

IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF THE FACTORS EFFECTIVE IN ATTRACTING TOURISTS BY BRAND ASSOCIATION OF SPORTING EVENTS IN IRAN

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ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed at identifying the factors effective in attracting tourists by brand association of sporting events in Iran and also ranking these factors. In terms of purpose, this research is exploratory, and a mixed method has been employed in the implementation process. The researcher has used a theory entitled grounded theory in the qualitative section. However, the AHP method has been used to rank qualitative data in the quantitative section. The management elites of sporting events, sports marketing, and sports tourism constituted the population of the present study. The desired sample including 12 elites in the relevant subjects of the study who were selected using theoretical sampling (targeted) and snowball sampling methods. Tools for data collection constituted documentation and qualitative interviews. Also, the data were obtained through the study guide in the interview sessions of this study. Then, natural coding and reanalysis led to the identification of 7 items and 34 sub-items in the form of components of brand association of sporting events. In the quantitative section, the data obtained from qualitative interviews were ranked by means of expert choice software. The results of this study indicated the data with the following ranking. Components of brand association of sporting events in order of importance are as follows: indicators of the event, indicators of participating teams, benefits of the event for tourists, management factors, sport type, location, and public relations.

KEYWORDS: Sporting Events, Sports Tourism of the Brand, Brand Associations

Today, the tourism industry, referred to as the white industry, has obtained its position more than any other time in human societies as a multidimensional phenomenon. Esfahani (2009) finds tourism worthy of argumentation as a means of negotiations and cultural dialogues and as a new phenomenon in all economic, political, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects. In this regard, sporting events have been introduced as the most important way to create a favorable mental image, increase awareness & brand reputation and boost tourism. It has also been introduced as the most important way for the development and marketing of tourism industry, the most economical way to stimulate the interest of senior authorities in the development of sports tourism and the creation of a unique opportunity and potential economic advantage with attracting large numbers of tourists and spectators to the host city throughout the world (Zeitoonali, 3:2011). Study and research in the tourism industry in line with desirable planning is of paramount importance to developing countries like Iran, especially for those countries whose single-product export will come to an end in the coming decades. Therefore, the significance and urgency of doing research in tourism planning, particularly sports tourism that is known as invisible exports is inevitable. The concept of brand is an emerging phenomenon in tourism has been used in

tourism destinations in the late 1990s (Zeitoonali, 5:2011). Branding is one of the accepted strategic tools to differentiate a product in today's competitive market (Fasih Mardanlou, 19:2013). American Marketing Association defines a brand as such: Brand is a name, term, expression, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of them that is used to make the sellers or a group of sellers' goods and services (sports events) well-known and to differentiate their products from those of competitors. Therefore, brand represents the trademark and address of the manufacturer or sellers of any product or service (Tafreshi Motlagh and Khandani, 121:2010). These are the customers who prefer one brand to another one and give specific value to a brand based on the factors they find important (Takli, 2012:4). According to Aker's investigation (1991), indexes of brand creation that are paid little attention to by companies, are the main factor in the strategic development of brand equity. Indeed, from the perspective of Aker (1996), brand equity is a set of assets (and credits) that are relevantly associated with the brand name; it is also regarded as a symbol that adds to the value offered by the company service or product. The major categories of assets: 1) awareness of the brand name 2) loyalty towards the brand 3) perceived quality 4) trademark associations. Brand equity is a multidimensional and complex concept whose some

aspects have been empirically tested (Atilgan, 239:2005). For brand equity in sports, we can refer to Takli's study (2012). Takli in his doctoral dissertation in 2012 provided a model for brand equity of Iran's National Olympic Committee. In this study, 25 people among coaches, players, directors, reporters, and heads of federations sent to the Asian Games in Guangzhou, with NOC staff constituted the population. Seven factors affecting brand equity of Iran's National Olympic Committee were obtained using exploratory factor analysis. They include features irrelevant to main functions, features relevant to main functions & functional benefits, symbolic benefits, financial and legal management, image management, design management, organizational design management, respectively. In the following, we will go for the dimensional review of the brand equity factors that include brand association.

The definition of brand association provided by Aker (1992) includes product features, customer benefits, applications, users, lifestyles, competitors and countries. The relationships of information with the details of one's life and with its compatibility level over time are two factors that reinforce the associations from various pieces of information in one's mind. Consumers create some beliefs about the various features and benefits of the brand in their minds.

Brand features include descriptive characteristics that best describe a product or service, advantages of the brand that gives value to the concept, and the meaning related to each of the product attributes along with the service in individuals' mind. Generally, personal experience can create the most prominent associations with brand features and advantages and significantly influence consumers' decisions (Keller, 2010, 54).

Brand associations can provide the opportunity for clients to opt for the most important brand when there are multiple choices at their disposal according to the criteria they have in their minds. In 1991, Aker defined brand associations as everything connected with mind about a special type of the brand or its image. Brand association shares affinity with a specific type of knowledge by clients. This knowledge is shaped by any ideas, samples, and truth generated by the product (Yu et al 2000). Chen (439: 2001) states that trademark associations are seen in every form and reflect the features or the independent aspects of the product. Major associations for making purchasing decisions show the

loyalty direction to the trademark and create value for the company and its customers. Aker (1991) has described the advantages as follows:

Contributing to information process, distinguishing the trademark, generating a reason for the purchase, generating positive feelings or features, providing a basis for development. Forming trademark associations such as establishing brand awareness strengthens the relationship between customer and brand. In this case, each new relationship creates, modifies and reinforces associations the brand; this means that the client becomes interested in the trademark (Ebrahimi Abed, 85: 2010). If the trademark is retrieved faster than clients' memory, it shows strong and acceptable associations between the elements of communication and trademark. In other words, it represents brand equity in customer's mind. Brand image is created from brand associations so that clients connect the trademark with relevant and irrelevant concepts. High value of trademark refers to the fact that customers hold a lot of strong and positive associations towards the trademark. Their perception of the brand quality is high and they are loyal to the brand (Ebrahimi Abed, 85: 2010). From Claire's perspective, brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and the factors that are associated with the brand name (associations) and are kept in mind are unique, desirable, and powerful. Claire believes that the brand knowledge in consumers' minds will affect them when deciding on a brand. Brand knowledge in consumers' minds is similar to a node and central point to which a variety of dependent factors, such as the factors that are later associated with the brand stick. In fact, an image of the brand is provided. Every time a brand name is heard and seen with the logo, brand knowledge will be at play. Therefore, the meaning of the brand is recognized and remembered and agents tied with it come to mind. At this time, if these factors are unique, desirable, and powerful, the brand will be selected or consumed and/ or recommended to others by consumers. In terms of the categorization of the associated factors with university sports teams, (Khorrami, 3: 2013) and Gladden & Funk (1998, 1999 and 2002) argue that management, coach and star players are among the features relevant to the product and services. Logo Design (Logo), stadium, and product delivery have also been classified under the node of irrelevant characteristics of the product or service. In a study entitled "a conceptual framework for understanding brand equity of spectator-based sports", Ross (2007)

proposed a framework that contained three categories of (preliminaries) for the brand equity, i.e. preliminaries as a result of market, organization, and experience. He concluded that if these preliminaries finally lead to brand equity, they will then cause loyalty to the team, exposure to the media, merchandise sales, ticket sales and profitability. Henceforth, if consumers have desirable associations of sports brand, it will bring about increased consumption, advertising, brand development, licensing, and sponsorship.

In a study entitled "factors affecting brand loyalty of baseball fans" Lin (2007) reached the conclusion that the concept of brand loyalty can be described through brand association dimensions (assets, interests, and attitudes). He also reported that brand association is an appropriate predictor of the degree of fans' loyalty towards the brand. Williams et al (2012) examined the dimensions and concepts available in branding of participatory spectator-based sports. They have vividly determined the dimensions of brand association and proposed a model for the prediction of brand loyalty. The present study resulted in 4 new dimensions, not existing in the previous studies in brand associations. They are situation (location), price value, product delivery and socialization. These dimensions in the 16-item model of Claire (1993) are restated as team's success, nostalgia, tradition, star player, head coach, management logo, stadium, product delivery, getaway, fan support, peer group acceptance, pride, honor, importance, knowledge. In their TBAS model, Glahn et al (2002) obtained the following dimensions effective in brand associations: personnel (non-players), team's success, history of the team, stadium, community, features of team performance, stadium, brand, consumption experience, sports features, commitment, organizational characteristics of social interaction, scores, and competition. Williams et al (2012) also found that there is a relationship between brand associations and brand loyalty. In his study aimed at prioritizing the factors affecting brand equity in the software industry, Rafiee (2012) showed the company's image as a mediating variable has the greatest impact on brand equity and services, price, promotion, and the relationship of this variable influence brand equity.

Today, creating a strong brand is a strategic necessity and a common goal for many organizations that helps them give customers more value and create a competitive advantage. Accordingly, it can be said the

above brand equity is considered a great asset for organizations. Given that brand associations as one of the dimensions of brand equity can create this value in customers' mind; and our country is at a desirable level in terms of necessary potentials for holding various sporting events and also tourism; and in spite of holding branded events like international competitions of Fajr decade; the current study is seeking to shed light on the issue that "what factors of brand associations in sporting events are effective and attracting tourists in Iran?"

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is an attempt to explore and rate factors of brand associations effective in attracting tourists in sporting events in Iran. In terms of purpose, this research is exploratory since it attempts to explore and fathom more deeply the issue that which factors are effective in the perceived quality of the brand, brand loyalty, and sporting events of Iran in attracting tourists in Iran. This study is seeking to extend the domain of knowledge in the present domain. There are three ways to conduct exploratory research: doing a Meta analysis in literature, speaking with experts in the field of knowledge, and conducting focus group interviews. These ways are flexible to changes. In this study, researchers have used literature and experts' opinions. In fact, the study employed a mixed method approach and is categorized in qualitative studies with context-dependent theory (grounded theory or data derived theory). Five basic steps, not necessarily consecutive, can be identified in the process of grounded theory, as follows: selection of participants, data collection, data organization, data analysis, theory building and modeling. Here, they have been rated.

There are many different ways for making sample group and sampling in qualitative research. The most important and the most frequent ones of them are as follows: homogeneous sampling, heterogeneous sampling, the whole population, a chain referral (snowball sampling), convenient sampling, and theoretical sampling. Both theoretical and snowball sampling have been used in the current study.

Given that determining factors of brand associations effective in attracting tourists in sporting events in Iran is a highly specialized and technical task and specific individuals can comment on it, the study sample did not contain a large number. Therefore, elites

and experts in management sports, sports events, and sports marketing constitute the study sample.

The first section of the research (library study) is dealt with the following: data collection tools including these reading, research papers and books related to the research scope, as well as visiting internet web sites, and some sporting events that are brand in the world.

In the second stage, some interviews were done. There are different ways of doing an interview from which the present study used semi-structured interviews due their flexibility. In the beginning, the analysis of collected data was done through note-taking. Then, open coding was done by the researcher.

In this study, two categories or main components of natural codes was determined. In the next step, AHP questionnaire was developed. These questionnaires were completed by some members of the sample. Thereafter, these questionnaires were ranked through Expert choice software. Finally, factors effective in the perceived brand quality and brand loyalty in Iran’s sporting events and their effects on tourist attraction were analyzed, discussed, and reported.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of the present study consist of two parts. The first part includes the results the findings of the qualitative section and the second part is dealt with the findings of the quantitative section.

Qualitative findings (derived from qualitative interviews)

Coding and final analysis of 12 interviews led to the identification of 34 sub-items and seven items in the form of brand associations (Table 1).

Table 1: brand associations of sporting events related to the specification of effective factors of brand equity in tourist attraction

No.	Items
1	Benefits of the event for sports tourists
2	Location
3	Type of sports field
4	Event indicators
5	Indicators of the participating teams
6	Public relations of the event
7	Management factors

After coding the interviews, sub-items (sub-indicators) were presented as follows:

Benefits of the event for sports tourists

1. Rewards (awards, resuming studies.)
2. Experience
3. Reputation
4. Connection to international events
5. Promotion in ranking
6. Socialization
7. Release of excitement

Location

1. Facilities and equipment of stadiums
2. Natural, cultural, historical, religious, and technological attractions
3. Political status
4. Cultural - social status
5. Economic status
6. Geographical situation
7. Support of the government sector
8. Support of the residents of the area

Type of sports field

1. Understandability of motor skills
2. Visual attractions
3. Understandability of the rules and regulations
4. Individual, team, double

Event indicators

1. Beauty of the logo and event name
2. Side programs of the event
3. Reputation of the event
4. Creation of perceived value for tourists
5. Experience of desired primary presence

Indicators of the participating teams

1. Appropriate behavior of team members towards tourists
2. Success

Public relations of the event

1. Staff
2. Employment of communication channels of the event
3. Training and the promotion of participants’ sports

Management factors

1. Safety Management
2. Population management

3. Strategic plan and organization of the event
4. Social Marketing
5. Security

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Data analysis through AHP

Given the number of identified factors in the previous section, prioritize them seems necessary. To this

end, AHP hierarchy process was used. To do this, for the quantification and calculation of weights, factors identified in the questionnaire were prepared and offered to the reports. Then, hierarchy tree of decisions was provided. Therefore each of the identified criteria (factors) that includes a set of sub-criteria (items) was coded in Expert choice software for calculations as follows.

Table 2: Coding of brand associations of sporting events

Criterion	Code	Sub-criterion	Code
Brand associations of sporting events	C	Benefits of the event for tourists	C ₁
		Location	C ₂
		Type of sports field	C ₃
		Event indicators	C ₄
		Indicators of participating team	C ₅
		Public relations of the event	C ₆
		Management factors	C ₇

Calculating the importance and weight of the identified factors

After completing the questionnaire by experts, inconsistency rate for each one was calculated to ensure the validity and reliability. Those completed questionnaires with an inconsistency rate higher than 0.1

were returned again to responders to reconsider their responses.

Thus, all questionnaires (10 ones) selected for the final analysis of the research were with an inconsistency rate of less than 0.1.

Table 3: Hybrid matrix of paired comparisons, related to factors of brand associations of sporting events

	C ₁	C ₂	C ₃	C ₄	C ₅	C ₆	C ₇
C ₁	1	1/453012	1/106917	0/656461	0/737001	1/613447	1/466826
C ₂	0/681269	1	1/161317	0/610951	0/73768	1/61525	0/856089
C ₃	0/89837	0/853414	1	0/883114	0/924841	1/471478	0/77989
C ₄	1/513129	1/62768	1/12731	1	1/243868	2/324321	1/776707
C ₅	1/350804	1/348053	1/078854	0/800361	1	1/962599	1/350754
C ₆	0/612175	1/612175	0/675051	0/427331	0/505526	1	0/50211
C ₇	0/672608	1/157701	1/27367	0/55655	0/73123	1/956013	1

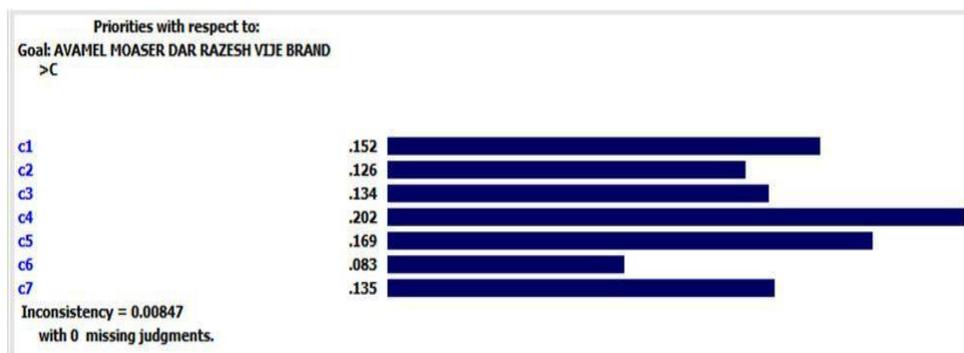


Figure 1: prioritization of brand association items of sporting events

Consistency rate of the hybrid matrix is 0.00 based on the software output. Therefore, there is no inconsistency since the consistency rate is less than 0.1.

As Chart 1 shows the software output, the items of event indicators and indicators of participating teams were the most important items from the perspective of these scholars and had the most impact on brand associations of sporting events in attracting tourists.

The importance factor of these items is 0.202 and 0.169. Then, the items were ranked respectively in the order of benefits of the event for tourists, management factors, type of sports field, location, and public relations of the event.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Brand associations plays a major role in rating a product /service and consumers' choice. The more one creates a relationship with his/ her information on a nearby brand and connects it to nearby brand, the stronger the associations formed in his mind will be (Ibrahimi Abed, 2010). Events as a service to boost their brand should have attributes that can create ideal associations for tourists. Hence, in the present study, index event of 0.202 has been acknowledged by experts as the most important factor in creating a brand which side event programs are located in its subsets. According to the literature, the qualities of side event results in differentiating one brand from another. Studies carried out by Talebpour, et al (2011) also showed that a long-term and marketing plan is critical to the host city, and generally it is believed that the climates of events, festivals, side festivals, visiting attractions and crafts along with marketing are effective in the presence of tourists. Also Honarvar (2005) in his study concluded that the ceremonies, traditional programs and other side event programs are impellent factors in encouraging tourists toward sporting events.

Neyreti, et al(2001) in their study found that the cultural and religious festivals are important factors in pushing tourists towards Olympics and these studies are consistent with the results of the present study. In this study, beauty of name and logo on event was recognized as the best indicators which Gladden(1998,1999) Vatkoli(1391) in his research, indicated it as an important factor in establishing the brand image and brand equity. Also Gladden, et al(2002) TrademarkVaklor(2003) consider logo management as an effective factor on

association and results obtained from this study highlight the importance of the name and logo on the event.

Favorable experience at a sporting event can create optimal associations from that event and also for sport tourists, it can be considered as an index which by this way it may call them back to the sport event and this is regarded as important from the viewpoint of research experts. As a confirmation of this statement, Chalyp (1992) in his study, considered various experiences of the events as a factor in determining the amount of any tourists. And Berry(2001) also believes that the customer experience is important in the formation of the brand which in the present paper it is considered as indices of even tby experts. Tyvary(2010) quoted from Takly(1391) considered the direct experience of consumers in using goods and services as effective on associations. Creating a correct value cycle as an indicator of sporting event and developing perceived values or tourists in this study were important factors for association because the event is an intangible product, and should be useful for tourists. Nitmeyer, et al (2003) in a study considered the perceived value as dimensions of customer-based brand equity and primary pay for the extra price. Customer satisfaction index model in Europe developed by Davarvenus, et al (1375)showed that if we can detect the customers' expectations and they perceive the quality, this ends in perceived value and finally the customers' satisfaction. In other words, in a competitive environment, the organizations will survive only if they can supply their customers and instead of adapting customers with a product or service of their own organization, the activities of the organizations should be based on the customers' demands and expectations. Factors that cause the prominence of the participating teams and result in desirable association on brand of sport events have been recognized by the experts of present study in the qualitative interview as success and appropriate behavior of participating teams which is labeled as the indicator of the participating teams in this study .This factor was considered as the second item in terms of importance by obtaining a factor of 0.169. Keller (2003) proposed a model of 16 items of the factors affecting association which included: the success of the team , nostalgia , star player , coach , management of logo, stadium, product delivery , avoiding boredom , fan support , history, acceptance in the peer group , pride , honor , importance, and knowledge. Gladden et al(2002)in TBAS model, found factors affecting brand equity which is the factor of

success among these factors. Gladden's(1999,1998) in another study, considers success, coach, star player, Logo, media coverage, support as factors of particular value in the team and states that success of team will increase the sale of the team.. Also, Alexander et al(2008) considered the popularity and team success as a major factor in the success of the club. The results of this research are in line with the results of the present study and even confirm it. Assets: from asset dimension, the physical picture is essential in evoking fans regarding the brand. The researchers said that in the sports industry, the assets that connect fans with a special team include team success, team players, coach, team management, logo design, Stadium and a brilliant experience and product offerings(Bauer, 2004).The benefits of the event for sports tourism, with the ratio of 0.152 is the second factor and its subsidiaries includes: compensation (bonus , continuing education, ...) , experience , connections to international events , promotion in rankings , draining of emotion, effective evoking factors from brand, special value of brand and attracting tourist which Masoomi(2008) proved it in his studies and stated that factors such as entertainment , excitement and socialization, and being interested in a team are one of the crucial elements in amount of spectators presence in the stadium. Also Dehghan Ghahfarokhi, et al (2010) takes into account beauty, excitement and escape as factors of provoking fans in attending national competitions. Also Yama Phones (2003) considers items and rewards as a positive variables affecting revisiting sporting events. Also in a study done by Takly (2012), Incentive activity showed a high correlation with functional benefits that all these results are consistent with the results of the present study.

Location of the event by a factor of 0.126 is considered as the sixth factor in associating the brand which included: organizing city, the venue and stadium, these are factors that according to experts, if followed by natural attractions, cultural, historical, religious, and technological influences on creating association and attracting tourists, they will be extremely helpful. Also other factors that were stressed by the expert in this study included: the political , cultural, social, and economic situation, geographic location, government support and the stadium facilities. In confirmation of these cases, Shams (2008) believes that using the locations with desired image has an effect on equity. Likewise, Chou (2001) in his study, states that the sports that are part of a

country's custom, can attract tourists. Also VanVakitamor (2006) and Fallahi et al(2009) stated that economic factors such as ticket prices and transportation costs and advertising can provoke audience and Esfahani(2008) considered this factor as an important factor in attracting sports tourism announced. Geographical location was known as a factor of attracting spectators in study carried out by Van Vakitamor(2006). In another study, Zhang et al(1996) stated that economic factors, factors related to exercise in the gym and the value of sport in the society were effective in amount of presence and quality of spectators' presence in a sport event.

One of the factors constituting location was government support which Claire and Lehmann (2006) quoted from Takly (2012) stated that the role of government on the location of brand is very effective and the results by Takli(2012) showed that principles governing policies are very helpful on the function of the organization and the image provided by the organization as well as the value of brand in organization. He states that sometimes the problems that appear for the credit of an organization is the result of legal and official organization, which these studies also rated as important the existence of this kind of item in creating associations in the mind of tourists.

In their studies, Esfahani and Safabakhsh (2011) examined the effect of hosting competitions in sport tourism and stated that the quality of communications led to an increase in sport tourism and that events were crucially important in the growth of sport tourism. They pointed out that sport tourism is the most beneficial type of trade and its side demands such as, security, appropriate behavior and communication, and quality of facilities in attracting spectators are very helpful and the findings of the present research confirms it. Because based on the experts' point of view in the present study, public relations of events with a factor of 0/83 in the seventh rank, is considered fruitful as a factor in creating appropriate associations for events and as an image for attracting the tourists. According to Takli (2012), media influences what people can see and hear. At present, the relationship between sport and media is vital. Media has access to a group of people, thus management of organization and public relations should be able to recognize the unique aspects of their products or services and make them interesting to media in a way that they can prove their value to the people. The media coverage of these organizations should be within the year. Training

and expanding the participating fields, use of communication channels and staff are considered as exploratory subsets of this field. Esfehni (2008) introduced training as the third factor in tourism which confirms the training factor and expanding the sport fields. And this is recognized of the factors in public relations. Halliday and Throt(2010) considered the existence of appropriate interactive communication capabilities with customers as contributing factor in developing innovative processes which this leads to formation and reinforcement of brand in the company that is in line with the results of the present study.

Organizing today's event has become important for all countries because of the interest in the economic, cultural, political, social, environmental fields, thus it is essential that be managed with the proper planning, organizing, leading and guiding(Jalali Farahani, Ali doost, 2011). According to experts, managerial factors with a factor of 0/135 and in the fourth rank can be considered helpful in attracting tourists and creating positive value and association of the brand in sport events of Iran. Nematpour (2011) viewed management, facilities, and infrastructureas one of the most important factors in attracting sport tourists to the coastal towns.

In this study, strategic planning and organizing events, were of the managerial factors in evoking effective brand in attracting tourist, which with respect to this, Bramuel(1997) in his study called "Strategic planning before and after major events "found out that major events are not effective in promoting the industry of the hosting countries, unless it can be attended in a long-term strategy and this strategy continues until organizing the event and emphasizes on an exploratory factor. Esfehni (2010) in his study, found that security was the most important factor in foreign tourism as well as domestic tourism which this was in line with the present study. This is because of the fact that in this study, security has been considered by experts as sub-sets of managerial factors. Likewise, Eftekhari(2010) in the study of security dimensions of tourism in Iran showed that the level of sense of public security of tourists in Iran has been high before the trip but television, friends , relatives and internet have had the most adverse effect on spread of insecurity to tourists about Iran.

Social marketing has been recognized as an effective factor in association of brand and managerial factor by experts. But Hooshmand (2011) in his study,

found no correlational relationship between attention of social responsibilities and association of brands, which this was not in line with the results of the present study. Hofler(2002) quoted from Takli(2012) states that social marketing contributes to the value of the brand via informing , increase of brand image and creating confidence on brand and on social affirmation, and finally establishing a positive sense and this is confirmed by the results of the study. It seems that event organizers' participation in social activities creates a good sense in the minds, regardless of gaining prestige for events.

The type of sport fields in events with a factor of 0.134 was recognized as the third factor in associations in terms of importance as a reason for appropriate associations. From experts point of view, the participating fields should be individual, double or team, and also from the viewers' perspective it should have image attractions and its rules and skills should be tangible, thus in this case the associations of the brand will be effective. It seems that this factor highlights the importance of exploratory factor in the subsets of public relations because in order to access to this factor, we can use the public relation in promotion and training of participating fields in the event. Likewise, Gladen, et al(2002) stated the following factors as an effective element in association of brands. They include: Physical characteristics, commitment, organizational features , ratings , competition, and consumer experience. These factors were in line with the type of sports field (the intent of the researcher is the evoking features in sport fields). Regarding the type of sport field, Dehghan Ghahfarokhi, et al (1389) consider interest in football and socialization and interest in a player as motivating factors to national competitions, which this is in line with the results of the present study.

According to the results obtained, for creating appropriate associations which leads to attracting tourists to events, managers by organizing events' plan, should try take some benefits for individuals such as invaluable prize for players and the winning teams, or awarding the events' donations to the sport tourists as Klar sees this as a benefit for creating association. In selecting the type of sport fields, he has paid attention to the most popular and affecting sport tourists ones, and also considers the image attractions of them. So by this way, it both creates appropriate associations and attracts the media and fans toward covering the event.

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