



## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## The Relationship between Marketing Mix Elements and the Purchasing Behaviour of Sports Club Customers

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## KEYWORDS

Buying behaviour;  
Customer;  
Marketing mix;  
Wind clubs

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between marketing mix elements and the purchasing behavior of sports club customers. This research was applied research in terms of its purpose, and correlational descriptive research in terms of its nature, which was conducted in the field. The statistical population of this research was made up of all the male customers of sports clubs in Damghan city, due to the uncertainty of the number of the statistical population in this research, a statistical sample of 384 people was selected based on Cochran's formula for uncertain communities, which according to the number of questionnaires distributed 292 were selected as a sample, the sampling method in this research was relative random. The data collection tool in this research included the standard questionnaires of the mixed elements of appeal marketing (2008) and the standard questionnaire on Kim's shopping behavior (2008), which was used after checking the validity and reliability. The method of data analysis in this research included descriptive statistics tests and inferential statistics tests including Smirnov's Kolmogorov, Cronbach's alpha test, and Pearson's correlation coefficient test using SPSS version 26 software. In general, the results of the research show that all elements of the marketing mix affect the buying behavior of the customers of sports clubs in Damghan City.

### Introduction

To survive in today's competitive market, the sports industry must be able to attract its audience and increase the choice of its audience by diversifying its products; otherwise, consumers and service users will gradually lose their trust. (Atai, 2017). Most experts think that in the current situation, only those organizations will remain in the field of competition that has made the main focus of their activities on meeting the demands of customers and satisfying their needs with minimum price and maximum quality (Mansourikhah, 2018). In the current situation, only relying on traditional marketing strategies, i.e. offering and selling the product (the same proportion of supply and demand) cannot achieve much success, but it is very

important to pay attention to the needs and expectations of customers to survive and make a profit (Khosro Khavar, 2015). Dastaneh *et al.*, (2020) state that marketing is the main factor in the customer's purchase intention and helps businesses to earn a lot of profit through personalization. Every person with a positive attitude and mental image toward a destination, even if they will not visit it again, can play a role in promoting the destination by word of mouth to others (Chen *et al.*, 2020).

Currently, sports marketing management is strategic management in which internal organizational strengths and weaknesses, on the one hand, and external or environmental opportunities and risks, on the

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other hand, must be examined and evaluated with precision, accuracy, and speed to be able to adapt internal organizational capabilities and external opportunities to the goals. Achieved (Hass, 2016). In this regard, the model of mixed elements of marketing is one of the best tools that can help create a suitable strategy in sports marketing management, based on which each of the elements can be considered as a controllable variable and sports needs based on set the target market (Moulin *et al.*, 2000). Today, business success cannot be oversimplified, that's why understanding and predicting consumer behavior is the key to success in marketing planning and management in this changing and transforming environment (Hemti Afif *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, marketing science tries to influence the ways of consumer behavior. These efforts for organizations, customers, and Society have some effects (Samadi *et al.*, 2019). In any organization, both production and services are the most important factors for the preservation and survival of the customer organization. If the organization can succeed in creating loyalty by satisfying the customers, it can prepare the ground for its long-term growth and survival, which is only possible with the study and planning of the management, and its introduction is also a complete understanding of the customer's wishes, considering the importance Marketing mix factors about customers, it seems that the identification of marketing mix factors can play an important role in attracting customers to clubs (Hass, 2016). In his works, McCarthy defines the marketing mix as controllable variables that the organization can use and combine to satisfy its target market. Also, the concept of marketing mix consists of decisions about product, price, promotion, and distribution. These are the most important parts to which marketing managers allocate organization resources to achieve sales and profitability goals (Jalali Farahani, 2013).

In the new world of marketing, there are different marketing methods and programs that can predict the buying behavior of customers and increase their satisfaction through it, distribution network strategies,

price strategies, product strategies, and promotion strategies, which are the same strategy of marketing mix elements that can cause strengthen or weaken the brand (Keller, 2019) if we know how each of these elements of the marketing mix affects the buying behavior of customers, we can use them to improve the brand value of the club and focus on these elements in marketing strategies and allocate more resources to them (Ataei, 2017). So far, there has been some research in this field, including Poursoltani *et al.* Product arrangement, promotion, price, and location were more important. In addition, Sembring<sup>4</sup> (2021) in the study of the mixed effect of marketing on the image of the company concluded that the product, price, distribution, and promotion have a positive and significant effect on the mental image of the company. The results of Kavand *et al.*'s research (2023) showed that the marketing mix has a significant effect on behavioral tendencies and the quality of communication with customers of sports stores; also, the combination of digital marketing with the mediating role of customer relationship quality on the behavioral tendencies of store customer Sport was influential. In a review of recent studies, Goldman *et al.* (2021) searched for the effect of green marketing on satisfaction and loyalty and concluded that among the mixed elements of green marketing, quality, product price, and company image have the greatest effect on purchase loyalty. In research, Arkorsakol (2017) investigated the analysis of the effective elements of the mixed model of service marketing on the attendance of spectators in international badminton competitions in Thailand, and the results showed that product, price, location, promotion and process variables, the willingness of spectators to attend international badminton competitions in It has affected Thailand. The results of Fereydoni and Kalate Sifri's research (2017) also show that the marketing mix has a high coefficient of effect on fans' re-attendance and fans' satisfaction. Based on the results of Hemti Ghafif *et al.* (2023), it was found that the combination of marketing and mental image had a significant positive effect

on the intention of students to return to sports Olympiads and the combination of marketing had a significant positive effect on the mental image of students.

As mentioned, the special attractions of sports and the emergence of special tendencies among all societies towards sports events have caused sports teams to become economic enterprises to develop and improve their quality, and therefore the main infrastructure of the sports industry. They form clubs that act as factories and economic enterprises (Yazdi, 2016). What is important is that sports clubs play a very important and effective role in popularizing sports on the one hand and promoting championship and professional sports on the other hand. Sports clubs create excitement in communities by motivating and attracting young people to championship sports and training athletes in various disciplines, as well as by participating in sports competitions. This sports institution provides elite athletes for countries and becomes a factor in achieving international sports honors, the results of which lead to appropriate political, economic, and cultural effects (Qarai, 2015). A group of these clubs seeks to achieve the goal with the manipulation approaches of marketing mixes (price, product, promotion, and advertising), and another group with new customer-oriented methods, according to the things that were stated, the research team in this research seeks to answer This question is, do the elements of marketing mix affect the buying behavior of the customers of sports clubs in Damghan city? Considering that the marketing mix is one of the important factors in formulating a marketing strategy and attracting customers, and sports halls should be To achieve their great goals, the sports halls of Damghan City should be aware of the impact of the marketing mix on the buying behavior and the level of customer attraction and apply the necessary changes in the elements of the marketing mix. Undoubtedly, the results obtained from this research show the weaknesses and strengths of sports halls in Damghan City in the marketing department and will create a suitable foundation for improving the current situation by transferring moti-

vation to the managers and employees of sports halls in Damghan City for more correct implementation in the use of marketing mix elements.

### **Materials and Methods**

According to the purpose of the present research, it is an applied research, in terms of design, it is a non-experimental design, and more precisely, descriptive-correlation; Also, this research was conducted in a field form using a questionnaire. The statistical population in this research was made up of all the male customers of sports clubs in Damghan city, due to the unknown number of the statistical population in this research, the statistical sample was selected based on Cochran's formula for unspecified communities of 384 people, which according to the number of questionnaires distributed and returned 292 questionnaires were able to perform statistical work and were selected as a statistical sample, the sampling method in this research was relative random, that is, according to the number of customers of different clubs, questionnaires were distributed among them in the same proportion. This research aims to collect information about the background of the research from library studies, internet research, and databases and to collect data from the personal information form to collect demographic information and from the standard questionnaires of the mixed elements of appeal marketing (2018) and the standard behavior questionnaire. Kim (2008) was used, whose validity was confirmed by 10 experts, management professors, and sports coaches. To check the reliability, in a preliminary study by collecting 30 questionnaires using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the internal reliability was calculated for the mixed elements questionnaire (0.78) and the shopping behavior questionnaire (0.91). It was acceptable. To organize, summarize, classify the raw scores, and describe the sample sizes, descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, percentages, standard deviation, and table drawing) were used; Also, to check the hypotheses of the research, inferential statistics tests including Smirnov's Kolmogoroff to check the data distribution,

Cronbach's alpha test to check the internal reliability of the research tool and Pearson's correlation coefficient test to check the relationship between the variables using SPS software. S version 26 was used.

**Results**

The demographic characteristics of the statistical sample were reported in Table 1, this table includes characteristics such as age, gender, position, and education

**Table 1.** Description of demographic characteristics.

	Variable	Number	
<b>Age</b>	Under 20 years	78	7.26
	21-30 years	81	7.27
	31 to 40 years	58	9.19
	41 to 50 years	51	5.17
	More than 50 years	24	2.8
<b>Education</b>	High school	52	8.17
	Diploma and postgraduate diploma	94	2.32
	Bachelor's degree	100	3.34
	Masters degree and higher	46	7.15
<b>Sports History</b>	Under 5 years	90	8.30
	Between 5 and 10 years	88	1.30
	Between 10 and 15 years	62	2.21
	More than 15 years	46	9.17

The results of the demographic characteristics of the subjects based on age show that 26.7% are under 20 years old, 27.7% are between 20 and 30 years old, 19.9% are between 31 and 40 years old, 17.4% are between 41 and 50 years old and 5 8.0% were over 50 years old. Regarding the level of education, 17.8% had a diploma, 32.2% had a diploma or a diploma,

34.3% had a bachelor's degree, and 15.7% had a master's degree or higher. Also, based on sports experience, 30.8% were under 5 years, 30.1% were between 5 to 10 years, 21.2% were between 10 to 15 years, and 17.9% had more than 15 years of sports experience. The descriptive results related to the research variables are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Descriptive distribution of research variables

	Factor	Number	Average	standard deviation
<b>Elements of the marketing mix</b>	Promotion	292	76.3	07.1
	the product	292	67.3	17.1
	Price	292	89.3	28.1
	place	292	48.3	42.1
<b>Customer buying behavior</b>		292	92.3	98.0

According to Table 2, the descriptive results of the research showed that the components of product (3.67±1.17), price (3.89±1.28), location (3.48±1.42), and promotion component (07.07) 3.76±1 had this mean value and standard deviation; Also, the variable

of customer buying behavior had a mean and standard deviation equal to (3.92±0.98).

To determine how the data is distributed, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical test was used, the results of which are reported in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results to check the distribution of research data

Factor		Number	Significance level	Test result
<b>Elements of the marketing mix</b>	Promotion	292	462.0	normal distribution
	the product	292	320.0	normal distribution
	Price	292	523.0	normal distribution
	place	292	403.0	normal distribution
<b>Customer buying behavior</b>		292	205.0	normal distribution

According to the results of the significance level and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, all research variables have a normal distribution ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

To investigate the relationship between marketing mix

elements and their components with customers' buying behavior, Pearson's correlation test was used, the results of which are reported in Table 4.

**Table 4.** The results of the correlation coefficient test between marketing mix elements and customers' buying behavior

Variables	Customer buying behavior		
	The correlation coefficient Pearson	Significance level	Test result
<b>Elements of the marketing mix</b>	660.0	001.0	Positive and meaningful communication
<b>Price</b>	707.0	001.0	Positive and meaningful communication
<b>place</b>	619.0	001.0	Positive and meaningful communication
<b>Promotion</b>	561.0	001.0	Positive and meaningful communication
<b>The product</b>	588.0	001.0	Positive and meaningful communication

Based on the results of the Pearson correlation test and the observed significance level ( $P \geq 0.05$ ) in Table 4, it was found that there is a positive and significant relationship between the elements of the marketing mix and its components with the purchasing behavior of the customers of sports clubs in Damghan city.

**Discussion**

Sports clubs are one of the most important groups that want to know why customers behave and how they can use marketing mixes to control these behaviors, so it seems necessary that to improve the marketing activities of these clubs, a thorough investigation of the factors should be done. be effective and guarantee their success; Obtaining information to identify the methods of improving the relationship with customers for health clubs improves their performance and increases their profitability, the purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship of mixed marketing

elements on the purchasing behavior of customers of sports clubs in Damghan city. The statistical population in this research was made up of all the male customers of sports clubs in Damghan City, and a total of 292 people participated in this research as a statistical sample. The results of the demographic characteristics of the subjects based on age showed that most of the subjects, i.e. 27.7%, were between 20 and 30 years old, and the least of them, about 8.5%, were older than 50 years. Regarding the level of education, most of the subjects had a bachelor's degree (34.3%) and the least of them had a master's degree or higher (15.7%). Regarding sports experience, most of the subjects, about 31%, had experience of less than 5 years, and less than 18% of the subjects had experience of more than 15 years. Descriptive results of the research show among the components of the marketing mix, the highest average was related to the price component, and the lowest average was related to the

location component.

The inferential results of the research showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between mixed marketing elements and purchasing behavior among the customers of sports clubs in Damghan City. Ghafif *et al.* (2014), Pour Soltani *et al.* (2016), Harsuno<sup>6</sup> (2016), Gerjian *et al.* (2017), Khodaparast *et al.*; However, Saif Panahi *et al.* (2018) and Tahmasapour *et al.* (2017) and Fitriah *et al.* (2019) were not by the findings of the research, so that at least one of the four components in the conducted research did not affect the purchase behavior. Considering that the basis of the marketing movement is to prevent the wastage of various resources and facilities and to find the most suitable place for the product (club), the managers of the clubs should make a significant contribution by using the opportunities available in the competitive market of the sports industry. On the other hand, in the dimension of market building, the most important effort of marketers is to attract, develop, and maintain their target market (customers, goods, and services). This shows the dependence between marketing elements in determining and driving customers' decisions.

Another part of the research results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the price component and purchasing behavior among the customers of sports clubs in Damghan City. Feridoni and Kalate (2017) and Poursoltani *et al.* (2019) are consistent and inconsistent with the results of Saif Panahi *et al.* (2017) and Khodaparast *et al.* showed that the element of price is one of the factors affecting the buying behavior of sports club customers, manufacturers and sellers of sports goods and services can be strengthening this element lead to encouraging customers to buy and repeat purchases; Because sometimes customers are the type of people who are first attracted to the price of the product, some people consider cheap items to be attractive and some more expensive items to be better while being expensive is not always a criterion of being better.

Also, a positive and significant relationship was observed between the location component and shopping behavior among the customers of sports clubs in Damghan City. The results of this part of the research are also in line with the findings of Golderman *et al.* (2021), and Hemti Ghafif *et al.* Gerjian *et al.* (2016), Feridouni and Kalate (2017) and Khodaparast *et al.* (2015) are consistent with the research results of Fitiriyeh *et al.* (2019), which state that the location component does not have much effect on customers; Of course, this finding may be due to the society being different from sports. Distribution channels affect consumer perceptions through sensory processes, for example, suitable parking near the gym, suitable light and temperature of the gym during exercise, location and convenient access to the gym, and so on, increase comfort and confidence for customers. Next, distance is important for customers and they prefer to go to clubs that are close to their place of residence.

Also, a positive and significant relationship between the promotion component and purchasing behavior was observed in the customers of sports clubs in Damghan city, and this finding is also in line with the research results of Sembring (2021), Kavand *et al.* (2023), Rouziani and Irena (2017) and Alipour (2016) are the same. In sports marketing, promotion covers a set of interrelated activities. All these activities are designed and implemented to attract the attention and arouse the interests and awareness of consumers and finally encourage them to buy sports products (Cutler and Armstrong, 2017). The main purpose of advertising is to sell more products by influencing the consumer. One of the most important issues that must be considered in the category of advertising is the trust in advertising from the customer. In the case of sports promotion, various objectives can be related to creating awareness, stimulating demand, encouraging products, services, and experience, and obtaining and maintaining customer loyalty.

Finally, it was found that a positive and significant relationship between the product component and pur-

chasing behavior was observed in the customers of sports clubs in Damghan City, these results are in line with the findings of Hemi Afif *et al.* (2015) and Roziani and Irena (2017) are consistent. High product quality as well as customer satisfaction leads to consumers' purchase intention and the product's ability to satisfy needs influences consumers to pursue the purchase of the product. On the other hand, it should be noted that many consumers are limited in their choices. A deep understanding of this issue can create a wider understanding of consumers (Poursoltani *et al.*, 2019), customers see the benefits of the product and if they find it in line with their expectations, they continue their relationship with the provider, since the product or service in sports is intangible. Therefore, physical sports facilities play a significant role in customer satisfaction.

In general, according to the results of the research, it can be stated that it is necessary to provide models based on scientific thinking in this field with an economic and industrial view of sports and subsequently a systemic approach to sports marketing, so that after In the process of marketing research, market opportunities have been identified and through the analysis of opportunities, target market and marketing strategies to access this market and meet the needs of the customers of this market, it is time to plan marketing activities to implement the marketing strategies and then according to the strategies selected and in line with their implementation, the club must decide on the marketing mix and the optimal allocation of resources.

#### **Conflict of interests**

NO conflict.

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