

Analysis of the growth and development of basketball game in context of China: A case of Chinese Basketball association

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Abstract:

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of the political, economic, and political and sports environment on the development of Chinese. The recent national stimulation policy regarding the development and promotion of sport industry and sport consumption suggest that market capital is more inclined towards the sports industry in China. This study aims to provide a summary of National basketball association developmental history in China, investigating its marketing strategies, examining its recent promotional activities, and generalizing the practical situations for various other sports leagues who wants to get access to the Chinese market. For collecting the data from selected respondents in the present study we have developed a self-administered questionnaire to carry out the data analysis we have adopted the statistical tools and procedures. For data analysis if we compare the PLS-SEM with other techniques the PLS is comparatively is more flexible, powerful, and superior. The researcher has made some important efforts for getting maximum response rate. As a result, we have received 325 questionnaires back out of 400. Moreover, during the process of sorting the data we have discarded 15 questionnaires as they were not having the proper information, so the response rate forms this survey was 81 percent. The study will be helpful for policymakers, researchers, and auctioneers in understanding the issues related to the development of basketball in China.

Keywords: Sports, Economics, Basketball, China

In China, the developing sports industry and 1.3 billion prospective customers have captured significant attention from professional sports leagues all around the globe. European soccer got access to the Chinese market for a very long time; however, the National Football League (NFL) and Major League Baseball (MLB) are also making efforts to reach to the Chinese market, besides, the National Hockey League had also started to strive for partnership with the Chinese sports companies (Abeza, Reilly, & Seguin, 2019). Relatively, a remarkable success of National Basketball Association (NBA) is achieved in the Chinese market. In context to marketing operations and sport competition perspective, the successful achievements of National Basketball Association (NBA) present an ideal framework for the sports leagues around the globe (Li, 2018).

During early 1990s, the national basketball Association (NBA) reached to a point of saturation in the American market (Jackson, 2017). This trend of sport globalization was identified by David Stern and argued that “the global development would certainly occur even with or without us” while the other logical aspect is the European division when the time comes, however, it will going to happen in next ten years (HERKOMMER & KOCH, 2017; Zhou, Wang, & Chen, 2017; Akbas et al., 2019). Majority of the cities in Europe has reflected their likeness for soccer however, they were not yet prepared for the development of an industry and building an arena as per the requirements of the NBA (Tack, 2015). On the contrary, Asia is becoming a key global sports industry and is ready to bring the NBA events (Dickson, Naylor, & Hedlund, 2018). As a result, the Asian

market was taken as a priority during the process of making NBA globalization efforts (Lee & Tan, 2019).

Since China is a rapidly growing economy, therefore the popularity and fame of basketball in China has made increased its importance for the NBA. During 1980’s, the reform and opening-up policy” was initiated by China with an aim to shift towards the market-oriented economic system and paving its way towards international market (Wu, 2018; Helmar et al., 2018; Cancar, 2018). Consequently, the American based products, for example fast food industries, jeans, movie, and rock music also arrived and gained acceptance in China. These industries invested in a completely new region and marketplace, while NBA fully embraced basketball as it has gained popularity in China a century ago. In the late years of the 1980s, basketball has been brought to China by the Young Men’s Christian Association in Tianjin, and in no time, it has become normalized as a national hobby in Old China. Thus, in the People’s Republic of China, basketball has gradually become one of the most famous sports and a game that is played at the community, school, and elite competition levels (Lee & Tan, 2019).

Evolution of Chinese Basketball

In China, there are approximately 300 million basketball fans and more than 0.65 million basketball courts in the country (Jackson, 2017). For a long time, the Chinese Basketball Association and Chinese Basketball Management Center paid no attention basketball culture, economy and value of entertainment, and merely emphasized on winning the sports

events (Jackson, 2017). Therefore, during 1990s, the Chinese basketball league and soccer started developing professionalization; and in this regard, NBA provides the China Basketball Association with the effective professional experience that it owns in this field (Gao, 2019; Afonso & Silva, 2019; Aydin, 2019; Akkaya, 2019; Maake & Tranos, 2019).

While at the same time the Chinese television industry experienced growth at a very fast pace, which also supported and helps the diffusion of NBA in Chinese market. According to Lee and Tan (2019), the NBA's numerous meetings with Chinese television broadcasters played a vital role in its good reputation in China. This point of view was highlighted by several other researchers in Chinese basketball marketing. According to Zhang, Kim, and Mastromartino (2018) "NBA gained significant benefit from the fast growth of Chinese television industry since the time it started i.e. 1980s. In most Chinese families, watching TV is considered as one of the key entertainment activities. This popularity of television further increased the reach of NBA to millions of people in China. According to the director of sport, Bao Mingxiao, an effective strategy is chosen by NBA for promoting their games.

During the initial stage of process, the NBA issued free copyrights to the Chinese Central Television (CCTV), which certainly is a good strategy. As a whole, the NBA's process of globalization in Chinese market took place in four stages, which are discussed below: In the early stages of reform and openness policy implementation in China, NBA started to develop relations and connections with China. For example, in 1979, in order to meet the USA's diplomatic demands, the Washington Bullets played a match against the BAYI Rockets. Furthermore, in 1984, David Stern was appointed as the Commissioner of the NBA and started taking initiatives and promoted globalization efforts (Tack, 2015). Afterwards, the NBA sent recorded videos of the final game to CCTV for free broadcasting for the first time in 1986. In China, television channels such as CCTV is one of the significant networks operated and regulated by the government in China. The NBA then offered a broadcast signal to the CCTV and the event content free of cost in 1989, mainly to develop a connection between Chinese media and the NBA. Through CCTV engagement, the NBA became successful in influencing the Chinese population in very short span of time (Lee & Tan, 2019). Meanwhile, this popularity of NBA in China was further heightened by Michael Jordan's Dream Team in 1992 (Zhang et al., 2018). In Hong Kong, the first headquarter of NBA was established in 1992 to support its operations.

In order to fulfill the demand of local basketball fans, the Chinese media slowly and gradually widened its presence during 1990s to increase its coverage. Therefore, for the first time, the CCTV live-broadcasted the NBA finals on June 8, 1994. Furthermore, in 1996, CCTV started live-broadcasting of NBA events, all-star games, finals, playoffs, and regular games

(Lee & Tan, 2019). While in that same year, the Chinese Basketball Association initiated the professionalization process and opted for frequent communication with the NBA, to learn and adopt advanced management system (Gao, 2019; Auriacombe & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2019; Athiyaman & Magapa, 2019; Dunga & Mafini, 2019; Bonal et al., 2019).

In 1998, the NBA started charging fee from China for live broadcasting of games. In 1999, Dallas Mavericks introduced Wang Zhizhi in the second round, who became the first player from China in the NBA. In 2001, Kobe Bryant traveled towards Hong Kong and Beijing for the promotion of basketball by conducting skill exhibitions and training camps (Lee & Tan, 2019). Introducing a Chinese player and the visits of NBA players to China further heightened the popularity of NBA in China and achieved higher fan base in China.

Conceptual Framework

On January 19, the director of General Administration of Sport, Liu Peng mentioned during the countrywide sports director conference that the operation mechanism of China is to learn the development dynamics of professional sport at international level. China had already played a vital role in politics, and without any doubts, it became one of the economic superpowers, although, it has failed to develop a significant influence and position in culture, however this area would likely to bring comprehensive improvement in China's international competition and in enhancing its power. In recent era, making reforms and opening up, playing market economy's fundamental role of resource allocation, bringing improvement in its soft cultural power, and promoting Chinese culture are the important tasks that needed to be performed for China's development. At the same time, the tremendous performance of the Chinese sportsmen at international level also greatly influence and shape China's image as an emerging power.

Presently, the political situation is stable in China, and its global position and power have also significantly improved. In 2008, China successfully held the Olympic Games in Beijing, it made comprehensive reforms during a period of 30 years which led to the successful achievements and advances both in social and economic terms, and the second process of reforms in China began after 30-years of its reform in villages (Jinping, 2017). Thus, the economic development and rapid growth of China will provide significant historical opportunities in the next 20 years, which will uplift the middle-class group and would enhance CBA audience. These variables will offer the required environmental and political base to develop and support better CBA, sport cause and a sport industry.

H1: The Chinese political environment has significant impact on the development of Chinese baseball association.

The Chinese economy has been experiencing continuous growth and development because of the reforms and opening

up, in addition, government guidance and effective macro-control have significantly improved the average growth of GDP i.e. 9.3 % per annum, which is a record in the history of world economic development. In a research report, *Dream Together with BRICS: Look into 2050*, Goldman Sachs predicted that Russia, Brazil, China and India would emerge as the powerful forces in the next 50 years (Thorp, 2015). Currently, the socialization and industrialization processes have been accelerated in China, and the high economic growth in China would certainly stimulate the changes in China's social hierarchy, although a rapid increase in the middle-class groups is actually a major change.

The working class likes the latest products and has great hopes of life taste and quality. Thus, it is the middle-class group which are the main consumption groups in basketball market and the CBA's, and development of these groups will no doubt bring lots of endogenous force towards the CBA growth sustainability. The condition of sustainable and stable development of the Chinese economy and the very fast development of the middle-class group will generate a huge consumption and investment condition for the CBA's growth (Koltai, 2016). China has a huge fan base for basketball and a great basketball consumption market, especially there is 465 million youth, which accounted for 36.25% of the total population in China. Most of the youth like basketball and are energetic buyers of numerous basketballs, which provide the growth space and hard-won opportunity for the international basketball organizations to make investment in the China's basketball industry. The vast basketball market of China and its rapid development involved several overseas and local organizations and firms. Infront and NBA have shown their interest to make investment in Chinese basketball market. In China, basketball gains more and more attention, and CBA has a vast development space and has great growth potential.

H2: The Chinese economic growth has significant impact on the development of Chinese baseball association.

In a prosperous economy and a stable politics situation, Chinese society is very stable regardless of the issues in its transformation process. During the past few years, the Chinese government has been placing high significance towards the problems of "peasants, agriculture and village", lifted the agricultural duties and taxes and corrected the arrears of salaries, and also giving huge significance to the peasants' job in cities and peasant's kid's enrolled in the school and so on, and the government has also improved the urban social system; covering medical insurance, pension insurance and significant expense of living grants.

In a similar period, the government also significantly contribute to correct the police order, purify the spirit of the society, effectively improve the security environment, and combat evil forces. All such measures that government take bring efficient release towards the social disputes and minimize

the insecure variables of the society so that the people's safety is highly enhanced (Pratt & Governance, 2020). Recently, the steady social condition of China is also beneficial for speeding up the growth of the CBA and sports industry. Currently, the society of China is in the late and middle level of industrialization, the economy is growing rapidly, urbanization is being accelerated, and the society is stable. In addition, the CBA's clubs have gained huge social and economic advantages from the investment in basketball.

Most of the clubs generated money from the investment, and in the association, the average annual wage of the basketball players is approximated around 200-300 thousand Yuan, and the salary of each star player from various sources is more than one million Yuan, mostly the owners of club gained a lot of social advantages from the basketball. Now, CBA is growing firmly with a huge social image, and has recently earned a lot of loyal fans (Fan, 2019). In context of developing an association system, the regulations and rules are gradually standardized and enhanced. Despite the issues, Chinese Basketball Association is transparent and very open, and fairly handles all the issues, efficiently control and manage all things, particularly (Vaccari & Jamkatel, 2020), their abilities and attitudes during crisis intervention, and is an excellent role model for others.

H3: The Chinese social environment has significant impact on the development of Chinese baseball association.

Though, CBA has a small history regarding development and reforms and there are numbers of issues that are yet to be resolved on urgent basis, therefore, it has currently reached and developed its embryonic framework. In addition, CBA has a good repute in China and the huge potential for market development and greatest commercial prospects. Similarly, international significant stars for instance, Yao Ming who had performed tremendously in China in the field of basketball (Zhou et al., 2017). They have abilities in games of basketball, live a healthy life, are prepared to take social responsibilities, have a passion for public activities as well, and have successfully developed a huge quantity of resources for the society.

In 2008, the achievement gained by the Beijing Olympic Games and Chinese Sports Delegate's winning 51 medals of gold by the national women and men basketball teams, as well as the efficient performance in the Beijing Olympic Games had a huge impact on the global society. The benefit of China's socialist system is extraordinary due to the huge achievement of the Olympic Games, open-up of China are fully displayed and huge success of the reform (Jinping, 2017); the efficient traditional humanistic perception of Chinese are more spread and positive international perception is developed due to the complete growth of Chinese sport through generating the platform of sports information. A strategic opportunity is developed for broad development space is brought to CBA, permanently and widely attaining sports events.

The associations from across the globe have established their visions on the fast-growing Chinese sports industry after Beijing Olympic Games, and the Beijing Olympic Games are motivating the Chinese sports industry and CBA to grow rapidly in consumption and investment areas (Miettunen,

2016). The researchers claimed that the efficient condition for sport growth outside and inside China is actually for accelerating the development of CBA and is a very hard-won historical opportunity, optimizing

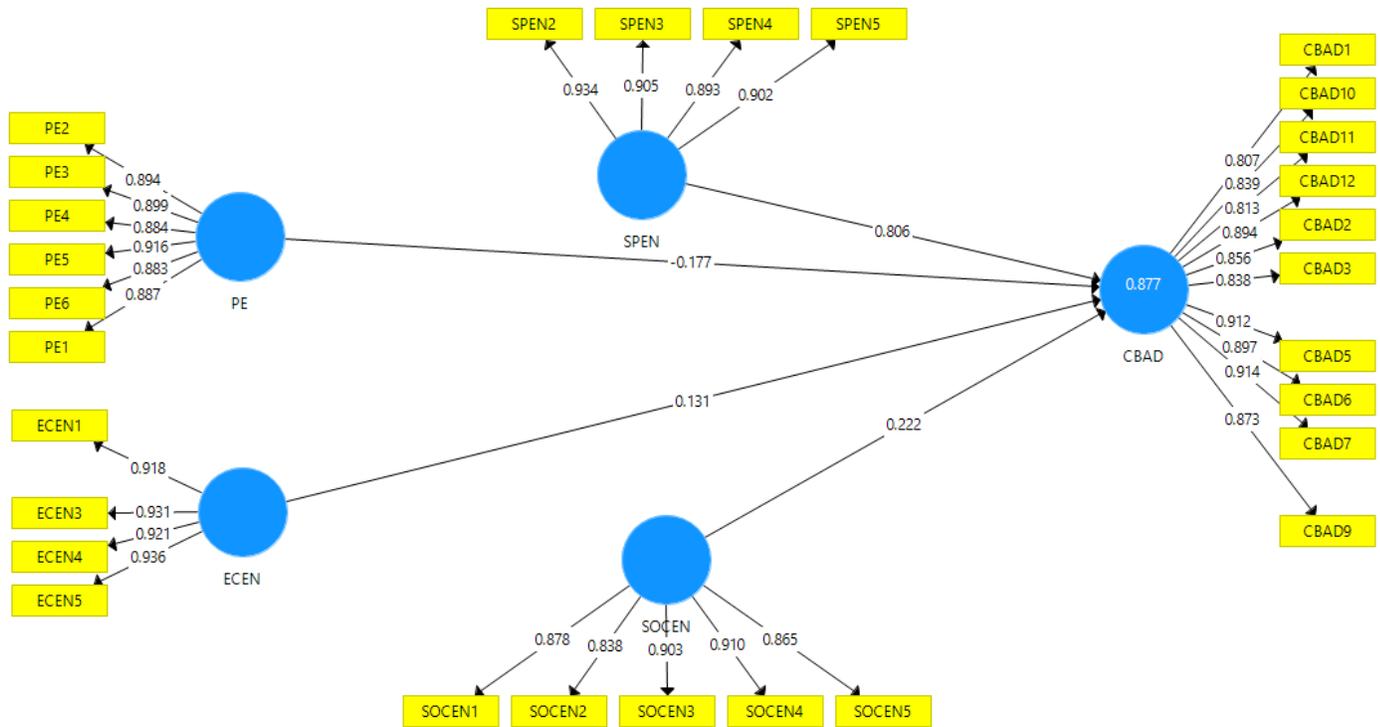


Figure 1: Measurement Model

the structure of CBA, especially for the introduction of strategic investment, rapid upgrading of the CBA chain, accelerating the innovation (Norhatan, 2018).

H4: The Chinese sports environment has significant impact on the development of Chinese baseball association.

Methodology

For collecting the data from selected respondents in the present study we have developed a self-administered questionnaire to carry out the data analysis we have adopted the statistical tools and procedures. In the present study we have also calculated both inferential and statistical techniques. We have selected the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for inferential statistics; hence we have tested the hypotheses of present study were analyzed and tested by using the PLS-SEM technique. According to Jagannarayan, Jayachitra, and Hegde (2020) usually we employ the PLS-SEM to analyze the complex and multiple relations between the observed and latent variables. According to the studies of Ong and Puteh (2017) and Naala, Nordin, and Omar (2017) the PLS-SEM

technique is most appropriate for testing the theories, outcome prediction and formulation of models. Consequently, for data analysis if we compare the PLS-SEM with other techniques the PLS is comparatively is more flexible, powerful, and superior. The researcher has made some important efforts for getting maximum response rate. As a result, we have received 325 questionnaires back out of 400. Moreover, during the process of sorting the data we have discarded 15 questionnaires as they were not having the proper information, so the response rate forms this survey was 81 percent.

Results

The PLS analysis consist of two stages, the first stage is the assessment of measurement or outer model whereas the assessment of structural or inner model is the second one. According to the study of Hair, Hult, and Ringle (2016) the focus of outer model is on the determination of relations among exogenous latent constructs and their indicators, whereas the structural model specify the relations between exogenous and endogenous latent variables in the model. So, for the estimation

of these models we have employed the PLS3 as it's the best software for the assessment of measurement inner and outer models (Ringle, Sarstedt, & Mitchell, 2018).

In the following research in the first step the outer model was estimated with the determination of some important measures, such as the internal consistency reliability, reliability of the construct the discriminant and convergent validates (Hair, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019; Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015; Ringle et al., 2018).

Mainly, for the reliability of item we have measured the outer loadings for each construct which are acceptable if they

lie between 0.40-0.70 (Hair et al., 2019), though if the value of outer loadings will be more suitable if it surpass 0.70 (Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016). In addition to this if the range of item loading is between the range of 0.81-1.00 then it indicates the very strong loadings (Hair et al., 2019). Hair et al. (2016) has suggested that when the values lie between range of 0.5 to 0.8 the loadings are considered as moderate and if its above 0.70 then the item loadings would be reflected as essential (Hair, Matthews, Matthews, & Sarstedt, 2017).

Table 1.

Outer Loadings

	CBAD	ECEN	PE	SOCEN	SPEN
CBAD1	0.807				
CBAD10	0.839				
CBAD11	0.813				
CBAD12	0.894				
CBAD2	0.856				
CBAD3	0.838				
CBAD5	0.912				
CBAD6	0.897				
CBAD7	0.914				
CBAD9	0.873				
ECEN1		0.918			
ECEN3		0.931			
ECEN4		0.921			
ECEN5		0.936			
PE1			0.887		
PE2			0.894		
PE3			0.899		
PE4			0.884		
PE5			0.916		
PE6			0.883		
SOCEN1				0.878	
SOCEN2				0.838	
SOCEN3				0.903	
SOCEN4				0.910	
SOCEN5				0.865	
SPEN2					0.934
SPEN3					0.905
SPEN4					0.893
SPEN5					0.902

Table 2:
Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CBAD	0.962	0.964	0.967	0.749
ECEN	0.945	0.946	0.961	0.859
PE	0.950	0.952	0.960	0.799
SOCEN	0.926	0.928	0.944	0.773
SPEN	0.929	0.930	0.950	0.825

On the basis of the assumptions of Cronbach alpha coefficient there is an equal contribution all items for their individual constructs. According to the studies of Hair et al. (2016) and Akter, Fosso Wamba, and Dewan (2017) the changes in outer loadings of an indicator are measured by the composite reliability. Hence for the determination of convergent validity of each construct we have calculated the outer loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). As for each indicator the AVE provides the value of the square loadings. After the convergent validity we have measured the discriminant validity as well which describes the degree at which specific measures is different from the other

empirical items (Akter et al., 2017). If we establish the discriminant validity it indicates that the specific construct is different as it cannot measure the certain phenomena from the outside boundaries (Asada, Basheerb, & Irfanc, 2020; Hair et al., 2017).

For the assessment of discriminant validity of the construct we commonly use the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross loadings research methods. Though in the present study we have used the AVE analysis to check that for two latent constructs the correlation values are exceeded by the AVE's square values. Meanwhile for this study we have achieved the appropriate level of discriminant validity which ensured the estimation of MM.

Table 3:
Validity

	CBAD	ECEN	PE	SOCEN	SPEN
CBAD	0.865				
ECEN	0.701	0.897			
PE	0.694	0.885	0.894		
SOCEN	0.738	0.814	0.811	0.879	
SPEN	0.723	0.649	0.686	0.691	0.898

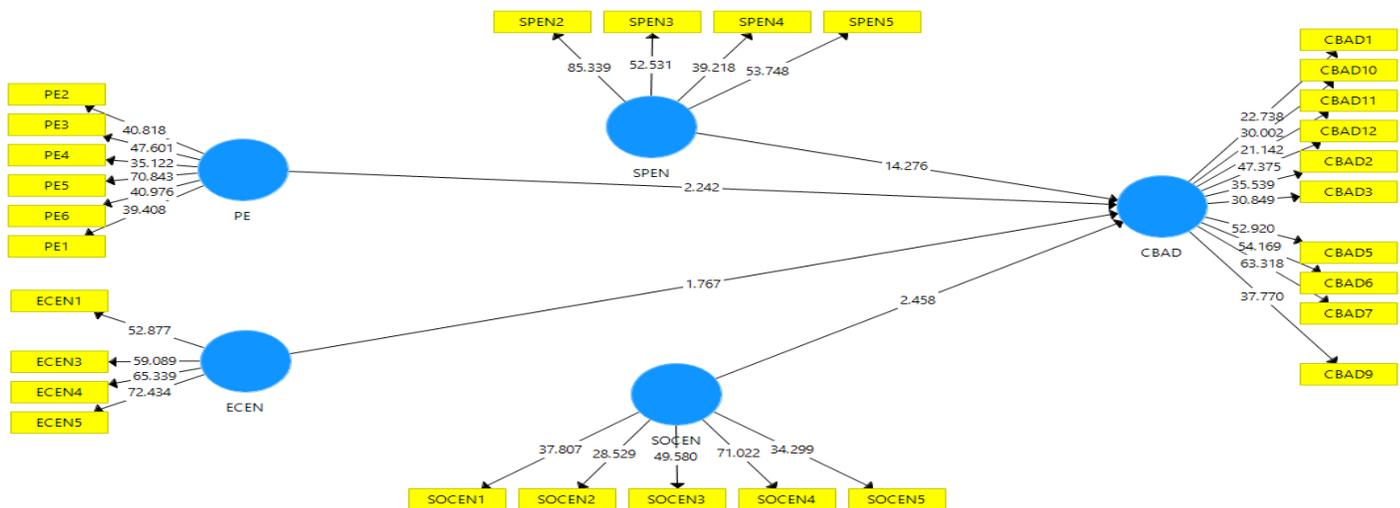


Figure 2: Structural model

We have determined the inner model with analyzing the link among the predictive ability of the model and exogenous and endogenous latent constructs (Hair et al., 2017; Hameed, Nawaz, Basheer, & Waseem, 2019). Additionally, we have performed the path-coefficient analysis as well for checking the hypothesized relations among the exogenous and endogenous latent constructs of model. In order to check the significance of

path-coefficients and their relations we have chosen the 5000 samples for 361 cases. To test the purposed hypothesis, we have obtained the path-coefficients' significance, beta coefficients, t-statistics, and the standard errors from this process (Hair et al., 2016; Hameed, Waseem, & Dahri, 2020; Henseler et al., 2016).

Table 4: Structural relationships

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard (STDEV)	Deviation	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
ECEN -> CBAD	0.131	0.139	0.074		1.767	0.039
PE -> CBAD	-0.177	-0.173	0.079		2.242	0.012
SOCEN -> CBAD	0.222	0.221	0.090		2.458	0.007
SPEN -> CBAD	0.806	0.796	0.056		14.276	0.000

We can measure the structural model with the coefficient of determination i.e. R- square and for the estimation of inner model it is the most powerful and common measure (Henseler et al., 2016). The coefficient of determination and the

correlation coefficient are similar in some respects. We have signified the values of R-square in the percentage form which describes the predictive ability of the model (Akter et al., 2017).

Table 5:

R-square

	R Square
CBAD	0.877

With the measurement of effect size (f²) we can determine the changes in the values of R-square. Basically, the effect size explains that if we drop some independent construct then how

much change it will bring in the value of R-square. According to the literature if the value of f² is 0.35, 0.15 and 0.02 then the effect size will be significant, medium and small respectively.

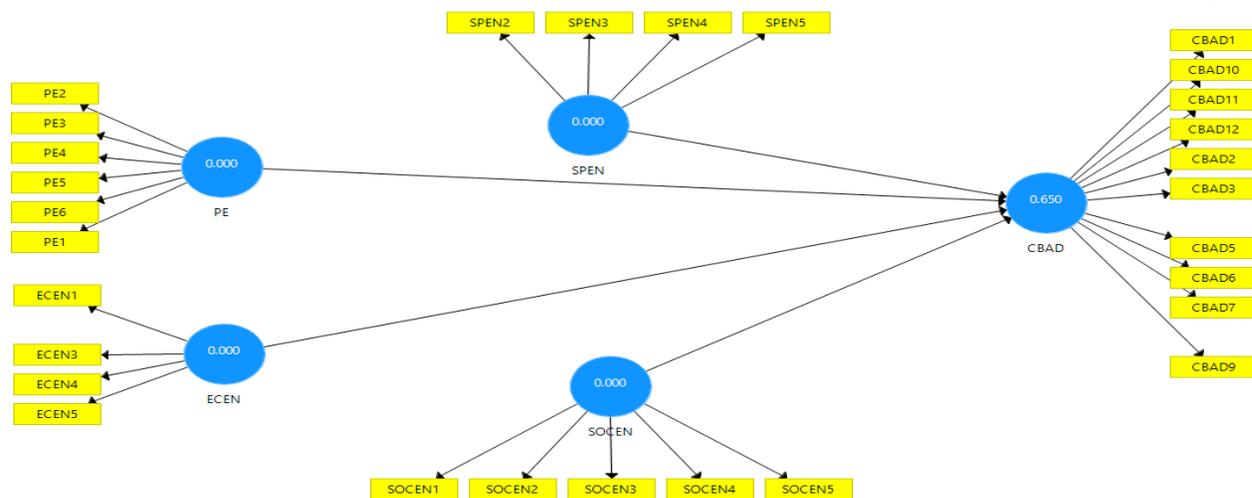


Figure 3: Blindfolding

In PLS-SEM by applying the Stone-Geisser's Q² test we can check the model's goodness of fit. Consequently, for checking the model's predictive relevance we have combined the Stone

Geisser's test with blindfolding procedure (Basheer, Hameed, Rashid, & Nadim, 2019; Hair et al., 2016). The value of Q-square must be greater than zero as if it would be greater than zero then

it indicates the presence of predictive relevance. In contrast there will be no predictive relevance if the value of Q^2 is less than 0.

Table 6.

Q-Square

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
CBAD	2170.000	759.611	0.650

Conclusion

There are encouraging economic environment, social environment, political environment, and sport environment for the development and reform of CBA, with good opportunities and benefits, which offer benefits to CBA in terms of its growth. Similarly, CBA should know about its restrictions. The growth of CBA strategy should be: overall power for the CBA growth, further base enhancement, self-reliance and independent, by virtue of external forces instead of depending on external forces, insisting the principle of being regulated by the market operation and government, enhancing the consciousness of service, transforming the ideas, and further associating with foreign organizations to grow the Chinese basketball market in an open attitude. Again in 2002, Houston Rockets drafted Yao Ming, which led to the inauguration of the golden era of NBA in China. As per the NBA, Yao Ming fame in China added 3.7 billion new viewers to the NBA which increased its fan base (Glazier & Mehdizadeh, 2019). In 2004, the NBA organized two pre-season games in two different cities of China i.e. Shanghai and Beijing. A couple of months before this event the house was full and all tickets were sold out, which also increased the trend of Chinese companies sponsoring the event, and is a strong indication to the NBA that penetrating the Chinese market was a very efficient move (Lee & Tan, 2019).

In July 2011, Yao Ming announced his retirement and with that the NBA's growth transitioned towards steady

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development stage. During the past few years, NBA took advantage from the China's fast growth in the fields of internet and started new collaborations among several latest media companies (Lee & Tan, 2019). However, a decline is reported in the viewership of NBA's televised events, meanwhile, NBA's collaboration with the Tencent and Sina (internet giants in China) have resulted in remarkable social and economic benefits for the NBA (Fu, 2017). Due to (Edelman, 2020). In 2012, Jeremy Lin, a Taiwanese American descent, broke the "Linsanity" wave towards China. In April 2016, Cui, Liu, and Bao (2019) who was a Basketball player from China, declared his membership in the NBA draft. Whenever the player joins, it is expected to bring more elevation to the NBA in China (Daily, 2015). Therefore, it can be stated that NBA's process of development took almost 30 years to progress in several markets of China (Lee & Tan, 2019).

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