

# How Has NBA Culture Affected the Development of Chinese Basketball Industry

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## Abstract

In the past ten years, the Chinese basketball industry has not developed well. This study aims to research the enlightenment of National Basketball Association (NBA) culture on the development of the Chinese basketball industry and find out what the Chinese can learn from the NBA to promote the development of the Chinese basketball industry. Because of the different races, we have to imitate, NBA properly instead of blindly following them to lead to the degeneration of development. Therefore, this study covers technical level, economic growth, spiritual power, and so on. They are the three most significant parts that influence the sports industry because its development needs financial support. The level and spirit of the players attract the audience. Then we can determine in which areas the Chinese basketball industry can be similar to the NBA, so as to maximize the development benefits. In conclusion, if we learn and imitate the NBA culture well, the basketball industry in China will prosper day by day.

## Keywords

NBA Culture; Chinese Basketball Industry

## Introduction

This study aims to research the enlightenment of the National Basketball Association (NBA) culture on the development of the Chinese basketball industry. NBA has been set up for 75 years. It is the most influential basketball league all over the world. Chinese basketball culture became famous in 2000, and its popularity is mainly on NBA culture (Chen, 2009). However, the development of the Chinese basketball industry was not ideal in recent years since the Chinese men's basketball team has not achieved outstanding results in world tournaments. Therefore, the Chinese basketball industry must find out how did NBA enlighten the Chinese basketball industry and what else can be learned from the NBA.

There has been much research on this topic. Still, it is challenging to figure it out in many aspects, such as technical level, economic growth, spiritual power, etc. In addition, physical quality is also an essential part of basketball. As the data says, the average height of Americans is about 8 cm higher than that of Chinese, and Americans generally look stronger than Chinese (Li, 2020). As a result, we cannot make the same standard

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for Chinese as high as the Americans in jumping ability, speed, and strength. Therefore, it is significant and challenging to scale how much the Chinese should learn from the NBA. Chinese players may not understand their playing style well and forget their original style if the scale is inaccurate and proper. Blindly adopting the American playing and training styles can be risky.

To avoid this situation, we need to research Chinese and American players' training methods and endurance to develop the best plan. It is difficult to get accurate data for the economic growth of the NBA and Chinese basketball industry because they both hide undercover operations and capital flows to protect themselves (Zuo, 2019). Therefore, we must use the information we can find or ask to make a comparative analysis between the NBA and the Chinese basketball industry.

The topic is essential because basketball is becoming one of the most popular sports in China. The effect of the NBA is meaningful for China, especially on Chinese economic growth. As a developing country, many sports in China are transferring to be in business mode. NBA is a charming model for them to learn to help the development of the Chinese economy. When the Chinese basketball industry knows the NBA culture properly, it will help in economics, competitive level, etc.

### **What Is the NBA Culture?**

NBA is an integral part of American culture. It is unique due to its core values, aesthetic trend, and drama. The core value is a particular existence in everyone's heart, when the spirit of people is refreshed, people find the charm of basketball (Zuo, 2019). A deep understanding of aesthetic trends, which reflect the public's likes, can make a basketball game more attractive. Drama is an essential part of life, and when it is added on the pitch, it makes people more interested and pays

more attention. Depending on these three aspects and the players' super high skills, the NBA has attracted countless audiences to watch it live or in front of the screen.

Roman Roland said, "there is only one kind of heroism in the world, that is, to love life after recognizing the truth of life" (Roland, 1912). In the 2018 NBA playoffs, we could see another kind of extreme personal heroism: LeBron James. He devoted classic blocking at the end of the first round and tried his best to snatch seven, although he was cramped. After 35 minutes of continuous fighting, the king came back and sent the Pacers home. In the second round, he ultimately defeated the Raptors in Game 3 and drifted in Toronto. His performance amazed everyone in this series of games. At the last moment, Morris scored the critical ball and made a final decision.

At that time, James would remind people of the two sentences in 'the fantasy journey of shepherd boy' that 'if you don't have a heart, you will be hurt because of pursuing your dream (Wen, 2019). When you want something, the sun, the moon, and the stars will be lined up to help you (Paul, 1988). LeBron James is not a player, he is a hero. Damian Lillard has the ability to become a superstar in NBA but his team has not got the ideal results these years. However, Damian Lillard did not give up, he insisted on one person, one city, and his loyalty touched lots of people. What a selfless person who did not care about his own fame, just want to let his city get higher honor. When we think of basketball, Michael Jordan comes to mind. When we think of snooker, Michael O'Sullivan comes to mind. When we think of boxing, Mike Tyson comes to mind. They gave new symbols to these sports. It also increases people's desire to watch the games and buy related products.

The aesthetic trend in NBA has changed a lot (Wang, 2019). More than ten years ago, most people were obsessed with the aesthetics of violence, like Shaquille O'Neal, who almost broke the basket when dunking. Aggressive is

human nature. When people see Shaquille O'Neal dunks over the defence savagely, they will feel the physical collision of the excitement and become more excited and excited with the appearance of Stephen Curry. NBA entered the era of 3 points. Audiences were impressed by his beautiful shooting posture, a high percentage of hits. People get a kick out of it when Curry makes multiple 3-pointers in a matter of minutes to catch up quickly. Kyrie Irving's fancy dribble made people surprised and compete to imitate because it is beneficial and dashing. Human nature is aggressive, but because of the existence of the law, we cannot fight at will, but the NBA has created a buffer zone for fighting and peace, so people can watch the NBA and release their desire to fight at the same time.

What is more, NBA paid much attention to creating drama. For example, the resentment between Chris Paul and Rajon Rondo was discussed by people all the time. The replacement of Rondo's position from Paul in the 2008 Olympic Games made Rondo feel envy. The most classic conflict happened in the 2019 season when the Lakers played the rockets at home. Rondo was entangled with Paul, and Rondo spat on Paul. After that event. Every time the two met, there would always be a lot of hype in the media to attract the audience's attention and get better ratings (Li, 2020). In this way, the press expanded the contradiction between the two and formed plot stories to attract attention. It is not just players but also teams. For example, the Cavaliers and Warriors have become the two strongest teams in the NBA since 2015 and have met in the finals for four consecutive years. The rivalry between the two teams has become the most oversized watch in recent years.

In conclusion, , core values, aesthetic trends, and drama are the main points for the NBA to expand and attract audiences. For the Chinese basketball industry, what we have done in these three points is still very superficial. We need to be more explicit about our players' core values and hold

them to them , control people's aesthetic trends and adjust the game system at any time according to the change of times, play up the drama between players and teams to attract the audience.

### **What Is the NBA Market Strategy?**

Marketing strategy is necessary for every industry to develop well, including establishing characters, commercial events, advertisements, and sponsors. Since the establishment of the NBA, it has attached great importance to marketing strategy, which is one of the main reasons for its development to the world's largest basketball association (Wang, 2019).

### **The Establishment of Characters**

NBA is good at setting characters to attract audiences. For example, LeBron James was born in Cleveland. After joining the Cleveland Cavaliers, James led the Cavaliers to win the NBA championship, ending Cleveland's 62-year no championship history. (Chen, 2009) Not only that, but James' star effect has also brought substantial economic benefits to Cleveland, such as promoting the development of local service industry, such as the tax growth of catering industry, parking lot and accommodation, promoting the increase of ticket tax, promoting the development of various commercial advertisements, and the economic benefits brought by live TV. It encourages the growth of the investment. James donated tens of millions of dollars of his income to improve local teaching facilities, build schools, and improve the status of black people. It can be said that without him, there would be no Cleveland today. With his efforts, he changed the whole of Cleveland and made outstanding contributions to the development of Cleveland. As a result, more and more people admired James and wanted to support him.

### **The Sponsors and Advertisements**

Nike signed James, as the number of his fans became bigger and bigger, the sales of James' jerseys and shoes were soaring, which brought many benefits to James himself, the Nike brand,

and NBA. After that, more NBA players were inspired by James to work harder to attract the brand to sign up. Sponsors are also an essential part of the NBA. Sponsors utilize the NBA platform to promote their popularity and attract more customers. NBA uses sponsorship fees to pay a bonus to teams. NBA will attract more sponsors than CBA because they have more attention and better stars.

### **Marketing Activities**

The all-star game is a traditional event of the NBA. The most popular and high-level players in 24 teams will be elected as all-stars. Before the all-star game, NBA will try its best to publicize the competition. It will contact the media to provide voting channels for NBA players on various apps. This is also worth learning from China's basketball industry. We should develop more transnational business cooperation to expand the scale of China's basketball industry opportunity. NBA will also provide methods to buy star players' jerseys online or inside and outside venues to make a big profit. CBA also has all-star games, but its effect is far less than NBA because it is not well prepared before the game, and even the lights are dim during the game. Some fans do not know that the all-star game will start because CBA lacks publicity and advertising. CBA should do good promotion and preparation for various marketing activities, which are good opportunities for its development.

### **Market Strategy for China**

NBA has been developing the Chinese market for a long time. In 1989, NBA President David Stern came to China to negotiate with CCTV and made the NBA the most famous American program in China. After being established in the Chinese market, the audience rating and popularity of the NBA have improved significantly due to the massive population of China. After that, Lenovo and NBA became partners, Li Ning signed with O'Neill, and peak also competed with them by sponsoring rockets and signing with Battier. NBA promoted its trademark products and services in

China and won a win-win situation with its trademark users (Yang, 2020). The NBA was able to develop such a large market in China because the basketball industry in China was just beginning to develop. Audiences could learn skills from the NBA and get a thrill that is impossible to get from watching the CBA.

### **The History of Development of the Chinese Basketball Industry**

The purpose of introducing the development history of Chinese basketball is to seek the help of American basketball culture from the perspective of the development history of Chinese basketball.

The history of the Chinese basketball industry development is not very long. However, it can be separated into three periods: National system, Before Yao Ming became chairman of the Chinese Basketball Association, and after. During the national system, the nation believed that the results of the games were the most important, so the players' efforts were the strongest. At the time of Yao's retirement, the Chinese men's basketball team was at the league's bottom, with poor results in all kinds of competitions. But Yao's appointment has raised hopes that the Chinese basketball team will recover soon.

### **The National System Era**

The national system refers to the national interest as the highest goal. The national sports management organizations mobilize relevant resources and strength in the whole country, the state pays for the allocation of excellent coaches and hardware and software facilities, centralized selection, training, training talented athletes to participate in the Olympic Games and other international sports events, in the competition with other countries, strive for excellent competition results The sports system of breaking records and winning gold medals.

First of all, the national system ensures the quality and quantity of players, which lays a solid

foundation for the performance of the men's basketball team in international competitions. Every year during the off-season of professional league matches, China Basketball Management Center will issue the training list of men's basketball to the provincial and municipal sports administrations and clubs and recruit the most influential players in China to prepare for the Asian Championships, Asian Games, world championships, and Olympic Games and other international competitions (Ge, 2019). Secondly, the incentive function of patriotism under the national system. The players work hard to win glory for their country in the national team and often play with tremendous energy. At that time, the selection mechanism had significant disadvantages. The Chinese squad selects players according to their height, which leads to many basketball talents failing to be chosen from sports schools and becoming mediocre due to a lack of professional training.

#### **After Yao Ming Retired**

Before Yao Ming became the chairman of the Chinese Basketball Association, he was the best basketball player in Chinese history. His achievements in the NBA have enhanced the attention and influence of Chinese basketball globally and enhanced the sports and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries. Yao Ming has helped China win the Asian championship many times and led the Chinese team to the Olympic Games' top eight. The 2007-08 season was the best season of his career with 37.2 minutes on the floor per game, and Yao turned in a pretty solid year: 22 points, 10.8 rebounds, and 2.0 blocks. 50.7 percent shooting from the field, he dominated the NBA at that time, leading the Chinese men's basketball team to flourish. It is a pity that it did not last long. Yao Ming has retired for the sake of his health after breaking his left ankle. After Yao Ming retired in 2011, the Chinese men's basketball team failed. Ten years after Yao Ming retired, China's men's basketball team won only three world

competitions and even lost in the Olympic Games.

#### **After Yao Ming Became President of CBA**

In 2017, with the support of most people, Yao Ming became the chairman of the China Basketball Association, and people saw the dawn of the future. After Yao Ming was elected chairman of the Basketball Association, he made the first change to the Chinese men's basketball team. He divided the original national team into two sections, red and blue, led by two coaches, and participated in all kinds of games. This change allows many young players to be selected into the national team, accumulated the experience of playing against the world's top basketball teams, and found the gap between themselves and the world-class players (Ding, 2020). Moreover, Yao Ming strongly opposed the "Asian foreign aid" policy because it significantly reduced the living space of domestic players and was not conducive to the development of young domestic players. Therefore, after Yao Ming became the chairman of the Basketball Association, he reduced the number of teams with Asian foreign aid qualifications. Finally, Yao's most crucial decision was to move closer to the NBA and make CBA more commercial. He and his team helped CBA bring in 17 new sponsors and sign new media copyright contracts. The basketball association also encouraged players to advertise and expand their brands, such as Guo Ailun.

Yao Ming is the person who has the most profound contact with NBA culture in the history of Chinese basketball, and he is also the only one who can connect the Chinese basketball industry with NBA. He is believed to be able to change the current situation of the basketball industry in China with his understanding of NBA culture. (Cao, 2020). Everyone can see that Yao Ming has the leading position in the history of Chinese basketball, so I use Yao Ming's peak and retirement as the boundary line. When Yao Ming played in the NBA, he always led the Chinese

team to achieve good results in every national-level match. It is not difficult to see that he was influenced by NBA culture. So, when Yao Ming became president of China, people hoped that he would use his understanding of NBA culture to inspire players and promote the development of the Chinese basketball industry.

### **How Can China's Basketball Industry Learn from the US?**

How should the Chinese basketball industry learn from the NBA? Let me separate it into two parts: culture, marketing strategy. Culture is the primary export means of the NBA. People come into contact with and understand NBA culture and then become fans of the NBA. Marketing strategy is the key to the prosperity and revival of the industry. If we can learn the NBA's marketing strategy, the basketball industry in China will make a big step forward economically.

You may remember that core values, aesthetic trends, and drama are the essential parts of NBA culture and are the worthiest parts of our learning. I started to play basketball in the third grade of primary school when I was a shy, short, thin boy. I found that basketball can make people feel energetic, make people more competitive and make people stronger. I can learn the spirit of never giving up and being brave to try from the basketball culture. When the Chinese basketball industry enriches its cultural heritage, People will see the charm of Chinese basketball, which is no longer a rigid routine game, but a fusion of cultural exchanges, people can learn the quality of perseverance, can feel the pleasure of violent aesthetics, can experience the exciting drama of life. (Wang, 2021) As a result, there will be more audiences and supporters. It is not hard to see in the CBA game. There are very few players to dominate the game, showing his heroism. Foreign basketball players even played those outstanding performances. That is why it was rare to see an epic individual performance from a Chinese player on a world stage (Wang, 2019). They were always looking for consistency and trying to win

the game with consistent play, while foreign players mainly were trying to show their maximum value and tried their best to dominate the game. Some people will excuse that the statistics show that Chinese people are not as physically fit as black people. However, the Chinese players did not play to their maximum level, whether in enthusiasm on the field or in private training. Their room for improvement is enormous. I suggest the CBA vigorously guide their most talented players to be heroes on the court to dominate the game so that everyone can see the individual heroism of Chinese players.

The aesthetic trend is changing all the time as time passes. From violent dunks to beautiful 3-points to fancy dribbles, unfortunately, you rarely see any of these three in the CBA. Most of the reasons come from coaches and referees. Because coaches impose too many constraints on the players, the players cannot release their maximum energy to enhance the look and feel of the game. We can often see a coach's criticism of his players on various social media or during a match. The complaint is correct and can make the players learn a lesson. But constantly rebuking will let the players in the heart of fear. The players won't dare to play solo anymore, and they won't dare to take difficult shots. They won't even dare to dunk when there's no enemy under the basket. Because they are afraid of missing images or making mistakes when they need to perform, they are so scared of failing to dunk. But how can a game be excellent and attractive enough without those fancy motions? In addition, flashy was also banned by the referee. When players want to do something that does not violate street ball rules, the referee will always call for a traveling or double dribble. This makes the players can only play the regular game, and it is a lot less entertaining. As a result, we should encourage the players to try more dazzling play on the pitch to please the audience.

The lack of drama is also why fans do not expect as much from the CBA as they do from the NBA.

Few players in the entire CBA have a terrible relationship with each other, and you cannot even find a pair of longtime rivals like Paul and Rondo. When players are interviewed and asked about other players, they will only express their appreciation and praise instead of dissing. This makes players and players do not have the same level of competition stress as NBA. So not many people will look forward to seeing two specific players play each other or two teams play each other. Being humble and courteous to your opponents has been a part of Chinese culture since ancient times. It can make people feel that China is a land of ceremonies. This is perfect behavior, and there is nothing wrong with it. However, if the players can bring their emotions into the game and play with more passion, it will be more passionate and attractive. Therefore, I would like to suggest that CBA players, like the NBA players, be bold to speak their true thoughts. Consequently, I suggest that CBA players should be brave to show their individuality on the court just like NBA players without being too restrained.

The NBA's marketing strategy is completer and more effective than the CBA's. Hu, Y. (2018). In CBA, there is almost no set of characters. It is as if the CBA has no idea of creating superstars. It has to do with our system, which focuses on egalitarianism. We pay much attention to winning and neglect the encouragement of individual performance. The advantage is that the country's performance has improved significantly, but the disadvantage is that it will lead to the negative psychology of the players (Tu, 2019). When the CBA focuses on creating a few superstars, many people will be attracted to the superstars. Then the ratings of the CBA and the number of audiences will be qualitatively improved. When a player has a certain number of fans, a brand like Adidas or Nike will sign contracts with those players. Or even Start their independent brand like Jordan, Lebron James. CBA's marketing activities are unsatisfactory, like in this year's All-Star game. Even the lights weren't on in the

stadium during the three-point contest. It was dark, both on video and lived, and it was not even clear if players scored the ball. Many viewers and players were upset when the MVP awarded a low-scoring player to the losing team in the five on 5 All-Star Game. The NBA holds many charity events to allow its stars to get closer to fans and give gifts to show their generosity. The CBA should also carry more such activities to build up the popularity of the players and show people the charm of the CBA players. The CBA should attract more sponsors and receive more advertisements to get funds to promote the further development of the NBA. For example, the CBA could increase players' salaries to make players more motivated to perform better.

The suggestions are in below:

1. Core values: The CBA should emphasize the core values of the league, let the players have the courage to express themselves, play every game like a final, and try to exert their maximum energy to dominate the game.
2. instincts: The CBA's referees and coaches should be less strict, not less severe about the rigor of the game, but more encouraging to let out the players' instincts to make every game more spectacular and attractive.
3. Drama: The CBA should increase the game's drama, whether the players' action language provocation during the game or giving their honest thoughts to other teams and players in the interview after the game. These are parts of life and will be the main reason people look forward to the game.
4. Characters setting: The CBA should develop characters to promote the league's basketball stars instead of chasing results. As a result, the reputation of the players' increases, and the CBA gets more sponsorship to expand the size of the basketball industry in China.
5. Commercial events: The CBA should hold more commercial events like the All-Star Game to promote itself. The activity must be excellent, not just go through the motions and not even turn on all the lights so that more people can see the

CBA stage and be attracted to it. I believe the Chinese basketball industry will have a bright future if leaders can adapt my suggestions.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, The CBA can learn from the NBA in terms of culture and marketing strategy. We can focus on developing core values, highlighting the aesthetic trend, creating drama, and using techniques like setting characters for players to attract more audiences and fans to help build the Chinese basketball industry. However, my research is also limited because the basketball environment in the United States and China is entirely different, and I do not know if the methods above are practical. I suggest that if any experts want to study this in the future, they should avoid comparing the physical differences between Chinese and American players because the body is inborn and cannot be changed. My advice for CBA is to emphasize the core values, encourage to let out the players' instincts, increase the drama of the game, set characters for players, and hold more commercial events.

### **Evaluation**

This EPQ is an unforgettable experience. For the first time, I experienced doing my research and finishing my thesis. I believe this experience will be of great help to my future study. First of all, I learned to read literature. I had never read academic literature in English before. In the beginning, I found it very difficult. Firstly, it was difficult for me to find literature related to my research. Secondly, many professional words in it set obstacles for my reading. But after a lot of reading, my reading speed improved, and I could quickly screen the literature I needed by looking at the abstract. Secondly, my time management ability has also improved. I have learned to make a Gantt chart. Gantt chart can remind me when I plan to complete every part of the project so that I will not delay and cause the consequence of not completing the task. I have also learned to use a mind map, which can be used in EPQ writing and help me better organize my thinking, so I can

make a mind map to help me think in any task related to review. In the EPQ experience, the most challenging part is writing. Before I took the EPQ course, I had never written such a large number of papers. At school, I only wrote short articles, so it was a great challenge for me initially. But after the doctoral course, I got inspiration, and I used my spare time to practice and think, so I finished it one by one. Of course, I also have many shortcomings that need to be improved. If I do EPQ again next time, I will go to the street to do surveys to draw public opinions, which will make my paper more in line with public opinion and accurate and effective. If other students want to do EPQ, I will put forward the following suggestions: first, they should complete the tasks they set for themselves on time and with high quality. EPQ is a long-term task. If they do not meet the charges, they plan according to the Gantt chart. It is challenging to complete the whole EPQ task later. Second, ask the teacher more questions. If it is the first time for you to do EPQ, there will be countless problems. At this moment, don't force yourself to do it on your own. Ask the teacher for help and spend more time understanding and solving problems. Third, choose a topic that you are interested in. Most of the time, research is not a pleasant thing to do. It is not that hard for one to lose motivation. Therefore, choosing a topic that you are genuinely interested in is very important. This way will make it a lot easier for you to maintain your motivation since you are researching something that you like. In this way, the exciting topic will significantly improve your writing efficiency. Overall, EPQ is a significant project. I recommend all high school students participate.

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