

## A Consideration of Factors Affecting Sport Tourism in Kish Island-Iran

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to study the important factors determining the quality of sport tourism package in kish island, with the perspective of the seven elements of the marketing mix. Using a questionnaire containing 66 questions, the data was collected from 7 aspects: product, promotion, people, physical evidence, process, price, and place. Its validity was confirmed by experts; and the Cronbach's alpha was used for confirming the reliability (0.96). The sample was consisted of 172 people including experts from the tourism department of Kish Free Zone Organization, university faculty members, graduate and post graduate students of Kish International Campus and Tehran University. The descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis were used for describing and analyzing data. The results indicated the factors determining the quality of sports tourism package in Kish island include suitable accommodation, transportation, and food costs, national and international events, focused marketing, research, and planning for the development of sports tourism, access to tourist information and tips via mobile, special road and stationary bike riding, and the peace and security.

**Keywords:** Sport Tourism, Tourism Packages, Marketing Mix, Kish Island

### **Introduction**

The tourism industry has long been of interest to mankind, especially in today's global economy. In addition, this industry is an important factor in the interaction between cultures and civilizations; it strengthens the dialogue between nations. Sport and tourism are the two largest industries in the world. These industries have been combined and one of the most amazing and modern service industries has been created as sport tourism industry. Simon

states the revenue from tourism in 2010 is nearly a trillion dollars; it is predicted two trillion dollars in 2020. Sport tourism is one of the fastest growing areas in tourism. In industrialized countries, tourism explains 4 to 6 percent of gross domestic product (GDP); and sport tourism explains 1 to 2 percent of GDP. Although measurements of sport and tourism effect in the world is difficult, the growth rate of sport tourism industry is estimated to be about 10 percent per year.

The economic benefits of tourism and natural and geographical landscapes and their characteristics are remarkable. In fact, "sports tourism" is an industry has been emerged from the combination of two industries: "tourism" and "sport". Sports and Tourism has made the world a small place that can further promote the understanding between cultures, tolerance, and world peace, eventually. The increasing popularity of sports-related travel and active lifestyle has led the people to get interested in sport even in the travel. So, many cities in the world compete to obtain the right to host the Olympics and World Championships in various sports.

Sports tourism commission of the National Olympic Committee established the sport tourism in Iran. According to forecasts by the World Tourism Organization, the tourism industry will grow at the rate of 1.4 percent per year. Since 1955 to 2020, the number of incoming tourists to Iran will grow with an average annual rate of 4.8. In addition to thousands tourist and historical attractions, Iran has the potentials for setting up different sports activities in a very desirable level. Because of its relatively good and deep coral reefs in many parts of the coast and its islands, Persian Gulf has the ability to provide many specific sports activities to tourists. Kish has many tourism attractions such as beaches, beautiful sea, specific climatic conditions, and suitable accommodation. According to the Iran's socio-economic development third plan and the High Council of Free Zones, tourism is one of the development strategies and prospects in this region.

Sustainable and comprehensive development as well as alternative revenue sources to replace oil requires using all facilities and capabilities. As the third dynamic and growing economic phenomenon after the oil and automobile industry, development of tourism has been considered as the basic requirement of Iran.

Tourism activities formally began in 1911 by the establishment of International Union of Official Travel Organizations. After 64 years (1975), Tourism organization as an international organ was established for dealing with different aspects of tourism. Today, this organization has 106 formal members of various nationalities and 158 technical institutions and international and regional institutions and unions. Since the early 1940s, travel as a necessity of life got out of aristocratic monopoly and as a profitable business attracted dealers.

The new theories in the field of sports tourism show the sport related tourism has more economic, social, and political benefits compared to other cultural attractions.

Kazemi (2006) classified the tourism based on the type of activity as follows: leisure tourism, business tourism, cultural tourism, health-medical tourism, religious tourism, tourism in order to exchange science, sport tourism, sex tourism, nature tourism, and adventure tourism.

The sports tourism is defined as leisure-based travel by persons who get out of their living region temporarily for gaming, watching sports activities, and visiting attractions. Sometimes, the host country achieves to up to \$ 400 million net profit in each day of competition. Most of the articles about Olympics emphasize on the long-term benefits such as infrastructure and new facilities, urban renewal, enhanced international credibility, increased tourism, promoted general welfare, increased employment, local employment opportunities, and appropriate movement caused by events.

The studies have shown that one of the main approaches to the development of sports tourism is marketing. The sport tourism packages as the most important marketing implications increase the residence time and visit quality of sports tourists and reduce travel costs. The tourism packages should include appropriate elements such as accommodation, food, transportation, and other services and activities. However, research should be done for identifying tourism packages information and providing a scheme of potential and actual tourists; therefore, the packages will match with the different parts of the target market. Given the importance of research in marketing management for identifying the factors attract sports tourists, identifying these factors within the seven elements of the marketing mix may determine the nature of the products and services that are provided in the form of tourism packages to sport tourists in Kish. The results of this study can help Kish Free Zone Organization in the future planning for promoting sport tourist attractions according to the available resources and facilities on the island.

### **Methodology**

This study is a descriptive, and analytical research. The research tool was a researcher-made questionnaire. Its validity was obtained using the viewpoints of sports management experts. The reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha. Also, library documents and resources and internet search was used for collecting the needed data. The sample was consisted of 172 people including experts from the tourism department of Kish Free Zone Organization, university faculty members, graduate and post graduate students of Kish International Campus and Tehran University. Descriptive statistics was used for statistical description of individuals' characteristics. In this study, the mean comparison test, frequency, and percentage were used to describe the characteristics of individual subjects. The exploratory factor analysis and principal component analysis was used for analyzing the data and identifying the important factors in sports tourism packages of Kish. The sampling size adequacy test "Olkin-Meyer-Kaiser" showed the suitability of data for factor analysis.

### **Results**

#### *Exploratory Factor Analysis*

The factor loading of identified variables shows the importance of product elements. According to the above table, the national and international coaching and refereeing courses with a load factor of 0.90, the national and international sport academic seminars with a load factor of 0.82, setting up camps for the national teams and popular clubs with a load factor of 0.66, holding international competitions with a load factor of 0.62, and holding suitable sporting events in the Kish with a load factor of 0.54 are the most important factors identified in the product element.

Table 1: the factor loading of identified variables in the order of importance in the product element

Product	Factor load
The national and international coaching and refereeing courses	0.90
The national and international sport academic seminars	0.82
Setting up camps for the national teams and popular clubs	0.66
Holding international competitions	0.62
Holding suitable sporting events in the Kish	0.54

Table 1 shows the factor loading of the identified variables in the order of importance in price element. According to above table, buying sports equipment and accessories at affordable prices with a load factor of 0.94, the diversity of sporting goods with a load factor of 0.91, providing facilities in accordance with the needs and desires of audience (online ticket sales, etc.) with a load factor of 0.77, the suitability of accommodation, transport, and food costs in the Kish compared to other Persian Gulf countries with a load factor of 0.74, providing sporting venues discount bin at airports with a load factor of 0.66, and transferring the sports tourism attractions to the public with a load factor of 0.65 are the most important identified factors in price element.

Table 2: the factor loading of identified variables in the order of importance in the price element

Price	Factor load
Buying sports equipments and accessories at affordable prices	0.94
The diversity of sporting goods	0.91
Providing facilities in accordance with the needs and desires of audience (online ticket sales, etc.)	0.77
The suitability of accommodation, transport, and food costs in the Kish compared to other Persian Gulf countries	0.74
Providing sporting venues discount bin at airports	0.66
Transferring the sports tourism attractions to the public	0.65

Table 3 shows the important identified factors for the quality of sport tourism packages in Kish with the perspective of marketing mix quality. A total of 27 elements of the marketing mix were identified as the most important factors affecting sport tourists attraction in the Kish.

Table 3: the factor loading of identified variables in the order of importance in the quality of marketing mix elements

Marketing mix elements	The important factors in the sport tourism packages in Kish
Product	The national and international coaching and refereeing courses
	The national and international sport academic seminars
	Setting up camps for the national teams and popular clubs
	Holding international competitions
	Holding suitable sporting events in the Kish
Price	Buying sports equipments and accessories at affordable prices
	The diversity of sporting goods

	Providing facilities in accordance with the needs and desires of audience (online ticket sales, etc.)
	The suitability of accommodation, transport, and food costs in the Kish compared to other Persian Gulf countries
	Providing sporting venues discount bin at airports
	Transferring the sports tourism attractions to the public
Promotion	Relentless effort for sport tourism marketing
	Pre-determined tourism packages
Individuals	Hospitality
The physical evidence	Internet tourism
	Online Information centers
	Mobile tourist information
Process	Convenient air transportation
	Easy accommodation booking
	Easy access for foreigners
Location	Safety
	Malls and shopping centers
	Transportation
	Accommodation
	Sight-seeing attractions
	Sanitary condition

### Discussion and Conclusion

The important elements in the product element included national and international coaching and refereeing courses, setting up camps for the national teams and popular clubs, holding national and international competitions, and using new technologies in the holding of sport events; these factors should be considered largely. This is consistent with the research results of Chalip and Green (2001), Qiu (2003), Kim and Patrik (2005), Chalip and koosta (2006), Honarvar (2005), and Heydari (2011). Also, this is consistent with the research results of Ksin and mucin (2005) and Kim and Patrick (2006) who showed that holding sport events in both limited and widespread level attracts active and inactive tourists. However, many of stadiums and sporting venues are old and have been built with traditional vision. They do not have advanced technology and beauty. Special attention should be paid to this matter. Well organized event is also largely dependent on modern technology.

The tourism location as the most important factor determining the quality of sports tourism packages is very important. The determinants for selected location quality in the tourism packages of Kish include the diversity of accommodation amenities such as five-star hotels, motels, and modern villas on the island. This is consistent with Koozak (2006); he stated that the accommodation facilities and the level of prices are the main reasons of English tourists for traveling to Malta and Turkey. Special bike roads and stations are another important factor in the quality of tourism packages in the Kish. This is consistent with the research results of Qio (2003). His study showed that considering sports such as cycling that require low infrastructures and costs attract tourists.

Subjects' belief and suitable accommodation, food, and transportation prices were proposed in the field of price element. The reasonable price of sports tourism packages is the selection criteria for many tourists. Basically, the tourist packages are created with the aim of reducing the price. The group plans with low cost should be provided for sport tourists in Kish. This is also confirmed in the research of Adabi (2005).

The method of promotion has an important role in advertising and promoting sports tourism packages. Three important strategies for the promotion of sports tourism packages have been identified: familiarity with cultures, beliefs, customs, suitability of location for tourism, and predetermined tourism packages. In other words, special emphasis should be on these three factors in promoting sports tourism packages.

The results of present study is consistent with the findings of Sardi Mahkan (2001), Fathollahi(2007), Honarvar (2007), and Chalip and green (2001).

Two factors are identified in the field of individuals who interact in the process of providing product and sports tourism packages. The first factor was the lack of attention to the values and preferences of tourists; this should be considered in providing tourism packages. The attention of event officials to the demands of participants is important. Tourism destinations are important because of their role in satisfying tourists' motivations. The second factor is the suitability of Iranian culture for the reception of tourists. Given the important role of culture, this advantage can be used in tourism packages. Madhooshi and Naserpoor (2003) found a relationship between the lack of tourist reception culture and the underdevelopment of tourism industry in Lorestan. According to research subjects, this weakness do not exist in Kish; therefore the results of this study is inconsistent with the above research.

Physical evidence refers to the tools that make more tangible the achieving to information and understanding the intangible subjects-such as tourism. In this regard, three methods of making tangible or physical evidence were found; identifying tourism opportunities of Kish in the Internet, information booklets and brochures, achieving to information and tips via phone. There are some weaknesses in each of the three areas. In other countries, many activities have been carried out for achieving the information via mobile phones. In Korea, for example, tourists have access via mobile phones to a wide variety of tourist services such hotel bookings, Taxi fares, tourism information, and the way of using it, from the beginning of their arrival.

The process element refers to the mechanisms of travel and providing tourist packages. In this regard, the condition of air and sea transportation, suitability of accommodation booking, taking advantage of the international banking system, and the comfortable entering of tourists to the Kish are important. The condition of transportation in the field of tourism is very important. The improved airports, parking lots, and resorts are all part of the tourism package must compete in today's competitive space. The proper transportation makes easier the access to the sports tourism attractions. By developing and setting up electronic tourism in Kish, the access to sports tourism packages can be made easier. Considering the priorities identified in this study is important in preparing the sport tourism packages. Given the variability of demands according to the target market, research should always be the key element in the development of sports tourism packages.

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