is $0.98 \times 1.07 = 1.049$, so it can be reasoned that brand emotion plays a partially mediating role in the match-viewing experience and the intention to continue consumption behaviour.

7. CONCLUSION

This chapter analyzes and validates a structural equation model linking match-viewing experience, brand perception, and brand emotion to fans' sustained consumption intentions. Data analysis confirmed a good overall model fit. The results validate the relationships between these factors and ongoing consumption behavior in the CBA.

7.1 Match-viewing experience positively influences Fans' Intention to Sustain Consumption Behaviour

Through the establishment of the above model as well as the validation, it can be concluded that the coefficient of spectator viewing experience and fan consumption behaviour intention is positive, then the test result is significant. The corresponding hypothesis is H1. It can be seen that fan consumption behaviour intention is influenced by the spectator's experience of watching the game, which is consistent with the view of previous literature research. Cheng Haiqing (2007) pointed out that the experience experience is inner satisfaction in the consumption process. Luo Lei pointed out that the diversified service contact process brings diversified inner feelings to the audience, which in turn affects the audience's intention to consume tournament products and consumption behaviours. The impact on the application of some theoretical support of the previous article is also more significant.

7.2 Match-viewing experience positively influences on Brand Perception

Through the establishment and validation of the above model, it can be concluded that the coefficient of the spectator viewing experience and brand perception is positive, and the correlation coefficient between the spectator viewing experience and brand perception is 1.01, which is a significant test result, and the corresponding hypothesis is H2. The corresponding hypothesis is H2, which shows that there is a link between spectator experience and brand perception, and the spectator experience is influenced by brand perception, which is consistent with the views of previous researchers in the literature review. Keller pointed out in the literature that the brand perception of consumers is determined by the consumer's memory of the brand.

7.3 Brand perception positively influences ongoing consumer behavioural intentions

Match-viewing experience not only indirectly enhances consumers' continued consumption intention through brand perception, but also has a direct impact on consumption intention. Multi-dimensional viewing experiences (e.g. sensory experience, emotional resonance, service quality and mindset engagement) synergise with brand perception to promote repeat consumption and word-of-mouth recommendation.

7.4 Viewing Experience Positively Influences Brand Emotion

Through the establishment and verification of the above model, it can be concluded that the coefficient between the spectator viewing experience and brand emotion is positive, then the test result is significant. The corresponding hypothesis is H4. It can be seen that the spectator experience is associated with and influenced by brand emotion, which is consistent with the previous viewpoints in the literature review. The definition of brand emotion by Xie Yi et al. (2014) emphasises its importance as a subjective psychological feeling of consumers towards the brand, pointing out that brand emotion can bring added value to the brand and profoundly affect consumers' overall evaluation of the brand.

7.5 Viewing Experience Positively Influences Brand Emotion

Literature suggests that brand emotion is an important bridge from brand perception to behavioural intention. Brand emotion consists of two dimensions: brand satisfaction and brand identity, and strengthens consumers' loyalty and willingness to recommend a brand through emotional resonance. Brand cognition provides consumers with a rational basis, while brand emotion strengthens their behavioural decisions through emotional drive. The two work together to drive the formation of consumer behavioural intentions.

8. DISCUSSION

Taking the audience of sports events as the interviewed object, this part constructs a theoretical model about the relationship between viewing experience, brand cognition, brand emotion and sustained consumption behaviour based on the Cognitive-Affective-Behavioral Model (CAB paradigm), drawing on the CAB paradigm. Based on the relevant literature, five core hypotheses are proposed with the aim of exploring the interactions between these variables.

9. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

9.1 Enhancement of the spectator experience

Optimise the environment of the venue: introduce dynamic light shows and special sound effects at key points of the game to stimulate the audience's emotions and increase memory points. Provide an immersive visual experience for spectators, for example by setting up a 360-degree LED screen in the stadium to present data, replays and animations in real time in conjunction with the game's dynamics. Technical support such as AR/VR technology can also be used to enable fans who are not present to experience the excitement of the game.

9.2 Strengthening branding

Higher brand recognition can effectively promote the conversion of viewers into loyal users. In the brand marketing of CBA games, the brand personality of "passion" and "unity" is highlighted, and the unity and depth of the brand image is strengthened through the production of brand story promotional films. Using the endorsement effect of star players, embedding brand symbols into their personal images, such as designing personalised co-branded products (sneakers, commemorative apparel, etc.).

9.3 Promoting sustained consumption behaviour

Data analysis shows that the intention factor loading of viewers recommending others to watch CBA events is as high as 0.819, suggesting that the promotion potential of the event can be further enhanced by enhancing viewer satisfaction. Introducing a referral reward mechanism, such as offering points redemption, souvenirs or ticket price discounts to fans who refer new viewers through online community activities.

9.4 Diversified brand cooperation

It is possible to launch co-branded limited-edition products in conjunction with well-known beverage and sports brands, and set up exclusive booths in the event venues to further strengthen the event brand image. regularly organised online and offline activities to build an active fan ecosystem.

9.5 Personalised data recommendation

Data analysis shows that big data and artificial intelligence play a significant role in user behaviour prediction. AI technology is used to push event updates, ticket purchase reminders and customised souvenir recommendations for spectators; smart navigation services are introduced in venues to enhance convenience.

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