
Identify and prioritise factors affecting sports consumer behaviour in Iran

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Abstract: One of the common features of all people, regardless of education level, income level and living location and so on, is that all of them are consumers. The key to a successful marketing strategy, both in terms of local and global aspects is to understand consumer behaviour. Therefore, the aim of this study was to identify and prioritise factors affecting sports consumer behaviour in Iran. The study was quantitative-qualitative research. Fuzzy Delphi method was used in this study. In this study, it was found that the marketing mix (product, price, distribution channels, promotion and advertising, service quality and brand personality), psychological factors (attitude, motivation, emotion, perception, past experience and consumer personality), individual factors (income, age, gender and education level), social factors (family, reference groups, social class and opinion leaders) and cultural factors (culture and religion) are factors influencing consumer behaviour. Also, AHP results show marketing mix is the most important influencing factor with 0.323 relative weights, then psychological factors (0.245), individual factors (0.185), social factors (0.141) and cultural factors (0.1077). This study determined companies have to highly pay attention to consumer and covering their demands (better than competitors) to obtain a high competitive advantage. On the other hand, the consumer has different approaches to buy products that are most noticed in programming marketing strategies.

Keywords: sports marketing; consumer behaviour; marketing mix; Iran.

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1 Introduction

Today, decision making about the sport and its related issues is clearly influenced by economic factors and economic organisations and business firms supervise and sometimes control the organising sports activities [Humphreys, (2008), p.6]. In recent decades, the expansion and development of sporting business events by economic enterprises have been achieved in the form of using sport as a means for ensuring the prosperity and development of business and commercial activities worldwide so as to access international markets. This process is not unique to athletic and professional sporting events and many of them are true even for (apparently) amateur sports [End et al., (2010), p.424].

1.1 Marketing in sport industry

The sports industry has quickly become global in its reach and its domain has developed everywhere and has expanded across the world, for the use of billions of people [Funk et al., (2009), p.129]. The importance of sports for the economy increases every day so that sports have become one of the most profitable sectors of the economy. Production of sporting goods now is one of the important industrial areas with various subsets and its domain is expanding day by day. Economically important sectors like sports tourism, sports companies and centres, an organisation of great sports conferences, the marketing industry, recreation, advertising, sports clubs and finally sport itself are the most important areas of the economy that are linked to sports. Orientation towards the market and achieving success under the aegis of such orientation are, at present, the most important goals of sports. The consequence of this process is further integration of sports with the economy in various forms. This integration has caused the sporting economy to become more important (Rahulana et al., 2013). On the other hand, in today's competitive world, companies primarily focus on customers and the satisfaction of their customers is the main factor in gaining competitive advantage. The necessity for obtaining customer satisfaction is to supply their needs completely and to identify the

needs, desires, expectations, abilities and their limitations accurately in providing and purchasing products. With access to such information, one can recognise factors influencing customers' behaviour of service organisations as well and use them in marketing decisions of companies [Abdolmaleki et al., (2014a), p.389]. In the modern world of business, understanding consumer behaviour and the identification of the main features of a product, which play an important role in the consumer's decision-making, constitute the main concern of the marketing programs of any organisation. Without a clear and accurate understanding of consumer behaviour, the organisations would be incapable of fulfilling the needs and demands of the consumers [Hawkins et al., (2003), p.22].

1.2 Consumer behaviour in sport marketing

One of the common features of all people, regardless of education level, income level, place of living and so on, is that all of them are consumers. This means that we consume or use food, clothing, housing, etc, based on a certain order. The key point for the success of marketing strategy, both in terms of local and global aspects, is to understand the consumer's behaviour [Nazari and Abed, (2011), p.133]. This fact is applied both to firms and non-profit organisations and government agencies that enact laws of marketing. However, understanding the consumer's behaviour and evaluating the performance of consumers in various communities is also of particular importance due to cultural differences [Shafieezadeh et al., (2013), p.16]. On the other hand, the existence and survival of all creatures and systems are related to enough input and consumption of resources, because any system and creature do not exist without consumption of resources. But what is important in the field of the existence and survival of systems is survival combined with success and one of the things that help the successful and unique survival of each system is the degree, level and the way of using related sources. Especially in the meantime in human entities, how to use facilities and resources has an important and strategic role in taking steps towards perfection [Davies and Cline, (2015), p.801].

Since successful sports marketing started with an understanding of why and how the behaviours of consumers and sports audiences occur, the understanding of the factors influencing sports consumers' preferences and behaviours can be considered the basis for decisions of sports consumers. The sports consumer's behaviour includes psychological and social processes which are there before and after the audiences' activities that tend towards various sporting products. How sports audiences think, how they behave, what factors influence their tendency towards different sports products and other questions of this kind are the key to the development of effective marketing programs so that the organisation and organisers of sporting events can achieve non-predetermined goals [Behnam et al., (2015a), p.39].

However, one of the major concerns of companies and factories from the past to the present has been the sale of their goods, but many managers of production units still have not found a way to increase sales of their goods and attract their consumers. It is observed every day that some shops are very busy and others with the similar products are quite empty [Anastasiadou, (2014), p.409]. Of course, there are factors other than product quality, which makes different the revenues of the shops. Therefore, according to the complexity of the customers' needs, entering into new markets requires investment in research and development, production, implementation and support of new products and

also needs its special infrastructures. Creation of these infrastructures and fulfilment of new products is generally associated with some costs in each industry and it is the appropriate sale of the products that can be a justification for these costs [Mihic and Kursan, (2010), p.51], but movement into the markets and new sales requires new strategies that for determination of them, the special parameters and factors affecting on this movement must be identified and the appropriate behaviour for them must be selected. Among these factors, the consumers' behaviour and what are effective in their selection are very important, because the ultimate goal of production and sale of new products is to obtain customers' satisfaction for survival in the market and continuation of profitability [Wootton and Horne, (2010), p.11].

1.3 Literature review

In this regard, Mohammadian and Khataei (2011) carried out a study entitled 'The relationship between psychological and social factors and green (pro-environment) consumer's behaviour'. They have prioritised the various factors that the priorities of psychological and social factors are environmental attitudes, (preventive) social norms, personal norms, perceived consumer effectiveness and the priorities of green consumer behaviour include green consumer purchasing behaviour, supporting environmental measures, protective behaviours towards the environment. Hamidi et al. (2011) in a study entitled 'Evaluation of factors influencing on purchasing behaviour of green products in the youth (case study: city of Tehran)' found that the young Tehran consumers have considerable awareness about green products and among the factors of social effects, environmental attitudes, environmental concerns, understanding the importance of environmental problems, people's understanding of social responsibilities, understanding the effectiveness of environmental behaviours and people's concerns from personal implication which are effective in inclination towards purchase in the youth, the four factors of social effects, environmental concerns, people's understanding of social responsibilities and people's concerns from personal implementation have the most effects. Ranjbarian et al. (2011) carried out a study entitled 'Investigation of consumption patterns in female students of Isfahan University'. The results showed that consumption patterns of the sample in selecting and consuming products were inclined to a dignifying pattern. Also, personal factors (tendency to be uniqueness) and social factors (attention to the information of social comparison) had a positive impact on dignifying consumption. In the field of consumption without attention to the role, personal factors (tendency to be uniqueness) and social factors (affectability from others and attention to the information of social comparison) had a negative impact on this consumption pattern. Ibrahimi et al. (2012) carried out a study under the title of 'Evaluation of the factors influencing on attitude and intention of consumers towards purchasing counterfeit products of luxury brands in clothing industry (case study: city of Sari)'. The results obtained from analysis of data showed that the variables of personal satisfaction, awareness from value, implication of price-quality, social impact, ethical issues, subjective norm, perceived risk and brand awareness had significant effects on individuals' attitudes towards counterfeit products, but the effects of variables of brand image, brand loyalty and risk aversion were not significant in attitude to counterfeit products. Also, the results showed that the attitude to the counterfeit product had a significant positive impact on the purchase intention of these products. Kharazmi et al. (2014) performed a study entitled

'Determination of the basic factors of the loyalty of the athletes of national teams of sports federations to sports clothing and brands'. According to results, the quality of services and the quality of the product had the most importance for male and female athletes. These results show that those individuals are inclined to use and buy branded sports clothing that is looking for sale services such as seasonal auctions, warranty of the product, giving gifts in occasions and also the quality of sports clothing. Sadeghi (2013) carried out a study entitled 'Determination and comparison of the reasons for customers' inclination to buy foreign sports products from the perspective of producers, retailers and consumers'. The results showed that there were significant differences between consumers and sellers and also between manufacturers and sellers in relation to the reasons for using the external sports products, but there was no difference between consumers and producers. From the perspective of consumers, the higher compliance of external sports products with the sports standards, the quality and durability of external sports products and weak advertising by domestic producers about the characteristics of their products in media versus widespread advertising of foreign producers are respectively the most important reasons. Behnam et al. (2015b) in a study entitled 'The impact of propaganda of free sport services on pleasure and attitude of consumer in advertising' showed that the main effects of the promotion of applying services on attitudes towards propaganda in subjects that have observed the advertising by promoting the application of free services are higher than those of subjects that have observed similar advertising without promoting the experimental services and have more positive attitudes. Davies and Cline (2015) conducted a study entitled 'An approach to consumer's behaviour in the monopolistic competitive world'. The researchers identified and introduced five characteristics of the market product that can influence the consumer's decision-making process. These five features include market size, the difference between markets, the boundaries of the market, the difference between the brands and retail. Tatt (2016) conducted his master's thesis as 'Factors affecting the behaviour of consumers of luxury goods'. The results showed that perceived social status, quality and brand loyalty are significantly related to the factors influencing consumers' purchasing behaviour, while price had not a significant relationship. The results also indicated that the monthly income is not an appropriate mediator between the independent variable (brand loyalty) and the dependent variable (purchasing behaviour). Yee and Sidek (2016) carried out a study entitled 'The effect of brand loyalty on consumers' behaviour of sports clothing'. The results showed that brand name, product quality, price, advertising, product diversification, quality of service and sports apparel retail environment influence purchasing behaviour of sport clothing consumers.

1.4 The necessity and importance of research

Although previous research has provided valuable insight into of sports consumers, the existing scales apply to sport in general and do not include other emotions or desires that may be important in specific situations. Madrigal and Howard (1995) suggest that we should expect between-sport differences in the motives of consumers and their reasons for watching sports. In addition, there may be differences based on factors related to consumers. For example, Madrigal and Howard (1995) suggest that the emotional feelings related to nostalgia might be an important influence in some cases. Therefore, the authors of the current study believed that a new research was needed to examine the motives of Iranian sports consumer behaviour.

Also, according to the growing marketing and the role of sport and sports products in creating specific behaviour which leads to attract and develop consumers, the investigation of the consumers' behaviour in this area is necessary. Therefore, the marketing needs to search to find suitable markets and sectors that the organisation can be present there more usefully and effectively. So the foundation of the marketing movement is to prevent wasting different resources and facilities and finding the most suitable place for the product. On the other hand, in the market finding aspect, the most important of efforts of marketers is to attract, develop and retain their target market (customer, product, etc.), that is, the market penetration and the introduction and recognition of the organisation, products and services using the marketing mix (product, price, distribution and promotion) [Hasangholipour et al., (2013), p.103]. Meanwhile, consumers are considered as target markets of a sport organisation. This group is considered as the main pillar of the sports industry to determine how to satisfy the demands of the present and typically is the attraction and developments of them are the most important principles in the area of sports marketing. Marketing research has shown that the cost of attracting new customers is five to 11 times of the cost of maintaining the current customers and the loss of missing a customer is equal to loss more 100 customers [McLaren, (2016), p.19]. Consumer's behaviour in the sports industry is a complex process because sports organisations have a limited control over the end result of an action. Identifying environmental and individual factors has a great impact on the success of sports marketers. There are some factors that the sports marketers have a limited control over them and however, they can affect the interests of respective sports organisations. Most important reason for this study is that, so far factors affecting sports consumer's behaviour in Iran sports industry has not been provided; therefore, the aim of this research is to identify and priority factors affecting sports consumer behaviour in Iran.

2 Methods

The study is a quantitative-qualitative research. In this research to identify and rank the factors influencing consumer behaviour conducted a four-step process as follows:

- Step 1 extensive literature survey on the topic of the research, in this step to collect data in the field of theoretical foundations and literature were used library resources, articles, books and the internet. 29 factors founded which affecting consumer behaviour.
- Step 2 the interview, in this step, were interviewed with four experts of sports marketing. At the end of this step by concluding responses were obtained 26 factors. In the next part was formed Delphi panel. Because the Delphi method requires a special group that must respond to specific questions in the relevant field, so must recognise experts in the field. Although the number of people forming Delphi group depends on study objects and expected heterogeneity of the target population [Martino, (1983), p.29], but based on empirical studies done by Delphi method is suggested that the number of people forming Delphi method can be up to 11 people for research validity [Dalkey, (1969), p.32],

unless a specific homogeneous sample is considered, in which the optimal number could be up to 15 to 20 people [Dalkey et al., (1970), p.288].

Finally, at the end of this step were asked each of respondents to introduce five experts that can participate in Delphi panel.

- Step 3 by adding people who had been introduced in the previous step, 24 members were formed the Delphi panel. The primary questionnaire, which had three questions, was sent to each of them. The three questions are as follows: initially, obtained variables were given to Delphi panel and they were asked to identify factors affecting sports consumer behaviour. In the second question was asked, mention the other factors that can affect the behaviour of sports consumers. Finally, in the third question was asked to offer any comments or proposed in this field. 16 respondents of the Delphi panel completed and sent the questionnaires.
- Step 4 By identifying factors, AHP questionnaire was made and given to the Delphi panel and researchers after collecting the questionnaires prioritise the factors identified in the previous step.

Fuzzy Delphi method was used in this study due to the advantages of this method. The difference fuzzy Delphi method with traditional Delphi method is that, in the traditional Delphi method, predictions by experts expressed in terms of absolute numbers, which the results do not have enough accuracy for certain long-term forecasts [Dalkey et al., (1970), p.285], also traditional Delphi method has always suffered from a rare convergence of experts, the high cost of implementation and possibility to remove certain expert comments. In Fuzzy Delphi method, maximum and minimum values of experts' comments consider as two endpoints of the triangular fuzzy number and geometric mean as membership degree of triangular fuzzy numbers to achieve non-skewed statistics effect and avoid the high-value effect. Therefore, Fuzzy Delphi method can make a better impact on the parameters selection. Another benefit of this method is to be simple, which can include all experts' opinions in a review. In this method, the OF_j parameter (Woo et al., 2000) and 0.7 thresholds were used to select key indicators.

$$of_j = \frac{u_j + m_j + l_j}{3}$$

If $of_j \geq 0.7$ indicator choose

If $of_j < 0.7$ Indicator eliminate.

3 Results

The results of Fuzzy Delphi method are presented in Table 1.

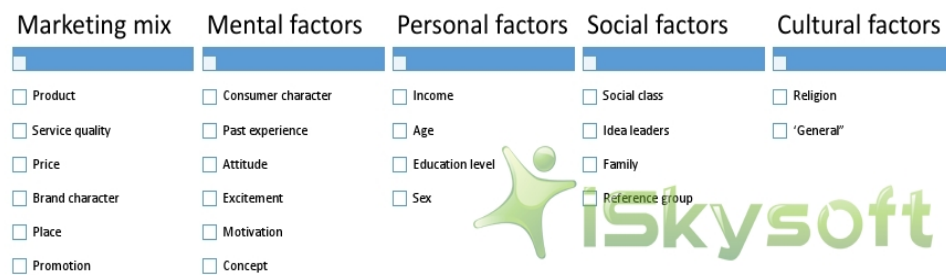
Therefore Indicators lifestyle, product quality and learning were eliminated. Also, all of the five branches of the marketing mix factors were classified into personal factors, individual factors, social factor and cultural factors.

Also to prioritise the influencing factors on consumer behaviour have been used an analytic hierarchy of process, which decision tree of this field is shown in Figure 1.

Table 1 The results of fuzzy Delphi method

Row	Scale	OF _j
1	Price	0.761
2	Product	0.867
3	Distribution channel	0.774
4	Promotions	0.853
5	Attitudes	0.792
6	Excitement	0.740
7	Motivation	0.790
8	Past experiences	0.788
9	Consumer personality	0.711
10	Perception	0.730
11	Family	0.769
12	Reference group	0.755
13	Social class	0.708
14	Brand personality	0.767
15	Service quality	0.772
16	Religion	0.811
17	Income level	0.813
18	Opinion leader	0.717
19	Culture	0.799
20	Learning	0.592
21	Product quality	0.473
22	Lifestyle	0.613
23	Age	0.758
24	Sex	0.791
25	Education	0.733

Figure 1 The structure of the hierarchy of influences on sports consumer behaviour (see online version for colours)



Based on the analysis, the main affecting elements on sports consumer behaviour include marketing mix, psychological factors, social factors and cultural factors, which the priority is shown in Figure 2. As can be seen, marketing mix is the most important influencing factor with 0.323 relative weights and then is psychological factors (0.245), individual factors (0.185), social factors (0.141) and cultural factors (0.1077). Also, the reliability of this information is confirmed according to the compatibility rate (0.40).

The components of each of these have been prioritised as following; the most important component of the marketing mix is a product with 0.281 relative weights and then is the quality of service (0.221), price (0.175), distribution channels (0.108), promotion and advertising (0.108) and brand personality (0.108).

Figure 2 Ranking of factors affecting sports consumer behaviour (see online version for colours)

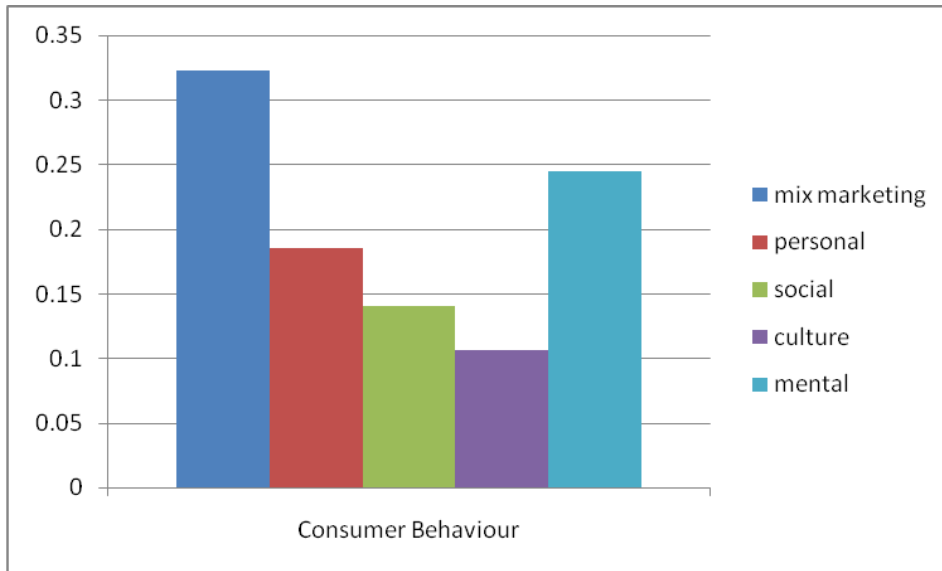
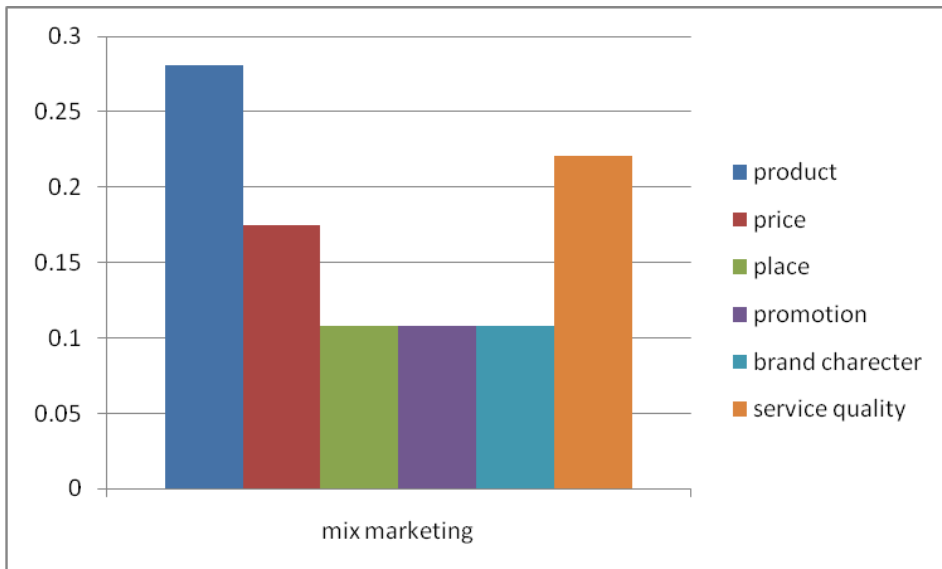


Figure 3 Ranking the components of the marketing mix (see online version for colours)



Results of prioritising components of the psychological factors indicate that the personality with 0.246 relative weight is the most important component of psychological factors and then are past experiences (0.220), attitude (0.180), excitement (0.158), motivation (0.110) and perception (0.087).

Figure 4 Ranking the components of psychological factors (see online version for colours)

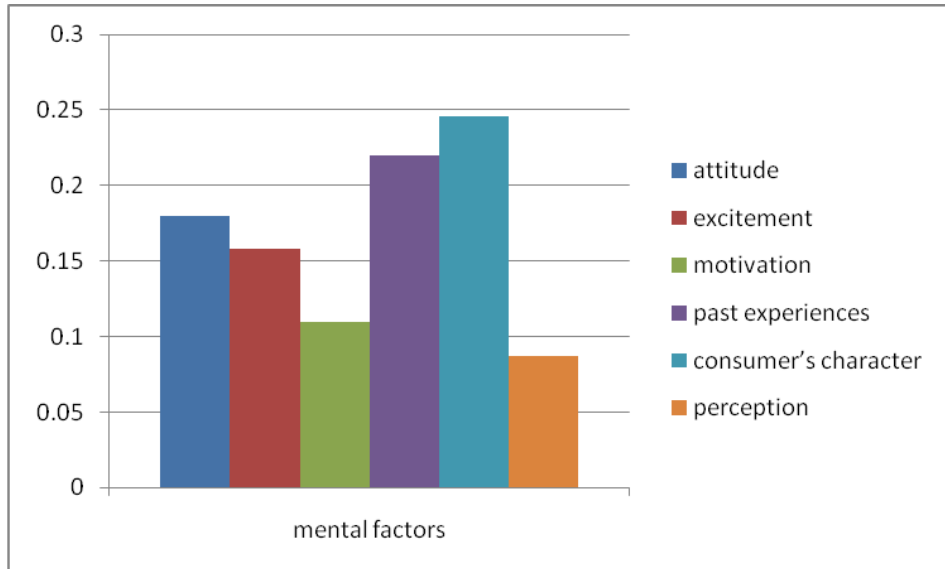
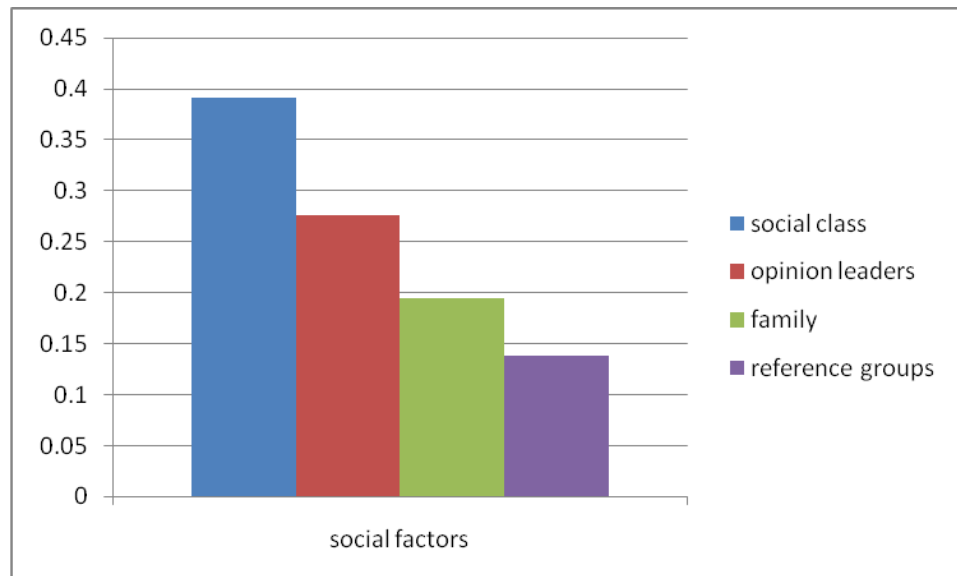


Figure 5 Ranking the components of social factors (see online version for colours)



The results of prioritising components of social factors indicate the social class is the most important component of social factors with 0.391 relative weights and then are opinion leaders (0.276), family (0.195) and reference groups (0.138) respectively.

The results of prioritising components of individual factors show that the level of income with 0.391 relative weight is the most important component of individual factors and then by age (0.276), education (0.195) and gender (0.138), respectively.

Figure 6 Ranking the components of individual factors (see online version for colours)

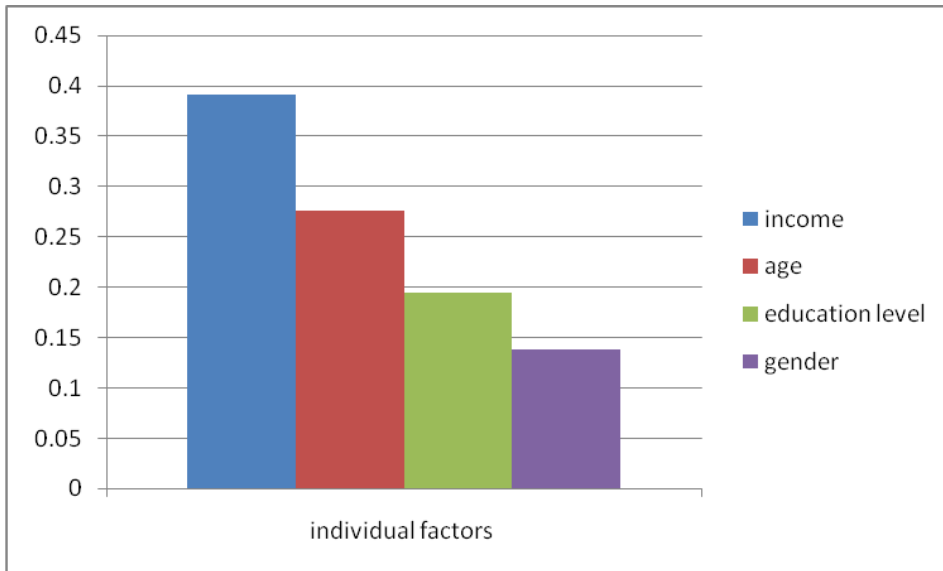
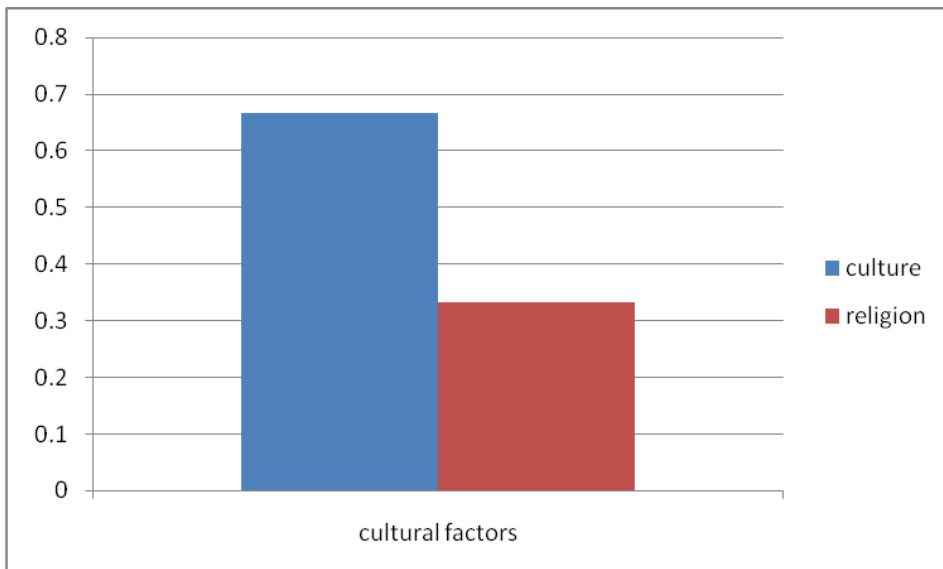


Figure 7 Ranking the components of cultural factors (see online version for colours)



Finally, the results prioritising components of cultural factors show that religion is the most important component of cultural factors with 0.667 relative weight and then culture (0.333).

4 Discussion

In this study, it was found that the marketing mix (product, price, distribution channels, promotion and advertising, service quality and brand personality) is one of the factors influencing consumer behaviour. Also in prioritising, affecting factors on consumer behaviour was determined as the most important influencing factor on sports consumer behaviour with 0.323 relative weights.

One of the issues to be discussed in the context of the marketing mix elements is diversity and freedom of choice (Hasangholi pour et al., 2013). The ability to choose is often overlooked by manufacturers and marketers of goods and services. The choice is the inalienable right of consumers and it is an essential factor in effective marketing. Many consumers are limited in their choices. A deeper understanding of this topic can cause broader view of consumers; but the choice not only provide a variety of products, it can guarantee by variations in prices, diverse ways of payment and delivery of goods, a variety of after-sales service and etc. saving scales of supplier cause lack of diversity, which have negative impact on suppliers.

One of the factors influencing consumer decision to purchase goods is distribution channels or physical environment of the store (Mahmoudi et al., 2015). Incentives such as coloursound, lighting, the arrangement of people and goods and so on can affect consumer behaviour. Distribution channels are effective on consumer perception through sensory mechanisms. Perhaps the most important task of the seller to impact on attitudes, beliefs and ultimately consumer behaviours, is to control store environment. One of the factors that can be controlled to some extent through stores is the perception of safety sale. For example, convenient parking nears the store, light and proper temperature of the store and so on, increases the comfort and confidence to consumers.

Furthermore, interest in providing high-quality service and expectations of customers, plays an important role in sports consumer behaviour, because of today, improving the quality of services in the sports industry is a key strategy for durability, sustainability and profitability of organisations (Ranaei and Yari, 2011). Therefore based on study results, investigate and notice to customer problems, security and understanding the needs and considering demands of customers should be considered as a priority for producers and sellers of sports goods to satisfy the consumers.

Brand validity is one of consumers' desirability in choosing products (Alavi and Najafi, 2015). In the sports industry, the brand makes a special identity for a product and binds them to a specific group of society. From psychology view, such goods In addition to appearance create personality and self-confidence for the consumer, so the consumer is prepared to pay different prices. In addition, the top brand for consumer unconsciously means better product quality. The customer who buys a reputable brand believes that in exchange for their money have received a valuable thing. Indeed, brand contributes to adding value to an organisation as well as capital or technology and materials.

About the role of marketing mix on consumer behaviour, the results of this study are consistent with the following research: Ranjbarian et al. (2011), Hasangholi pour et al.

(2013), Shafieezadeh et al. (2013), McLaren (2016), which they report that marketing mix has a significant impact on consumer behaviour. Hamidi et al. (2011) and ranai kordeshloi and yari bozanjani (2011) stated that green mix has a significant impact on the green behaviour of consumers. Also, the results showed that promotion of free trial service of publicising the sports service impact on arousal and future plans of the consumer, which is consistent by Behnam et al. (2015b, 2015c) researches. Mahmoudi et al. (2015) reported in their study, regression test shows a significant positive correlation between quality of services to customers and loyalty and service quality explains 38% variance of customer loyalty. Alavi and Najafi (2015) stated that marketing mix sports complex services have a significant impact on satisfaction and price resiliency of customers. Shahlaee Bagheri (2014) mention that, there is a significant relation between green product, green promotion, green pricing, green distribution and green behaviour. Yee and Sidek (2016) suggested that, Brand, product quality, price, promotion, product diversity, quality of service and athletic apparel retail environment influence consumers' purchasing behaviour.

Also, the role of the marketing mix on consumer behaviour, the results of this study are inconsistent with the following research: Nazari and Abed (2011) stated that the impact of product price factor is not approved. Possible reasons for this inconsistency can be the difference between the populations of two studies. These researchers also studied the behaviour of students in impulse buying. Tatt (2016) also reported that price has insignificant relation to consumer behaviour. Possible reasons for this inconsistency can be stated that this research had been done on buyers of luxury goods and naturally the price of the product for people looking to buy luxury goods are less important. Other causes can be noted differences in the population of the two studies. The research has been conducted among instructors and elites in Malaysia.

In this study was determined that psychological factors (attitude, motivation, emotion, perception, past experience and consumer personality) are another factor affecting consumer behaviour. Also in prioritising the factors affecting consumer behaviour with the relative weight of 0.245 is the second component influencing sports consumer behaviour.

In this study, the perception was one of the factors influencing sports consumer behaviour. The reference frame is a psychological term that refers to a previous experience or a mental makeup. This often involves the visualisation about the bug or attributes as 'comfortable', 'safety', or 'durability'. This setting from traits instruction – the chain of visualisations (visual or verbal) that a brand spontaneously reignites in our minds.

Other factors influencing sports consumer behaviour was excitement. The results also showed that excitements are modulators for the consumer response to promotions. In addition, the study participants also expressed that, unfair understanding of price and quality lead to dissatisfaction, which its negative emotional response is anger. Perceived unfair price are associated with a variety of negative excitements. Therefore, inequality in understanding the price and quality may lead to frustration, anger or injustice. Usually, consumers do not like to feel that they have been deceived. If consumers feel that they have been treated unfairly, any positive feeling diminished and the negative effect will be revealed (such as anger and fear). Some excitements such as surprise and joy play a role in customer responses and using price information. When consumers realise price unfair, they feel a sense of disappointment and sadness that may extend verbal complaint in

communication or it could be the end of a buyer-seller relationship (Ibrahimi et al., 2012). In addition, when customers are angry, more tend to buy competitors and less willing to repurchase from the first seller. And conversely, fair price perception leads to satisfaction and satisfaction is related to positive excitement. Consumers who have positive excitement show more positive verbal communication, planning to repurchase, complain less and are less likely to buy another seller.

Consumer attitude was other components of psychological factors in this study. If emotions make a negative impact on customers' attention to purchasing a product, it will cause to avoid shopping, while positive emotions in a time of attention to purchasing have a positive impact on the continuation of the process of buying products and consumer loyalty to a particular brand product.

Motivation was another psychological component of the study. In other words, motivation creates energy and directs the behaviour which causes to keep and continue people attention. Since human behaviour is purposeful, so motivation is a determinant of reinforcements and justifying the direction. People usually react to Stimulants that are waiting for it and that is selective attention. Selective distortion show people tendency to their compliance with personal goals and usually interpret information in a way that is consistent with their beliefs, therefore, marketers should be aware of the frame of consumers mind to take advantage of them in the marketing program, in selective retention people tend to keep the information that somehow approved their beliefs and opinions.

Another psychological factor in this study was consumer personality. Personality study and psychoanalysis include analysis of different behavioural patterns from each other. One of the factors influencing sports consumer behaviour is a social context where the purchase occurs. Researchers have concluded that consumers show different behaviour considering whether their purchasing behaviour is observed or not (Shafiezadeh et al., 2013). The fourth feature of the study of personality is that can not be expected that precisely predict consumer behaviour in a particular situation by a standard personality profile. People see themselves as they think other imagine them. As others thinking and imagination is related to what a person use, therefore, this product helps to determine personality perception. These products give the sports consumer a social role that can help to answer the question 'who am I?'

Past experience was the latest psychological factor in this study. We gain a lot of attitude, values, interests and behaviour through experience (Richard and Chandra, 2005). Sports marketers incur high costs in order to ensure that the consumer knows the existence and nature of their goods. Learning defines as any changes in content or organisation of long-term memory. So learning from past experiences is the result of information processing that takes place in the mind. Processing information may be deliberate and high, in learning situations, or may be decentralised and unconscious in low engagement situations. In both cases, the result of information processing and learning leads to changes in memory. Previous experience may occur in high and low engagement. In learning situation by high engagement, the sports consumer is motivated to learn something. For example, a person who is going to buy a ski pole, before purchasing, he is looking for different ways to gather information about the quality and price of a ski pole. In learning situation with low engagement, sports consumer would not highly motivate about product and service. And also, a man favourite TV sports competition is cut by commercials, if he does not need to the goods, will have no

incentive to learn about. The interesting point in this context is that most of the sports consumers learning processes occur in a time of low engagement.

The results of psychological factors on consumer behaviour in this study are consistent with the following research: Abdolmaleki et al. (2014b, 2014c, 2015b), Nazari and Ghaderi Abed (2011), Ibrahim et al. (2012), and Richard and Chandra (2005) report in their research that psychological factors have significant impact on consumer behaviour. Mohammadian and Khataei (2011) mention that, psychological factors have a significant positive relationship with consumer green behaviour. Shafieezadeh et al. (2013) and Abdolmaleki et al. (2015a) mention that mental factors have a significant impact on consumer behaviour, especially online shopping. Behnam and Toosi (2013) report that attitude to advertising has a direct and positive effect on future plans of the customer. Also, arousal has a strong indirect effect on consumers' future plans. Rahulana et al. (2013) conclude that psychological factors have a significant role on the tendency to buy sports apparel. Abdolmaleki et al. (2016a) reported that feelings and emotions have a significant role on consumer behaviour.

Also, results of rating the affecting factors on consumer behaviour (psychological factors) are inconsistent with the following research: Abdolmaleki et al. (2016b), they report that psychological factors (excitement) are the most important factors on consumer behaviour. The possible reasons for this inconsistency can refer to differences in population. The study samples were selected among the sports apparel buyer in Karaj. In this study, the researchers examined factors influencing the impulsive purchasing behaviour.

In this study were determined that Individual factors (income, age, gender and education level) are effective in the behaviour of sports consumers. Also in rating, the affecting factors on consumer behaviour Individual factors with 0.185 relative weights were the third effective factors on sports consumer behaviour.

The question is how sports consumers allocate their limited incomes to its various demands and what is their response to changes in factors such as price and income. In this context, patterns of income allocation in two stages of deciding and allocation of income can be investigated through needs, consumption expenditure, community participation expenditure, saving expenditure and selecting goods and services stages. In the first stage, the consumer issue is how much of his income should allocate to consumption, social participation and savings expenditure. Results of this study showed that the sports consumer in all cases behaves in moderation. In other words, according to income and your financial ability to buy the sports goods. In other words, consumers buy the sports goods according to income and financial ability.

In respect to the role of individual factors on consumer behaviour, the result of the present study is inconsistent with the following research: Ranjbariyan et al. (2011) and Ibrahim et al. (2012), they believe that individual factors have not a significant impact on consumer behaviour. Richard et al. (2010) reported that individual factors have an insignificant impact on consumer behaviour as a mediator variable. The possible reasons for this inconsistency can refer to differences in population. Also, this study examined the online consumer behaviour.

In this study, it was found that social factors (family, reference groups, social class and opinion leaders) have a significant positive effect on sports consumer behaviour. It also in rating affecting factors on consumer behaviour with 0.141 relative weights was the fourth affective factors on sports consumer behaviour.

Social class was one of social factor in this study. Subjects have expressed that, they buy a product in their social class and some things that can afford it. Social class, not only an economic criterion, but also includes several concepts such as prestige, dignity and sense of belonging. Generally, members of a social class tend to live in a similar way and have common perspectives and philosophy and more important of all have the same consumption pattern (Mohammadian and Khataei, 2011). However, necessarily consumption patterns are not always the same. In observing the sports consumer behaviour, social class is a proper indicator to determine the type of consumption. In fact, some believe that the community is the best and most important indicator of consumer behaviour in response to stimuli and advertisement (Ranjbarian et al., 2011). Consumers of middle and upper classes look for more information before purchasing, but lower classes have less information about the products. Consumers of higher classes rarely use price as a quality indicator and measure quality by-products performance. The results indicate that social class is a better predictive indicator in case of low-cost purchases with symbolic lifestyle values.

The reference group was one of the social factors in the study. Respondents reported that, buy products that have been used by famous athletes, is refreshing to them, also they tend to buy products that peers are using and, finally peers idea impact on the purchase process.

When a consumer makes its sporty identity as a member of a reference group, usually matches with the norms of the group. Usually, sports marketing experts target features of the reference group to describe a sports product. This provides a means to inform members of reference group about a sports product and justifies all the members' decision to use the same sports product (Hamdi et al., 2011). Sports marketing experts to impress members through marketing sports products employ the need to belong, the need to love and fear of negative evaluation of reference group. Since many people are involved in the decision-making process of the consumer to purchase the product or service of sports, the consumer satisfaction would be different and this will be reflected in the next purchasing behaviour. Consumer offer products or services to others based on satisfaction or dissatisfaction levels. This has lots of applications to marketing experts because advertising or word of mouth communication greatly impacts on purchasing sports products. Sports marketing experts have to know the different social environment and social classes to influence consumers. According to social classes of sports consumers, they may choose different sports products at a similar geographical location. Some of the consumers like sports product to be based on fashion and status symbols, while others consider them as threats or opportunity.

The family was one of the social factors in the study. Respondents stated that usually one of the family members accompany them in a time of shopping and family ideas influence on shopping and they buy a product which is family acceptable. Nowadays family is the strongest reference group (Mohammadian and Khataei, 2011). A family role for its member include emotional support, present a proper lifestyle and strong economic support. Family members influence each other decisions during life. Sports marketing experts have to determine each role of family members in shopping process to access the best method for influencing sports consumer shopping.

Opinion leaders were one of the social factors in the study. Respondents reported that they always buy sports product with the help of informed person or informed person accompany them in the purchase process. In the study of human communication can be

seen that some people provide much information than others. Such persons can be opinion leaders that, can define them as ‘consumers who influence the decisions of others’. Information is primary tools used by sports marketing in influencing sports consumer behaviour. While eventually information processed by the consumer, in many cases members of one or more group may provide, interpretation or refines the information (Mohammadian and Khataei, 2011). A person who plays such a task or role is called opinion leaders. The process of receiving information from sports media or other marketing information sources by a person and transferring to others, know as two-step flow communications. Two-step flow explains some aspects of inter-group relations but this flow is simplistic for most of the communication. What happen in reality are the multiple flows of communications? Multiple flows of communication for a particular product involve opinion leaders who actively catch information from all sources.

In regard to, the role of social factors on consumer behaviour, results of this study are consistent with the following research: Mohammadian and Khataei (2011) and Hamdi et al. (2011), they suggest that social factors significantly influence on consumer green behaviour. Ranjbarian et al. (2011) report that social factors have a significant impact on consumer attitudes toward counterfeit products of luxury brands.

In this study, it was found that culture has significant positive roles on the behaviour of sport product consumers.

Ranjbarian and et al. (2011) stated culture plays an important role in the success or failure of a particular product or service acceptance. Chance of products that interests compatible with the culture or community members at any point in time, is much more accepted in the market. A consumer culture that determines overall priorities in relation to the activities of various goods.

In this study, participants expressed that they have to buy goods fitness check it with norms of society and purchase a product that is accepted norms.

In sports consumer behaviour, culture determines the acceptable level of marketing actions. Sports marketing experts should pay attention to the fact that consumers learn how sports culture and what factors influence their decision-making process and solve the problem. The aim of training Sports marketing experts is to recognise cultural differences and marketing measures in accordance with its terms of design.

In this study, it was found that religion has significant positive roles on the behaviour of sport product consumers.

Participants in this study stated that they use products that do not have a religious problem, to buy sporting goods note that the product in question have religious status and purchase products that matched with religious attitudes.

5 Theoretical and practical implications

Our research contributes to sports consumer behaviour literature in three important ways:

- a identify factors affecting sports consumer behaviour
- b by priority of these factors.

As previously mentioned in the literature review section consumer behaviour is recognised as an important section in marketing management, however, sports consumer behaviour in Iran has never been exploited. At a practical level, our research found that

two dimensions (preference and priority goal) from sports consumer behaviour. As Schneider (1987, p.440) so appropriately noted 'the people make the place' and Collins (2001, p.163) reinforce "a company should limit its growth based on its ability to attract enough of the right people." The main idea in these thoughts is that organisations should attract, select and retain those individuals who share their values and have the potential to create value. Because a large number of organisations apply personality tests during their recruitment process our study suggests they could benefit from individuals. Thus, these organisations should develop by training the levels of social marketing. It's proposed to sporting goods manufacturers, to designing marketing mix approved such as freedom to choose, design, colour, quality and price terms so that consumers choose products according to their ability.

According to the results of this study researcher proposes for future researches:

In this study descriptive method used but for future studies use other methods such as empirical methods (for example eye tracking). Also, it is recommended to identify organisational consumer behaviour.

6 Conclusions

In this study, it was found that the marketing mix (product, price, distribution channels, promotion and advertising, service quality and brand personality), psychological factors (attitude, motivation, emotion, perception, past experience and consumer personality), Individual factors (income, age, gender and education level), social factors (family, reference groups, social class and opinion leaders) and cultural factors (culture and religion) are factors influencing consumer behaviour. In today's competitive market, companies have to pay more attention to customers and meet their needs (better than competitors), to gain competitive advantage. In addition, customers buy products with different trends that need to be considered in setting marketing strategies. If sports producer companies try to meet the demands of consumers through optimal and proper marketing mix elements, they will be able to make their customers loyal. In other words, it does not matter that how the managers of sports companies determine the combination of marketing mix elements, but also it is important to what extent this combination satisfy customers and can be effective on their purchase behaviour. Also by being aware of the psychology role and applying the correct study methods on consumer behaviour and predicting behaviour related to shopping can build and deliver a better product, which ultimately leads to increased sales and customer satisfaction. Consumer behaviour and how to allocate income is one of the most important economic issues. Nature of the problem is similar to microeconomic issues and its method matches the theoretical approach in economics.

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