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## The Role of Media, Spectators and Fans in Attracting Sport Sponsors for Developing Sport Clubs

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of present study is to investigate the role of media, spectators, and fans in attracting sport sponsors. The study method is of descriptive-traverse and applied type. The statistical society of the study composed of 925 managers, sport experts and athletes of public and private sport clubs in Esfahan province. The evaluated sample composed of 272 individuals who were selected cluster sampling method in proportion with statistical society. Measuring tool included researcher-made 28-item questionnaire. Justifiability of questionnaire has been studied by professionals' and experts' opinion and the validity of the questionnaire has been obtained through Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha=0/86$ ). The study results showed that mass media and spectators and fans were effective in attracting sport fans ( $p\leq 0.05$ ).

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## INTRODUCTION

The aspects of financial support are very extensive regarding sport. In the past companies devoted their financial means to support artists and athletes and etc. but overtime financial support was developed and turned into astrategic tool and companies used it for their promotion. Today many companies are active in sport support but a few companies use the potential of sport support in a period with encouraging news to support sport events financially. Therefore they are not able to attain maximum success and return of capital in supporting sport (Ehsani *et al*, 2008). Sport marketing and its application for being successful in sport industry is an important and essential issue (Minaghan, 2001).

Also one of the most important and complicated duties of organization and sport clubs is marketing. Sport clubs must use advertisement to introduce their services via marketing activies and attract companies to be sponsors and financial supporters, so that they will be successful in their task and will be able to attain their objectives which re defined as attaining more capitals and money to spend in sport. On one hand according to privatization rule, public organizations are divided into three sections:

- 1- Those institutions whose transference makes no problem and all their shares can be transferred to private section.
- 2- Those organizations which have the capacity to be privatized but not in complete manner, in such organizations, 51 percent of stocks are transferred to private sector.
- 3- Organizations which are not transferable to private sector at all and government present the documentations to show the reasons for this impossibility and these organizations are exceptional to privatization act of principle

Based on this act public clubs are subjected to one of above conditions. So attracting sport sponsors is of special importance to get rid of financial crisis. Sport cubs in the country can't afford to meet their need just by public budgets, so that in recent years it has been observed that most of the sport teams could not participate in different state and international matches, due to lack of liquidity and financial supports and sponsors. Therefore in privatization process, investment by private companies and institutions on sport industry is very important and its importance is increased day by day. Today, lack of financial supporters and sponsors is one of the most important difficulties and concerns which sport managers are confronted with in most of sport clubs and teams. In some recent decades, most of the governments proceeded to transfer public sectors to private ones due to financial crisis. Also in Iran, according to principle 44 of constitutional law and fifth development plan, government undertakes to transfer its sectors to private sectors. So sport clubs must be covered by that act. Thus

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sport clubs and organizations must attend the issue of sport supporters and sponsors to do their sport activities and consider marketing as one of their important tasks.

Investigation showed that there is a significant difference between the opinion of managers in private companies and sport managers with regard to the obstacles in the way of financial support which is related to following factors: lack of using tax exemptions due to sport advertisements, lack of advertisement suitable facilities in sport events, lack of financial and working standards, weak transference of company's commercial message, time consuming-ness, uncertainty of sponsors in investment in sport industry due to lack of future investments and lack of using sport expert managers (Ameri *et al*,2001 p. 22). Rajabi in investigating the reasons of lack of producing (private) companies' financial support for championship sports refer to four economical, managing, organizational, public and mass media and spectator Factors, all of which have been effective on championship sport. In this vein, public factor has the most influence on lack of support from producing companies of championship sport (Rajabi, 2001).

A researcher conducted a study in which they showed that when advertisements are used with the trading name in a sport event, it is beneficial for one of the two official sponsors of this event or those sponsors who are provider of products(Karrillat &Alain, 2011). One of the researchers offered a model for showing the attachments of fans, Study results showed that the tendency of more fans toward team, the probability to obtain a positive picture for the sponsors of our team, are all regarded as a higher purposeful exhibition for purchasing and introducing sponsors' products (Tsiotsou,2011). Some researchers proceeded to compare the rate of results and supportive attitudes in two different cultural samples from Australian and French spectators are difference in terms of capacity but not in terms of rate that this initial difference in turns is influenced by sensitive reactions in attitude support results (Balet *et al*, 2010).Some researchers showed in a research under the title of customers' awareness regarding financial support that comparing to mass sport events, customers', participants' and spectators' awareness in recreational and public sports levels with regard to National Support is not in one level. The rate of sponsors' recalling and identification is in lower and weaker degree comparing to big sport events such as Olympic, both are influenced by standing of advertisement symbols in sport holding location. Those sponsors who insert their advertisement symbols in high traffic places such as locations of inserting scores, result boards and those symbols which are themselves regarded as a part of match and or those which have variety and multitude are more known and remembered(Kimberly *et al*, 2006).

Investigations show that creating trading mark value has positive trading incomes besides board. Besides this special value of trading mark is constant and permanent and can maintain spectators and fans in unsuccessful sport sponsors (Douglas *et al*. 2005).A researcher regarded the role of television in attracting financial supporters and asserts that the more pervasive television and satellite broadcasting of sport matches, the more absorption of financial supporters or sponsors (Strelize.2005).The researcher tries to clarify the problems encountered in the process of investment by private companies and factories by considering the opinions of managers, physical education experts and sport elites of clubs, and the researcher attempts to find ways to identify these problems so that sport managers, federations, clubs and athletes of different sports can benefit from his findings.

#### Methodology:

The research was descriptive and the research method was applied research. The society of present study include all managers, physical education experts and public and private sport clubs' elites in Esfahan Province in 2012 that the manner of distribution of statistical society based on public and private clubs have been shown below.

**Table 1:** Statistical Society Frequency Distribution.

Club	Statistical Society
Public (Sepahan and Zobahan)	205
Private	720
Sum	925

Study statistical was selected by random cluster method among statistical society and based on Kerjis and Morgan (1970), 272 individuals were determined among which 252 questionnaire were gathered and used in statistical analyses. Following table shows the manner of society distribution and simple volume based on cluster sampling method in proportion to statistical society. The measuring tool in this study was 11- item researcher made questionnaire to assess influencing factor in attracting sport sponsors.

**Table 2:** Society frequency distribution and sample volume.

Club	statistical society	sample volume
Public (Sepahan and Zobahan)	205	60
Private	720	212
Sum	925	272

Study statistical sample was selected among statistical society by cluster random sampling method and based on Kerjis and Morgan, 272 individuals were determined from which 252 questionnaires were gathered and used in statistical analysis. Following table shows the manner of society distribution based on using cluster random sampling method in proportion to statistical society. In this study, 8-item researcher made questionnaire regarding effective factors in attracting sponsors was used. To assess the fluency of measuring tool in this study content validity was used. The validity of this questionnaire based on kernel coefficient was assessed as 0.71. The stability of this questionnaire was assessed by conducting a preliminary study and determining the variance of question via cronbach alpha coefficient as 0.80. Descriptive and inference statistics were used to analyze gathered data in this study. In the level of descriptive statistics, central oriented indices such as mean and distribution, standard deviation, diagrams and tables were used to describe the gathered data. In the level of inference statistics, Kalmerov-Smirnov test was used to assess the normality of score distribution of sample and Levin test was used to assess the conformity of variance. Friedman test was used for ranking and uni-variable T-test and multi-variable variance analysis were used to test research hypotheses. These analyses were conducted by using SPSS software and in significance level of 0.05 percent.

#### Result:

First study hypothesis: Mass media hypothesis: Mass media factors have effective roles in attracting sport sponsors.

**Table 3:** Uni-variable t test, comparing mean value of the amount mass media factors in attracting sport sponsors with hypothesized mean(3).

Hypothesized Mean	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
3	3.66	0.72	0.001

Based on results of table 3, observed t has been significant in level of  $p \leq 0.05$ . Therefore it can be physical education experts and sport elites of clubs, mass media factors in absorbing sport supporters (sponsors).

**Table 4:** The results of uni-variable t test, comparing mean values of related cases to mass media factors with hypothesized mean (3).

Mass Media	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	Significance Level
Audio visual live broadcasting of matches	3.76	1.16	10.43	0.001
Press-printed mass media coverage of matches	3.64	1.23	8.29	0.001
Press-interview with managers of sponsor companies	3.48	1.07	7.05	0.001
Sport reporters' praise of sport sponsors	3.61	1.10	8.75	0.001
Mass media attention to sponsor company advertisement symbols	3.93	0.97	15.27	0.001

Based on table 4, observed t has been significant at the level of  $\leq 0.05$ . Therefore it can be concluded that in the opinion of managers, physical experts and sport elites of clubs, all raised cases in the field of cultural and social aspects are effective on absorbing sport supporters (sponsors).

Second study hypothesis: Spectators and fans factors have effective roles in absorbing sport supporters (sponsors).

**Table 5:** Uni-variable t test results, comparing the amount of influence of spectator's factors in attracting sport supporters with hypothesized mean value (3).

Hypothesized Mean	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	Significance Level
3	3.63	0.75	13.31	0.001

Based on the results of table 5, observed t has been significant in the level of  $p \leq 0.05$ . Therefore it can be concluded that in the opinion of managers, physical education experts, sport elites of clubs, spectator's factor is influential in attracting sport supporters (sponsors).

**Table 6:** Uni-variable t test results, comparing mean values related to spectators factors in attracting sport supporters with hypothesized mean (3).

Spectators	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	Significance Level
A sport team having many fans	3.82	0.94	13.98	0.001
Obligation of spectators to use sport goods and service	3.45	1.04	6.89	0.001
Presence of fans center in an sport team	3.63	1	10.02	0.001

Third study hypothesis: There is a significance relationship between the opinions of public and private clubs in mass media, spectators and fans in attracting sport supporters (sponsors). Comparison of mean value of influential factors an attracting sport supporters in Esfahan Province based on the kind of public and private sport clubs by using F test (MANOVA) was investigated that the relevant results have been presented below.

Based on the results of table 7, observed  $f$  at the level of  $p \leq 0.05$ , does not show a significant difference in mass media, spectators and fans' factors based on the opinions of managers, physical education experts, and sport elites according to the kind of public and private sport club in effective factors on attracting sport supporters (sponsored) in Esfahan Province.

**Table 7:** Comparing mean value of influential factors on attracting sport supporters in Esfahan Province by using F tests (MANOVA).

Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Square mean	F	Significance level	Determination coefficient
Club	Mass media	0.73	1	0.73	1.40	0.24	0.006
	Spectators	0.10	1	0.10	0.18	0.67	0.001

Fourth Study hypothesis: There is a significant difference between mass media factors, spectators, and fans in attracting sport supporters (sponsors).

**Table 8:** The results of Friedman, ranking mean values of influential factors on attracting sport supporters (spectators) in Esfahan Province.

Rank	Source	Rank Mean	df	Friedman Statistics	Significance Level
First	Mass Media	3.61	5	16.38	0.006
Second	Spectators	3.58			

There is a significant difference between rankings of mean values of influential factors on attracting sport supporters in Esfahan Province in inference analysis to rank mean values resulting from Friedman statistical study variables. Investigating ranking of the mean values shows that in the ranking of mean values of influential factors, mass media and spectators factors are located respectively.

#### Discussion and conclusion:

First study hypothesis: local mass media factors have an effective in attracting sport supporters "(sponsors) in Esfahan.

The results regarding mass media factors in attracting sport supporters has shown that this factor has been influential in attracting sport supporters and it is regarded as the second influential factor in attracting sport supporters that if mass media is active in area of country's sport, private companies will probably tend to become sport sponsors. Live broadcast of sport events from T. V., suitable coverage of printed mass media for sport matches, press and television interviews with authorities of sponsors and mass media attention to advertisement symbols of sponsors companies and broadcasting trading symbols of these companies via mass media are among those factors which can increase the motivation of companies to do more sport activities.

One of the most important objectives of sport sponsor companies is that they want to show their products to the people and reinforce the tendency to purchase in people so that their economical motivations are met. Thus mass media coverage is the most important tool for introducing goods that if it is more pervasive in the case of sport section and include all sport branches, sport sponsor will have more tendencies for investment in sport as reported in the study of sterilizer (2005), Rajabi (2009), Ameriet. Al (2009), Abuder (2006 that the presence of mass media in sport scene results in introducing companies' products and enhancing people's awareness regarding the products of those companies and it is one of the most influential factors in attracting financial sponsors. The findings are consistent with the finding of present studies that we can conclude that mass media must cover the news of matches to encourage private companies to invest in sport, they must also attend advertisement symbols, and reporters must praise sport sponsors so that companies' good are introduced to people in sport locations and it is hoped that private companies will be more willing to invest in sports especially with regard to starting up sport network by Islamic Republic of Iran broadcasting TV.

Study second hypothesis: Spectators and fans factors have effective roles in attracting sport sponsors.

Based on the obtained results, spectators are regarded as the most influential factors in attracting sport sponsors. Based on this those clubs having the more number of spectators, due to the fact that they can sell their cloths of the club, they have more income and they are able to use the brand of the advertisement and sponsors can protect the clubs. Actually protecting these clubs means to attract millions of fans for selling the goods and services of sponsors and their can benefit from a remarkable interest. In fact according to Hoda and Khakha (2001), sport investors when they reach to higher interest and to capital return without any problem have more tendencies for investment which is more pronounced and true for clubs with many fans, so that among sport field, Football has shown this subject very well and due to presence of many fans, sport sponsors have more motivation for investment. Tessisto also considered the spectators as the most important factors in attracting sport sponsors because they consider the presence of spectators and fans for a team as more selling of products and gaining of the teams with many fans and with a long history is more comparing to teams with a few fans and with short history.

Therefore as shown in present study, spectators are considered as an important factor in attracting sport reported in some other researchers' studies and the spectators are regarded as one of the most important factor

for sponsors' tendency toward investment in sport fields and investment is more in those sports which have more fans and spectators.

Third Study hypothesis: there is a significant difference between the opinions of private and public clubs and spectators and fans in attracting sport sponsors.

There was no significant difference between the opinions of managers, physical education experts and sport elites of private and public clubs in mass media factors and spectators so that the mean values regarding their opinions were the same ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Therefore based on obtained results, private and public clubs' employees were quite aware of two influential factors for attracting sport sponsors and confirm these factors and this issue shows the important and basic effect of above two factors on attracting sport sponsors.

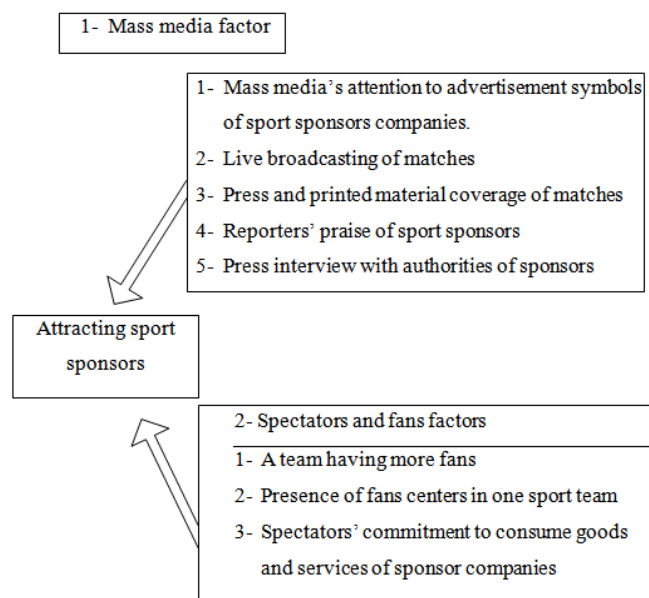
Fourth Study hypothesis: there is a significant difference between mass media factors, spectators and fans in attracting sport sponsors.

Based on study hypothesis from the point of view of managers, physical education experts and clubs elite, mass media and spectators have been effective in attracting sport sponsors. The findings of present study is consistent with Rajabi's finding.

Results show that mass media factor is more effective than spectators, so we can attract more sport supporters for investment in sport by reinforcing and giving more importance to mass media factor, and so we can witness a remarkable development in our country's sport.

The model of influential factors in attracting sport sponsors based on privatization

Based on study results "normal model of attracting sport sponsors in Esfahan Province" from the points of view of managers, experts and public and private clubs' sport elites, following model was presented which is based on priority of effectiveness of influential factors in attracting sport sponsors.



Model of influential model in attracting sport sponsors based on effectiveness prioritization

It is recommended bas dons study findings that:

1- Considering the obtained results regarding "the effectiveness of mass media factor in attracting sport sponsors, it is recommended to club's managers to over sport matches more than before by cooperating with state's TV managers so that present their goods and services via mass media and get higher incentives to invest on sport.

2- Results show that effectiveness of mass media factor on sport sponsors. Based on this, it is recommended to clubs' managers to require sport reporters to announce the name of sponsor companies so that the companies get higher motivation and tendency for sport sponsorship like what is done in radio in which the name of Irancell Company is noted as the sport sponsor in some reports by reporters.

3- Based on the obtained results regarding "the effectiveness of attracting sport sponsors, it is recommended to clubs' managers to provide sport sponsors center for fans and issues a membership card for fans and consider facilities for them so that they have more spectators and fans for the teams and attract more financial sponsors.

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