

Pathology of conventional marketing methods on water sports complexes and presenting an optimal model

(A case study of Dezful city)

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ABSTRACT / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to diagnose the pathology of conventional marketing methods of water sports complexes and to present an optimal model in Dezful city. The research method is descriptive survey and applied in terms of purpose and data collection was done in the field. The statistical population of the study were sports experts of Dezful city, managers and employees of water complexes, managers of relevant departments and marketing professors and customers of water complexes of Dezful city. Aqueous assemblies ($n = 313$) were performed by simple random sampling. Research data collection tools included structured interviews in the field of marketing mix and researcher-made questionnaire. The validity of the present research questionnaire was confirmed by 12 professors of sports management and its reliability was 0.88. The data obtained from the interview were analyzed by thematic analysis using MAXQDA2020 software and the questionnaire data were analyzed using SPSS21 software and Expert choice11. The results showed 7 strengths and 18 weaknesses in the main indicators and sub-indicators of the mixed water marketing model of Dezful city; Therefore, for the growth and success of marketing, it is necessary to maintain and optimize the 7 identified strengths, and the 18 identified weaknesses are considered as harmful factors to marketing and business, and steps are taken to eliminate these defects and transform them. Taken to strengths.

Keywords: Marketing pathology, Water sports complexes, Optimal marketing model.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the sports industry is among the significant areas with a promising future due to its dynamic nature. Investment in this industry is increasing in all countries (Ribeiro et al., 2019). Currently, the field of marketing possesses a variety of technical tools and methods that can contribute to market growth across various industries (Sadki et al., 2020). The sports industry is no exception to this, as the adaptation of marketing management methods and techniques in sports aligns with marketing knowledge and theories from the past few decades (Scolla & Gordon, 2019).

The growth of sporting events, the development of sports skills and the appeal of competitions, improving the quality of clubs, sports facilities, and equipment, athlete management methods, and the development of scientific training techniques have all emphasized the role of marketing in promoting sports products and ultimately satisfying customers more than ever before (Armstrong et al., 2020). With the advancement of technology and communication worldwide, including in our country, Iran, we witness the emergence of innovative marketing methods and diverse customer responses to products and services (Shahbazi et al., 2018). Nowadays, it's no

longer enough to expect customers to make purchases solely based on the quality of products or services, as marketing, tailored to the specific needs of the product or service, requires specific strategies. In this regard, the concept of integrated marketing is crucial, meaning that a systematic and coordinated approach among these components is necessary to have an impact on customers (Chang et al., 2017).

In our country, marketing for recreational and sports facilities, such as clubs, sports halls, stadiums, and other sports products or services, has not received much attention. It appears that the limited number of such facilities in the not-so-distant past, combined with the recent quantitative and qualitative development in aquatic sports facilities, has made it necessary to identify traditional marketing methods and design optimal marketing models for these sports facilities. Many new or under-construction sports facilities, equipped with pools, have also gained a significant number of followers among customers and investors. In these competitive conditions, predicting optimal marketing management models for these sports facilities can be a necessary and effective step towards their success and development. Currently, preliminary studies on aquatic sports facilities in Dezful county reveal that traditional marketing methods, such as word-of-mouth advertising, wall writing, and print ads, have the largest share in marketing efforts. Therefore, under these circumstances, conducting a damage assessment of conventional marketing methods for aquatic sports facilities in Dezful county is essential for business expansion, improved customer access to suitable aquatic sports services, and ultimately an increase in sports participation rates in this county.

2. ANALYSIS

This research is both applied in terms of its objective and descriptive-survey in terms of its method. To conduct this research, initial theoretical studies on marketing for aquatic sports facilities and pools were carried out to identify the fundamental variables in integrated sports marketing based on reports from other studies. Subsequently, specialized interviews were conducted with the managers of aquatic sports facilities regarding the identified variables.

Based on the information gathered from these interviews, a marketing model for aquatic sports facilities was developed based on marketing domain definitions and the integrated marketing model (7Ps: Price, Product, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence) and was valued. Based on these recent variables, a questionnaire was designed to assess the role and importance of these variables in the marketing of aquatic sports facilities.

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were initially reviewed through the distribution of 20 copies. The statistical population for data collection included all managers and employees of aquatic sports facilities, managers of the Sports and Youth Department, officials, and employees of the Swimming and Aquatic Sports Association in Dezful County, totaling 43 individuals. Additionally, the statistical population for quantitative data collection consisted of regular customers of aquatic sports facilities (a total of 1650 individuals, selected randomly) based on information gathered from the initial interviews with facility managers. Using Kerjees-Morgan table, a sample size of 313 customers was selected, and they completed the research questionnaire. Sampling from the officials of the sports department and the managers and employees of the studied aquatic sports facilities was done through a census method, while sampling from customers was carried out through simple random sampling. The selection of customers was done randomly by selecting those who were present at the aquatic sports facilities.

For collecting primary information, structured interviews with officials and experts were conducted using questions related to integrated sports service marketing. The data obtained from these interviews were analyzed using content analysis and the MAXQDA2020 software. An information gathering tool was designed for customers of aquatic sports facilities, consisting of a researcher-made questionnaire based on the identified indicators from the

interviews. This questionnaire sought respondents' opinions on integrated sports marketing indicators and their strengths and weaknesses, featuring 33 questions with five-point Likert scale responses (very low, low, moderate, high, very high). Its validity and reliability were initially reviewed through the distribution of 20 copies and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.88.

To analyze the quantitative data obtained from the research questionnaires, descriptive statistics such as central tendency and dispersion measures (mean and standard deviation) were used. Moreover, prioritization and valuation of variables based on the collected data were performed using inferential statistics (one-sample t-test) and the SPSS software version 21. Hierarchical analysis of the data was also conducted for prioritization using the Expert Choice 11 software.

3. ALTERNATIVES, RECOMMENDATION AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that among the 7 elements of integrated marketing for aquatic sports facilities in Dezful County, the most important elements, in order of importance, are 1- Product, 2- Promotion, 3- Process, 4- People, 5- Place, 6- Physical Evidence, and 7- Price. According to the stakeholders, the most important elements among the 7 elements of integrated marketing for aquatic sports facilities in Dezful County are, in order of importance, Product, Promotion, Process, People, Place, Physical Evidence, and Price. Furthermore, the results showed that online ticket sales had the highest importance in the Place element of integrated marketing, local online advertising had the highest importance in the Promotion element, ensuring employee satisfaction had the highest importance in the People element, employee control and evaluation had the highest importance in the Process element, physical security had the highest importance in the Product element, pricing diversity had the highest importance in the Price element, and customer feedback had the highest importance in the Physical Evidence element.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, an optimal marketing model for aquatic sports facilities in Dezful County has been developed, featuring 7 strengths and 18 weaknesses (vulnerabilities). It is evident that for the growth and success of marketing for aquatic sports facilities in Dezful County, it is essential to preserve and optimize the 7 identified strengths. Additionally, the 18 identified weaknesses should be considered as factors detrimental to marketing and business, and steps should be taken to address these weaknesses and transform them into strengths.

5. REFERENCES

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