

Study of Push, Pull, and Restraint Factors of Sports Tourism in North-West Iran

¹Zeinab Naghiloo, ²Fariba Asgarian, ³Mehrdad Moharramzadeh, ⁴Farzad Nobakht, ¹Seyyed Sajjad Hosseini

¹Abhar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Abhar, Iran.

²Member of Academic Staff, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.

³Member of Academic Staff, University of Urmia, Urmia, Iran.

⁴PhD Student of Sports Management, University of Tarbiat Modares, Tehran, Iran.

Abstract: Sports tourism is a combination of two important industries of sports and tourism and in order to expand this industry, its corresponding factors must be identified and noted. These factors, according to most researchers are classified as pull, push, and restraint factors. The goal of this research is to study these factors with regards to sports tourism in north-west Iran. The research method used is field-descriptive, using a Persian self-designed questionnaire with acceptable validity and reliability (Alpha=95%). The statistical population and sample of this research include sports and tourism managers and active tourism centers of the relative provinces (n=260, N=500). In order to analyze the data after Bartlett and KMO tests and in order to determine sample size and suitability, we used exploratory data analysis. The results of Bartlett and KMO tests showed that the samples were sufficient for the current research and that questions were appropriate. The derived factors were named using research literature. F1: Push factors of sports tourism. F2: Pull factors of sports tourism. F3: Restraint factors of sport tourism Using these factors in coordination with the government, private sector and people can play an important role in promoting sports tourism of the region.

Key words: Restraint Factors, Push Factors, Pull Factors, Sports Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Sports tourism is a combination of two important industries of Sports and Tourism and in order to expand this industry, its corresponding factors must be identified and noted. These factors, according to most researchers are pull, push, and restraint factors. Pull factors are classified into two groups of natural and artificial and in other studies into two groups of transferable and untransferable (Hinch and Higham, 2003). In pull factors, characteristics, utilities, and special conditions of the region and sport event matter. Sports attractions are considered as a unique pull factor. The uncertain nature of sports results and the quick expiration date of a sports event as goods are of the unique characteristics of sports that add to its attraction; thus, events that include sports activities are regarded as attractions and are of the important income sources of a country or a region. It is estimated that annually, the US gains around 27 million dollars income through sport events; it is also reported that two third of mature American people attend sports events. Therefore, sports attractions can be considered as important pull factors (Gibson, 2003). Besides sports attractions, culture, customs, historical places, weather condition, accommodation, food, and transportation are other factors classified under pull factors (Honarvar, 2005). Different sports require their own specific infrastructural conditions. Sports such as skiing, mountaineering, diving and surf riding are performed under specific conditions; therefore, basic resources for developing sports tourism such as natural environment, sports facilities, transportation, and sports infrastructures are destination-related push factors and depend on travelers' motives, requirements, interests and cultures. Of the three factors mentioned, push factors must be noted in tourism industry. Although different factors influence the formation of push factors, motive is the most important variable and each tourist chooses their destination according to their personal needs; thus, push factors are the starting point of travelers' destination choice (Crampton, 1979). In other words, need leads to motivation and people travel to satisfy their needs. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs that classifies human needs in five categories, severity of lower levels is higher than upper levels and upper needs depend on the satisfaction of lower needs. Travel needs are generally on the upper levels and are related to friendship, amusement, respect and self-actualization (Crampton, 1979), and these needs constitute travel motives.

Corresponding Author: Zeinab Naghiloo, Abhar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Abhar, Iran.

Besides, there are factors in tourism destination which are related to pull factors. Age, gender, education level and economic, cultural and political conditions affect traveling behavior (Honarvar, 2005).

In a research on sports tourism, three types of behavior have been deduced from sport tourists that are related to sports; enjoyment and amusement, watching the game, following the results and supporting favorite teams are the chief motives of sports events' spectators (Gibson, 2003). There are many factors for developing sports tourism classified under push, pull, and restraint factors. In fact, each destination has goods and services and the tourists, under the influence of different factors, choose one of the destinations. Motivation, age, income, personality, distance, and costs are of the factors that affect destination choice. The main motive of spectators who also display tourist behavior is to follow the game (Gibson, 2003). In various researches, the effect of pull, push and restraint factors on forming tourists' motives and their destination choice has been mentioned.

There are many researches that have been outlined based on these three factors or sometimes, only the two factors of push and pull.

Generally, in discussions regarding push, pull and restraint factors, the objective is to answer these primary questions: why people travel, which is related to push factors, why people travel to certain places, which is related to pull factors and finally, why people don't travel, which is related to restraint factors. The provinces of north-west Iran are freighted with sports and touristic potentials and in order to include them in this discussion, it is better to identify the foresaid factors. Therefore, the goal of this research is to study the push, pull and restraint factors of sports tourism in north-west Iran.

Methodology:

Research method is field-descriptive, using a self-designed Persian questionnaire, whose validity was verified by sports and tourism professors and in order to examine its reliability, we performed a research in which 25 questionnaires were distributed in a similar population and its reliability was accepted with cronbach's alpha equal to 95% and without any change. Sports and tourism managers and active tourism centers of the relative provinces formed the statistical population and sample of this research, who were about 500 individuals of which 260 were chosen as random sample and after distributing the questionnaires, 250 individuals filled them. In order to analyze the data after Bartlett and KMO tests and in order to determine sample size and suitability, we used exploratory data analysis.

Findings:

The results of Bartlett and KMO tests showed that the samples were sufficient for the current research and that questions were appropriate. The results of factor loadings of each question were summarized in Table 1 and using research literature, derived factors were named.

F1: Push factors of sport tourism

F2: Pull factors of sport tourism

F3: Restraint factors of sport tourism.

Table 1: Factor loadings, push, pull and restraint factors of region's sports tourism.

Factors	F1	F2	F3
Hydrotherapy rivers and springs	72.1		
Geographical conditions (weather and natural landscapes)	67.5		
Mountains of the province	59.1		
Being conterminous with neighboring countries	43		
Hotels and accommodation centers (service, price, quality)	67.5		
Railroad transportation	54.2		
Land transportation	63.3		
Stadiums	59.2		
Arial transportation	49.1		
Hygiene services	67		
Parking lots and shelters	64.2		
Recreational infrastructures	63.3		
The role of sports clubs in attracting tourists	55.4		
The effect of seasonal variety and sports consistent with each season	52		
Private sector investments	71.7		
Tourist routes (signposts and route info)		48.2	
Promotional posters and brochures		70.1	
Travel agencies		58.2	

Table 1: Continue.

The way of receiving travelers in customs, airports, and events	54		
Informative services of TV and radio	54.3		
Internet registration and electronic services	51.7		
Weblogs and websites	47.8		
Road relief and rescue	46		
Scientific congresses and sports exhibitions	75.3		
Hydrotherapy, massage and mud therapy	54		
Holding sport tournaments (national and provincial)	48.4		
Marketing sports tourism of the province	78.4		
Facilities for travelers during sports events	72.4		
The role of international tournaments in development	69.5		
The effect of the quality of holding sports and tourist events	69.3		
Holding league matches in the province	63.1		
Holding tours, coaching courses, and sporting-scientific events	55.1		
Sports stars	54.6		
Security and convenience of sports tourists during events	52.5		
Holding local games festivals	36.6		
Customs facilities during holidays	70.5		
Using an educated and young workforce	66		
Discount, awards, and promotional gifts	58.5		
Holding local festivals (customs, traditions and food culture of the province)	40.6		
People's interest in mountaineering and ecotourism	73.2		
Recreational centers, sightseeing, and sports night clubs	69.6		
Recreational sports like skiing, fishing, and hunting	57.6		
Local culture and historical monuments	39.2		
Local music and handicrafts	48		
Cultural barriers (limitations and conditions)			69
Fear of the negative effect of some cultures			46.7
Fear of holding some of the local events			43.5
Failing to recognize tourists' interests and inappropriate advertisement			65
Failing to guide and expedite license acquisition of private sector investment			68.3
Non-proficiency of executive managers of sports tourism sector			68
Lacking a strategic plan for sports tourism			76.5
Contribution of factors variance	25.4	12.9	9.1

Discussion and Conclusion:

The results of the present research are generally consistent with the researches of Honarvar (2005), Nobakht (2009), Mirzaee kalar (2010), Chalip et al. (2005), Funk et al. (2007) and Williams (2008), but are different in the sequence of factors. It appears that the aforementioned factors are important in the development of sports tourism of any region, but their significance and priority differ with regards to characteristics and potentials of each region. Generally, for implementing any type of plan we need to consider financial resources, workforce, structures and relative regulations. From the structural viewpoint, in this research physical education institutions and tourist institutions must consider an appropriate budget in coordination and correlation with other institutions. On the other hand, the decision-making centers deciding provincial programs and priorities must set relative regulations.

Normally, beside these three items, adopting a proficient workforce makes implementing the programs feasible. It must be noted that to create such a development, we must use private sector, the government and people to make a proper move in developing sports tourism of the region. According to the findings of this research, first, pull factors are identified and noted and then by considering push factors which are related to the motives and needs of tourists and are some kind of needs-assessment, as well as by dominating over restraint factors, we can take a giant step in promoting sports tourism in this region. Of course, it should also be noted that in this research, the sum of factors variance is 49.3, that is, there are other push, pull and restraint factors other than these that must be identified in other researches.

REFERENCES

- Chalip, L. and Hill, T. Harrison., 2005. "Marketing Sport Tourism: Creating Synergy between Sport and Destination", *Sport in Society*, 8: 302-320.
- Crompton, J.L. and S.L. McKay, 1997. "Motives of Visitors Attending Festival Events", *Annals of Tourism research*, 24(2): 125-139.

Funk, Daniel C. and Bruun, J. Tennille, 2007. "The Role of Socio-Psychological and Culture-Education Motives in Market International Sport Tourism: A Cross-Cultural Perspective", *Tourism Management*, 28: 806-8.

Honarvar, Afshar, 2005. "Factors Influencing Tourism due to Holding International Sport Events in the Country from the Viewpoint of Sports and Tourism Managers", MSc. Thesis, Tehran Tarbiat Moalem University.

Honarvar, Afshar; Ghafouri, Farzad; Farzan, Farzam; Sharifian, Esmail, 2008. "Influential Factors in Sports Tourism Marketing in Iran", *Olympics Journal*, 15(4): 40.

Mirzaee Kalar, Akbar, 2010. "A Survey of Factors Influencing the Motive of Tourists Attending Sports Events", MSc. Thesis, Guilan University.

Nobakht, Farzad, 2009. "Survey and Description of Development Factors of Sports Tourism in Ardebil Province", MSc. Thesis, Central Tehran Payame Noor University.

Williams, A., 2008. "Motivation Dimensions of Equestrian Sport Tourists", *International Review of Business Research Papers*, 4(4): 62-74.