

The Status of Female Sports Marketing Products Through Online in the City of Sanandaj, Iran

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Abstract

Growing internet using in the third world countries, especially between the Iranian people, encourages marketers to be more concentrated on electronic trade and attracting customers through online. This research consists of two goals which they are: the study of sellers and sports experts about effect of products, price, place and promotion of 4 Ps that propagated through online on sales and studying the effect of marketers and sports products sellers' relationship with buyers through online with emphasis on 4 Ps of marketing factors. This study is a descriptive study method that it has been done through scaling method. The statistical society of this research is 300 professors and sport management experts and marketing companies or sports products sellers in Kurdistan province (Iran). The tool for collecting data was questionnaire and the data has been analyzed by the regression method. Findings indicated that from the sports marketers and the experts point of view, between the amount of influence through online on the 4 Ps elements and women's sports products in the current and desirable conditions, there is a meaningful positive relationship and finally respondents have had different attitude and assess on the impact of propagated 4p through online on the selling.

Key words: Female sports marketing; 4 Ps of marketing; Online marketing; Sanandaj-Iran

INTRODUCTION

We are all the consumers. This means that in a special order, we use or consume the food, clothing, housing, education, services, ideas and etc. Decisions that we make about consumption, demand for raw materials, transportation, technical services or allocation of resources, cause to success in some industries and failure in some others. Therefore, consumer's behavior is an important factor in recession or flourishing of the commercial activities. Important factor in the success of the marketing strategies and advertising is the correct understanding of consumer's behavior. This issue is important both for profit organization and nonprofit organizations. The developing of the studies about the consumers' behavior is resulting of the marketing philosophy change from production tendency and the product toward selling tendency and then marketing tendency. Other factors have been involving in the developing of studies about consumer's behavior that include: high speed introduction in new products, the shorter cycles of the products life, increasing in the movements for supporting of the consumers by private groups and public politicians, paying attention to the environment and developing the marketing services. In such an atmosphere, a correct understanding of the consumers and the process of the consumption have the numerous advantages (Amir & Mehrdad, 2001).

The advantages include assisting the managers in their decision, providing a basis of knowledge through consumers' behavior analysis, to help the legislators and arrangers for setting up the law that related to buying and selling goods and services and ultimately to consumers in making better decision. In this research, we studied the situation of women sports marketing through online by using 4 Ps elements in Sanandaj (Iran). Because of being importance of internet among the people of Iran in recent years, this research will be more important. Also, there has not been scientific research in Kurdistan province and in all around of our country and it is just limited to some conferences or seminars. Also this research has two general factors that they make its goals, which these goals include: researching the opinions of the two sports sellers and experts groups from each other separately that about the priority of the amount of the effect of internet on mixed elements of sports marketing is in the ideal situation. And studying the difference or lack of difference about the effect of the Internet on every one of the sports marketing elements are belonging to the separating of the conditions (the current-desired) and separating of the groups (experts-sellers). The method of the research is descriptive-analytic. The statistical society includes: sports management experts from the universities that they are subset of the Science Ministry, Research and Technology and Sanandaj's free Islamic University (first group) and institutions and companies that they sell the products and sports products from Sanandaj city (second group). The sample of the first group includes 200 professors and sports management experts from different universities that they were chosen randomly in the based on the name of the universities, and a second group also includes marketing company or seller of the sports products that they have been selected randomly. Totally, 300 respondents, as statistical sample, answered questionnaires completely and acceptably. The independent variables for this research include product, place, price, promotion that the method of relationship and influencing on the dependent variable (the state of the sports marketing through online) drives through analyzing. In this research, the status of sports marketing through online is a kind of reaction that it maybe shows itself as a measure to buy or not buying the sports goods.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, it is obvious that one of the key elements for the management in order to achieve success in the administration of the organizations especially from the kind of trade, manufacturing and servicing next to the important subjects like making a decision, planning, organizing, leadership and supervision is marketing discussion. Today, the organizations and institutions that want to stay alive and progress in competition with

their opponents, necessarily they benefit from marketing in their working environment and organizations and institutions also are not an exception from that (Fatemeh, 2004). Also, there are various definitions for marketing, each of these definitions are aspect of the Marketing activities, some experts define that marketing is process to satisfy humans' needs and demands. In Philip Kotler's opinion-owner of the most prominent clear-sightedness in this field, marketing is the "human activity to satisfy the needs and demands through the exchange process" (Mehrdad, 2003).

Recently, the sports world feels a new experience. Rapid and widespread changes in all sports dimensions have affected using the methods and marketing techniques in sports. Every day, millions of dollars in different countries is spending for sports and also needing to exercise in order to obviate mental and physical problems, will be shown more tangible every day. All these cases have led to more efforts that it is necessary in sports marketing. On the other hand, in the past years, sports marketing knowledge has had major importance for the organizations and institutions. This skill and knowledge to some extent has had importance that it can be considered as one of the components of the sports organizations and institutions and this importance is increasing more (Peterson *et al.*, 1997). In addition, the Sports marketing includes all activities that it has been designed to satisfy the needs and demands of the sports fans.

Effective sports marketing can have a lot of profit. This profit includes giving information about the sports and encouraging people to test the sport for the first time in their life, or to direct to the other sport and to make confident, honesty, happiness and pledge and it proposes some stimulus for making knowledge and science (Mehrdad, 2003). Today, with new formation about sports events, a good opportunity has been created for dealing with the modern sports for women. Development and expansion of the international sports organizations have made the necessity of creating attraction and opportunity for women activation as tangible and necessary thing. Games charter has special emphasis to create suitable sports opportunities for women and men. Sport can be effective device to power the girls and women who have been deprived from the sports in participating and enjoying from mental, social and physical profits of the sports in due to their gender in different cultures (Fatemeh, 2004). Also, using the internet in developing countries is considerably increasing. Iran also is one of the countries that have increased internet users tangibly in the recent decade. So, the internet has had excellence impact on traditional Marketing. In fact, internet marketing has had major changes than traditional marketing. Of course, it should be noted that the available theories for marketing have useful ability in the control of the internet because the human's needs and demands has not changed but only

possess of making it, is different. Therefore, marketing techniques and the way of using it just might have been changed (SydAmyr, 2007).

Additionally, we should not forget that in Iran, internet users use the internet variously that trade with 0.1% has allocated to itself the least percent but researches show that with the increasing computer and internet among the Iranians this percent will be increased considerably in the next few years (Fatemeh, 2004). Moreover, at the age of internet is basic concept of marketing as “satisfying needs and demands of customers”, is true but methods that are used for recognition and meeting the needs and demands have certainly changed. As in during the past years, other technologies such as radio and television have also created changes in the manner of doing marketing. Internet due to some of its own special characteristics has created the changes in the traditional marketing (Mehrdad, 2003).

These changes have been studied by different researchers. The change of the unilateral information process between the company and customers in traditional marketing to bilateral information process in internet marketing; the change from the mass marketing to individual marketing (Martin, 1996); the change from the concept of the divisible in market in traditional marketing to the concept of making of the society in Internet marketing (Rashin, 2007). Therefore, internet technology nowadays is most important invention whether we accept it or not it will have deep effects on the style of the doing activities especially on the commercial activities and in the future, it will have more effects. Also marketing as one of the main activities in every profit and nonprofit organizations has accepted profound effects in result of Internet consequence (Bahram *et al.*, 2007).

These effects have had different advantages for marketers and for this same reason, companies want to transfer from the traditional marketing to internet marketing. The important point in this transferring is realism and avoiding from the sudden changes in activities. Historical experience has proved that gradual change and stage by stage is often more successful (Gavhar *et al.*, 2009).

1.1 Background of Research

1.1.1 Researches Inside the Country

(1) Fatemeh (2004) studied the influence of infrastructure factors of technical and users, industries, social and economic systems. Her findings show that in Iran 47% of internet users, use internet in order to have fun and entertainment, 18.9% in order to access the scientific resources, 34% of users use internet to gain information from the news and 0.1% for business and trading. She has also found in her researches that the speed to access internet influences all the elements mixed with marketing (product, price, promotion and place) (Fatemeh, 2004).

(2) Hamid (2005) studied role of information and communication technology in the manufacturing's sports

industry. His findings show that manufacturers need to compete in the market to be successful. By the same token, many of the manufacturing sports industry have been influenced by information and communication technologies. In this way, the workforce structure in the organizations has tended from pyramidal state toward a flat organizational structure and non-focused. Leaders pay attention to identify skills more, not giving orders and provide necessary resources for workers. Manufacturing workers in the stockroom work as a united team under the management of their boss and maybe they will be transformed from their team to other teams. Manufacturing workers in the factory manage the process of manufacturing and they choose the most useful way for doing their work. In fact, with using information technology in factories and companies, the costs will decrease and communications will be affected more and it will able companies to control their manufacturing and stock and so much of their works will be automated. Automation is every kind of tools or equipments that causes to hasten the time of moving in manufacturing process.

1.1.2 The Research Outside of the Country

Hacckel (1998), in his researches has arrived to this point that internet and information technology in business and trade is very important. He thinks that dealing with customers is more important than dealing against the rivals (Hacckel, 1998). Meanwhile, Eighmi and McCord (1998) compared internet media with the other media, they emphasized on being the interaction with its personal communications (Eighmy & McCord, 1998). Also, Ward and Davis (1999) suggested a model for choosing a distribution channel and found that consumers think direct marketing is good alternative instead of traditional retail. They have mentioned the precious points in connection with internet as the sign of the business, characteristics of the tangible and intangible, sensitivity of the price (Ward & Davies, 1999). Vargo and Lusch's (2004) indicated that the modern marketing has changed from its own usual logic, that is to say, dealing the sensible things toward dealing the professional expertise, knowledge and intangible processes. They found that marketing is opening a dominant logic which provides a stronger foundation for developing the thought and the performance of marketing. Although, in different ways, marketing order will be derived from the balanced economy, but it has not been separated from the effects of its principles completely (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Hoffman and Novak (1997) pointed that the kind of judgment for using the internet is effective and they mentioned that some people see internet with the looking from outside of it and supposed it is a device that is a substitute for other medias and others see it as a privileged media with its special characteristics that sometimes it is unique (Hoffman & Novak, 1997). Anderson *et al.* (2003) discovered that using the internet in the real meaning, decreases the costs of searching and

locating and causes the buyers and customers to access their cases better and easier and it also causes the buyers and customers to achieve their products in less time. Internet also makes competitive environment between the buyers and sellers that this issue will be good for both of them (Anderson *et al.*, 2003).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method of this research is descriptive-analytic. The statistics include sports management experts from the universities that they are subset of the Science Ministry, Research and Technology and Islamic Azad University of Sanandaj (first group) and institutions and companies that they sell the products and sports products from Sanandaj city (second group). The sample of the first group includes 200 people of the masters and sports management experts from different universities that they were chosen randomly based on the name of the universities, and a second group also includes marketing company or seller of the sports products that they have been selected randomly. Totally, 300 people answer questionnaires completely and acceptably. The sports products of these companies in general include the sports equipment, clothing, (hat, shirt, trouser, sock, T-shirt and etc.), sport bags, all kinds of balls, sports shoes, mountain climbing equipment, fitness, skiing and skating equipment and necessary equipment in other sports fields. The instrument for collecting data is questionnaire that has a high percentage of credit. This questionnaire has 25 questions that half of them are related to the current situation and half of them are related to the status of ideal and optimum stores. Every

one of the elements of 4 P's has allocated five questions to themselves and to examine the amount of influence on the internet for every one of these elements have been used. The 5 option tests that they are based on a Likert scale that very undesirable option equals 1 and very desirable option equals 5. The accuracy of its contents was valid by getting the opinion of 39 professors and telling their suggestions and criticisms and correcting the possible objections about the questions in the questionnaire. In order to its internal validity, the questionnaire was given to 27 sport shops, and after 12 days this questionnaire again was given to these same numbers of sport shops and with statistical analysis, coefficient was calculated between pretest and posttest that for the current situation $r = 0.92$ and for an desirable situation $r = 0.81$. Descriptive statistics are used to describe data, counting the Mean, Standard Deviation and the Range of variations and in regarding of this fact that determination of the statistical method for analysis and proper elicitation of the research directly depends on homogeneity or disproportion in the distribution of the data, the first step was that researchers should distinguish this issue that how will be the shape of distribution? Distribution and collecting the questionnaire was done by researcher personally and the analysis of the data was done by researcher with using of the SPSS software.

2.1 Research Framework

In Figure 1, you can see the research framework. In this model is shown independent variables that include 4 P's of marketing factors and dependent variable (selling women's sports equipment through online).

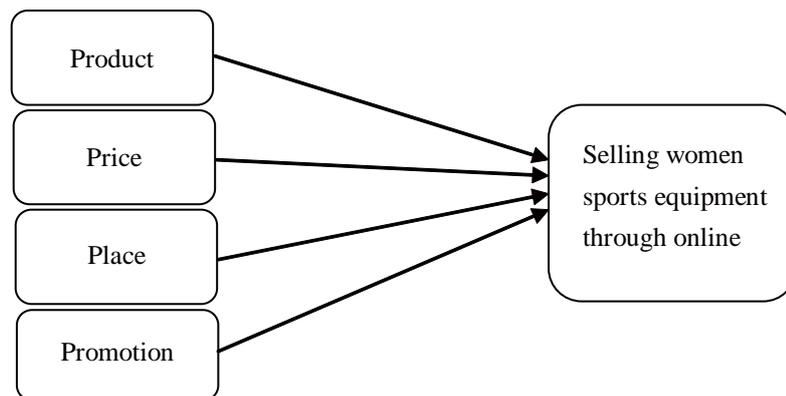


Figure1
Women's Sports Marketing Through Online with Emphasis on the 4Ps

2.2 Hypotheses Development

There are four hypotheses in this research that they separately show how every one of the independent variables affect on the dependent variables. Regression method has been applied to examine and analysis every one of these hypotheses.

H₁: From sports experts and the marketers' view point, there is a positive meaningful relationship between products and women's sports products.

H₂: From sports experts and the marketers' point of view, there is significant relationship between the price and women's sports products.

H₃: From sports experts and the marketers' view point, there is a positive meaningful relationship between the place and women's sports products.

H₄: From sports experts and the marketers' point of view, there is significant relationship between the promotion and women's sports products.

3. RESULTS

The information of Table 1, shows that of 300 participants that they were responsible for answering the questionnaire, 120 participants or 40% of respondents are in the 35-45 years old that they are maximum age group of the study and the minimum age group are those people between 45-60 years that they are 30 participants or 10%. Also, the people whom have been studied on them are 113 men and 187 women that the highest frequency is related to men and it equals to 62.3%. The results of the table one show 120 participants or 40% of the participants that they are most educational group have Master or higher degrees and 70 participants or 23.3% are under high school diploma. Also, 80 participants have an associate degree and 30 participants have a bachelor's degree. The results of the Table 2, show that from the participants' point of view, the effect of the propagated product through online on selling for 23.3% and 23.3% of participants are

very desirable and desirable. For 20 participants is almost 6.7% that nearly it has been evaluated as undesirable thing. Also, the effect of the propagated product's price through online on selling for 120 participants is almost 40% that it is almost desirable (20%) and completely desirable (20%) and for 50 participants is almost 16.7% that nearly it has been evaluated as undesirable thing. And also, the most of the participants that they are 33.3%, the effect of the propagated product's place through online on selling have evaluated as desirable thing but for 30 participants it is almost desirable and for 70 participants it is almost undesirable. Finally, the effect of the propagated product's promotion through online on selling for 70 participants is almost 23.3% that it is almost desirable and for 70 participants is almost 23.3% that nearly it has been evaluated as undesirable thing. While, 70 participants have said that it is desirable (23.3%), 60 participants have said that it is very desirable (20%) and 30 participants have said that it is very undesirable (10%). Also, the reliability estimates and descriptive statistics of the variables are indicated in Table 3, which indicates the cronbach's alpha for five items is 0.83 (product), 0.83 (price), 0.81 (place), 0.80 (promotion) and 0.92 (sale of women's sport equipment through online), suggesting that items have relatively high internal consistency and reliability.

Table 1
Sample of Demographic Profile

Demographic Factors		Frequency	Percentage
Age	Under 30	70	23.3
	30-35	80	26.7
	35-45	120	40
	45-60	30	10
Gender	Male	187	62.3
	Female	113	37.7
Education	Less than a high school diploma	70	23.3
	Associate degree	80	26.7
	Bachelor's degree	30	10
	Master's degree and higher	120	40

Table 2
The Participants' Point of View About Effect of Propagated 4P Through Online on Selling

Dominions	VERY DESIRABLE	ALMOST DESIRABLE	DESIRABLE	ALMOST UNDESIRABLE	VERY UNDESIRABLE
Product	23.3	23.3	30.0	6.7	16.7
Price	20.0	20.0	26.7	16.7	16.7
Place	20.0	10.0	33.3	23.3	13.3
Promotion	20.0	23.3	23.3	23.3	10.0

Table 3
Reliability Estimates and Descriptive Statistics

Dominions	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's a
Product	3.96	.54	0.83
Price	3.76	0.78	0.83
Place	3.91	0.63	0.81
Promotion	3.85	0.68	0.80
Sale of Women's Sport Equipment through online	3.99	0.74	0.92

The regression was used to examine the correlation among Product, Price, Place and Promotion (4Ps) as independent variables with the Sale of Women's Sport Equipment through online as dependent variable. The results of the regression analysis in Table 4, show that 4Ps contribute significantly to the Sale of Women's Sport Equipment through online ($F = 20.18$; $p, 0.001$). They also indicate that there is a strong positive association

between independent variables and dependent variable at 5 per cent significance level. Among the four independent variables, product has the highest correlation value of 0.188, followed by place (0.186), promotion (0.157) and price (0.153). Likewise, and given the representativeness of the sample, it is fair to conclude that 4Ps significantly influence on Iranian customers to buy women's sports equipments through online.

Table 4
The Studying of the Effect About Marketers and Sports Products Sellers' Relationship with Buyers Through Online With Emphasis on the 4Ps Elements

Variables	Beta coefficients	t-value	(p value)
Constant		3.277	(0.000)
Product	0.188	2.467	(0.013)
Price	0.153	2.078	(0.037)
Place	0.186	2.399	(0.021)
Promotion	0.157	2.041	(0.044)

Notes: $F = 20.18$; Sig. $F = 0.000$

4. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

We can say that this research almost shows the amount of influence of internet on the sports products marketing but in this case, it is not clear yet that how is this influence? And what dimensions has been effected by it? It seems, that there are optimisms and positivisms about influence of internet on marketing and when we ask the participants, they under the influence of this assumption, emphasize on the positive aspects. On the other hand, the amount of access to the internet and using it in Sanandaj city is not considerable that we can show this effect correctly. And also, the subject of the confidence to internet and electronic trade is important that unfortunately in Iran in general this amount of trust is in the lowest level. In future researches, it should be distinguished the position, the importance, the amount of access and trust of Sanandaj's audiences (marketers and sellers of sports products) to the internet and internet marketing at first. In the next stage, it should be noted to quality and the amount of influence of the internet on economic activity (selling the sports products). And finally, it should be estimated the effect of other variables such as advertising of other media and using similar products by colleagues and acquaintances because it is possible the amount of increased selling

would not be affected by internet but it would be affected by other cases. Moreover, it suggests that for doing this issue it should be also used the other quantitative and qualitative methods.

CONCLUSION

This research was done as "the status of marketing in women's sports products through online", with emphasizing on the 4 Ps of marketing elements in Sanandaj (Iran). The way of knowing the status of marketing in women's sports products is through online and also a place where this research was done is Sanandaj. This research has been done by random method. In this way, the number of people as a statistical sample was chosen by sample methods that they are representative in society and necessary information was collected through this sample by different methods.

In this study, information was collected by questionnaire with personal interview technique and with the help of 20 SPSS software, collected data were analyzed and also the descriptive and inferential statistics were used in this case. The achieved results show that respondents have showed their different attitude and

evaluation about the effect of propagated products, price, place of distribution and promotion through online on selling as desirable thing. Additionally, the results of analyzing the regression show that through all of the 4Ps elements in relationship with sports products marketers and sellers with buyers through online, there is a positive and meaningful relationship and with paying attention to this point that all gained independent variables are less than 5 percent ($p < 0.05$) all hypotheses have been confirmed.

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