

THE CHINESE PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL LEAGUE CLUB SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INFLUENCES FANS' LOYALTY THROUGH THE TEAM IDENTIFICATION AND FAN TRUST

A RESPONSABILIDADE SOCIAL DOS CLUBES DA LIGA PROFISSIONAL DE BASQUETE DA CHINA INFLUENCIA A LEALDADE DOS TORCEDORES POR MEIO DA IDENTIFICAÇÃO COM O TIME E DA CONFIANÇA DOS TORCEDORES

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Abstract

The development of the sports industry and the maturity of the market environment have become key factors driving professional sports clubs to emphasize corporate social responsibility. This paper explores the influence mechanism of professional sports clubs' social responsibility on fan loyalty through the mediating role of team identification and fan trust. Using partial least squares structural equation modeling with 507 valid questionnaires from Liaoning, Beijing, and Zhejiang regions of China, the study was conducted to quantitatively analyze the impact of professional sports clubs' social responsibility on fans' loyalty. The results show that: professional sports clubs' social responsibility positively affects team identification and fan trust; team identification and fan trust positively reinforce fan loyalty. In addition, team identification and fan trust play a significant mediating role in the relationship between professional sports clubs' social responsibility and fan loyalty. This study not only provides empirical evidence for Chinese professional basketball league (CBA) clubs to formulate social responsibility strategies and improve market performance, but also provides an important reference for the sustainable development of the whole sports industry.

Keywords: Chinese Professional Basketball League (CBA) Club Social Responsibility. Fan Trust Team Identification. Fan Loyalty.

Resumo

O desenvolvimento da indústria do esporte e a maturidade do ambiente de mercado tornaram-se fatores-chave que levam os clubes esportivos profissionais a enfatizar a responsabilidade social corporativa. Este artigo explora o mecanismo de influência da responsabilidade social dos clubes esportivos profissionais sobre a lealdade dos torcedores por meio do papel mediador da identificação com o time e da confiança dos torcedores. Utilizando a modelagem de equações estruturais por mínimos quadrados parciais com 507 questionários válidos das regiões de Liaoning, Pequim e Zhejiang, na China, o estudo foi conduzido para analisar quantitativamente o impacto da responsabilidade social dos clubes esportivos profissionais na lealdade dos torcedores. Os resultados mostram que: a responsabilidade social dos clubes esportivos profissionais afeta positivamente a identificação com o time e a confiança dos torcedores; a identificação com o time e a confiança dos torcedores reforçam positivamente a lealdade dos torcedores. Além disso, a identificação com o time e a confiança dos torcedores desempenham um papel mediador significativo na relação entre a responsabilidade social dos clubes esportivos profissionais e a lealdade dos torcedores. Este estudo não apenas fornece evidências empíricas para que os clubes da Liga Profissional de Basquete da China (CBA) formulem estratégias de responsabilidade social e melhorem o desempenho no mercado, mas também oferece uma referência importante para



o desenvolvimento sustentável de toda a indústria do esporte.

Palavras-chave: *Liga Profissional de Basquete da China (CBA). Responsabilidade Social dos Clubes. Confiança dos Torcedores Identificação com o Time. Lealdade dos Torcedores.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the rapid development of China's sports industry and the increasingly mature market environment have continuously driven professional sports clubs to deepen their understanding of social responsibility. As the core force of China's professional sports sector, CBA clubs have expanded their role from being mere operators of competitive events to becoming comprehensive social responsibility bearers that integrate youth basketball development, community sports services, charitable practices, and industry standard-setting (Qiao, 2022). Actively practicing social responsibility has not only become a key pathway for clubs to shape their brand image but also profoundly influences fans' consumption behavior and long-term support intentions through emotional connections and value resonance, serving as a crucial bond for maintaining fan loyalty (Walker & Kent, 2009).

Meanwhile, as fans' consumption awareness awakens and their value demands upgrade, their evaluation of clubs is no longer limited to competitive performance but also focuses on the values and social contributions conveyed by their social responsibility practices. When deciding whether to maintain high loyalty (such as continuing to watch games, purchasing merchandise, and actively spreading word-of-mouth), fans not only consider the content and depth of a club's social responsibility practices but also focus on how these practices are transformed into stable support behavior through emotional recognition and trust perception.

Related research has preliminarily confirmed the positive correlation between CBA club social responsibility and fan loyalty. For example, Song, Bing, Geng (2020) pointed out that a club's community involvement and charitable contributions can significantly enhance fans' emotional belonging; Bao, Mingxiao (2020) found in their empirical research that social responsibility practices are positively correlated with fan

loyalty. However, the academic community has yet to systematically reveal the underlying mechanisms through which social responsibility influences fan loyalty via the two core mediating variables of team identity and fan trust. As the key psychological link connecting external social responsibility practices with fans' internal attitudes, team identity (emotional and value-based belonging) and fan trust (perceptions of the club's goodwill and reliability) can effectively explain how social responsibility behaviors shape fans' long-term support intentions through cognitive-emotional pathways.

Based on CSR theory and the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory, this study constructs a theoretical model and hypotheses, focusing on the mediating roles of team identity and fan trust, to explore the influence mechanism of CBA club CSR on fan loyalty. This study further deepens the application of CSR and SOR theory in the sports consumption field, providing a new perspective on the psychological logic underlying fan loyalty formation. It also offers empirical support for CBA clubs to develop precise CSR strategies, stabilize core fan groups, and enhance brand long-term value, while injecting theoretical momentum into the sustainable development of China's sports industry.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 CSR theory

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) theory originated in the fields of business ethics and management, emphasizing that organizations should not only pursue pure profit maximization but also assume responsibility toward diverse stakeholders, including society, the environment, employees, and the public. This theory posits that businesses or organizations should not only pursue economic interests but also actively engage in behaviors that contribute to social welfare, environmental protection, community development, and the well-being of stakeholders (Carroll, 1991). In the professional sports sector, this means that CBA clubs, as key social organizations, have responsibilities that extend beyond competitive performance and economic operations to include youth talent development, community sports services, philanthropic initiatives, and the promotion of positive values. This ultimately fosters sustainable support behaviors such as fan loyalty. Therefore, CSR theory provides a framework for exploring how sports

organizations can balance social obligations and stakeholder relationships to achieve sustainable growth.

2.2 SOR theory

The S-O-R theoretical framework (stimulus-organism-response) originates from the field of environmental psychology and is used to study the effects of various internal and external stimuli related to the organism on an individual's cognitive or psychological responses, as well as the subsequent predictions of behavior. This theory posits that stimuli in the environment (S) can influence and alter an individual's internal or organismic state (O), These internal states, in turn, trigger the individual's approach or avoidance responses (R) (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). CBA clubs implement social responsibility measures across various domains, enabling fans to perceive a positive image of responsibility, thereby serving as an important stimulus source (S) for fans' physiological cognition and perception, and inducing changes in their perception of the club (O). This influences fans' identification with and trust in the club, ultimately leading to fan consumption intentions or behavioral responses (R). Therefore, using the SOR theory as a research framework, this study aims to reveal the relationship between professional sports clubs' social responsibility, team identification, fan trust, and fan loyalty.

2.3 CBA social responsibility and fans' loyalty

Social Responsibility and Fans' Loyalty Professional sports clubs' social responsibility can enhance fans' loyalty. Turker,D. (2009) suggests that active fulfillment of social responsibility by sports organizations helps shape a positive brand image, strengthening fans' emotional attachment and long- term support. Zhang.L(2000) argue that fans' perceptions of clubs' social responsibility behaviors are closely related to their loyalty, as responsible practices convey the club's commitment to society and fans, thereby enhancing sustainable support. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: The Chinese Professional Basketball League club social responsibility has a direct and positive impact on fans' loyalty.

2.4 CBA social responsibility and team identification

Social responsibility can enhance fans' team identification. In the context of professional sports, social identity theory suggests that fans tend to identify with clubs that demonstrate social responsibility, as such behaviors align with their own values and enhance a sense of belonging Bauer, H(2008). Similarly, Funk, D.C., & James, J.D(2006), through a survey of 320 sports fans, found that clubs' participation in community service and public welfare activities significantly improves fans' team identification, as fans perceive the club as a responsible and community-oriented organization. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: The Chinese Professional Basketball League club social responsibility has a direct and positive impact on the team identification.

2.5 CBA social responsibility and fan trust

Social responsibility can enhance fans' trust in the club. Based on trust theory, fans' trust in clubs is built on perceptions of the club's integrity and benevolence. Kim, W(2020) identified that transparent and sustained social responsibility practices help fans perceive the club as reliable and altruistic, thereby enhancing trust. Liu et al. (2023) studied the relationship between sports organization responsibility and stakeholder trust, revealing that responsible behaviors (such as public welfare investment and community engagement) significantly improve fans' trust levels. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: The Chinese Professional Basketball League club social responsibility has a direct and positive impact on the fan trust.

2.6 Team identification and fans' loyalty

Team identification can enhance fans' loyalty. Social identity theory emphasizes that strong team identification drives fans to maintain consistent support behaviors. Chadwick, S., & Beech, J. (2006) demonstrated through empirical research that fans with high team identification are more likely to engage in frequent watching, merchandise consumption, and word-of-mouth promotion, which are key manifestations of loyalty. Kunkel, T. (2017) further confirmed that emotional and cognitive identification with the team directly strengthens long-term loyalty. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: The Team identification has a direct and positive impact on fans' loyalty.

2.7 Fan trust and fans' loyalty

Fan trust can enhance fans' loyalty. In the context of sports consumption, trust is a core factor maintaining long-term relationships between fans and clubs. Yan, C. (2011) argued that fans' trust in clubs (including trust in the club's integrity and responsibility fulfillment) negatively correlates with switching behavior, thereby promoting stable loyalty. Ruyter, K. D. (2000) found that high trust levels make fans more tolerant of club shortcomings and more willing to maintain sustained support. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: The Fan trust has a direct and positive impact on fans' loyalty.

2.8 CBA social responsibility, team identification and fans' loyalty

Social responsibility can enhance team identification, thereby strengthening fans' loyalty. Drawing from social identity theory and structural equation modeling, Maignan, I., & Ferrell, O. C. (2000) identified that team identification serves as a mediator between sports club social responsibility and fan loyalty, as responsible behaviors first enhance fans' sense of belonging and then translate into sustained support. Li et al. (2022) also confirmed that the impact of social responsibility on loyalty is

partially transmitted through team identification in the context of professional basketball leagues. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6: The Chinese Professional Basketball League club social responsibility has an indirect effect on fans' loyalty through the team identification.

2.9 CBA social responsibility, fan trust and fans' loyalty

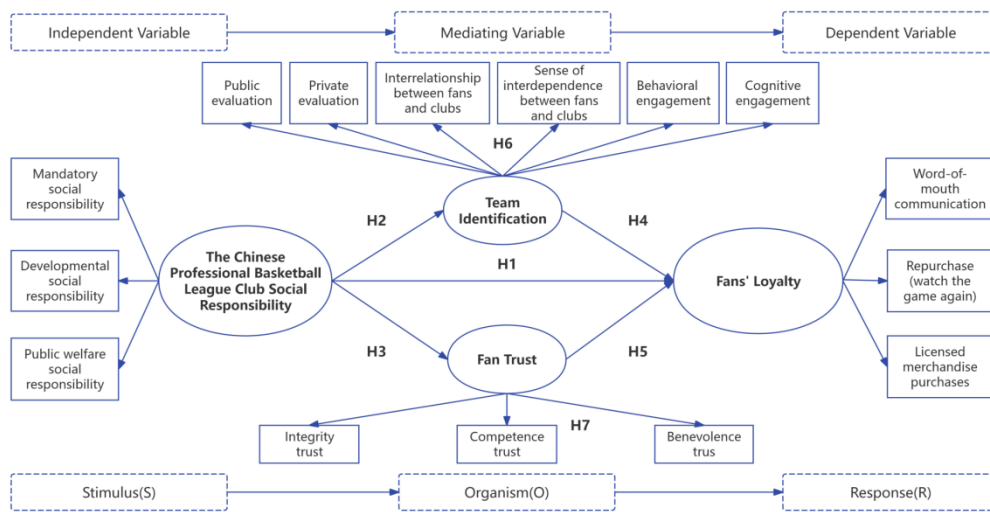
Social responsibility can enhance fan trust, thereby strengthening fans' loyalty. Based on the trust-transfer model, Zhang,L(2001)found that fans' positive perceptions of club social responsibility are transferred to trust in the club, which in turn promotes loyalty. Zheng,W.(2012) studied CBA fans and revealed that fan trust plays a significant mediating role between social responsibility and loyalty, as responsible practices reduce fans' uncertainty and enhance their willingness to maintain long-term relationships. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H7: The Chinese Professional Basketball League club social responsibility has an indirect effect on fans' loyalty through the fan trust.

2.10 Research model

Based on the literature review and research hypotheses, the conceptual model of the impact of CBA club social responsibility on fans' loyalty through team identification and fan trust is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Conceptual model



3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants and sample design

The target population consists of both current and potential fans of CBA clubs, with a particular focus on individuals from key cities with active CBA fan bases, such as Beijing, Liaoning, Zhejiang, Jilin and Guangzhou. In order to break through geographical limitations, this paper used the online platform to distribute electronic questionnaires in these cities simultaneously. The researchers collected a total of 550 questionnaires. After eliminating invalid questionnaires (e.g., incomplete responses, inconsistent answers), a total of 507 valid questionnaires were obtained, with an effective recovery rate of 92.1%.

3.2 Measurement

This study employs established measurement scales from both domestic and international sources to measure the variables, with modifications made to the items to align with the specific context of Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) fans. The CBA Club Social Responsibility Scale comprises 24 items, measuring the variable across three dimensions: mandatory social responsibility, developmental social responsibility, and

philanthropic social responsibility, drawing on Liu (2023)'s scale. The Team Identification Scale comprises 18 items, measuring the variable across six dimensions: public evaluation, private evaluation, the relationship and mutual influence between fans and the club, and participation behavior and cognitive awareness. It draws on scales developed by Song,H(2005)and Kunkel,T(2017). The fan trust scale includes nine items, measuring the variable through three dimensions: capability trust, integrity trust, and goodwill trust, adapted from Zhang (2022) and Liu et al. (2023). The fan loyalty scale consists of 11 items, measuring the variable through three dimensions: rewatching matches, purchasing licensed merchandise, and word-of-mouth recommendations. It is adapted from McDonald, M.,&Shaw, J.(2005).

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This study constructed a SEM model and used SPSS and AMOS software to test its validity and reliability and analyze path coefficients to verify the proposed hypotheses.

4.1 Reliability and validity analysis

Reliability analysis, also known as validity analysis, is a test of the stability, consistency, and reliability of measurement results. To ensure the accuracy of measurement results, reliability analysis must be conducted on the valid data in the questionnaire prior to analysis. Currently, in social science research, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is commonly used for analysis. Generally, if the reliability coefficient is above 0.9, it indicates very good reliability; if it is between 0.8 and 0.9, it indicates good reliability; if it is between 0.7 and 0.8, it indicates fair reliability; if it is between 0.6 and 0.7, it indicates acceptable reliability; and if it is below 0.6, it indicates that revisions are needed.

Validity refers to the extent to which a test or measurement tool can accurately measure the desired psychological and behavioral characteristics, i.e., the accuracy and reliability of the test results. Generally, the smaller the significance level of Bartlett's sphericity test ($P < 0.05$), the more likely it is that there is a meaningful relationship between the original variables. The KMO value is used to compare simple correlation and

partial correlation coefficients between items, with values ranging from 0 to 1. The criteria for determining suitability for factor analysis are as follows: greater than 0.9 indicates very suitable; 0.7-0.9 indicates suitable; 0.6-0.7 indicates somewhat suitable; 0.6–0.5 indicates not very suitable; and below 0.5 indicates unsuitable. The Bartlett sphericity test value is used to determine whether the correlation coefficients between items are significant. If the significance level is less than 0.05, it indicates that each item is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 1

Cronbach's coefficients for each variable

Variable	Dimension	Cronbach's α	Total Cronbach's α	Overall Cronbach's α
Fan's loyalty	Word-of-mouth communication	0.870	0.869	0.949
	Repurchase (watch the game again)	0.851		
	Licensed merchandise purchases	0.824		
CBA club social responsibility	Mandatory social responsibility	0.905	0.932	
	Developmental social responsibility	0.931		
	Public welfare responsibility	0.891		
	Public evaluation	0.824		
Team identification	Private evaluation	0.787	0.887	
	Interrelationship between fans and clubs	0.775		
	Sence of interdependence between fans and clubs	0.811		
	Behavioral engagement	0.805		
	cognitive awareness	0.816		
Fan trust	Competence trust	0.824	0.845	
	Integrity trust	0.808		
	Benevolence trust	0.811		

As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all dimensions are greater than 0.7, indicating that the reliability of the research data is high and can be used for further analysis.

Table 2

Overall KMO and Bartlett's spherical inspection results

KMO value		0.926
Bartlett sphericity test	Chi-square	17355.667
	df	1891
	P-value	0.000

Validity was verified using KMO and Bartlett's tests. As shown in the table above, the KMO value is 0.926, which is greater than 0.8, indicating that the research data is very suitable for extracting information (reflecting good validity) and can be used for factor analysis.

4.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

In the process of constructing a structural equation model, the first step is to conduct a model fit test to determine whether the model can adequately describe the relationships between observed variables and latent variables. Evaluating the fit of a model is a complex task, as different fit indices emphasize different aspects of the model. Therefore, it is generally agreed that the quality of a model should not be assessed using a single index but rather through a comprehensive evaluation of multiple indices. This study examines model fit primarily based on three types of indicators: absolute fit indicators, relative fit indicators, and parsimonious fit indicators. The absolute fit indicators used include the chi-square-to-degrees-of-freedom ratio (χ^2/df), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), normality fit index (NFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI).

The results show that the fit indices of all core models meet general standards: the χ^2/df of the fan loyalty model is 2.879 (<3), the RMSEA is 0.061 (<0.08), and the GFI, NFI, and NNFI are 0.958, 0.956, and 0.961, respectively; The CBA club model had an χ^2/df of 2.214 (<3), an RMSEA of 0.049 (<0.08), and GFI, NFI, and NNFI values of 0.906, 0.925, and 0.952, respectively; The χ^2/df of the team identity model is 2.395 (<3), the RMSEA is 0.053 (<0.08), and the GFI, NFI, and NNFI are 0.940, 0.927, and 0.944, respectively; The fan trust model has an χ^2/df of 2.067 (<3), an RMSEA of 0.046 (<0.08), and GFI, NFI, and NNFI values of 0.979, 0.973, and 0.979, respectively. All indicators meet the excellent standard, indicating that the models fit well.

4.3 Convergent validity analysis

Combined reliability (CR) is one of the criteria for assessing the internal quality of a model, reflecting whether all items in each latent variable consistently explain that

latent variable. A CR greater than 0.7 indicates that all items in each latent variable can consistently explain that latent variable. The convergent validity of each dimension is reflected by the average variance extracted (AVE), which is typically used to indicate the convergent validity of a scale. It directly shows the proportion of variance explained by the latent variable that is attributable to measurement error. The larger the AVE value, the higher the percentage of variance in the measured variables explained by the latent variables, and the smaller the measurement error. Generally, the AVE value should be above 0.5. After testing, all AVE values were greater than 0.5, and all CR values were higher than 0.7. This indicates that the questionnaire structure model has good convergent validity.

4.4 Discriminant validity analysis

Figure 2

Distinguishing validity: Pearson correlation and AVE square root values

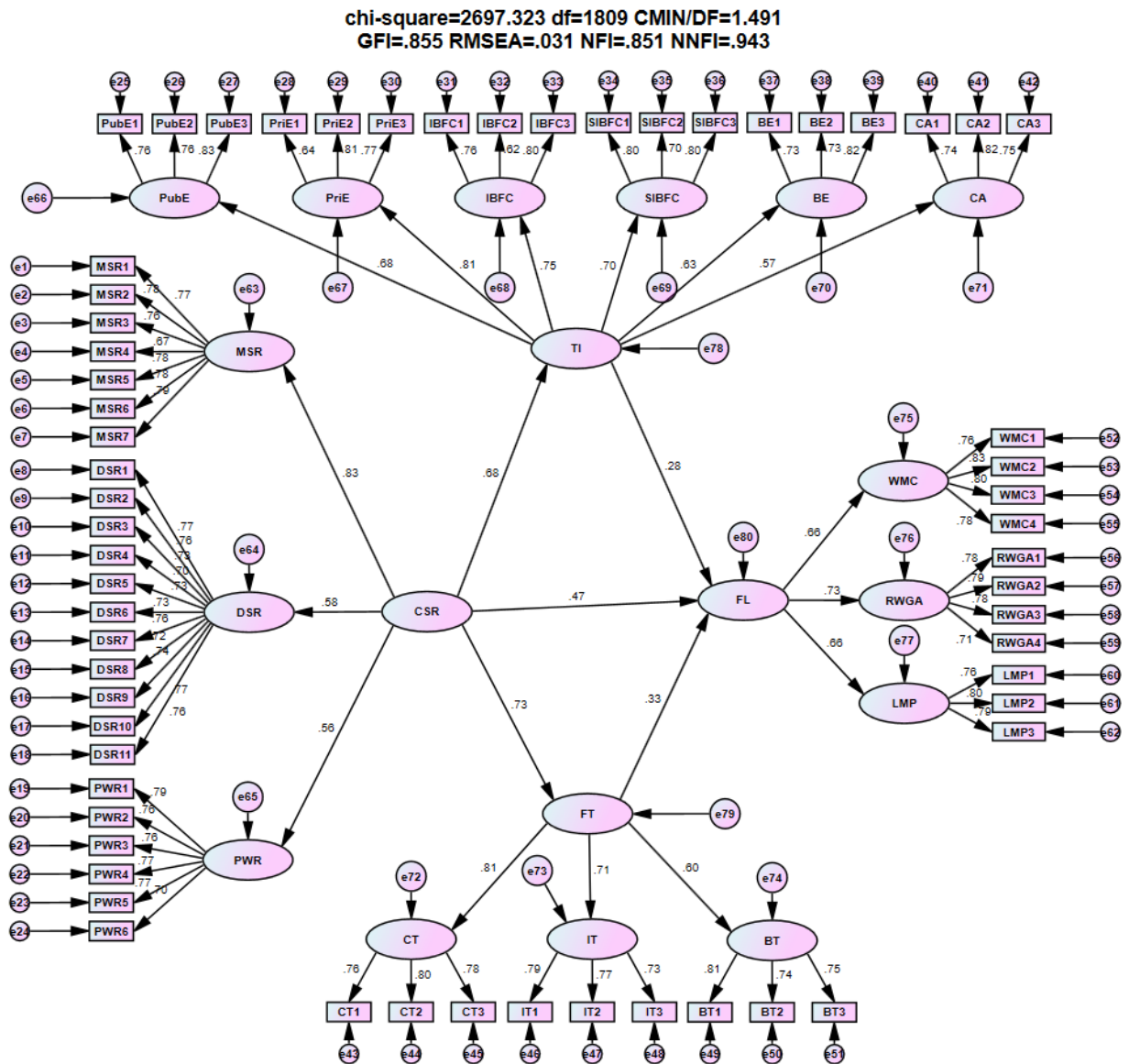
Distinguishing validity: Pearson correlation and AVE square root values															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
WMC (1)	0.793														
RWG A (2)	0.394*	0.768													
LMP (3)	0.418*	0.408*	0.781												
MSR (4)	0.467*	0.439*	0.413*	0.761											
DSR (5)	0.287*	0.359*	0.268*	0.444*	0.742										
PWR (6)	0.300*	0.302*	0.305*	0.422*	0.428*	0.76									
PubE (7)	0.267*	0.342*	0.273*	0.299*	0.166*	0.150*	0.783								
PriE (8)	0.340*	0.352*	0.352*	0.312*	0.241*	0.242*	0.449*	0.746							
IBFC (9)	0.294*	0.357*	0.259*	0.352*	0.246*	0.208*	0.465*	0.437*	0.731						
SIBFC (10)	0.308*	0.434*	0.275*	0.345*	0.307*	0.261*	0.345*	0.439*	0.358*	0.768					
BE (11)	0.288*	0.308*	0.270*	.331**	0.173*	0.188*	0.305*	0.410*	0.385*	0.337*	0.762				
CA (12)	0.209*	0.209*	0.220*	.208**	0.161*	0.101*	0.335*	0.369*	0.298*	0.351*	0.298*	0.771			
CT (13)	0.425*	0.411*	0.390*	.466**	0.240*	0.209*	0.306*	0.321*	0.290*	0.322*	0.252*	.238**	0.781		
IT (14)	0.322*	0.388*	0.303*	.406**	0.197*	0.201*	0.235*	0.314*	0.240*	0.278*	0.227*	0.188*	0.408*	0.764	
BT (15)	0.183*	0.271*	0.215*	.267**	0.102*	0.103*	0.184*	0.228*	0.183*	0.156*	0.150*	0.172*	0.430*	0.405	0.767
AVE	0.629	0.589	0.61	0.579	0.551	0.577	0.613	0.556	0.535	0.589	0.581	0.594	0.611	0.584	0.589

One method for testing discriminant validity involves comparing the correlation coefficient with the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE). The principle behind this is that each dimension has an AVE value and a correlation coefficient with other dimensions. If the square root of the factor AVE is greater than the correlation coefficient between factors, this indicates good discriminant validity. As shown in Figure 2, the square root values of the AVE for each factor are greater than the maximum absolute value of the correlation coefficients between factors, indicating good discriminant validity.

4.5 Structural equation model test

Based on the seven research hypotheses proposed earlier, this study constructed a structural equation model incorporating the logical relationships among the core variables. The model clearly defines the path relationships between the independent variables (CBA club social responsibility), mediating variables (team identification, fan trust), and dependent variable (fan loyalty). Subsequently, the 507 valid questionnaire data collected were imported into AMOS 24.0 software for model calculation and goodness-of-fit testing, yielding the following results:

Figure 3
Structural Equation Modeling



In the process of constructing a structural equation model, the first step is to conduct a model fit test to determine whether the model can adequately describe the relationships between observed variables and latent variables. Evaluating the fit of a model is a complex task, as different fit indices emphasize different aspects of the model. Therefore, it is generally agreed that the quality of a model should not be assessed using a single index but rather through a comprehensive evaluation of multiple indices. In this study, the model fit is assessed primarily based on three types of indicators: absolute fit

indicators, relative fit indicators, and parsimonious fit indicators. The absolute fit indicators used include the chi-square-to-degrees-of-freedom ratio (χ^2/df), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), normality fit index (NFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI).

Table 3

Structural equation model fitting index

Index	Judging standard	Statistical value	Fit condition
CMIN	-	2697.323	-
DF	-	1809	-
CMIN/DF	<3	1.491	Good
GFI	>0.90	0.855	Acceptable
RMSEA	<0.08	0.031	Good
NFI	>0.90	0.851	Acceptable
NNFI	>0.90	0.945	Good

As shown in Table 3, the χ^2/df value is 1.491, which is less than 3; the RMSEA is 0.031, which is below the standard level of 0.08, indicating good fit; The GFI value is 0.855, and the NFI value is 0.851, which although not meeting the standard of greater than 0.9, have reached the minimum standard of greater than 0.8, falling within an acceptable range. The NNFI value is 0.945, meeting the excellent standard. All model fit indices meet acceptable standards, indicating good model fit.

Table 4

Hypotheses Testing Result of the Structural Model

	Path		Non-standard load factor	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized load coefficient	Hypothesis
FL	<---	CSR	0.395	0.105	3.771	***	0.466	H1
TI	<---	CSR	0.564	0.066	8.586	***	0.676	H2
FT	<---	CSR	0.712	0.076	9.421	***	0.73	H3
FL	<---	TI	0.281	0.078	3.595	***	0.276	H4
FL	<---	FT	0.291	0.083	3.5	***	0.335	H5

When $P < 0.05$, the path is significant. When the path is significant, a positive coefficient indicates that the independent variable has a significant positive effect on the dependent variable. As shown in the table above, the variables CBA club social responsibility, Team identification, and Fan trust all have a significant positive effect on the dependent variable Fan's loyalty.

4.6 Intermediate path check

To verify the mediating role of team identity and fan trust in the relationship between CBA club social responsibility and fan loyalty, this study employed the Bootstrap sampling technique in AMOS 24.0 software for statistical testing. Specifically, by conducting 5,000 repeated samples on 507 valid sample data points, a 95% confidence interval was constructed to assess the significance level of the mediating path. This method effectively avoids the strict reliance on data normality in traditional mediation effect tests, enhancing the robustness and accuracy of the results. The test results, including the effect values, confidence intervals, and significance judgments of each mediation path, are shown in the table below, providing reliable empirical support for revealing the underlying transmission mechanism through which social responsibility influences fan loyalty.

Table 5

The mediating Effect of Team identification, Fan trust on CBA club social responsibility and Fan's loyalty

Path	Effect type	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
	Direct effect	0.395	0.158	0.72	0.003
CBA club social responsibility=>Team identification=>Fan's loyalty	Indirect effect 1	0.158	0.065	0.278	0.006
CBA club social responsibility=>Fan trust=>Fan's loyalty	Indirect effect 2	0.207	0.076	0.379	0.009
	Total effect	0.365	0.198	0.591	0.002

Since the confidence interval does not include the number 0, it is significant. The two mediating paths CBA club social responsibility => Team identification => Fan loyalty and CBA club social responsibility => Fan trust => Fan loyalty are established.

This indicates that Team identification and Fan trust play a mediating role between CBA club social responsibility and Fan loyalty. The direct effect is significant, the indirect effect is significant, and the total effect is significant, indicating that Team identification and Fan trust play a partial mediating role.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study takes CBA fans as the research subjects and CBA club social responsibility practices as empirical research cases. It employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods to explore the impact of CBA club social responsibility on fan loyalty, as well as the underlying mechanisms through team identification and fan trust.

Through qualitative research, interviews were conducted to collect and present information on the relationships among variables such as CBA club social responsibility, team identification, fan trust, and fan loyalty, laying the foundation for subsequent quantitative research. Quantitative research methods were used to conduct surveys and collect data. Descriptive statistics, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and correlation analysis were performed on 507 valid questionnaires. Structural equation models were constructed using software such as SPSS and AMOS to analyze the collected data.

Through data modeling, the study revealed the influence pathways of CBA club social responsibility on fan loyalty, as well as the mediating roles of team identity and fan trust in these pathways. The following conclusions were drawn:

CBA club social responsibility has a significant impact on team identity. CBA club social responsibility has a significant impact on fan trust. CBA club social responsibility has a significant impact on fan loyalty. Team identity has a significant impact on fan loyalty. Fan trust has a significant impact on fan loyalty. CBA club social responsibility has a significant indirect impact on fan loyalty through team identity. CBA club social responsibility has a significant indirect impact on fan loyalty through fan trust.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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