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The Evolution of the Sports Industry: The Role of Advanced Marketing Strategies and Emerging Technologies in Increasing the Average Attracting and Retaining Customers of Sports Venues

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Abstract:

In recent years, due to the rapid growth of the sports industry and the need to attract and retain customers, the use of advanced marketing strategies and new technologies has become key tools for success in attracting audiences and promoting their loyalty to sports venues. The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the impact of these strategies and technologies on attracting and retaining customers in sports venues. The present study is of an applied type and its statistical population includes customers of sports venues in the Kermanshah and Kurdistan regions. Standard and researcher-made questionnaires were used to collect data, and after verifying their validity and calculating their reliability, the data were analyzed. The results of the study show that using an effective combination of the marketing mix and utilizing emerging technologies has a positive and direct impact on the process of attracting and retaining customers. In particular, using physical and virtual space to introduce and enhance sports services increases competitiveness and improves customer experience. It is suggested that managers, by relying on these strategies and employing new technologies, establish closer relationships with their customers and thereby strengthen their loyalty, because the cost of retaining existing customers is much lower than attracting new customers.

Key words:

Marketing strategies, audience acquisition, information technology, competitiveness, customer management

Introduction:

Today, sports is known as one of the biggest social phenomena in the world, so that it has taken an important part of modern life (Ismaili et al., 2013). The intensity of competition in the current situation prompts sports service providers to examine critical events and their impact on customer behavior. Knowing the expectations of customers and the levels of these expectations from sports organizations allows managers to determine whether the services provided have an acceptable level of quality (Ramazani et al., 2013). Sports as an effective power in economic and social development with direct and indirect effects play an important role in the economy of countries. The sports industry, by holding a stimulating factor such as holding sports competitions, has made it possible to take advantage of advertising and media opportunities, which has created the necessary platform for interaction between industry, business and sports, which serves as a strategic communication bridge. It is considered to serve the development of sports and its economic prosperity (Farahani et al., 2014). The optimal implementation of physical education and sports programs requires the provision of a set of conditions and facilities, and the most important of these conditions is the use of standard spaces and equipment, which is designed based on international standards and laws approved by sports federations in each discipline, and in other words, Creating a better environment for the realization of physical training goals, the need to pay attention to the facilities, spaces, facilities and awareness of the management knowledge of sports facilities in order to preserve and maintain and optimally use these facilities is more important than ever and adds to the importance of the issue (Saeidi, 2014). Every year, billions of Rials are spent on building new sports facilities or equipping old sports facilities, but it seems that an issue that has been given less attention is the existence of appropriate control processes and the subsequent compliance with certain standards regarding sports facilities and spaces. Therefore, the purpose of the current research is to analyze and investigate the expectations of customers in terms of safety and health from sports venues in order to increase loyalty and repeat attendance. Jafari (2008).

The topic of customer loyalty is one of the most important topics in sports (Pedragosa and Correa, 2014). They express loyalty by re-demanding the product and even recommending other people to use it (Liu, 2008). It should be noted that the high satisfaction of customers and the perceived high quality of services lead to their return in the future (Dosti et al. 2010). Loyal customers help the organization in explaining the predictable flow of sales and increasing profits (Safari, 2015). Bowen 2018 lists four characteristics for customer loyalty. The first feature is word-of-mouth advertising, which includes things such as positive talk about a particular organization or service to others, as well as recommending that organization or service to friends and other people; The second feature is the shopping list, which shows the customer's intention to reuse the services of an organization in the future, the next feature is price sensitivity. This means that if the price of the service increases, the customer will continue to buy that service, and if the competing organizations offer similar services at a cheaper price, the probability of the customer going to them is very low. Your behavior is complaining. This means that the probability of a loyal customer complaining about the problems in the service field with others is very low (Pashapour, 2019). Therefore, it is obvious that currently, customer loyalty is mentioned as the ultimate goal that organizations seek to achieve (Sharifian et al., 2019). On the other hand, keeping the customer and creating the conditions for his return is a very sensitive and vital task that requires special tricks and tools. The most important marketing tool for managers and marketers is constant communication with people, providing appropriate services and being aware of competitors' movements (Sardari et al. 1400).

In recent decades, the sports industry is experiencing a new era, so that sports, as an economic sector in the production of sports goods and services and the development of the national economy of countries, is considered one of the most profitable industries in the 21st century (Salimi et al., 2015). In the era of increasing globalization, competitiveness is an important issue among the policy makers of various industries, among which one of the most controversial industries is the sports industry (Porshafiei et al., 2016). Information and communication technologies have created infrastructures in today's life that prevent the marginalization of the past and prolonging the time of decisions and information. These infrastructures increase the productivity of resources and flow for information circulation based on information systems, and the final product will be based on information technology. In many cases, people try to separate themselves from daily busyness and relax or focus on issues other than daily work, one of which is doing sports. Sports has many fans due to its invigorating feature. . On the other hand, team sports have special conditions that gather a lot of people in one place and focus on one issue, which is the focus of people and their thoughts that makes information technology appear there and change the conditions to facilitate the conditions more. to give Many technologies entered the world of sports and led to the development of sports and athletes, which also brought the evolution of inventions and the growth of other technologies. But it is the issue of information technology that was able to change the type of attitudes by entering human life; Technology that is used in any environment. Information technology in sports has affected different sectors, which can be categorized

in different classes such as equipment, improving movements and making the environment healthy and managing sports affairs. Information and communication technology can affect many characteristics of the organization such as the organizational structure and attitude of human resources and internal and external communication. In order to achieve the desired goals in a sports venue, in addition to an expert and experienced coach and talented and hard-working students, suitable facilities are needed in the desired field. It is natural that the more suitable the facilities are, the human resources of the organization will benefit more from these facilities, and in the same way, if the material facilities are used according to the regulatory plan and correctly, the optimal productivity will occur, and it is noteworthy that The efficiency of any organization decreases when the material facilities and human resources are not directed in the right direction (Sadeghinejad 2019).

Rice and Leonardi (2013) point out that information and communication technology can affect many characteristics of the organization such as organizational structure and attitude of human resources and internal and external communication. Advaya and colleagues (2012) have defined the management information system as a uniform and uniform structure of the information base environment including information flow, its collection, transfer and presentation of information in a suitable form to meet the needs of the organization for all its levels and components, and effective management information system It has greatly increased production. Koger et al. (2012) They admit that managers use management information systems at all levels (strategic, intermediate and operational) that need to be modified. Therefore, their employees are equally determined to prevent repetitions. In this regard, Zohreband et al. (2014) points out that Managers and all employees of sports facilities should acquire the necessary skills in using the Internet, and also know the widely used computer software related to their field of work and have the skill to use it, as well as competitive intelligence by collecting information about behavior. The present and future of competitors and the business environment can be an important source of information for planning. Loyalty in sales and marketing systems refers to methods and programs that create customer loyalty and retention. With the help of these programs, the customer is encouraged to have a kind of sense and motivation to advertise and support a particular company's goods or services. Also, the use of these solutions makes a more stable relationship based on the satisfaction of the parties. Customer loyalty programs are one of the newest and most successful solutions of the last half century, which are used in sales systems. One of its best functions for economic enterprises is to obtain a large amount of information about customers. Having this strategic capital, every organization and company is able to base on the information and data from its customers. achieved, make a correct and practical planning (Ghafari, 2019). Esmaili et al.(2013) in a research entitled A new look at relational marketing defined relational marketing and pointed out the main characteristics of this approach such as beneficial and long-term relationship, creation of mutual advantage and correlation between organization and customer and each of them as Part of this trend was explained. Considering the fact that the organization can gain real commitment by building trust, so that the customer will repeat the purchase without the organization trying again. Then they explained the benefits of relational marketing from the perspective of the organization and the customer. From the perspective of the organization, customer loyalty was pointed out, which not only brings profitability for the organization, but also word-of-mouth communication and causes the customer to support the organization. Then, at the end, it was said that reducing the risk of unsatisfactory purchases and saving time at the same time are among the advantages of this attitude in terms of customers.

Sharfi (2017), in his research entitled "Investigation of the level of satisfaction of the spectators of the premier football league with the provision of various services" showed that the level of satisfaction of the spectators with the provision of services at the Azadi Stadium was evaluated as weak. Chang et al. (2017) conducted a research on the relationship between the perception of service quality, customer satisfaction and customer citizenship behavior. By examining the customers of entertainment and sports places, these researchers found that the quality of the program, customer-employee interaction, capacity, sociability, environmental conditions, and equipment have the ability to predict the perception of quality, and there is a significant relationship between the perception of service quality and customer satisfaction. There is. Moreira and Silva (2016) in their research titled protest behavior through three parts: examination of service quality, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth in health facilities, found that service quality has an effect on customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth. Also, customer satisfaction has an effect on word of mouth marketing. Kim et al. (2016) conducted a research titled Designing a Safety Management Network for Sports Facilities. In this study, the researchers investigated the role of sports venue management to prevent accidents related to sports equipment and venues and stated that sports venues should be in constant contact with emergency management centers and other bodies in charge of incident control so that risks are not created. Bring the least damages and casualties .

Lee et al. (2016) in their research, which was conducted with the aim of the relationship between perceived service quality and brand equity, found that perceived service quality can increase the number of customers and improve the performance of organizations. Higgs et al. (2015) in their research, which was conducted with the aim of investigating the sports facilities in Wales, after their investigations, found that in order to improve the functional level of this possibility, it is necessary to properly develop the safety of this possibility and pay attention to biological issues. Special attention was paid to the environment. Novyala et al. (2015) in a research entitled "Investigation of the relationship between the quality of sports services, value and customer satisfaction in Spain",

which investigated the existing models in this field in Spain and with a survey of 2667 users of sports services. In this country, they found that quality plays a key role in predicting satisfaction and value. No significant relationship was found between value and satisfaction. Alexander et al. (2014) conducted a research titled satisfaction, image and loyalty: new customers versus experienced (old) customers, and the results show the customers' mental image of the organization, service quality, product quality, and the emotional connection that the organization has with the customer. creates, that it has been effective on customer loyalty, and also customer loyalty is effective on repeat purchases and recommending purchases to others. Chain (2014), in his research entitled "Investigation of customer satisfaction with the services of fitness centers in China and Hong Kong, concluded that there is no significant difference between the overall satisfaction level of male and female customers from the two countries of China and Hong Kong, and also There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of male and female customers with the quality of staff service, which means that the level of satisfaction of male and female customers with the quality of staff service in sports facilities in China and Hong Kong is the same.

In the marketing mix, we see three other p's including personnel, physical assets and procedures (process) in the sum of four p's, which finally results in a marketing mix with seven p's for services. These changes are made to satisfy the needs and demands of the consumer in order to develop a competitive strategy based on what the company can do in an ethical, critical and legal framework. Because marketing management is from analysis, planning, Implementation and control of programs to create, present and maintain the process of profitable transactions with the desired customers (buyers) in order to achieve the goals of the organization. In general, it can be said that the main purpose of the marketing mix is to help the organization to create and strengthen competitive opportunities in the market (Kol et al., 2003). Ninh et al. (2015) found a positive and significant relationship between marketing mix variables and purchasing behavior. Rahim Ahmad et al. (2014) market orientation is a tool through which one can achieve a competitive advantage in business, which is related to variables such as market opportunities, competitors' risks, competitors' threats. Therefore, it seems that providing the basis for the preparation and compilation of the strategic plan of sports venues is a major and initial step to organize extensive and diverse efforts in the field of sports venues. Since building strong brands plays a very important role in the service sector, Sports venues can be innovative in providing services when they push their organization, including employees, customers, and managers, towards integrated marketing and achieve a competitive advantage in the long term. In this regard, the research has shown that the quality of the desired service and satisfaction is one of the most important factors that form the basis for customer loyalty, and there is a relationship between all aspects of the service quality of sports facilities and the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty. In this regard, researchers pointed out that the quality of services, such as the quality of programs and the environment of places, has an effect on customer satisfaction (Saeidi et al., 2015). Pedragusa and Correa (2009) satisfaction is a variable that is related to the expectations of customers and equipment of places and is very important in determining the level of loyalty of customers to places. Moral et al. (2016) considered the relationship between the quality of after-sales service and customer satisfaction, retention and loyalty (Kayaman and Arsli, 2017). With regard to the progress, development and public interest in sports on the one hand and the existence of appropriate and high capacities in this sector on the other hand, it requires accurate and correct understanding of the current situation and providing a principled and scientific strategy for determining the strategy of sports venues in the horizon of the medium-term plan and Short term is necessary. The current age should be considered as a combination of information and communication, an age in which the field of sports needs to know information and communicate to obtain the required information more than in the past.

Methodology:

According to the subject and the general goal, which is to analyze and investigate the effective factors in attracting customers of sports venues with a combination of marketing and new technologies. The present research is a descriptive research and is carried out by the correlation method, and its results are considered to be applied. It is possible that in the first part it was done in a library and in the second part it was done in the field. The statistical population of this research consists of the customers of 2 sports venues in Kermanshah and Kurdistan provinces. In order to select the research samples, based on the inquiry provided On behalf of the Sports and Youth Directorate of Kermanshah and Kurdistan Province, the number of customers of sports venues cannot be accurately estimated, so the ceiling of the statistical sample based on Cochran's formula, i.e. 384 people, was considered for the present study. The purpose of this research is to discover the relationship between the variables, which will be done in a survey. The sampling method of this research was random cluster (districts of Kermanshah and Kurdistan) proportional to the sample size. In order to collect information, the questionnaires of mixed elements of residential marketing (2009) and the questionnaire of Moqq were used. In order to determine the validity of the researcher's questionnaire, in order to ask for opinions and confirm the validity of the form and content, the sample questionnaire was presented to ten sports management experts, and they examined the form and content of the questionnaire items according to the research objectives. Reliability was calculated through Cronbach's alpha (0.76). The information technology questionnaire made by the researcher has 13 questions with three components of hardware, software and human software in a preliminary study through the method of halving 30 questionnaires from among the sample in question, a preliminary study of distribution and after collecting the questionnaires It

was calculated using Cronbach's alpha method (0.79). The questionnaire was scored using a five-point Likert scale. Path analysis in structural equations was used to analyze the findings of the test. All data were analyzed using statistical software package of social sciences version 19 and Lisrel software version 8.54.

Findings:

Table (1) description of marketing mix variables, strategic brand position and communication and information technology

standard deviation	Average	Name of the component	Variables
0.63	3.12	the product	mixed Marketing
0.96	3.38	Price	
0.64	3.65	Advertising	
0.83	3.60	place	
0.55	3.83	Staff	
1.48	2.47	Facilities and equipment	
1.88	2.56	Process	
1.72	2.95	software	Information and Communications Technology
0.79	3.78	hardware	
0.81	3.62	human software	
2.21	4.96	Attract customers	

According to table (1), among the marketing mix components, employees with an average of 83.3 have the highest average and facilities and equipment with an average of 2.47 have the lowest average. Among the information technology components, hardware with an average of 3.78 has the highest average and software with an average of 2.95 has the lowest average. The average number of customers is 4.96 with a standard deviation of 2.21.

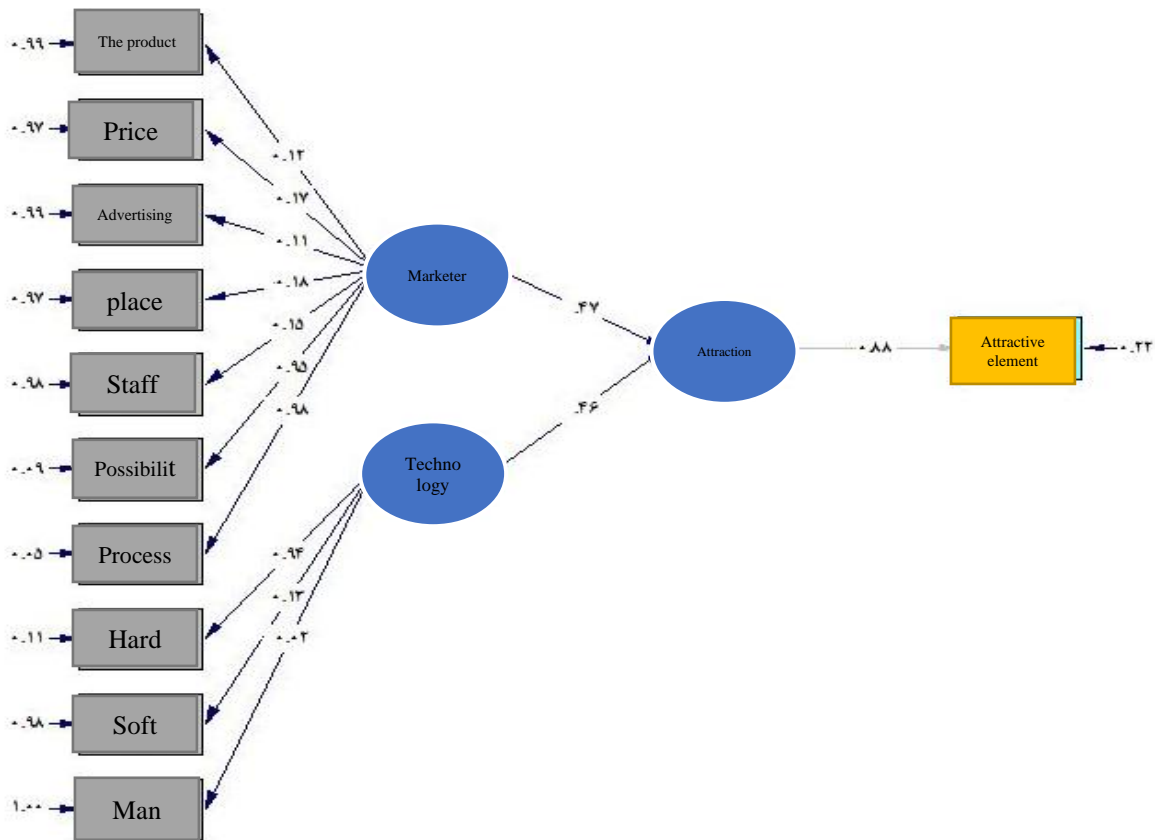


Figure (1) Predicting model of attracting customers through mixed elements of marketing and the use of information and communication technology in sports venues

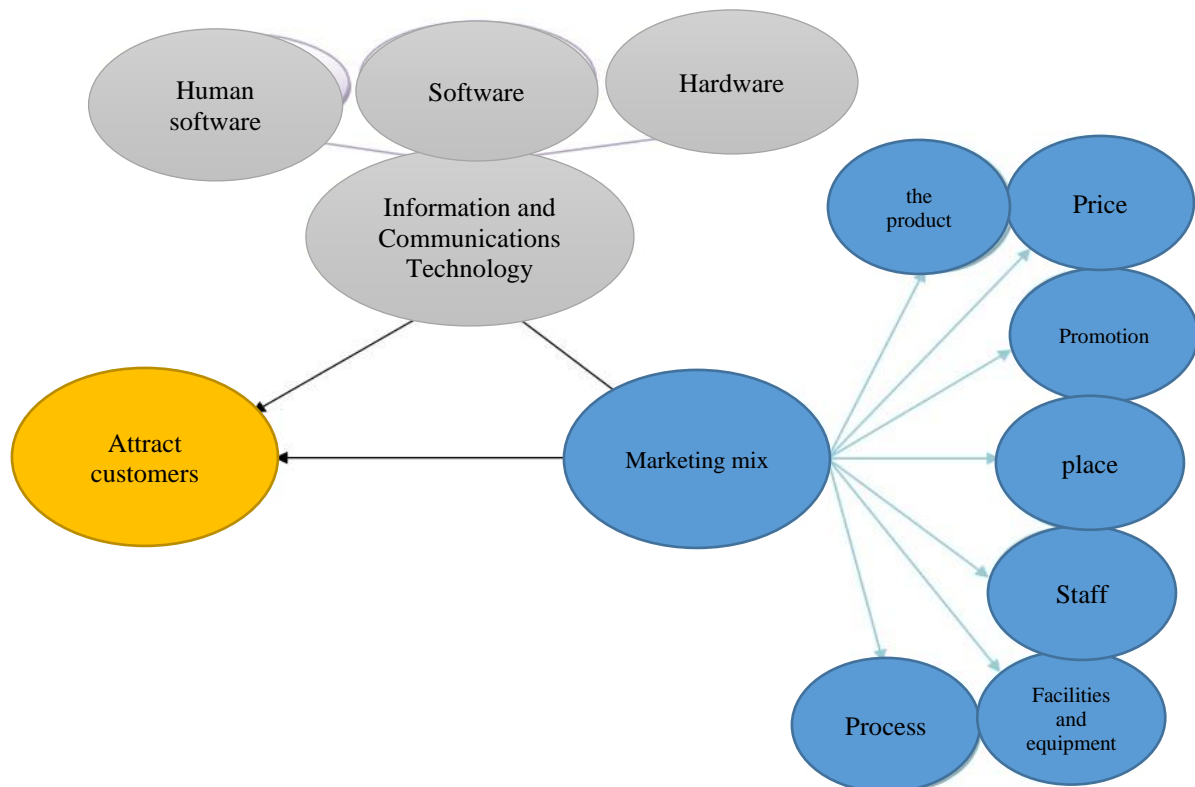


Figure (2) proposed research model

Considering the impact of mixed marketing components on information and communication technology and finally the mediating and non-mediating influence of these two variables on the attraction of customers in sports venues (Figure (2) of the proposed research model), it can be acknowledged that there are cases such as Hasan The behavior of venue managers, necessary expertise, appropriate appearance, effective training, commitment to work, proper communication and human relations skills, up-to-date knowledge of instructors, proximity of venues to residences, appropriateness of tuition fees to people's income, easy access to quality Appropriate work in places, proper planning for athletes, the presence of peripheral equipment in places based on mixed marketing components can be effective in marketing sports places and attract more people. What can be inferred is that effective human relations and having high human skills are among the most important characteristics that managers, employees and trainers of sports venues should have and with good morals they can attract many fans. For this reason, Hickman et al. (2005) suggest a program to empower sports managers and are of the opinion that by training human relations skills and social skills, sports venues can achieve more profitability and this can lead to Sports economy can help a lot.

Table (2) important fit indices of the main model

Acceptable fit	Model fit indices	Abbreviation	index name	Grouping of indicators
GFI%90<	0/94	GFI	goodness of fit index	Absolute fit indices
AGFI%90<	0/91	AGFI	Improved goodness of fit index	
RMR%5>	0/011	RMR	Root mean square residual	
NNFI%90<	1/00	NNFI(TL)	Tucker-Lewis index	Comparative fit indices
NFI%90<	0/97	NFI	Normalized fit index	
CFI%90<	0/98	CFI	Relative fit index	
IFI%90<	0/98	IFI	Incremental fit index	
√10 RMSEA<	0/01	RMSEA	The root mean square of the estimation error	Indices of parsimonious fit
-	0/087	p	p- value	
-	736	df	Degrees of freedom	
<3 CMIN/df0<	1/87	CMIN/df	Chi score normalized to degrees of freedom	
PNFI%05<	0/74	PNFI	Normalized parsimonious fit index	

Table (2) showed the values of the most important indices of the model fit, including the square root of the mean error (0.01) and the ratio of work to degree of freedom (1.87). As it is clear and visible, all indicators have met the desired and required level at this stage, and this means that the data support the research model. In other words, the research model with the present graphic diagram is acceptable.

Discussion:

Knowing the expectations of the customers of sports venues can help improve the loyalty and willingness of customers to attend the venues and affect their financial performance. Also, in order to improve their performance, sports venues can learn from similar organizations in successful cities and countries in this field and examine the reasons for their success. It should be noted that customers will bring a competitive advantage to sports venues, and in the meantime, the safety and security of sports venues and the quality of health services can be an important factor in achieving this goal and making customers more loyal in the country's sports venues. Since the communication between people for the purpose of education and expanding knowledge is increasingly possible through computers. Due to the competitive nature of the sports market, the customers of sports hats and services become more valuable day by day. According to the findings, the average of the obtained marketing mix elements is higher than the average, that is, the marketing mix elements are more than the average. The results of the present research are consistent with the results of Zohra Vandian et al. (2014). Customer loyalty is critical to an organization's success because it is usually more expensive to attract new customers than to retain existing customers. Therefore, it is suggested to maintain loyal fans as a competitive asset, and one of the ways to strengthen this is through establishing a sincere, appropriate and strong cooperative relationship between service providers and beneficiaries.

Marketing mix elements is one of the best tools that can help create a suitable strategy in sports marketing management, based on which each element can be considered as a controllable variable and sports needs based on the market. Set the goal. Sports venues must have all the studied elements so that they can have more customers, in other words, the presence of things such as the good behavior of managers and employees of sports venues, necessary expertise, proper appearance, effective training, commitment to work, establishing proper communication. and having human relations skills, the up-to-date knowledge of trainers, the proximity of places to the place of residence, the proportionality of tuition with people's income, Easy access, proper quality in sports venues, training of outstanding champions, facilities equipped with modern equipment and facilities, presence of medical and nutrition advisors, presence of ancillary equipment in sports venues can be effective in marketing sports venues and attract more people. According to the results, the average of the information and communication technology elements obtained is higher than the average. The results of this part of the current research are in line with the achievements of Murad Khani et al. (2014) and Zohra Vandian et al. Sports venues can use new technology and technologies in the virtual space to attract customers.

For example, advertising sports classes, coaches and other services through channels in virtual space or contracts with private mobile phone companies can be a way forward. The reasons for this compatibility may be due to the up-to-dateness, effectiveness, necessity and importance of using information technology in all systems and organizations. Information technology can play an important role in improving the productivity and efficiency of organizations. The use of information and communication technology in order to promote the success of sports venues and customer loyalty is known as an important and effective factor in sports. Emphasizing the fact that the use of information technology and management information systems can play an effective role in all aspects of sports, therefore, all organizations, managers and sports professionals should use these systems and technologies as much as possible. In this way, they succeed in planning, programming, services and productions and achieve their desired goals by developing the quantity and quality of affairs. Managers and employees of sports facilities as the main role and force of the organization have a major role in the success of their organization, on the other hand, the greatest value of information technology in success and achieving goals; Increasing people's access to information technology knowledge and accelerating its transfer. According to the average difference obtained, it can be said that the difference is positive and the average of this component is higher than the average level (3). Kuo and Pastor (2004) report the interactions between managers and members of the venues as an important factor in the sports success of the venues and believe that managers and coaches should have high human relations skills for the success of the venues in the sports arena. ; Gaining sports and economic position; Provide more profitability. Also, Kuo and Pastor (2004) reported that the presence of places in accessible places and the fact that people can easily travel there can be very effective in attracting customers.

What can be inferred is that effective human relations and having high human skills are among the most important characteristics that managers, employees, and trainers of sports venues must have, and with good morals, they can attract many customers. This is the reason why they propose a program to empower sports managers and they believe that by training human relations skills and social skills, sports venues can achieve more profitability and this can greatly help the economy of sports. . They also report interactions between managers and members in sports venues as an important factor in sports success and believe that managers and coaches should have high human relations skills to ensure the success of venues in the sports and economic arena. Among other elements of marketing, we can mention the element of location. If sports facilities are built in places that are easy to access and in places where there is not much traffic and less crowd, it can be effective in attracting customers. The presence of the necessary facilities and equipment in the places and the places being equipped with modern and new equipment can be in the sports marketing of the sports places. The existence of equipment and facilities as a psychological element affects the mentality of customers and they believe that the equipment can have a positive effect on the motivation and sports success of the members psychologically. It must be acknowledged that the future will belong to those organizations that align themselves with the new reality and its requirements. Managers who seek to use information technology in the management of quality costs can, by taking into account the analysis of information and failure, at the same time as Market surveys, production lines, tests and product reliability plans, while increasing quality, which is exactly what the customer wants, reduce quality costs. In today's world and a dynamic and highly competitive economic environment, information technology has been able to become one of the become the main and important players and improve its position until reaching a strategic capital. Information technology can lead an organization to innovation, increase productivity and produce value for customers and be considered as a competitive advantage. The benefits that information technology creates in organizations, including saving costs, preventing human errors, organizational effectiveness, increasing efficiency and income, are very remarkable. For this reason, today the per capita cost of information technology per human force is considered as one of the national development indicators of countries. Information technology will reduce costs due to increased access to information, its processing and retrieval.

In general, it can be acknowledged that today the competition in various industries, including the sports industry, is increasing. Since sports service organizations such as sports venues offer similar services to the beneficiaries, the competition is to acquire customers and most importantly to keep them. Managers of places should use their

competitive intelligence to achieve this goal By using market orientation, compete with other places and meet the needs and demands of their customers. Therefore, it is suggested that the senior managers of the sports facilities allocate a special sign and logo for their hall and choose a suitable name for the hall. Also, regarding the staff component, it is suggested that the trainers' knowledge is up-to-date, they know the etiquette and familiarity with They should be aware of the culture of the people of that region, the proper communication between employees and customers, and the level of training and education of trainers and be effective in choosing the best trainers and employees.

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