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SPORTS MARKETING: RESEARCH ON NBA MARKETING STRATEGY IN CHINESE MARKET

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Master in Management

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October, 2020



**BUSINESS
SCHOOL**

Department of Marketing, Strategy and Operations

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Abstract

This study explores the NBA's marketing strategies in China through the influence of 4Ps on purchase intention. Using a sample of 288 valid questionnaires collected in China, multiple linear regression analyses were employed to test the hypotheses.

Research shows that product quality and public relations have a positive relationship with the purchase intention. NBA's product strategy and promotion strategy have a direct impact on the purchase intention. But the price strategy and the place strategy have no influence on the purchase intention.

Keywords: Sports marketing, marketing mix, marketing strategy, NBA in China

JEL Classification: M31; M37

Resumo

Este estudo explora as estratégias de marketing da NBA na China por meio da influência dos 4Ps na intenção de compra. Usando uma amostra de 288 questionários válidos coletados na China, análises de regressão linear múltipla foram empregadas para testar as hipóteses.

A pesquisa mostra que a qualidade do produto e as relações públicas têm uma relação positiva com a intenção de compra. A estratégia de produto e a estratégia de promoção da NBA têm um impacto direto na intenção de compra. Mas a estratégia de preço e a estratégia de local não influenciam a intenção de compra.

Palavras-chave: marketing esportivo, mix de marketing, estratégia de marketing, NBA na China

Classificação JEL: M31; M37

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and purpose

Sports are playing an important role in today's society, and the distance between sports and people's life is getting closer. Some companies are beginning to realize the huge business opportunities behind sports and use sports events to launch marketing campaigns to attract consumers to increase sales and profits (Pan, 2018). The concept of sports marketing first appeared in Advertising Age magazine in 1978. At present, sports marketing has not formed a scientific and systematic discipline system in the theoretical field, so there is no specific authoritative definition of sports marketing. (Yang et al., 2012). However, more and more companies and brands have realized the importance of sports marketing, and the NBA is one of them.

The NBA stands for the National Basketball Association. Founded in 1946, the American domestic league is now one of the most highly marketed sports leagues in the world. It has 30 teams and many big names, with hundreds of millions of fans across the globe and all ages. All this can be attributed to the NBA business model based on modern marketing concept. Former NBA commissioner David Stern once said, "NBA professional basketball is not only a sport, but also a sporting commodity. We have a responsibility and obligation to create its own brand equity and market it to basketball fans around the world" (Zhang, 2009). As a result, the NBA's marketing strategy has had remarkable results around the world, especially in China, where it has been a huge success. The number of NBA fans in China has reached 500 million. Such successful marketing is inseparable from the various marketing strategies adopted by the NBA in China. China's economic development is so fast that China has a lot of capital to invest in the Chinese basketball market. Therefore, the Chinese market has great potential and is very attractive to the NBA. China has become the NBA's largest market. However, the NBA is losing this important market due to Daryl Morey's comments.

Based on the above, this study seeks to develop a conceptual framework between 4P theory and purchase intention. More specifically, the purpose of this study is based on

4P theory to assess the NBA marketing strategies in China impact on purchase intention and explore its influence on China's basketball market.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The literature review of this thesis mainly includes the following four aspects: sports marketing, NBA marketing strategy, marketing mix and purchase intention.

2.1. Sports marketing

2.1.1. Concept and Definition

It is generally believed that the concept of sports marketing first appeared in the American magazine *Advertising Age* in 1978 (Pan, 2018). However, there are few clear definitions of sports marketing. Sports marketing is in accordance with market rules, to meet the needs of the enterprise, integrate the advantage resources, with the help of naming, sponsorship and other means, through the sports activities sponsored by setting up enterprise image, promote their own brands, to create consumer demand, create a good external development environment of the marketing goals of a new independent marketing tool (Zhang and Liang, 2006). Sports marketing is a special marketing tool that aims to promote products and brands through the channels of sports activities (Hu, 2012). Sports marketing is a kind of strategy, which relies on thousands of sports activities, combines products with sports, and integrates sports culture with brand culture to form a unique enterprise culture. It not only includes the sports industry marketing which sells sports as a commodity, but also includes the marketing carried out by enterprises through sports. The most basic function of sports marketing is to re-integrate the resources of the enterprise, and all the operation of the enterprise completely serves sports marketing. Integrate sports culture embodied in sports activities into enterprise products to realize the integration of sports culture, brand culture and enterprise culture. Thus, it can arouse the resonance between consumers and enterprises, form long-term special preference in the minds of consumers, and become a competitive advantage of enterprises (Zhang and Liang, 2006).

At present, sports marketing has not formed a scientific and systematic discipline system in the theoretical field, so it has not given an authoritative definition of sports marketing. In China, there are many forms of definition and operation methods. In the actual operation, the enterprise also creates a lot of Chinese-style sports marketing to satisfy the Chinese market based on the successful cases of foreign countries and the specific national conditions of China, among which there are also many successful experiences (Yang et al., 2012). The definition of strategic sports marketing process is to develop and maintain a strategic and coordinated sports market management process, and coordinate the relationship between organizational goals, resources and changing market opportunities (Kotler, 2013). After several years of summary, sports marketing is widely recognized by the definition of both broad and narrow. In the narrow sense, sports marketing refers to the whole process of product production, market pricing, marketing channels, promotion and other design and operation of a certain type of sports or sports enterprises. Its purpose is to meet consumers' desires and needs while achieving the company's goals. In the broad sense, sports marketing applies the marketing process and principles to sports products and some non-sports products that benefit from sports marketing communication. By analyzing the practical activities of sports industry, it is found that the proportion of sports marketing activities in the broad sense is significantly higher than that in the narrow sense. In other words, sports programs or sports enterprises will inevitably use sports activities and events for marketing activities (Yang et al., 2012).

Sports marketing is the specific application of marketing principles and processes in the marketing of sports products and non-sports products. The sports industry is experiencing tremendous growth and sports marketing plays an important role in this dynamic industry. Many people mistakenly believe that sports marketing is a form of promotion, or that sports agents say, "show me the money." The study and practice of sports marketing is complex, yet interesting because of the unique nature of the sports industry (Matthew and Mark, 2015).

Sports marketing generally includes selling sports itself as a product and carrying out marketing activities of other products with sports activities as the carrier (Yu and Wu, 2019).

2.1.2. The model of sports marketing

Marketing of sports media

Sports media marketing model mainly through the following ways:

- Sponsor media or buy media advertising slots. By sponsoring live television or broadcasting sports events, or buying advertising slots in these media, companies can gain good exposure and collateral benefits.
- Sponsor sports programs by name.
- Media and journalists who sponsor coverage of sporting events (Zhang and Liang, 2006).

Marketing of sports events

Naming right is a major means of sports sponsorship. After becoming a title sponsor, any mention of the event must be made using the full name, including the name specified by the sponsor, and must not be omitted.

- The name of the sports field. Sponsors can be directly signed a contract with sports venues and named the area.
- Sponsors of sporting events. Event sponsors, such as main sponsor, co-sponsor, only designated sponsor, etc.
- The right of use the games emblem and mascots. Major events such as the Olympic Games and the football World Cup have mascots and emblems.
- The right of public relations activities. Public relations rights refer to the rights obtained by sponsors to hold various activities that directly touch the audience at the sports site.
- Exclusive on-site sales rights. The exclusive right of spot sale refers to the right obtained by the sponsor to exclusively sell its products at the sports venue. It is a special right granted by the event organizer to the sponsor (Zhang and Liang, 2006).

Marketing of sports stars

- Equipment supply sponsors. Sponsors can provide athletes with free sportswear, shoes, hats, socks, etc. to accompany them on and off the field and in the media.

- Public relations and advertising activity. Sponsors may invite sports teams or stars to shoot advertisements. They can also participate in fan meetings and charity events.
- Product naming sponsorship event. Sponsors can name their products after famous clubs and stars.
- Sports star endorsements. By the well-known sports athletes as sponsors of enterprises, product spokesmen (Zhang and Liang, 2006).

The four domains that comprise the sports marketing environment are identified as theme-based strategies, product-based strategies, alignment-based strategies, and sports-based strategies.

Theme-Based Strategies

Theme-based strategies can be defined as the use of traditional marketing strategies that incorporate a sports theme into the marketing program for nonsports products. The marketer might opt to use a sports-related copy platform or advertise products in sports-related media to effectively reach customers (Fullerton and Russell, 2008).

Product-Based Strategies

Efforts to market sports products using traditional marketing strategies when the marketer has no official relationship with the sports entity being used in its marketing efforts are classified as product-based strategies. These strategies may or may not involve a sports theme beyond the product offering (Fullerton and Russell, 2008).

Alignment-Based Strategies

Many marketers of nonsports products officially align themselves with sports properties via one or more of the four forms of sponsorship (traditional sponsorships, venue naming rights, endorsements, and licensing agreements). The nature of this sponsorship-based relationship reflects a higher level of integration of sports within the sports marketing environment. A common strategy involves a sponsor who uses an association with sports to market nonsports products; this combination emphasizes initiatives that are classified as alignment-based strategies. In an effort to sell more fast food, McDonald's advertising and packaging feature its official partnership with the Olympic Games. Volvo uses its sponsorship of a high profile sailing event to

strengthen the public's perception of the carmaker as one that exudes prestige while concurrently emphasizing safety and technology (Fullerton and Russell, 2008).

Sports-Based Strategies

The final domain, sports-based strategies, is characterized by official sponsors of a sports property who are selling other sports products. Because of the role of sports in both the product and integration dimensions, this domain may reflect the greatest reliance on sports-oriented initiatives. It may also represent the least common type of strategy employed by today's sports marketers. Within this domain, the most common strategy features the marketer of sporting goods or sports apparel in a traditional sponsorship of a sports team or a sporting event. Strategies in this domain can be very effective when appealing to customers who are excited by the sports that are used in the implementation of the specific strategic initiatives (Fullerton, 2007). For example, Adidas sells sporting goods and it uses advertising that complements its traditional sponsorship of FIFA and the World Cup of Soccer. This consistency produces the synergy that is characteristic of the sports-based domain (Fullerton and Russell, 2008).

2.1.3. Sports Marketing in China

Status of Sports Marketing in China

China's real sense of sports marketing began in the mid-1980s. In 1984, China sent its first large delegation to the Los Angeles Olympics. In this Olympic Games, China's local brands Jianlibao and Tianjin seagull made the first sponsorship for the Chinese delegation without a clear purpose, but took the first step of China's national sports brand marketing. The 2008 Beijing Olympics pushed China's sports marketing to a new climax. More and more brands and business activities are cooperating with the Beijing Olympics (Hu, 2012). In recent years, the development of sports marketing in China has been accelerating. More and more enterprises are known through sports.

Problems of Sports Marketing in China

- Insufficient understanding of sports marketing

Most Chinese companies are still at the level of simple sponsorship when they carry out sports marketing, and provide funds to set up billboards on the spot. There are also some companies that attract consumers through price cuts or through hype. Although it can increase sales in the short term, it ignores the connotation of sports marketing and has no meaning for the company's own long-term development and brand establishment (Liang, 2015).

- Inaccurate sports marketing positioning

The biggest weakness of Chinese companies is that they generally attach importance to short-term interests and despise long-term interests. The behavior of interest leads to a lack of reasonable planning for the sponsored project. From 1996 Sponsor of the Atlanta Olympic Games to the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, the Chinese delegation The large-scale sharp decline fully illustrates the disadvantages of the marketing positioning of most sponsors. Companies that fail to meet expected returns often find it difficult to retreat (Hu, 2012).

- Inadequate sports marketing management

The marketing management system of Chinese enterprises is very scarce. After most companies have formulated their marketing strategies, it is difficult to match their marketing behaviors with marketing goals, including their unsatisfactory performance in the choice of image spokespersons, marketing channel expansion, and marketing follow-up services (Hu, 2012).

- Shortage of sports marketing talent

According to the statistics of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, on the eve of the Beijing Olympic Games, there was a gap of nearly 10,000 sports management and marketing personnel in China, and there were only more than 1,000 senior sports management marketers with rich business experience in China. Such a stretched sports marketing team is already one of the practical problems that need to be changed for China, which is developing the national sports industry in full swing (Hu, 2012).

- Blurred corporate image

Many companies blindly perform star benefits, but ignore the relevance of sports events to their brands. For example, the well-known China Unicom CDMA has heavily invested in Yao Ming to endorse it. However, it is difficult for us to see the connection between China Unicom and Yao Ming, and we cannot establish a good image of the enterprise at all (Cheng, 2012).

2.1.4. Summary

Although sports marketing started late in marketing, its development speed is very fast. The model and method of sports marketing should be dynamic. Past research can help the present, but it also needs to innovate as the market changes. Obviously, sports marketing in China is not mature enough, but it also means that the sports market in China has great potential. China's economy is developing rapidly, and the large amount of capital in China is conducive to the development of sports marketing. If a large amount of capital in the Chinese market can be well combined with sports marketing, it is a mutually beneficial situation for both brands, companies, and sports marketing.

China is a big sports country, so the demand for sports goods is also great. From the perspective of the global sporting goods market, China's sporting goods production market has an absolute production advantage. However, compared with the comprehensive strength of sports marketing in other countries, there is still a big gap between China and other developed countries in sports industry. Whether from the quality of their own sports products, or the brand effect of enterprises, there are obvious defects. Therefore, Chinese sporting goods companies should integrate brand culture with sports culture in a variety of ways to form a unique corporate culture, and make good use of sports events to promote their brand strategy.

2.2. NBA marketing strategy

2.2.1. NBA Global Marketing Strategy

The NBA is one of the most popular sports leagues in the world. Founded in New York, USA in 1946, it has a history of 70 years. Of the 30 teams, 29 are based in the U.S. and one is based in Toronto, Canada. It is one of the four major professional sports leagues in the United States and the highest level basketball game in the world. NBA is one of the most influential brands in the world. Popularity has hit record highs. Surveys show that in 2003 alone in China, 75% of adolescent male groups aged 15 to 24 were NBA fans; NBA was broadcast in more than 200 countries during the 09-10 season. In the annual All-Star game broadcast, there are 212 countries, translated into 42 languages worldwide. Today the NBA has 11 offices around the world. International players in the NBA also account for 15% of all players. Its games have been translated into 43 languages and broadcast in more than 215 countries on more than 200 radio stations worldwide. There are more than 1 billion NBA fans worldwide. In 2003, overseas retail sales accounted for one-tenth of the total (Fan, 2016).

NBA has achieved brand win-win through the cooperation with more than 100 famous companies around the world, including Nike, McDonald's, Mengniu and Tsingtao. A series of activities launched through cooperation and complementarity with various brands. It not only helps both parties to share expenses and reduce costs, but also gains sufficient market share in their respective fields, bringing huge economic benefits. NBA cable television was founded in 1984 by NBA commissioner David Stern. The NBA now generates more than \$3 billion a year in broadcast revenue alone, more than 30 percent of its total. Entertainment marketing is the NBA's consistent marketing strategy. The idea is to rely on the entertaining nature of basketball to attract attention and money. NBA's entertainment marketing competition is no longer the skills of players, but the entertainment and participation of the audience, the annual NBA all-star game fully reflects the participation of the people. The reason why NBA can become the best league in the world is also inseparable from its perfect internal competition system and regulatory system (Fan, 2016).

- **High Quality Television Relay**

NBA copyrights include wireless TV broadcast rights, satellite television broadcast rights, cable television broadcast rights, etc. The authorization of the television

copyright is divided into regional copyright, national copyright, intercontinental copyright and copyright around the world. The commercial sports reported in 2014, NBA has negotiated a new contract on television relay, the contract income of broadcast a year is expected to more than \$2 billion (Sun, 2015).

- **Strong Marketing Partners**

The NBA has numerous strong marketing partners. The NBA partners in China market have up to six in 2005, thus it can be seen that NBA is a good place for publicity. Broad audience let NBA become the darling of the advertising, the NBA's sports shoes and sportswear business partners include Adidas, Reebok, Nike, drink business partners include Coca Cola, and McDonald's is NBA's food business partner. In 2005-06 season, NBA already has 17 business partners around the world. NBA gets great economic benefits sponsored by advertising and intangible publicity. On the other hand, NBA also provides a good medium for sponsors to advertise themselves (Sun, 2015).

- **The Basketball Peripheral Products**

The basketball game is the NBA's main product, but each year more than 1000 regular season games and dozens of playoff games are just one part of the NBA's products. The all-star game, NBA draft, overseas competition, basketball carnival, basketball without borders, the NBA training camp, and basketball caravan are the direct extension products of NBA. In addition, NBA also invites basketball stars to shoot film and television products, including the game video tapes, videos, music and other multimedia products (Sun, 2015).

2.2.2. NBA Marketing Strategy in China

In the early 1990s, NBA was reaching a saturation point in the American market (Jackson and Andrews, 1999). Most European cities showed an overwhelming preference for soccer but not ready for building a NBA-standard arena (Madkour, 2012). Comparatively, Asia as an increasingly important base of global sports industry has showed great interest in embracing the NBA events (Cho et al., 2012).

Consequently, in the process of NBA globalization efforts, the Asian market has been placed with a priority, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region (Huang, 2013).

In 1986, the NBA, for the first time, sent video-recorded games of the NBA Finals to CCTV for free broadcasting (Huang, 2008) as CCTV is the government controlled and most influential television network in China. In 1989, the NBA, led by David Stern, offered event content and a broadcast signal to CCTV without asking for a payment in an effort to promote collaborations between the NBA and the Chinese media. By taking engaging with CCTV, the NBA rapidly gained nationwide influence in China (Huang, 2013). In 1992, the Dream Team, led by Michael Jordan, further heightened the popularity of the NBA in China (Sun, 2010). To facilitate NBA operations in China, the first NBA overseas headquarter was founded in Hong Kong in 1992.

First, with respect to the promotion of NBA games, the NBA's strong network of television and digital media outlets has cultivated a developed sports show market in China. It has also benefited from the rise of Chinese basketball players, particularly Yao Ming, in the NBA, which has occurred in tandem with the growth in China's sports spectating market. Consequently, the NBA began holding NBA China Games in 2004 to further nurture demand in its Chinese consumer base. Second, the NBA's global expansion has activated a sponsorship market, which draws sponsors from a combination of world-class Chinese corporations and multinationals, thus incorporating China's sporting resources into the on-going global economic flows. Third, the NBA has prompted the development of Chinese grassroots basketball, with a variety of promotional campaigns being held by sponsors (Huang, 2013).

- **Advertising strategy**

NBA's media strategy in China is mainly based on TV and Internet, supplemented by newspapers and magazines to convey the desired objectives to its target audience. Through the CCTV sports channel as the core of the TV media strategy for pre-competition publicity and live broadcast of the game. NBA has its own official website, NBA Chinese website. At the same time, it cooperates with major Chinese websites such as Sina, ifeng.com and Tencent to broadcast NBA games live and provide its consumers with a large amount of NBA information. In terms of

newspapers and periodicals, NBA has Basketball pioneer, Titan sports, Slam and other newspapers and magazines providing NBA information to their target groups.

- **Public relations strategy**

"NBA caravan", "Borderless basketball", "NBA care" and other activities are the NBA's global basketball development and community welfare activities. The NBA and FIBA donate basketballs, baskets, nets and other items to basketball associations and communities around the country. The NBA also commemorates major events during regular games. Such as the Boston bombings in 2013, the earthquake in Haiti, the typhoon disaster in the Philippines and so on. Such behavior is in line with Chinese values and thus wins favor among Chinese consumers.

- **Sponsorship**

After the NBA entered China, in order to attract more Chinese fans and expand the NBA's Chinese market, the NBA has sponsored and cooperated with well-known domestic brands such as Haier, Harbin Beer, Dongfeng Motor, and Mengniu. As a result, the NBA has received some financial support, and at the same time it has increased the visibility of the NBA in the Chinese market, especially in the non-fans market. Chinese companies have also increased their visibility by sponsoring the NBA and expanded their own markets.

- **Localization strategy**

After Yao Ming entered the NBA, the NBA discovered the strong appeal of Chinese players to the Chinese market and successively introduced Chinese players to the NBA. From Liu Wei, who trained to the Kings, to Yi Jianlian, who was selected by the Bucks in the first round of the sixth round. The NBA attracts more Chinese fans by attracting Chinese players to play in the NBA, expanding the NBA's influence and brand awareness in China. The most successful move by the NBA to expand its influence in China is to host the NBA China Games. Being able to watch an NBA game on the spot is the wish of most Chinese fans, and the NBA has captured the minds of Chinese fans. In 2004, the Houston Rockets where Yao Ming was located and the Sacramento Kings where Liu Wei was at the time were dispatched to host the first NBA China games in Shanghai and Beijing, China. Since then, the NBA has held several Chinese games in China successively, with remarkable publicity results

(Zhang, 2015). At the Chinese New Year, the NBA also organizes the players to speak Chinese to send blessings to Chinese audiences.

The NBA's marketing in China in the past 30 years is undoubtedly successful. Because of Yao Ming's huge influence, the Houston Rockets are the most popular team among Chinese fans. But it all turned around because of Rockets general manager Daryl Morey. October 5, 2019, the Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey published a support Hong Kong protesters slogan on Twitter. The remarks immediately aroused the dissatisfaction of a large number of Chinese fans. However, this did not attract the attention of the NBA and the Rockets. First of all, Tencent Sports, which had just renewed its \$ 1.5 billion digital media copyright for a period of five years, suspended the Rockets game broadcast and coverage. Subsequently, nearly 20 Chinese companies announced their suspension of cooperation with the NBA. All Chinese brands cancel their sponsorship of the NBA. But NBA Presidents Adam Silver and Morey both refused to apologize on the grounds of freedom of speech. This has greatly hurt the feelings of Chinese fans. So the NBA has been completely stopped in China so far. Currently, the NBA has lost \$ 200 million because of Morey's remarks.

2.2.3. Summary

In the aspect of the team

There are 30 teams in the NBA, and every NBA fan wants to go to a live NBA game. In order to expand the international influence and develop the international market, every year some teams go to Europe, Asia and other big cities to play. In China, in particular, several Chinese fans' favorite teams play each year in Beijing and Shanghai. These teams have inspired local fans and made it difficult to get a ticket for the NBA China game. Many fans fly to Beijing and Shanghai from faraway places just to be able to watch an NBA game live. Admittedly, this marketing strategy has been very successful.

In the aspect of players

The NBA's marketing strategy for its players is extreme. Every year, elite basketball players from all over the world enter the NBA. This makes the NBA not only the NBA of the United States, but also the NBA of the world. This is an important part of NBA internationalization. International players are the key to NBA's overseas market. For example, Yao Ming joined the Houston rockets in 2002, which made more and more Chinese know NBA, and also made many basketball fans like Yao Ming and NBA. Since then, the influence of NBA in China has been pushed to the peak. In recent years, with Yi Jianlian, Sun Yue and Zhou Qi joining the NBA, China has become the NBA's largest market. NBA superstars have also made significant contributions to NBA marketing. The NBA brings together the best basketball players in the world, such as Kobe Bryant, LeBron James, and Dwyane Wade. These superstars can create huge financial benefits by selling their jerseys, sneakers and other sports equipment. The benefits of the celebrity effect are well reflected in NBA marketing strategies.

In the aspect of sponsors

NBA marketing strategy is inseparable from sponsors. The NBA has partnerships with many of the world's best-known companies and can receive huge sponsorship fees each year. Advertisements for these companies will appear on player jerseys, basketball court floors, billboards next to courts, player chairs, and team equipment, such as Nike, Adidas, Gatorade, Coca-Cola and Toyota have maintained long-term cooperative relationships with the NBA. More and more Chinese brands have become sponsors of the NBA, such as Li Ning, Anta, Tencent, Tsingtao and Harbin Beer. However, due to Morey's comments, there is no Chinese brand recently with the NBA related.

In the aspect of public

Rewarding society Modern marketing strategies can increase the stickiness of businesses and consumers. As the world's largest basketball league, the NBA also attaches great importance to the public relations image of the league. For example, the NBA often conducts various public welfare activities: NBA "stay on campus" activities designed for the poor boys in the United States; vigorously support activities

such as popularizing culture, preventing child abuse, combating alcohol abuse, and helping hungry people; setting up counselling centers and child care clinics in South Africa Each year, a "Reading Month" event is held in March, and each team must send a player to meet the fans, share their reading experience, and recommend each other's favorite literature (Zheng et al., 2012). Not only that, whenever a natural disaster occurs, the NBA will donate to the disaster area.

In the aspect of government

China is a socialist country with a socialist market economy and public ownership of the means of production. The mainstream media and sports resources are state-owned. Therefore, cooperation with the Chinese government is extremely important. Since the NBA entered the Chinese market, the Chinese government and the NBA have maintained a mutually beneficial and cooperative relationship. The Chinese government supports the promotion of the NBA in China, and the NBA also continues to cooperate with Chinese companies. But Morey's remarks about politics not only hurt Chinese fans, but also angered the Chinese government. This incident makes the relationship between the NBA and the Chinese government delicate. All Chinese media and companies cancelled their cooperation with the NBA, and the NBA suffered huge losses.

2.3. Marketing Mix

2.3.1 What is Marketing Mix?

Borden (1965) claims to be the first to have used the term "marketing mix" and that it was suggested to him by Culliton's (1948) description of a business executive as "mixer of ingredients". Borden's original marketing mix had a set of 12 elements namely: product planning; pricing; branding; channels of distribution; personal selling; advertising; promotions; packaging; display; servicing; physical handling; and fact finding and analysis. Frey (1961) suggests that marketing variables should be divided into two parts: the offering (product, packaging, brand, price and service) and the methods and tools (distribution channels, personal selling, advertising, sales promotion and publicity). McCarthy (1964) refined Borden's (1965) idea further and defined the marketing mix as a combination of all of the factors at a marketing

manger's command to satisfy the target market. He regrouped Borden's 12 elements to four elements or 4Ps, namely product, price, promotion and place at a marketing manger's command to satisfy the target market.

Especially in 1980s onward, number of researchers proposes new 'P' into the marketing mix. Judd (1987) proposes a fifth P (people). Booms and Bitner (1980) add 3 Ps (participants, physical evidence and process) to the original 4 Ps to apply the marketing mix concept to service. Kotler (1986) adds political power and public opinion formation to the Ps concept. Vignalis and Davis (1994) suggests the addition of S (service) to the marketing mix. Goldsmith (1999) suggests that there should be 8 Ps (product, price, place, promotion, participants, physical evidence, process and personalisation) (Goi, 2009). Kinnear and Bernheerd (2002) define it as the use and specification of the 4Ps (price, product, place and promotion) to describe the strategic position of a product in the marketplace. Macmillan and Baron (2004) define the marketing mix as "those activities that show similarities to the overall process of marketing, requiring the combination of individual elements". Also, Czinkota (2000) gives the following definition of the marketing mix: "A complex of tangible and intangible elements to distinguish it in the market place".

Marketing Mix based on four elements;

Product

Goods or services that are launched in the market to be consumed or to be used by customers to satisfy their needs and demands are called products (Armstrong & Kotler, 2006). However, there is another opinion about the definition of product as shared by Hirankitti, Mechinda and Manjing (2009) that the concept of service as product is based on two aspects. The first is prolific service that demonstrates core benefits and the second is secondary level services that are tangible and augmented. The latter is related to delivery of key services. Product is primary aspect of marketing mix and every product as argued by Ferrell (2005), differentiates itself from another product on the basis of its characteristics. Its characteristics as mentioned by Borden (1984) include quality that is major concern of every customer, design: that attracts customers, features: that enable customers to buy new product and brand name that increases loyalty.

Place

Place strategy involves what the channels distributions have been used to deliver the products to the customers on time, and the way of store, chose the sellers. In general, there is no organization has all strategy of place and market, therefore each organization focuses on strategic elements which is have rather than others. The concept of place is related to the availability of a product to a customer (Armstrong & Kotler, 2006). However, the concept of place is not merely limited to Armstrong's and Kotler's definition as Hirankitti et al. (2009) notes that the concept of place includes distribution channels and location as well. The distribution facilities and location are major factors to meet demand and supply of a product and to overcome variables that hinder supply of a product to a targeted market (Copley, 2004).

Price

Price is the amount of money that intended customers willing to pay to get a product or a kind of service. Price is the most flexibility element on Marketing Mix, it can change or be changed rapidly in short term more than others Ps (Al Badi, 2015). Price is the value that is charged against the service or product provided to a customer. Price impacts significantly on customer's psychology and helps to decide to repurchase a product (Kotler et al., 2008). The decision of pricing a product depends on many factors that include buying power of customer, cost of product and cost of product delivery (Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000).

Promotion

The core aspect of promotion is to reduce the communication gap that occurs between an organisation and the customer (Lovelock & Wright, 2002). Strategic initiatives focus on exploiting media advertising opportunities to communicate with customers to attract and persuade customers to buy company product (Munusamy & Hoo, 2008). It is the communication process between the customer and the product or service, it is what the promotions try to tell target customer about the product, and it's the way to make customer aware about the product. Promotion includes all the weapons in the marketing armory - advertising, selling, sales promotions, Public Relations, etc. While the other three P's have lost much of their meanings in today's markets, Promotion has become the most important P to focus on (Dibb et al., 1994).

2.3.2. 4ps applied to sports

Shank (2001) believes that there are 5Ps in the sports marketing. The four traditional ones (price, place, product, promotion) but also he believes that because sport enjoys so much media attention. Public Relation should be treated as a separate P. Normally PR is considered to be part of the promotion. His argument seems to be based on the importance of the media. PR is a special part of promotions in sport, has an obvious effect on product image and position. According to Shank: a much greater extent than promotional efforts such as advertising, which the marketer controls, public relations efforts rely on the goodwill of the media.

Product

Sports products are divided into tangible and intangible products. Tangible products include sports events, tickets, sportswear, sports shoes, sports facilities, etc. Intangible products include service, convey certain spirit, expression of emotion and convenience. In an industry-oriented services such as sport, the element must be expanded to encompass product management staff and processes. Various processes involving sports staff - distribution of tickets, start in the sport, maintenance facilities, etc. are essential features of the product. A basic product that is essentially sound, can be compromised by staff conduct or the conduct of activities. One of the main activities of sports marketing is product and service development strategies (Bocse et al, 2012).

In relation to sport, two important concepts have implications for sport marketing. The first is the core product, defined as the actual game, over which the sport marketer has no control. The sport marketer must be very careful not to overpromise in terms of how good the game will be or how well specific athletes may perform. The second concept is the importance of product extensions to the overall marketing effort. It is here that the marketer can ensure that acceptable levels of quality are achieved. It is easy to think of the word product as referring to a physical, manufactured item.

However, the term product can also refer to services, people, places, ideas and the benefits that a sport organisation offers consumers. Many sport organisations offer a service, such as a form of physical activity, entertainment or an experience. There is often no physical product to take away, but a sport organisation might offer some intangible benefits such as a lifestyle, a social group or even a belief system. The product can also include design, packaging and merchandise.

Packaging the sport product includes presenting the product in the best possible manner to encourage selected target audiences to purchase it. Because consumers differ, marketers must present the product in different ways. Packaging the core product of sport (the game or event itself), however, involves communicating the expectations of the product and providing information before the point of purchase. For example, sport marketers might package the game or event as family entertainment and offer family ticket plans. Or marketers might package sport as a good place to make business contacts and offer business ticket plans. A sport organization that wants to be seen as one that cares about the community might offer group discount ticket plans for social service and charitable organizations (Mihai, 2013).

Price

Despite its inclusion as one of the core Ps of the traditional marketing mix, research on sport pricing has been noticeably underrepresented in the sport marketing literature. For sport marketers, “big data” and other advanced data collection and data analysis tools have resulted in more creative and sophisticated price setting strategies. Dynamic ticket pricing (DTP) in spectator sport is the most common example of this, though these demand-based strategies can occur throughout the sport product/service landscape (Drayer & Rascher 2013).

In sports there is no direct determination between income and price level of participation in sport. Also, with finding new ways of financing, there is a noticeable tendency to diminish the emphasis placed on sports organizations from revenue sport

participants. Few organizations today rely solely on revenue from members or spectators. Ticket prices for sporting events, fees for personal sites, cable television fees paid for sports channels, determining the costs of participation in recreational sports are all examples of the role of price in sports marketing (Bocse et al, 2012).

Price is the most obvious and flexible factor, especially due to sales, discounts, rebates and coupons. Pricing strategies have a significant impact on the success of the overall sports marketing program. The challenge for the sport marketer is to determine the right price for the consumer. The price of a product can be manipulated many ways. Promotional pricing can be used: 2-for-1 tickets to the game or 2-for-1 memberships to the fitness club, special sale prices on sports clothing for during a holiday period, special sale prices on sporting goods equipment for seasonal sports, or price breaks as the quantity purchased increases. Sport pricing is complex and critical to the success of the marketing plan. However, price is one aspect of the marketing plan that may be readily changed. Sport organizations often alter their prices to attract different consumers. For example, students may pay a different price for event tickets than the general public pays. Sport organizations may also change prices according to the market environment (e.g., lowering prices during a recession or economic downturn) or the team's performance (e.g., increasing prices as a team's performance dramatically improves) (Mihai, 2013).

Place

The sport marketer will analyze the types of distribution methods available and select those that will deliver the product to the right place. The right place means: where the consumer is, shops, or will travel. Place refers to the location of the sport product (stadium, arena), the point of origin for distributing the product (ticket sales at the stadium, sales by a toll-free telephone number, or internet), the geographic location of the target markets (global, national, regional, state, communities, cities), and other channels that are important to consider regarding whether target audiences may access the product (such as time, day, season, or month in which a product is

offered, as well as the media distribution outlets consumers may use to receive the product experience). Factors related to the physical location of the sport can have a favourable or unfavourable effect on the marketing plan. To ensure a favourable effect, the sport facility must be easily accessible (highway systems, parking, walkways, ramps); have an attractive physical appearance (well maintained and painted); have a pleasant, convenient, and functional environment (quick and easy access to concessions, clean restrooms, smoke-free and odour-free environment); and have safe and pleasant surroundings (adequate public safety and security personnel, attractive neighbourhood) (Mihai, 2013).

Promotion

In sport marketing the word promotion covers a range of interrelated activities. All of these activities are designed to attract attention, stimulate the interest and awareness of consumers, and of course, encourage them to purchase a sport product. Promotion involves all forms of communication with consumers, not just advertising. Promotion is best seen as the way that sport marketers communicate with consumers to inform, persuade and remind them about a product. The aim of promotion is to encourage consumers to develop a favourable opinion about a sport product which is aligned to a predetermined positioning strategy, and then to stimulate consumers to try the sport product. The elements of sport promotions (also known as the sport promotional mix) include advertising, sponsorship, public relations, licensing, personal contact, incentives, and atmospherics. Advertising involves paid, non-personal communications about a sport product or service through the print, broadcast, or electronic media that are designed to attract public attention and subsequent purchase. In sport marketing, advertising may include broadcast commercials, direct mailings, facility signage, and manufactured media. Sponsorship refers to the relationship between a corporation and a sport organization as a tool to develop brand image and customer loyalty as a result of the association. Public relations is the collection of activities, communications, and media

coverage that convey who the sport organization is and what they have to offer, all in the effort to enhance their image and prestige. Licensing is one of the fastest growing components of sport promotions, and involves the creation of a strategic alliance in which the manufacturer of a sport product gives permission to a second party to manufacture that product in return for specific royalties or payments (Mihai, 2013).

2.3.3. 4ps applied to NBA

Product

NBA products span all categories. Tangible products include NBA games, television broadcasts, teams, players, players' jerseys, team hats, sneakers, even drinks and figurines. NBA industries is also involved in the development of the game, providing fans of the home team with vertigo boards that interfere with free throws, special shirts on the home team, inflators and other derivatives. In order to build the NBA culture, there are also many commemorative products, such as the player album, the player card and so on. There are also NBA derivatives in gaming. The NBA2k series of games developed by EA has become a global fan favorite. It is also a hot game nowadays. Even many players like to play it. Intangible products include the NBA brand image, NBA live service, after-sales service and entertainment experience.

Price

The NBA also has a very flexible pricing strategy for its products. Fans get a big discount on season tickets, family tickets or tickets for special events. Jerseys and souvenirs are sold at a discount at the end of each season. The NBA also sets different prices for jerseys and shoes, depending on a player's popularity. Some commemorative and co-branded sneakers cost several times more than the regular version.

Place

The NBA's global strategy allows people to experience NBA products in most countries. One of the most important methods is television broadcasting. NBA games

have been broadcast in more than 200 countries. NBA's main income is obtained from these broadcast rights granted in. In addition, the NBA established its own official website in 1998. NBA.com is the first and only international website for fans of the American Professional Sports League. NBA.com has nine international websites, including: Brazil, Canada, China, Spain, France, Germany, Japan, Chinese Taipei, and the United Kingdom (He et al., 2013). Fans can buy tickets or other products on the website. The NBA also has specialty stores in major cities around the world. Fans can buy NBA products without visiting the United States. The NBA not only provides products and services directly to consumers. Through cooperation with sponsors, fans can also obtain NBA products from third-party companies.

Promotion

Advertising is one of the many ways to enhance communication with customers. NBA ads are everywhere, whether on TV, the Internet, on the road or on social media. Sponsorship is also a way of promotion. The NBA's partnerships with Coca-Cola, McDonald's and Gatorade have given it exposure in food and drinks. Sponsorship of the NBA by Nike, Adidas, Reebok and Under armour has made products more popular. Public relations is the most important means of promotion at present. The NBA is one of the best pr organizations in the world (Yang & Wang, 2006). The NBA often organizes some public welfare activities, such as organizing stars to promote AIDS prevention, donating to education, etc., so that fans love their idol teams more, and also fully communicate and interact with fans. Every month, the league will arrange players to enter the community to help the community build and volunteer. Arrange the players to enter the school, give basketball lectures, and increase basketball cultural exchanges. A reading month is held every year, and players enter the school to accompany students to read, exchange reading experiences, recommend books they like, and exchange knowledge with fans. Not long ago, basketball superstar Kobe Bryant died in a plane crash. All NBA teams stopped attacking to mourn Kobe 24 seconds after the start of the game, because Kobe's jersey number is 24.

2.3.4. 4ps applied to NBA in China

Product

In 1987, NBA President Stern brought the NBA game to China. Subsequently, the NBA cooperated with CCTV, Sina Sports, Tencent Sports and other websites to provide fans with live games online. The NBA China Games is a specific product of the NBA aimed at Chinese consumers. It aims to attract NBA customers in China, expand NBA's influence in China, gain more business cooperation, and steadily expand the Chinese market. The first NBA China game was in 2004 (Zhang, 2015). Since then, NBA China Games has been held for many years. Chinese players in the NBA are also attracted Chinese market. Relying on Chinese players such as Yao Ming, Wang Zhizhi, Sun Yue, Yi Jianlian and Zhou Qi, the NBA has gained a large number of Chinese fans and Chinese capital. Although some players cannot adapt to the NBA, their commercial value is far greater than basketball skills. Every Chinese New Year, the NBA will always release a series of Chinese New Year-themed jerseys and sneakers.

Price

The NBA's pricing for the Chinese market is basically the same as local pricing. The difference between the price of NBA products in China and the price in the United States is only reflected in the exchange rate. It can be seen that although China is far from the NBA headquarters, the NBA has not increased the price of products in the Chinese market. This is the benefit of NBA distribution—place.

Place

NBA has several stores in China and most of these products are produced in Chinese factories. At present, there are about five in Beijing, and Shanghai, Chengdu, Nanjing and other places have NBA franchise stores, but the total number is relatively small, which is still far from the number expected by the NBA. In 2009, the NBA partnered with Li Ning to announce the sale of NBA souvenirs in hundreds of Li Ning stores in China. Li Ning, as a pioneer of domestic sports brands, cooperates with Li Ning in

order to use Li Ning's status and reputation in sports brand circles to promote NBA commemorative products, thereby further opening up the Chinese market. At the same time, in addition to physical stores, the NBA has adopted online sales measures to open NBA flagship stores on Tmall. The overall evaluation of the store is also good, and the monthly sales of hot products can reach more than 4,000 pieces. Because online sales are more convenient, online flagship stores have higher sales than physical stores (Wang, 2017). Media is an important channel for NBA marketing. The cooperation between NBA and CCTV, Tencent and Sina Sports has greatly increased the exposure of NBA in China. The Chinese official website of the NBA is also an important channel. The website is visited hundreds of millions of times a year. The NBA's Weibo account has 43.16 million followers. Each team and star also has their own Sina Weibo account. For example, the Los Angeles Lakers have 7.58 million fans. It is shocking that Kobe Bryant's account has 10.15 million fans.

Promotion

Because many Chinese companies have become NBA sponsors and partners, such as Tsingtao, Li Ning, Anta and Lenovo. NBA advertising is spread across every city in China. Whenever Chinese festivals come, there will be discounts on the products of these brands that cooperate with the NBA. It can be said that sponsorship is the most powerful promotion method of the NBA in the Chinese market. But public relations are increasingly important for the NBA. The NBA's public relations for the "Morey Incident" were obviously not adequately handled, resulting in the loss of a large number of Chinese fans and all Chinese sponsors. In order to recover the Chinese market, the NBA is constantly making efforts. The emergence of a new type of coronavirus in China recently has caused serious harm to the Chinese people. So the NBA organized players from all teams to pray for the Chinese people and encourage them.

2.3.5. Summary

Marketing mix is integral to marketing strategy. The application of marketing mix in sports becomes more and more important with the development of sports industry.

The 4ps theory is obvious to the success of the NBA in the Chinese market. But it also brought some problems to the NBA's marketing in China. Every element in 4ps cannot be ignored, even if there is a problem with one element, it causes an adverse chain reaction. Only four elements combined with each other in order to make the right product at the normal time in the right place.

2.4. Purchase intention

As the premise and foundation of consumers' purchase behavior, purchase intention is a topic widely concerned by the academic circle, and many scholars have defined it from different perspectives. Purchasing intention refers to the possibility of measuring consumers' purchase behavior (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). Consumers' attitude towards a certain product or brand, coupled with the effect of external factors, constituted consumers' purchase intention. Purchasing intention can be regarded as the subjective tendency of consumers to choose a particular product and proved to be an important indicator to predict consumption behaviour (Mullet and Karson, 1985). Dodds(1985) and other researchers defined purchase intention as the subjective probability or possibility of consumers to buy a particular product. With the deepening of research, some scholars believe that buying intention is consumers' purchase plan for specific goods.

Some Chinese scholars have also made their own definitions of purchasing intention from the perspective of their respective research fields. Purchasing intention refers to the possibility of consumers buying this product (Han and Tian, 2005). However, Zhu Zhixian (1989) defined purchasing intention as a psychological consultant for consumers to buy goods suitable for their own needs from the perspective of psychology, which is the manifestation of consumer psychology and the prelude of purchasing behavior. In summary, intention is the subjective probability that an individual will engage in a particular behavior. By extension of the concept, purchase intention refers to the probability that consumers are willing to take a specific purchase behavior.

2.5. Theoretical model

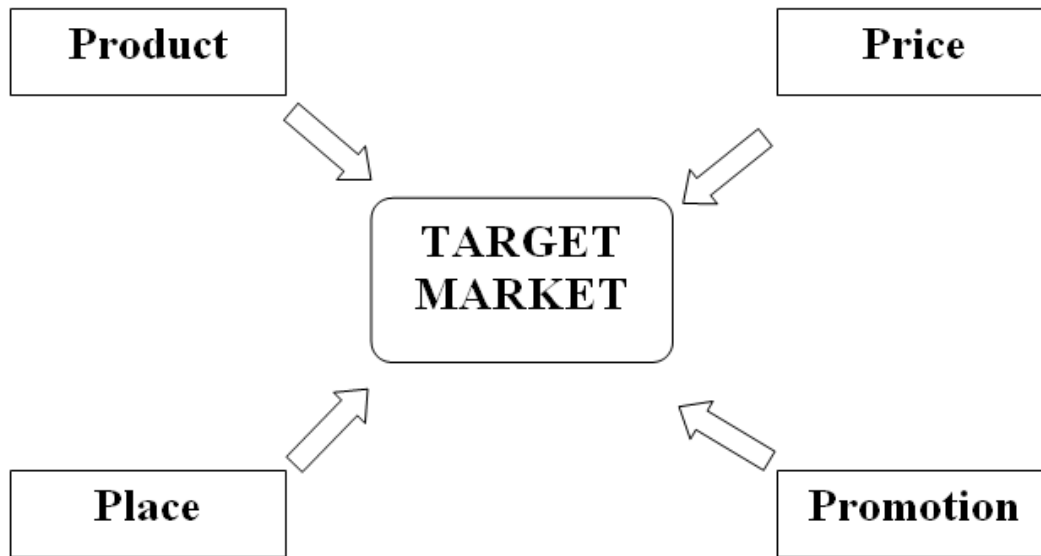


Figure 1 : The marketing mix

Source: adapted from Schwarz, E. C.; Hunter, J. D., *Advanced Theory and Practice in Sport Marketing*, Elsevier's Science & Technology Department, Oxford, 2008

In 1953, Neil Borden coined the term "marketing mix" in his inaugural address to the American Marketing Association. It means that market demand is more or less affected to some extent by the so-called "marketing variables" or "marketing elements". In order to seek certain market reaction, the company should combine these elements effectively, so as to meet the market demand and obtain the maximum profit. The theory, known as the 4P theory, was first proposed by Jerry McCarthy (1960). The model framework adopted in this study is derived from the 4P theory.

The following are the hypotheses proposed in this study:

H1: Product strategy has a positive relationship with purchase intention.

H2: Price strategy has a positive relationship with purchase intention.

H3: Place strategy has a positive relationship with purchase intention.

H4: Promotion strategy has a positive relationship with purchase intention.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1. Sampling and procedure

This study was conducted with Chinese customers who had bought NBA products or watched NBA games. The questionnaire was tested through pre-test before a formal online survey which was carried out between July to August 2020. Three hundred and ten (310) questionnaires were collected. After removing invalid questionnaires, 288 questionnaires were used for the analysis in this thesis.

3.2. Pre-Test

To better understand the viability of the measurements, it was crucial to undergo a pre-test. The pre-test went on from the 20th until the 25th of July 2020, registering a total of 30 responses. It included a section where the respondents could state if they found any misspelling or confusion and, overall, there were some misunderstandings pointed out from it. Some of the ambiguous words and concepts were revised in the final version of the questionnaire. Some English grammar, spelling mistakes and sentences have also been corrected.

3.3. Measures

The questionnaire consists of five parts: participant's background information, Product, Price, Place and Promotion.

Demographics: Variables include gender, age, permanent residence, education, employment, monthly income, whether know NBA, favourite basketball league, the degree of purchase intention and monthly expenditure on NBA product.

Product: The product was measured by a 7-item scale from a part of the study of Lee (2009), which consists of 2 items for quality (e.g., "The quality of NBA products is

good” and “NBA service is good”), 3 items for brand awareness (e.g., “There are many types of NBA products”), and the other 2 for design (e.g., “The product design of NBA is very attractive to me”). Participants are requested to use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “highly disagree” to 5 “highly agree”.

Price: The price was measured by a 5-item scale from a part of the study of Gaski and Etzel (1986), which consists of 3 items for price competitiveness (e.g., “NBA product price is competitive than others”), 1 items for discount(e.g., “Discount program is very useful for fans”). Participants are requested to use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “highly disagree” to 5 “highly agree”.

Place: The place was measured by a 4-item scale from a part of the study of Lee (2009), which consists of 3 items for purchase channels (e.g., “NBA products cover a wide range”), 1 items for delivery speed (e.g., “NBA products are shipped quickly”). Participants are requested to use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “highly disagree” to 5 “highly agree”.

Promotion: The promotion was measured by a 4-item scale from a part of the study of Lee (2009), which consists of 3 items for advertisement(e.g., “I like the NBA's advertising”), 1 items for public relations (e.g., “The public relations of the NBA are very good”). Participants are requested to use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “highly disagree” to 5 “highly agree”.

3.4. Statistical Analysis

All tests were conducted using IBM’s Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 26). The statistical analyses conducted included descriptive statistics and multiple linear regressions. By comparing the mean value and standard deviation, can be seen how people rate a particular factor and whether their opinions are similar. Finally, regression analysis was used to test the direct effects on the purchase intention.

Nine dimensions were created for regression analysis from 20 items and calculate them using the mean of a set of items. Previously this calculation , Cronbach's alpha was computed for all dimensions to understand if there is reliability in the set of items of each of them. According to the research of Lee (2008) and Yoo et al.,(2000), the 9 dimensions are subdivided as follows:

Quality:

The quality of NBA products is good.

NBA service is good.

Brand Awareness:

There are many types of NBA products.

NBA product features are obvious.

NBA is a well-known brand.

Design:

The product design of NBA is very attractive to me.

NBA products are well packaged.

Price competitiveness:

NBA product price is competitive than others.

NBA product price is commensurate with its quality

NBA product price is stable.

Discount:

Discount program is very useful for fans.

Purchase Channels:

NBA products cover a wide range.

I can get NBA products through many channels.

I can get NBA products in many locations.

Delivery Speed:

NBA products are shipped quickly.

Advertisement:

I like the NBA sales promotions.

I like the NBA's advertising.

The NBA's advertising can be seen everywhere.

Public relations:

The public relations of the NBA are very good.

The multiple linear regression model required by the present research is as follows:

$$\text{- Purchase Intention} = P0I + P1I * \text{Quality} + P2I * \text{Brand Awareness} + P3I * \text{Design} + P4I * \text{Price competitiveness} + P5I * \text{Discount} + P6I * \text{Purchase Channels} + P7I * \text{Delivery Speed} + P8I * \text{Advertisement} + P9I * \text{Public relations} + \epsilon$$

For the well usage of the Regression Models, 6 assumptions have to be verified:

- The Regression is linear in its coefficients and has a residual component.
- The residual expected value is zero.
- The independent variable is not correlated with the residual values.
- There is no correlation between the residual values.
- The variance of the residual values is constant.
- The residual values have a normal distribution.

Additionally, the R squared test should be completed.

3.4. Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

The following figure describes the conceptual model used in this survey.

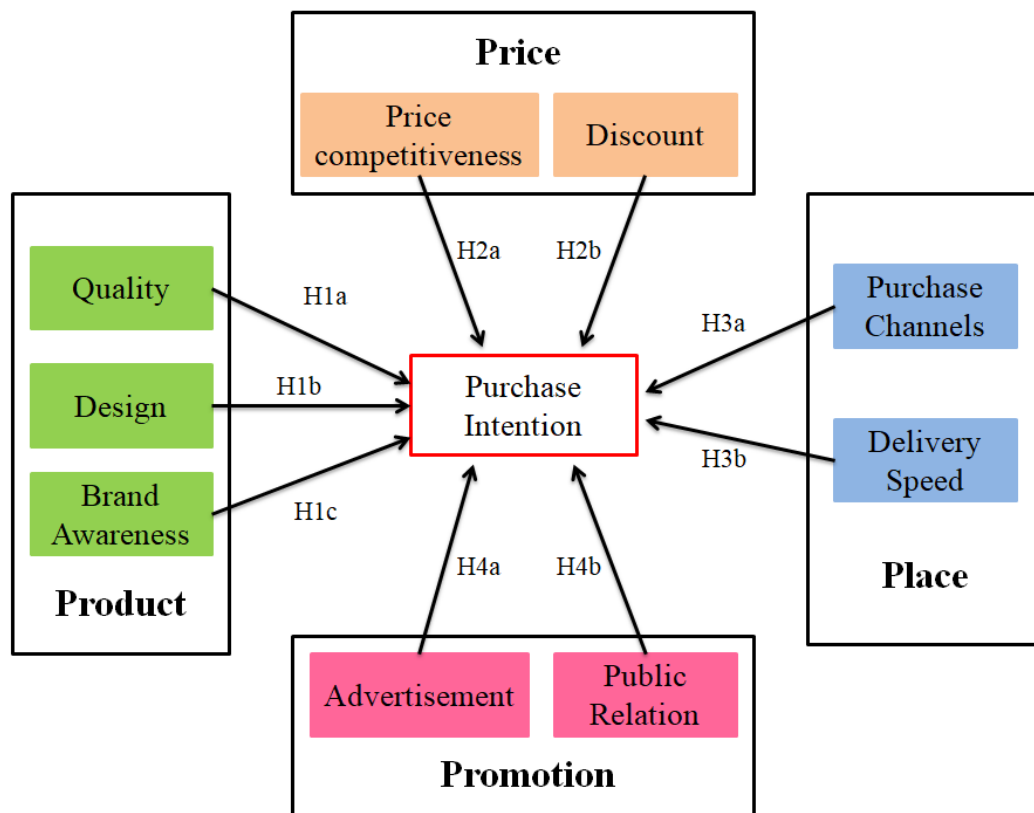


Figure 2 : 4Ps impact on Purchasing Intention Conceptual Model

The following model consists of five important pillars: Product (Brand awareness, Quality, Design), Price (Price competitiveness, Discount), Place (Purchase Channels, Delivery Speed), Promotion (Advertisement, Public relations) and Purchase intention. The model aims to analyse the impact of 4Ps on purchase intention. Hence, the main drawn hypotheses for this study are:

H1: Product strategy has a positive relationship with purchase intention

H1a: Product quality has a positive relationship with purchase intention

H1b: Product design has a positive relationship with purchase intention

H1c: Brand awareness has a positive relationship with purchase intention

H2: Price strategy has a positive relationship with purchase intention

H2a: Price competitiveness has a positive relationship with purchase intention

H2b: Discount has a positive relationship with purchase intention

H3: Place strategy has a positive relationship with purchase intention

H3a: Purchase channels have a positive relationship with purchase intention

H3b: Delivery speed has a positive relationship with purchase intention

H4: Promotion strategy has a positive relationship with purchase intention

H4a: Advertisement has a positive relationship with purchase intention

H4b: Public relation has a positive relationship with purchase intention

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis

4.1. Sample characterisation

Most of the data were from 30 different provinces in China. Most of the Chinese market is covered, but the largest sources are mainly in Inner Mongolia (35.42%), Beijing (15.28%), and Guangdong (7.99%) (Appendix).

4.2. Participants

As can be seen from the table 1, there were more males (70.1%) than females (29.9%). People with a young age structure of 25 to 34 accounted for 76.4% of the total. Most of the participants were employed (75.3%). The education level of the participants is generally high. The majority of them have an undergraduate degree or above (96.2%) and earn more than 3,000 Yuan a month (75.7%). For most of them (92%) the favourite basketball league is the NBA. Most people (77.1%) often or occasionally buy sports related products, but many people (70.8%) have expenses on NBA products no more than 1000 Yuan. Overall, the data shown that highly educated young men with middle and high income are the main customers of NBA in China.

Table 1 : Distribution of Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics

Measure	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	202	70.1
Female	86	29.9
Age		
18-24	50	17.4
25-34	220	76.4
35-44	12	4.2
45 or over	6	2.0
Education		
High School	11	3.8
Undergraduate	189	65.6
Master	80	27.8
PHD	8	2.8
Employment		
Employed	217	75.3
Unemployed	18	6.3
Studying	53	18.4
Monthly income (RMB)		
Less than 3500	70	24.3
3500-5000	51	17.7
5000-8000	70	24.3
More than 8000	97	33.7
Favorite basketball league		
NBA	265	92.0
CBA	14	4.9
Euroleague	7	2.4
CUBA	2	.7
Frequency of purchase sports related products		
Often purchase	70	24.3
Occasionally purchase	152	52.8
Hardly purchase	44	15.3
Never purchase	22	7.6
Monthly expenditure on NBA (RMB)		
Less than 1000	204	70.8
1000-5000	49	17.0
5000-10000	20	7.0

More than 10000	15	5.2
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As can be seen from the mean values (Table 2), the participants have higher ratings for “There are many types of NBA products” (M = 4.03, SD = 0.989), “NBA product features are obvious” (M = 4.03, SD = 0.966), “NBA is a well-known brand” (M = 4.28, SD = 0.938). “NBA products are well packaged” (M = 3.83, SD = 0.931) and “NBA service is good” (M = 3.56, SD = 0.924) have lower standard deviations, meaning that people opinion is similar.

Table 2 : Descriptives of Product items

	Mean	Std. Deviation
There are many types of NBA products.	4.03	.989
The quality of NBA products is good.	3.76	.943
The product design of NBA is very attractive to me.	3.62	1.036
NBA product features are obvious.	4.03	.966
NBA is a well-known brand.	4.28	.938
NBA products are well packaged.	3.83	.931
NBA service is good.	3.56	.924

For the price, as can be seen from the Table 3, the participants rated the “NBA product price is competitive than others” (M = 3.42, SD = 1.079) as having lower average score, but had high standard deviation. In contrast the participants have higher ratings for “Discount program is very useful for fans” (M = 4.28, SD = 0.959).

Table 3 : Descriptives of Price items

	Mean	Std. Deviation
NBA product price is competitive than others.	3.42	1.079
NBA product price is commensurate with its quality.	3.56	.950
NBA product price is stable.	3.55	.976
Discount program is very useful for fans.	4.28	.959
NBA product price is suitable for our purchasing power.	3.53	.998

For the place, as can be seen from the Table 4, “NBA products are shipped quickly” (M = 3.51, SD = 0.914) has lower mean. This means that shipping is not very fast.

Table 4 : Descriptives of Place items

	Mean	Std. Deviation
NBA products cover a wide range.	3.80	.995
I can get NBA products through many channels.	3.81	1.002
I can get NBA products in many locations.	3.67	1.066
NBA products are shipped quickly.	3.51	.914

For the promotion, as can be seen from the Table 5, the participants have lower ratings for “The public relations of the NBA are very good” (M = 3.34, SD = 1.187)

“The NBA's advertising can be seen everywhere” (M = 3.47, SD = 0.998). This shows that people are not satisfied with the NBA public relations. But “I like the NBA sales promotions” (M = 3.91, SD = 0.979) and “I like the NBA's advertising” (M = 3.92, SD = 1.07) have higher mean. This means that people like NBA’s advertising and promotions.

Table 5 : Descriptives of Promotion items

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I like the NBA sales promotions.	3.91	.979
I like the NBA's advertising.	3.92	1.070
The NBA's advertising can be seen everywhere.	3.47	.998
The public relations of the NBA are very good.	3.34	1.187

4.3. Reliability analysis

This study used the Cronbach alpha and correlation coefficients to test the reliability. The following table 6 shows that all the Cronbach’s alpha values and Corrected Item-Total Correlation indicate that each dimension is consistent and the questionnaire has high reliability.

Table 6 : Reliability measures

	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Product		
There are many types of NBA products.	.592	
The product design of NBA is very attractive to me.	.695	
NBA product features are obvious.	.738	.895
NBA is a well-known brand.	.620	
NBA products are well packaged.	.800	
NBA service is good.	.715	
Price		
NBA product price is competitive than others.	.639	
NBA product price is commensurate with its quality.	.747	
NBA product price is stable.	.620	.804
Discount program is very useful for fans.	.340	
NBA product price is suitable for our purchasing power.	.619	
Place		
NBA products cover a wide range.	.625	
I can get NBA products through many channels.	.769	.831
I can get NBA products in many locations.	.702	
NBA products are shipped quickly.	.551	
Promotion		
I like the NBA sales promotions.	.478	
I like the NBA's advertising.	.575	.755
The NBA's advertising can be seen everywhere.	.589	
The public relations of the NBA are very good.	.574	

4.4. Regression analysis

As can be seen from Table 7, product quality (B = 0.21), design (B = - 0.209), advertisement (B = - 0.284) and public relations (B = 0.118) have an impact on the purchase intention. Advertising is the most considerable coefficient, with Beta = -0.270. Quality and public relations have a positive impact on purchase intention. Both advertising and design have a negative impact on purchase intention. As for the R squared, the dependent variable's total variance is explained by the others in 11.3% (Table 8). The regression model can be updated to the below:

$$\text{- Purchase intention} = 3.166 + 0.77 * \text{Brand awareness} + 0.21 * \text{Quality} - 0.209 * \text{Design} - 0.103 * \text{Price competitiveness} - 0.037 * \text{Discount} - 0.03 * \text{Purchase Channels} - 0.03 * \text{Delivery Speed} - 0.284 * \text{Advertisement} + 0.118 * \text{Public relations}$$

Table 7 : Purchase Intention's Regression Model

Model		Coefficients ^a					Collinearity Statistics	
		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.166	.290		10.933	.000		
	Brand awareness	.077	.098	.073	.783	.434	.364	2.750
	Quality	.210	.095	.215	2.215	.028	.340	2.945
	Design	-.209	.097	-.221	-2.161	.032	.305	3.280
	Price competitiveness	-.103	.093	-.101	-1.106	.270	.381	2.624
	Discount	-.037	.058	-.042	-.635	.526	.719	1.390
	Purchase Channels	-.030	.074	-.031	-.400	.689	.523	1.913
	Delivery Speed	-.030	.079	-.033	-.382	.703	.428	2.335
	Advertisement	-.284	.099	-.270	-2.868	.004	.360	2.780
	Public relations	.118	.051	.168	2.338	.020	.618	1.617

a. Dependent Variable: Your degree of purchase intention for NBA products

Table 8 : R Squared Values

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.337 ^a	.113	.085	.800

a. Predictors: (Constant), Public relations, Discount, Purchase Channels, Quality, Delivery Speed, Brand awareness, Price competitiveness, Advertisement, Design

By observing Table 9, because $p < 0.05$ the explanatory variables are useful to explain purchase intention, the model is valid.

Table 9 : Assessing model's validity

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.757	9	2.529	3.946	.000 ^b
	Residual	178.118	278	.641		
	Total	200.875	287			

a. Dependent Variable: Your degree of purchase intention for NBA products

b. Predictors: (Constant), Public relations, Discount, Purchase Channels, Quality, Delivery Speed, Brand awareness, Price competitiveness, Advertisement, Design

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

This study investigates NBA marketing strategies in China through explore the relationship between product, price, place, promotion and purchase intention. Based on previous research, the product is the main aspect of the marketing mix, and each product is different from the others according to its characteristics (Ferrell, 2005). Its features include the quality that customers care most about and the design that attracts them (Borden, 1984). The present study applies the same logic to the interaction between NBA product and its customers. The NBA's core product is basketball game, which is played live or via live television and Internet broadcasts. To tap the Chinese market, the NBA offers the fullest possible base of its products to Chinese consumers (Zhang, 2015). Public relation is the most important means of promotion (Yang and Wang, 2006). The results obtained in this study then represent support for the previously mentioned studies.

First of all, the results report a significantly positive relationship between quality and purchase intention. As a sporting product, players improve the quality of sporting products for the whole sporting product (Zhang, 2015). The NBA's marketing of its basketball game. How to make people love basketball, love the NBA basketball, willing to pay to watch the game, the NBA has its unique method: Ensure product quality. Firstly, scientific and reasonable rules are the basic guarantee of a wonderful game. Secondly, the unique salary limit system, draft system, transfer system and luxury tax system. Finally, rely on the charm of the stars (Yang and Wang, 2006). As a professional basketball league, NBA's main products include the game itself and related peripheral products. The quality of matches is the basis for the long-term development of the league and also the key to affect other links of the league (Zheng et al., 2012). With the help of local Chinese players, NBA live games will be introduced to China, and other teams will be gradually introduced to China, so as to improve the popularity of non-popular teams in China and expand the NBA market in

China. A range of products, including NBA jerseys, basketball shoes and paid access to NBA games, are selling like hot cakes in China. These methods to improve the quality of their products are consistent with the conclusions of this study. The venue environment affects the number of live fans watching the game, and the number of live fans and their reactions are important components of the live broadcast. For both the number of fans present and the broadcast of matches, the playing environment is an important part in improving the quality of sports products. Good live broadcasting effect can attract more media partners and increase the selling price of live broadcasting rights (Zhang, 2015). This goes in line with the conclusion provided with this study, where Product quality has a positive effect on purchase intention ($p < 0.05$). So hypothesis 1a is supported.

Furthermore, due to the particularity of NBA products, the design of products will not affect the use value of products and their own attributes. Mihai (2013) believes the NBA's core product is the game, over which sports marketers have no control. Sports marketers have to be very careful not to over describe how good the game is going to be, or how well certain players are going to perform. If people are disappointed with the quality of the game or the performance of the players, excessive design and commitment will reduce purchase intention. The jersey design of every team in the NBA won't change much for many years. People only buy the jerseys of their favorite stars, instead of designing beautiful jerseys. NBA jerseys are not cheap, so there may be little interest in buying jerseys. Most Chinese fans buy NBA basketball shoes for practice rather than collection. Today's basketball shoes have more useless designs just for profit, people don't want to pay for it, and they just need the most basic design and function of basketball shoes. These reasons are consistent with the conclusions of this study. Product design has a negative impact on purchase intention ($p < 0.05$). So hypothesis 1b is not supported.

Buying power of customer, cost of product and cost of product delivery affect the decision of pricing a product (Parasuraman and Grewal, 2000). Fans with a strong sense of belonging have high loyalty and are not sensitive to price changes of sports products (Zhang, 2015). The NBA's pricing strategy in China is no different than it is

in other countries. The price of NBA products is higher relative to the purchasing power of Chinese consumers. NBA products are monopolized in China and have no competitors. Most of NBA's Chinese customers are loyal customers, so the price does not affect their purchase intention. According to the data, people rate price the lowest, which may also indicate that the NBA's pricing strategy has no impact on Chinese customers. The conclusion shows that there is no effect of NBA product price on purchase intention ($p > 0.05$). So hypothesis 2a and hypothesis 2b are not supported.

The NBA's global strategy allows people to experience NBA products in most countries. One of the most important methods is television broadcasting (He et al., 2013). The NBA has established offices abroad to expand its international influence. At the same time, the strategy of globalization is also closely related to broadcasting rights (Zheng et al., 2012). The NBA's cooperation with Chinese media is an important distribution channel for the NBA. Tencent is the only company in China with the right to broadcast NBA games. If Chinese customers don't pay to become Tencent members, they won't be able to watch NBA games, which is the only way Chinese customers can watch NBA games now. So Chinese customers have no choice, and the place strategy doesn't make much sense to them. This is consistent with the conclusion that there is no effect of place strategy on purchase intention ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis 3a and hypothesis 3b are not supported.

Moreover, NBA advertises a lot about the intense rivalry and suspense over the outcome of the game, as well as the players' desire for victory and love for the game (Zhang, 2015). Li (2001) believes advertising can create an image of a team, a facility or a product in the minds of sports consumers. Nike exploited labor and employed child labor by paying substandard and unreasonable wages. This negative image is in sharp contrast to the image of the same shoes and incredible stunts advertised by NBA players on the court. The NBA has signed a new Chinese advertising spokesman, but his image is repugnant to most of its customers. These reasons may be why advertising has a negative impact on purchase intention ($p < 0.05$). So hypothesis 4a is not supported.

Finally, Yang and Wang (2006) think the NBA is one of the most good at make public relation organizations in the world. Zhang (2015) thinks that the NBA's social responsibility is appreciated and conveys much more than sports spirit. The conclusion shows that public relation has positive influence on purchase intention ($p < 0.05$). So hypothesis 4b is supported.

With these past deductions and conclusions, the main takeaways can be outlined:

- NBA product quality and public relations have a positive effect on purchase intention.
- NBA product design and advertising have a negative impact on purchase intention.
- NBA's price strategy and place strategy have no effect on the purchase intention.

The NBA's marketing strategy is of great significance to the development of China's basketball market. With a century's development experiences, NBA is worthy of Chinese learning and reference. Chinese competitive sports also become professional and market-oriented in the tide of history, but Chinese system and competition mechanism is in the transition period with a clear system of loopholes and questions because of Chinese economic and political system. It is difficult to obtain the economic benefits brought by the development and utilization of sports resources before the problems are solved (Sun, 2015). Based on the analysis of NBA's marketing strategies in China, this study puts forward the following suggestions for Chinese basketball market:

- Improve the existing competition system and enhance the competition quality.
- Increase the brand awareness.
- Cultivate professional operation management talents.
- Focus on public relations and brand promotion.

5.1. Research Limitations

The limitation of this study is that the sample is from China, and the results may not be applicable to other countries. In addition, NBA has suffered serious losses in China this year due to Morey's inappropriate comments. It also makes a lot of people have too strong subjective consciousness, causing their attitude to change greatly, thus affecting the objectivity of the results.

5.2. Further Research

Future research should focus on the NBA's marketing strategies in other areas, for instance brand equity and customer loyalty, not just the 4Ps. As for the NBA's marketing strategy in China, future research should explore the price strategy and place strategy and the enlightenment to Chinese professional basketball. Sports marketing in China has just begun to develop and has great potential in the future.

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Annexes A

Descriptive statistics of sample data (source distribution)

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Inner Mongolia	102	35.42
	Beijing	44	15.28
	Guangdong	23	7.99
	Sichuan	18	6.25
	Chongqing	13	4.51
	Liaoning	8	2.78
	Shandong	8	2.78
	Guizhou	7	2.43
	Hunan	7	2.43
	Shanghai	7	2.43
	Hebei	5	1.74
	Zhejiang	5	1.74
	Henan	4	1.39
	Jiangsu	4	1.39
	Shanxi	4	1.39
	Fujian	3	1.04
	Heilongjiang	3	1.04
	Hubei	3	1.04
	Shannxi	3	1.04
	Tianjin	3	1.04
	Tibet	3	1.04
	Xinjiang	3	1.04
	Anhui	1	.35
	Qinghai	1	.35
	Guangxi	1	.35
	Yunnan	1	.35
	Gansu	1	.35
	Jilin	1	.35
	Hainan	1	.35
	Jiangxi	1	.35
	Total	288	100.0

Annexes B

Questionnaire

Part one-Factual Questions

1. Gender: Female; Male
2. Age Group (Years) : 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45 or over
3. Province:
4. Education background: High School; Undergraduate; Master; PHD
5. Employment: Employed; Unemployed; Studying
6. Monthly income (RMB):
Less than 3500; 3500-5000; 5000-8000; More than 8000
7. Do you know the NBA or seen the NBA games live: YES; NO
8. Favorite basketball league: NBA; CBA; Euroleague ; CUBA; NCAA
9. Your degree of purchase intention for NBA products :
Very low; Low; No opinion; High; Very high
10. Monthly expenditure on NBA (RMB):
Less than 1000; 1000-5000; 5000-10000; More than 10000

Part two

Marketing mix strategy perception	Sources
Product	[Lee, 2009]
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are many types of NBA products. 2. The quality of NBA products is good. 3. The product design of NBA is very attractive to me. 4. NBA product features are obvious. 5. NBA is a well-known brand. 6. NBA products are well packaged. 7. NBA service is good. 	
Price	[Gaski and Etzel, 1986]
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NBA product price is competitive than others. 2. NBA product price is commensurate with its quality 3. NBA product price is stable. 4. Discount program is very useful for fans. 5. NBA product price is suitable for our purchasing power. 	
Place	[Lee, 2009]
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NBA products cover a wide range. 2. I can get NBA products through many channels. 3. I can get NBA products in many locations. 4. NBA products are shipped quickly. 	
Promotion	[Lee, 2009]
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I like the NBA sales promotions. 2. I like the NBA's advertising. 3. The NBA's advertising can be seen everywhere. 4. The public relations of the NBA are very good. 	