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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EFFECTIVE FACTORS ON THE ATTENDANCE OF SHAHRDARI URMIA AUDIENCES AND THEIR SHOPPING BEHAVIOR IN IRAN PROFESSIONAL VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between the effective factors on the attendance of Shahr-dari Urmia audiences and their shopping behavior in Iran professional volleyball league. The statistical population of this study included all the audiences of Shahr-dari Urmia club which are 6000 audiences according to Alghadir Stadium capacity. 361 audiences were selected through simple random sampling and Morgan sampling table. For the data collection, three questionnaires were used, i.e., demographic information questionnaire, the questionnaire of effective factors on attendance by AliMohammadi's and Kim's shopping behavior questionnaire. Spearman and Pearson statistical test were used for the data analyses. The results showed that there is a positive significant relationship between all effective factors on the attendance of audiences (facility, information and attractiveness, performance and backgrounds of the teams, timing and notification, vicarious achievement, attendance and support, interaction and escape, and excitement) and shopping behavior at $\alpha=0.01$ level. In addition, there is a negative significant relationship between the age of audiences and shopping behavior. Spearman data analyses showed that there is a positive significant relationship between the level of education of audiences and their shopping behavior.

Keywords: *Effective Factors on the Attendance, Shopping Behavior, Shahr-dari Urmia Audiences*

INTRODUCTION

Today, watching sports is one of the most popular leisure time activities and has become an international industry. Professional clubs all over the world use various methods such as attracting sponsors, advertising commercial goods, selling players, selling tickets and sports products, and presenting ancillary services to provide their resources and cover their costs (Izzo, 2011). With the increasing growth of sports industry, marketing in organizations has become specifically important. But, marketing is not limited to the profits of organizations; the first goal of sports marketing is providing for customer needs, and next comes providing for organizational goals. In order to provide for customer needs, a proper understanding of consumers including people and families who use sports products and services, or attend sports events with a particular purpose is required. It is the duty of sports marketing to attract sports audiences with various tastes and present sports products and services in commensurate with their tastes. Thus, sports marketing should precisely investigate and analyze the behavior of sports consumers. If the sports products or services do not attract the audience, they will most probably fail in sports market. The behavior of sports consumers include various psychological and social processes which occur before and after activities related to purchasing and using sports products and services, or attending and participating in sports events. One important field of studying consumer behavior is shopping behavior (Hasanzadeh, 2010). The shopping behavior of consumers can have various forms. Word of mouth advertising, media purchasing, purchasing goods licensed by the club, second attendance, and lack of choosing an alternative for attendance are among these behaviors. Word of mouth advertising, as a shopping behavior component, refers to a behavior in which the consumer establishes an informal relation with other consumers to transfer experience, evaluate and recommend goods or services. If the expectations of the

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audiences in each component of effective factors on attendance are not satisfied, it leads to dissatisfaction from sports purchase and can have unpleasant consequences for the team because this dissatisfaction affects attending stadiums and shopping tickets which are important shopping behaviors. Because the provision of team and club financial needs is dependent on revenues from competitions (tickets, sponsors, etc.), it is possible that the club loses its players and technical staff due to inability in funding them which leads to reduced quality of games and thus the failure and disintegration of the team. Yousef *et al.*, (2008) reported physical features (stadium factors such as access to the stadium, beauty of places, the quality of scoreboard, and convenience of seats); Almiri (2009) reported easy entrance and exit from the stadiums and parking lots, appropriate audience position, and game attraction; Azhdari (2011) reported appropriateness of audience position with regard to light, view of court, cleanness and seats; Caro (2009) and Saatchian (2012) reported the excitement of the competition; Piece (2009) reported attraction factor; Woo *et al.*, (2009) reported excitement and knowledge; Nemati *et al.*, (2012) reported attraction factor (star players, competition attraction, supporting the team, the results of team competitions and unpredictability of the results); Funk (2000) reported team, player and sport attraction; and Torkfar (2010) reported the knowledge of audiences as effective factors on the attendance of fans in stadiums, competitions, and sports shopping behavior. The review of literature suggests that various factors such as physical features, places and installations, information, attraction, and excitement of competitions are effective on the extent of attendance of audience and their sports shopping behavior. Volleyball is considered among the most popular, most viewed, and most exciting sports in the world and our country is not an exception. The international position and importance of volleyball was so undeniable since its globalization that the Olympics organizers soon introduced it as an Olympic sport. Volleyball competitions in men and women sections were formally added to Olympics since 1964. Eleven rounds have passed so far and volleyball is welcomed each round more than the previous one. The national Iranian volleyball team is currently among the world-class teams and Shahrdari Urmia Team has significantly contributed to this honor because some of the players of national Iranian volleyball team came from Shahrdari Urmia Team and Urmia is known as volleyball capital of Iran. Increased level of competitions of national teams and consequently Shahrdari Urmia Team increase the number of audiences of this sport. The value of audiences can be defined based on the number of times they attend the stadium. Regarding that the most important factor in improvement of professional sports is increased number of audiences, the attendance of audiences in the stadiums is the most important event for Shahrdari Urmia Volleyball Team. Numerous factors such as old stadiums, worn-out equipment and facilities, difficult access to transportation, insufficient advertising, and improper time of competitions and lack of sensitivity in the competition, undesirable games and improper schedules are effective on reducing the number of audiences. Thus, the managers of Shahrdari Urmia Volleyball Club should design their programs in order to attract people to the stadium to increase revenues. Regarding the mentioned issues, this question is posed if there is a significant relationship between the effective factors on the attendance of the audiences of Shahrdari Urmia Team and their shopping behavior in Iran professional Volleyball league.

MATERIALS AND MEHODS

Methodology

The present research has an applied orientation and the method used in this research is of a descriptive-correlation nature and data collection is carried out through a field research. The statistical population of this study included all the audiences of Shahrdari Urmia club which are 6000 audiences according to Alghadir Stadium capacity. 361 audiences were selected through simple random sampling and Morgan sampling table. For the data collection, three questionnaires were used, i.e., demographic information questionnaire (age and educational level), the questionnaire of effective factors on attendance by AliMohammadi's and Kim's shopping behavior questionnaire.

The questionnaire of effective factors on attendance involves 33 questions and eight components: facility, information and attractiveness, performance and backgrounds of the teams, timing and notification,

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vicarious achievement, attendance and support, interaction and escape, and excitement in a five-point Likert scale. The reliability of the questionnaire in this study using Cronbach's alpha was calculated at 0.93. Kim's shopping behavior questionnaire (2008) involves 10 questions and four components: word of mouth advertising, Future Intention, commercial shopping, and alternative choices to the attendance in a five-point Likert scale. The reliability of the questionnaire in this study using Cronbach's alpha was calculated at 0.81. In this study, descriptive statistics were used in order to summarize and classify the data and to calculate the mean, frequency, standard deviation and to draw diagrams and tables, and Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, Pearson test and Spearman test were used for testing the hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results showed that the average age of audiences was 31. The highest frequent degrees of audiences were diploma, with 30.7 percent; and the lowest frequent degrees of audiences were M.A & Ph. D, with 10.5 percent.

The results showed that there is a positive significant relationship between all effective factors on the attendance of audiences (facility, information and attractiveness, performance and backgrounds of the teams, timing and notification, vicarious achievement, attendance and support, interaction and escape, and excitement) and shopping behavior at $\alpha=0.01$ level (Table 1).

Table 1: The relationship between the effective factors on the attendance of audiences and shopping behavior

	Facility	Information and Attractiveness	Performance and Backgrounds of the Teams	Timing and Notification	Vicarious Achievement	Attendance and Support	Interaction and escape	Excitement
Shopping Behavior	r= 0.65** Sig=0.000	r= 0.74** Sig=0.000	r= 0.60** Sig=0.000	r= 0.68** Sig=0.000	r= 0.54** Sig=0.000	r= 0.67** Sig=0.000	r= 0.69** Sig=0.000	r= 0.66** Sig=0.000

*n= 361; **P <0.01*

The results indicated that there is a negative significant relationship between the age of audiences and their shopping behavior at $\alpha=0.01$ level (Table 2).

Table 2: The relationship between the age of audiences and shopping behavior

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Pearson Correlation
Age of Audiences	31	10.8	r= - 0.130**
Shopping Behavior	3.71	0.73	

*n= 361; **P <0.01*

Spearman data analyses showed that there is a positive significant relationship between the level of education of audiences and their shopping behavior in Iran Professional Volleyball League. The more the education of audiences, the more their shopping behavior (Table 3).

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Table 3: The relationship between the level of education of audiences and shopping behaviour

Variable	Spearman Test
Level of Education of Audiences	r= 0.160** Sig= 0.002 n= 361
Shopping Behavior	

Discussion and Conclusion

There is a positive significant relationship between facility and shopping behavior of the audiences of Shahr-dari Urmia Team in Iran professional Volleyball league. The results of this study are consistent with the previous research conducted by Yusof *et al.*, (2008), Almiri *et al.*, (2009), Azhdari *et al.*, (2011) and Saatchian (2012). Regarding the fact that facility includes factors such as place of competitions, facilities of the stadium, proper audience position with regard to light, view of the court, convenient seats, easy entrance and exit from the parking lots and stadiums, easy access to tickets, cleanness and hygiene in the stadium, hygienic buffets with high quality food and reasonable price, easy access to the stadium, etc., it has an undeniable effect on the extent of attendance of sports audiences and consequently sports shopping behavior.

The results showed that there is a positive significant relationship between information and sport attractiveness, and audience shopping behavior. The results of this study are consistent with the previous research conducted by Almiri *et al.*, (2009), Pease & Zhang (2009), Woo *et al.*, (2009), Torkfar (2010) and Nemati *et al.*, (2012). Information and attraction is the sports knowledge of the audiences about athletic fields and quality level of the competitions. It seems that increasing understanding and knowledge of sports rules and regulations in the fans through television programs or publishing articles in newspapers, magazines and websites, and also increasing the attractiveness of and quality level of competitions through star players, critical competitions, increased competitive equilibrium are important steps in increasing the shopping behavior of the audiences, because these factors (under information and attraction component) have been able to increase the number of audiences in stadiums. It seems that the managers and marketers are able to make the atmosphere of the stadiums healthy and implement cultural programs through appropriate programs and fan club centers in order to attract audiences and increase their attendance.

The results showed that there is a positive significant relationship between excitement and shopping behavior of audiences of Shahr-dari Urmia Team in Iran Professional Volleyball League. The results of this study are consistent with the previous research conducted by Woo *et al.*, (2009) and Saatchian (2012). It seems that audiences gain proper experiences for escaping their routine problems by watching exciting, beautiful, and attractive matches. They are willing to provide their friends and acquaintances with these experiences and increase their attendance.

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