A Survey of the Cycle of Production, Supply and Consumption of Sporting Goods and Services in Ardabil Province with Emphasis on Consumers' Rights

Masoud Imanzadeh, Akbar Asghari, Peyman Imanzadeh and Akbar Amiri

Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Ardabil Branch, Ardebil, Iran.

Department of Accounting, Islamic Azad University, Talesh branch, Talesh, Iran.

Department of Mathematics, Islamic Azad University, Talesh branch, Talesh, Iran.

Abstract: In the contemporary age, sport has turned into a huge industry and production, sale and consumption of sporting goods play an important role in the formation and development of this industry. Thus, production and supply of proper sporting goods are of utmost importance for the well-being of a society. The goal of the present research is to survey the cycle of production, supply and consumption of sporting goods and services in Ardabil province. The research method is field research and questionnaires have been used in order to estimate the results of this research. The results showed that 84% of consumers and 57% of producers and suppliers are not very much familiar with their own rights. Moreover, 75% of producers and suppliers and 78% of consumers are unaware of the essential properties of a standard sporting good. Besides, for 72% of vendors, more profit and for 64% of consumers, cheaper purchase has higher priority.

Key words: Sports, Sporting Goods, Consumer, Producer, Vendor, Standard, Sports Rights.

INTRODUCTION

The increase in tendency toward sports and subsequently in the profuse utilization of sporting accessories and equipment inevitably necessitates discussing the cycle of production, supply and consumption of sporting goods and equipment.

In the contemporary age, sport has turned into a huge industry and production and consumption of sporting goods and providing sports services are of the important arms of this developing industry. In any country, there are many people who earn a living through manufacture, production and sale of sporting goods and equipment and in this way, capital owners gain abundant profits. Considering the foresaid issues, it is inevitably important to deal with the level of awareness regarding the cycle of production, supply and consumption of these goods in terms of quality and necessary factors in their production and supply which is referred to as consumers’ rights (Boone, L.E. and D.L. Kurtz, 2009).

As well as the variety of needs and products and considering the phenomenon of globalization, there happens to be many opportunities and risks in the area of production and consumption of goods and services in general and in specific, sporting goods and services which are noteworthy, including consumption of low quality domestic and foreign goods which can jeopardize the well-being of the society and affect domestic production cycle. Besides, we can discuss this case from the perspective of sports law. In accordance with article one of Iran’s Civil Liability Code, “anyone who intentionally or imprudently damages the life, health, property, freedom, prestige, business reputation or any other right granted upon individuals according to law, which would thus lead to other material or immaterial harm, shall be responsible for compensation of damage caused by their action” (Katouzian, N., 1990).

However, providing that there be an improvement of production and supply in this area, we can witness increasing tendency among people toward sports activities as well as development of market for sporting goods and equipment with domestic quality and consequently, country’s economic growth.

Thus, considering the importance of this issue, a field research was carried out throughout Ardabil province as a newcomer in the area of sports development. The basic concepts of this research includes a survey and explanation of the level of awareness of subjects regarding the cycle of production, supply and consumption of sporting goods and equipment, concerning their rights and how they view different aspects that affect this cycle.

Regarding this all-embracing research on the responsibility of production, supply and consumption of sporting goods and the standing of consumers in this cycle, we make a quick notion of some legal systems. Legal systems in the US and Europe always prioritize consumers and try to encourage or even force producers and suppliers to support consumers in relation to manufactured goods. These systems have adopted compensation for damage caused
by consumption of faulty goods as a civil liability (Aghaei-Nia, H., 2004). “Supporting consumers along with protecting the interests of producers and suppliers of any type of goods or services are more related to legal, social and economic structures and procedures of each society rather than to differences in the nature of legal systems” (Ebrahimi, N., 2004). There have been various discussions from economic, legal, ethical, cultural and social perspectives regarding the necessity of supporting consumers. Notwithstanding the differences in viewpoints of economists, legal scientists and researchers in this area, all agree on the point that consumers’ rights must not be regarded exclusively and without any regard to the liabilities and rights of producers and suppliers. Consumers’ rights means a set of permissions and privileges received by consumers upon purchasing goods or services from vendors so that in case of dissatisfaction, they would be able to use them to compensate for their loss (Amiri, M. and A.R. Saadatmandi, 1995).

In 1962, new rights under the name of “The Consumer Bill of Rights” were declared following President John F. Kennedy’s speech and these rights are now being taught across Europe and the US as an independent field of study, which includes: the right to choose freely, the right to be safe, the right to be heard, governmental support and so on. Generally up to now, in developed countries, three systems have been developed for protection of the rights of consumers and producers:

a) Anglo-Saxon system in the US and Britain.
b) The system in Scandinavian countries.
c) European Economic Community (Common Market) system (Ferrand, A. and S. McCarthy, 2008).

Regarding the same issue, in 2002, Fornell et al. carried out a research in the US and the results showed that consumer satisfaction is considered a key factor in the cycle of production of goods and services.

In Iran, unfortunately, no practical and innovative action has been taken in this regard. Although a bill of consumer rights was presented to economic vice president of the Department of Planning and Budget in 1990, it didn’t have much progress up to the beginning of 1992 and finally in late 1992 it was prepared for implementation and of course it appears that a thorough success in this area requires practical and comprehensive actions, becoming more and more tangible progressively (Shafizadeh, R., 2005).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Field research was carried out in order to obtain the required data for the present research. The statistical population includes factors of the cycle of production, supply and consumption of sporting goods and services throughout Ardabil province. Research samples were randomly chosen from mass consumers of sporting goods and services such as students of physical education, athletes at the level of province championship, purchase assistants of departments of the province responsible for purchasing sporting goods and producers and suppliers of these goods and services. The measurement material was a questionnaire with 40 questions designed to evaluate and describe samples’ level of awareness regarding the objectives of the research. The mentioned questionnaire was researcher-made and its validity was approved using Cronbach’s alpha test (83%). Descriptive statistics methods and SPSS software were used to describe and analyze research data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the research show that the majority of research samples do not have sufficient information and awareness regarding the properties of proper sporting equipment (about 80% of consumers). Moreover, according to the results, only about 37% of consumers were satisfied with sporting goods and services they received; while about 84% of consumers and 57% of producers and vendors of sporting goods had little awareness of consumption and sale rights.

Regarding taking into consideration the basic and important issues in purchase and production of sporting goods, for about 64% of consumers, cheaper purchase has been the main component and for 72% of producers, additional sale and more profit have been the chief priorities.

Regarding the reasons behind the increase of sporting goods prices, about 70% of consumers considered producers and middlemen as the main factors, while the majority of vendors (about 78%) held producers responsible. In the view of consumers, producers and suppliers, the role of inflation has been assumed to be a primary factor in the increase of sporting goods prices.
Data from chart 1 shows that 57% of producers and suppliers and 84% of consumers are not much aware of their rights as consumers or producers.

Data in chart 2 shows that 78% of consumers and 75% of producers and suppliers are little aware of the properties of a standard sporting good.

**Discussion and Conclusion:**

By analyzing the obtained results we come to the conclusion that the cycle of consumption of sporting goods and services in Ardabil province, like the other areas of production and consumption, is not very promising; while in most of developed or developing countries, the cycle of production and consumption of sporting goods is very significant and considering its direct relationship with health and well-being of the society and consequently, the all-embracing growth of the country, clear standards and regulations have been established or are being established to improve the quality and the process of supplying and consuming these goods and services and it would be of utmost value if similar practical and fundamental steps were taken in our young society too. Since the necessity for a comprehensive system for an exhaustive support of the rights of consumers and producers in different cycles of production and consumption of sporting goods and services is an evident and undeniable matter. The discussion over legal awareness regarding the cycle of production, supply and consumption of sporting goods can include a broad range of different set of actions; actions that can supervise issues such as the quality of production and supply, information, after-sales services and attending to consumers’ views, complaints and recommendations (Samavati, H.A., 1989).

A review of the results of this research suggests lack of information and awareness regarding the cycle of production, supply and consumption of sporting goods and services in Ardabil province. In order to improve the current condition, it is imperative to inform and educate people through governmental organizations (such as some divisions of Physical Education Organization), educational systems (such as universities, schools, public broadcasting networks, etc.) and non-governmental associations and organizations.

Strategies for improving the status quo:

1. An attempt to standardize production of sporting goods and offering sporting services.
2. Continuous observation and quality assurance assessment of sporting goods produced in this area by more activating the supervisory divisions of Physical Education Organization.
3. Helpful coordination and interaction between sports managers and producers of sporting goods on one hand and on the other hand, with other supervisory institutions such as the Consumers and Producers Protection Organization (CPPO) and Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran (ISIRI).
4. An attempt by the culture and education sector of the country to promulgate the use of high quality and standard sporting goods as well as an attempt to put into effect the strategic motto that “buying cheap is not necessarily always the best choice”.
5. Related organizations’ support of participation of expert and technically qualified producers in the area of production and supply of sporting goods and equipment.
6. Establishing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in order to protect consumer rights and to inform consumers (as we see such trade unions active in the areas of production and supply) (Web: Fany, D., 2000.).

REFERENCES