

The Relationship between The Lakers Team and Fans' Attitude

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Abstract. NBA the National Basketball Association founded in 1946 is one of the most historical leagues and also the most popular one in the recent world. Every day there are millions of people old and young, tall and short, watching the NBA games. The Los Angeles Lakers, founded in 1974, the most famous team in the NBA have run into some trouble, they are losing fans due to their unbeatable performance. The purpose of this study was to find ways to solve the trouble of the Lakers, improve the basketball team, boost the number of fans and get money back. This paper also used qualitative analysis and SWOT analysis listing the aspects that affect the fandom base and how to comfort the unpleasant fans. The research also concluded several methods for the manager of the Lakers to choose from. Thus, the desire of the fans and the advantage and disadvantage of the Lakers team is also discussed in the paper.

Keywords: Fans; Sports management; 4P theory

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The year 2022 is an important year for all the NBA teams, especially for the LA Lakers, which won the champ 18 times during the last 48 years after the team was organized because the team made a trade with the Washington Wizards [1,2]. Every year, one team in the NBA would win the championship since 1946, the championship represents glory, fans, and the most important money [3]. Before the transaction deadline, the Lakers get one of the best players throughout NBA history-Russel Westbrook who was chosen to be the most valuable player in the season 2016-2017, 10 times all-stars, and the king of triple-double throughout the NBA history was traded to the LA Lakers and the Lakers send Kyle Kuzma, Montrezl Harrell and draft [4,5]. The Lakers in 2022 were flattered by almost every professional basketball player and couches, as the team includes Lebron James, Carmelo Anthony, Anthony Davis, and Dwight Howard [6]. They were all NBA superstars, not just ordinary players, three of them entered the list of the best 75 players throughout NBA history which was raised by American social media, retired players, players not retired, coaches and fans. Signing those superstars successfully added the LA Lakers' fan base, as a large amount of the NBA audience in favor of NBA superstars. After having those superstars, those audiences would watch Lakers games to watch their favorite player and become fans of the LA Lakers. All of them considered that the Lakers have great possibilities to achieve the championship and create another magnificent dynasty as the Lakers still kept their main force of basketball players. Lebron James and Anthony Davis but what happened next were out of their exception [6]. After the trade, the NBA season begins, the Lakers experienced 33 wins and 49 losses the winning rate is 40.6 percent [7]. To show how bad the team played I searched the winning rate of some teams for the season 2021-2022 and the winning rate of the Lakers in the previous season. In the season 2020-2021, the Lakers, 42 wins and 30 losses, the winning rate is 58 percent [7]. In the season 2019-2020 (the season in which the Lakers in the champ), they won 52 games and lost 19 games [7]. The winning rate is 73 percent. As the players of the team get stronger and better, the winning rate declines, that is what disappoints the fans. On Apr.2nd, the Lakers were defeated by the New Orleans Pelicans, one of the worst teams in the NBA, which loses 46 games in 82 and with no basketball stars, only regular players [8]. After this loss, the

Lakers have no chance to enter the NBA playoffs and say farewell to the NBA and the champ this year.

1.2 Research Gap

The difficult position of the Lakers in 2022 reminded me of 2012 when the Lakers have Kobe Bryant, Dwight Howard, Steve Nash, and Pau Gasol. In 2012, the Lakers is also considered to be the most compatible chaser of the champ, but they were beaten by the Miami Heat, causing the disappointment of the fans. It seems that the team lakers is magnificent, but there are huge disadvantages, which were not considered by the manager of the team, their defense outside the three-point line is weak, and Howard wanted to prove that he is the best player in the world so he refused to pass, and Kobe was used to making the shot himself, and Nash did not show his leadership as he was old and all he wanted is to win another champ, he did not want to spend every effort to play [9]. The circumstances of the Lakers in 2012 are a little bit similar to the one in 2022.

While surfing the internet, the study showed that there are already many fans and experts who are as disappointed as the authors are, and wrote much about the potential possibilities of the Lakers. But the researchers discovered that most of them are not reasonable at all. It occurred to me that those disappointed fans needed to calm down and gain confidence in the team, while the paper discovered that hardly had anyone written an essay on how to deal with those disappointed fans. If the fans were disappointed, they would not buy Lakers' souvenirs and they would not come to see the games Lakers next year, which may greatly damage the economy of the Lakers. Fans also don't wish to see LeBron retire with no champ, and the Lakers go down and down. So, this paper raised the question: What issues caused the fans to be disappointed? This paper discovered many factors like changes in the team's record, incompetence of the Lakers' front office, attitude of the players towards the game, and performance of the franchise's star player. After finding out those issues, the paper discussed those issues particularly, and try the best to help to accomplish the redemption of the players, the coaches the managers, and most importantly, to keep fans.

1.3 Structure

In the paper, the study is going to make research the relationship between the team and the fans' attitude, and what kinds of attitudes would greatly affect fans, using the SWOT analysis. The research team considers the team as a type of brand, using the 4P theory to discover issues related to fans' attitudes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition

Marketing mix refers to the optimal combination and application of the factors that can be controlled by the environment, ability, and competition in the selected target market, to achieve the purpose and task of the enterprise. The concept of the marketing mix was first adopted by Professor Neil Burton of Harvard University in 1964 who identified 12 elements of the marketing mix [10]. Subsequently, Professor Richard Klein summarized the elements of the marketing mix as product, pricing, channel, and promotion [11]. 4PS Marketing: Product, price, place, and promotion. The first is the product which is a product designed and packaged to attract customers [11]. Producing products that are different from other companies (product differentials) is key to the clear market share needed to meet demand. Every product has a life cycle, consisting of a growth cycle as the product nears market saturation, first a growth phase, and then a final decline phase needed to remain competitive in the market. This is not a competitor's strategy [11].

Secondly, Price is to find the right market share and competitors for the company's products [11]. Luxury goods are often much more expensive than they are, while less popular items are often sold at deep discounts [11].

Next, Place includes distribution or logistics to customers through different channels, usually through stores (retail) or directly through customers' homes, and increasingly through websites (e-commerce) [11]. It can contain any physical memory [11]. There are also virtual stores online [11].

Last, Promotion includes all communication with customers. Improve brand awareness Potential customers are crucial. Advertising can be in broadcast media, such as television or radio, or Print media such as newspapers, magazines, and billboards. Public relations Departments of the company prepare press releases and send them to the media Free news coverage of new products. sponsorship deals, exhibitions, conferences, conferences, seminars or trade fairs, and other events with speakers and general word of mouth Advertisements are also used to promote products [11].

2.2 Important Result

For products, High quality and innovation will influence consumer satisfaction. The higher the quality and innovation of the product, the higher the consumer satisfaction. For example, when Wang Peng, also holds the same view when studying iQiyi's paid channels [12]. He believes that iQiyi can ensure the audience rating and reputation by keeping the video content short and pithy [12]. Optimize the experience of members, such as optimizing the IP promotion boutique incubation, which can increase consumers' desire to consume [12]. For example, Li Xiuhui also expressed the same point of view when she studied the film marketing strategy [13]. Taking *The Wandering Earth* as an example, she believed that the film did a good job in narrating the new theme of science fiction style [13]. Breaking through the market circle and attracting audiences with an innovative cast [13]. Here is an example, Song Huirui, she also came to the same point of view when studying the marketing strategy of "Uncle Kai Stories" children's audiobooks [14]. She concluded that the product needs to be deep and vertical [14]. Building the product brand and accelerating the innovation of the product can generate good sales and make it more competitive in the new media market [14].

For the price, the price change will influence consumer satisfaction. The lower price of the product will get higher consumer satisfaction. For example, when Li Qing studied the market development of mobile e-commerce platforms and took Pinduoduo as an example [15]. He believed that Pinduoduo could attract consumers through multiple forms of low prices and reference prices to strengthen user suggestions [15]. Also, when Li Jiali and Cui Peng studied IKEA's marketing strategy for entering the smart home market, they proved the same point [16]. Ikea pursued a low-price strategy, driving down the price by lowering the design cost and commodity cost to attract consumers [16]. For example, when Yu Chenxi studied Uniqlo's marketing strategy, he also proved the same point of view [17]. He concluded that Uniqlo's pricing mainly adopted penetration pricing [17]. Penetration pricing refers to attracting customers with a low price that not only opens the market quickly but also keeps them [17].

For place, the contention will influence consumer satisfaction. The more convenient the delivery, the higher the customer satisfaction. For example, when Dong Siyan studied the marketing strategy analysis of Ai's artificial intelligence equipment, he also demonstrated the same point of view [18]. His conclusion was to involve third-party websites and expand sales channels so that more consumers could easily buy Ai [18]. For example, when, Li and Li researched commercial real estate enterprise marketing strategy analysis in country gardens [19]. They conclude the country's housing sales center sells, with the middle agent of red tape [19]. Make the company's internal sales staff direct contact with customers, understanding goods psychology, to meet customer demand [19]. For example, when Liu Yan studied the marketing strategy of tourist souvenirs in Inner Mongolia, he also had the same point of view. [20] His conclusion was that to expand the width of market sales, there would be a full demand in any place with sufficient tourist capacity [20]. So, there should be corresponding tourist souvenirs [20]. Feeding should be based on their resources around the characteristics of the production of the corresponding tourist souvenirs [20].

For Promotion, the advertisements and paying attention to the friendly cooperation with wholesalers will influence consumer satisfaction. More advertisement and pay attention to the friendly cooperation with wholesalers will have higher consumer satisfaction. For example, When Li

Haixia studies the book marketing strategy, she also demonstrates the same point of view [21]. He concludes that publishing enterprises do a good job in online marketing at the same time, the offline promotion activities do deep and thorough [21]. First, reserach should rely on various international and domestic exhibitions to increase the publicity and promotion of books [21]. For example, Tan Yao and Zhen Xueyun demonstrated the same point of view when studying the marketing strategy of Xiaomi mobile phones [22]. They concluded that appropriate marketing channels can reduce product costs, and reduce enterprise management risks [22]. Use the Internet platform to meet the needs of consumers [22]. For example, When Han Lu and Wang Zhigang studied the marketing strategy of e-books on e-commerce platforms, they also demonstrated the same point of view [23]. They concluded that giving gifts to consumers would shorten the distance between consumers, increase their sense of purchase pleasure and improve their loyalty [23].

2.3 Summary

The object of study in this article is the Los Angeles Lakers for the 2021-2022 season.

For the price, this paper will study the effect of ticket prices on a team's total revenue. For product, this paper will study the influence of the updating speed of team peripheral products on consumers' purchase of team peripheral products. For place, this paper will study the influence of traffic convenience around the team on consumer satisfaction. For Promotion, this paper will study whether customer satisfaction increase through affordable season passes and bundles.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This passage is aimed at the Lakers team and the management layer of the team, using the way of qualitative analysis and make SWOT analysis because this strategy is quite convenient for the research to analyze the issues that affect the team and it would be easier for the writer to compare the Lakers with other basketball teams.

3.2 Lakers

The Lakers is a basketball team founded by businessmen Burg and Moris La located in Los Angles. The team has entered the playoff 62 times [24]. From 2000 to 2002 the Lakers accomplished a historical achievement--champ three times in succession with the help of Kobe and Shaquille [24]. But the Lakers are in great trouble recently, they missed the playoff in 2022, while they have three talented basketball stars on the team. Throughout history, there are only 5 times that the Lakers failed to enter the playoffs each of them has a reason, like the best player on the team is injured, or the best player is retired [24].

Table 1. the seasons in which the Lakers did not enter playoffs and the reasons [24].

Season of not entering the playoff	Times of not entering	Reasons of not entering	The measurement they take
1957-1958	1	The Star player is retired	Elgin Baylor joined the team
1974-1976	2	Jerry West is retired	Magician Johnson comes
1993-1994	1	Showtime is retired	Newborn Vlade Divac is ready
2004-2004	1	Shaquille leave the team	Paul Gasol comes
2013-2019	6	Kobe is retired	Lebron comes
2021-2022	unknown	Waiting for analysis	Waiting for analysis

3.3 SWOT Analysis

3.3.1 Strength

The biggest advantage of the Lakers is they still keep their star players, this can greatly ensure their fan base. Secondly, the Lakers as an old basketball team have a long history. During those times, the Showtime and the OK combination attracted a great many fans, who are old now. They would take their children and grandchildren to the Lakers, which could greatly boost the fandom base. Lastly, the Lakers also have an advantage in location, the Lakers are located in LA, one of the biggest cities in the world. There are a lot of children studying in LA and lots of adults work there, if they wanted to watch an NBA show, the Lakers would undoubtedly be their first choice.

3.3.2 Weakness

As the level of consumption in LA is high, so the tickets and souvenirs would undoubtedly cost a lot. Meanwhile, they did not perform well in the match. They keep losing and losing. The team has to focus on winning the game. If the audience sees the Lakers lose and play a boring game, the audience may not insist to be a fan of the Lakers also due to the high priced ticket. The average payment of each ticket is 734 bucks, which is the highest in the league [25]. By comparison, the prize of Cleveland Cavaliers is 219 dollars [26]. The prize of food and a soft drink of the Lakers is also at the top of the league [27].

3.3.3 Opportunity

What the Lakers have to do is to lower the price of the food and drink and lower the price of the ticket. Since the team already has a combination of three basketball stars, the paper does not expect the team to recruit other star players. But it seems that for some plays on the team who did not perform well while having high salaries like Westbrook and Howard, the management can just fire those players and recruit some powerful helpers. Since LA is one of the best places ever in the USA for a sports team, there are also not many opportunities. But the team may have a lot to improve on the product. The Lakers have a tough season, they lose a lot and did not enter the playoff. Next year the team has to make more winning and it could be even better for the team to enter the playoffs.

3.3.4 Threaten

It is known that there are two teams located in LA, the Lakers and the Clippers, if one team does not perform well, the fan of this team would abandon the team and go to watch the performance of the other team. The Clippers also have two basketball stars, Kawhi Leonard and Paul George. Let's say the Lakers would keep this low level, and the fan of the Lakers would go to watch the performance of the Clippers. That is what the manager of the Lakers does not expect to see. If there are no fans here to watch the match, there would be no money for the team to sign powerful players, which would lead to worse performance causing a vicious circle

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Result

Overall, the Lakers product is its advantage because the team has big three have a lot of fans so they can attract many fans to come to watch the games, however, it is also the key disadvantage of the product, with the great expectations comes great disappointment. The laker team with the big three even cannot enter the playoff. That doesn't sit well with the fans.

Price is also the disadvantage, as the team comes big three the price of tickets also increases a lot, but as the terrible expression, during the season some fans even said that: do not buy Lakers tickets because after first quarto they will lose the games. The place is the advantage, where are the Lakers? It is in Los Angles. The second biggest city in the USA. There are also many ways can go to the arena. So, it is very convenient for fans to come and leave the arena. Last is the promotion, there is no doubt,

it is its disadvantage. During the whole season, the management layer hardly communicates with fans. The Lakers have gained popularity but because of their poor record, this is a negative effect.

4.2 Discussion

According to the SWOT. There is some advice for the Lakers team, to keep their competitiveness. The strength of the Lakers team is the product, the big three, the management of the Lakers should learn how to maximize the market interests of the big three and strategics allows the Big three to have good chemistry on the court. The team should take advantage of the potential market in the second largest cities in the United States. It is right to raise the team's profile with the Big Three. The next step is to increase the number of fans and customers. The team can also play the hometown card to get more locals to come and watch the team. On the other hand, there are some weaknesses parts. The Lakers team should try to fix it. The first is the ineptitude of the front office, which even though they traded for the big three, changed the team drastically and made the offense and defense extremely unbalanced. The fact that the team did not make any trades before the deadline of the trading day in the middle of the season can be seen as the team management's disregard. After this off-season, the team management should strengthen the communication and active operation with the fans, and make the team better through all trades that are beneficial to the team. For the opportunity for a team that has to build on a core of players after a losing season, the Lakers have been a mess. You can pick up a few free agents in the off-play. The team can also get more suitable players through trade, coach Vogel's dismissal represents the current team head coach position vacancy, the team also needs to find a good coach or suitable for this team coach to coach. Threaten, there is a risk, as there was last season when the big three came together and it didn't end well and that's the risk. So, teams need to avoid those risks as much as possible, starting with the need to stop making mindless trades to attract fans. It would ruin the team's good chemistry. Another is age. This year's Lakers have the oldest average age among the league's 30 teams, leading to many injury problems. It was one of the many reasons this season failed.

Finally, comparing the solution from 4P and the literature review here are some same solutions like the ticket price influence the total revenue of the team because of the higher price tickets and the poor record of the team, the demand for tickets decreases so the revenue decrease. Also, the convenience it's a natural advantage because you're in a big city, so it's relatively easy to get around. For Promotion, the Lakers team cannot easy to just increase customer satisfaction through affordable season passes and bundles. Because the team has so many problems like the management layer. Those are just small problems this paper should fix the bigger ones first. For product, it is also different for the same reason, the influence of the updating speed of team peripheral products on consumers' purchase of team peripheral products. It may increase, however in the context of a bleak environment, it will not improve the fans' desire to buy products only by updating them faster.

5. Conclusion

This article examines the reasons for the NBA team Lakers' failure this season in the context of their failure in the 2021-2022 season. The research question is the relationship between Lakers and fans' attitudes: What factors influence fan attitudes. This article uses the 4P mix market to discuss the research question. From product, price, place, and promotion, four parts to study the problem and try to find a way to help the team recover from its current failure.

Finally, the result is for products High quality and innovation will influence consumer satisfaction, The lower price of the product will get higher consumer satisfaction. The more convenient the delivery, the higher the customer satisfaction. More advertisement and pay attention to the friendly cooperation with wholesalers will have higher consumer satisfaction. The results are similar to what the article suspected. So here Give the Lakers team some advice, the price of the ticket can be reduced to attract more fans to watch the match.

Teams can accelerate the pace of merchandise updates to get fans to buy more. The team should increase communication with the fans and listen to their opinions of the fans. Teams should not only consider a player's name when signing a star but also consider whether players will have good chemistry with each other. Finally, this study should give fans more benefits to feedback fans because increasing the connection between the team and the fans can increase the fans' sense of belonging to the team.

This paper summarizes some articles about Mix Market 4P and proves the practicality of 4P theory in studying fan economy. This article is also the latest one to study the reasons for the failure of the NBA team Lakers in the 2021-2022 season, and it innovates the 4P argument method to study the influencing factors of the attitude of the fans of the team. However, this paper also has some limitations, because this is a relatively new topic of research, so there are not enough data to support the argument and analysis. Too little time coverage of references will have limitations. There is no field investigation when writing this article, so the final result may be limited and may not be fully consistent with the local environment. The summary analysis based on the author is subjective because the author is a James fan. It is a personal opinion and evaluation.

For future research agenda, Since the topic discussed in this article is relatively new, few people are studying it. In the future, more people will study this topic, so the paper hopes to make further improvements based on future articles. Although it has proved that ticket prices affect fans' attitudes towards football teams, more practical examples are needed, and other researchers are invited to conduct a dubious validation study.

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