**Impact of NBA Team Performance on Fan Engagement**

Business of Sports

1. **Introduction**

Winning is the goal of a professional sports team. But how does winning impact the NBA as a whole in each team’s area? We know that winning tends to boost a team’s attendance numbers (Munoz, Chen, and Thomas 2022). However, in this project I will be looking at the impact of winning on the NBA’s brand image and consumption. Using both localized Harris Brand Platform data and passive TV and computer/smartphone behavioral data, I will see how the NBA’s brand image changes as the local team wins or loses, and I will see how fans’ engagement level with the NBA changes.

1. **Methods**

I ran some time series analyses to plot each team’s performance against a bunch of the league’s engagement and brand image metrics in each team’s metro area. I also looked at the correlations between winning and each of the key consumer metrics. I also looked at metro areas that do not have a team or that are near multiple teams and compared my results in each of the different areas.

1. **Results**

There were a lot of interesting insights that I discovered in this project.

Firstly, playoff teams have a little more viewership in the playoffs than non-playoff teams. However, both playoff and non-playoff team areas get more viewership than areas with no NBA team.

I also found out that - as expected - the better a local team is, the more users from that area watch games. However, just being good for one month is not enough to change viewership too much. Rather, a team must have some sustained success to capture the interest of its audience.

A close-up of a number

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I also saw that being a better team slightly increases the team’s mobile/web interactions. However, this increase is not as noticeable as I expected.

And, perhaps most importantly, I saw that the NBA’s brand image metrics – such as its brand approval and reputation – in an area remain resistant to the local team’s performance.

A comparison of a graph

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1. **Conclusion**

In the end, being a better team helps increase local viewership, but it does not make a big impact on the league’s overall approval metrics in that area. The results of this project also support the league expanding to more cities, as this will increase overall league viewership in the new cities. In addition, the methodology used here can be applied to teams’ brand image metrics to see how resistant those are to the team’s performance.

**References**

[1] Munoz, Ercio, Chen, Jiadi and Thomas, Milan. "Jumping on the bandwagon? Attendance response to recent victories in the NBA" *Journal of Quantitative Analysis in Sports*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2022, pp. 161-170. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jqas-2020-0092>