

Compilation of Iran Sport Tourism Strategy (SWOT)

Shahla NAGHIBI¹, Mina HAKAKZADEH¹, Mohammad Ebrahim RAZAGHI²

¹Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, Azad University, Kerman, IRAN

²Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, University of Farhangiyān, Kerman, IRAN

Email: Me.razaghi@yahoo.com

Type: Research Article (Received: 31.03.2018 – Corrected: 09.04.2018 – Accepted: 06.05.2018)

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to formulate a strategy of sport tourism in Iran as a prominent player in sport tourism. The method of doing research was mixed in a series of phenomenological approaches, and in the following cases, a compilation strategy was used. The statistical population of qualitative and quantitative research section of Iranian sport tourism association was ten people. The present sample was selected as theoretical saturation and snowball sampling. For gathering data from the form of systematic survey here applied (that was created from detailed library study and had general questions about tourism and the whole status of the area) had two kinds of qualitative and quantitative questions that were assessed suitably before questioning from content and visual validity point of view. Analyzing survey data in the first section was done as coding strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and threats according to the mentioned frequency rate and coefficients of the experts, strategic situation was defined and related strategies were edited the findings show that growing and structural strategies should be in development axis of Iran sport tourism. According to these results and indices, we can probably enhance Iran tourism strategic attractions.

Keywords: strategic management, tourism, expert, Iran

Introduction

Today phenomenon of tourism is due to its enormous income that made most of the world countries to invest in this section (Kim et al., 2015). The number of tourists in the world grows 4.3% annually and will reach 1.6 billion by 2020. At the same time, tourists cost all around the world reaches to 2 trillion dollars. (Andra and Dimanch., 2017) Tourism involves recreational, therapeutic, religious, market, consultative, electronic, indoor and sport tourism (Mokhtari et al., 2016). In this research sport tourism is the main matter. Sport tourism advocates 5 to 10% of all trips and is known as one of the fastest tourism sections. Because of its enormous income, it has made intense competition among the countries according to the kind of tourism and provides better facilities to attract sport tourism (Akhondi et al., 2015) so that today some countries due to existing potentials and talents they have created related sport centers such as Switzerland, Austria that are suitable from the point of view of the climate. Korea as the host of skiing, hockey, climbing, and martial art especially, Japan by attending skiing competitions can attract many sport tourists to their country so they have enormous income annually (Baning and Gipson., 2003). World Basketball Federation also reported that income earned from attending basketball world cup in 2010 in Turkey was about 200 million euro so that 30000 sport tourists were in this matches (Mosavi Gilani et al., 2014). Cartacolli and Carlis (2007) in sport tourism development model in Qebres using focus group technique among six experts point to Athena Olympics in 2004 and non-existence of technical substructures in attending the phenomena as a serious threat. Carlis (2002) in compilation of spare time and entertainment strategy of Canada with small and middle companies approach points to social status of Canada, these companies and their role in making a strategy. Liv and Zang (2016) in analyzing sport tourism development of China and according to analysis mentioned that weaknesses of tourism development of China involves: tourism sources, transformation system and having proper politics with tourism and also consists of variable opportunities that cause development of local economy, water sports and rapid growth of tourism demand and treats involve lack of progress and environmental problems. Huvio (2008) in a research with strategic approaches points to skiing in China and focuses on cultural sources. Zua (2004) in strategic analyzing of sport in China focuses on economics. Hu & Yan (2010) in strategic analysis of natural sports recognize natural sources as an opportunity. Jirex and Brangan (2016) quoted from Rhin in considering strategic analysis of sport tourism sources of Ganso in China which its main strength are many tourism sources, rapid growth of economy, human sources development, the weaknesses are unequal spatial distribution of tourism sources, improper places, having weaknesses in structure, insufficient awareness about tourism and professional sport tourism, the opportunities are rapid world growth economy, strategy of developing attractions and tourism sources, people awareness of dates and the treats are competition of neighbor provinces in relation with progress of local economy and inter environmental corruption. Abbasi et al. (2016) quoted from Hamidi et al. by analyzing strengths, weaknesses, threats, and sport tourism opportunities in Iran. By explaining sport tourism strategies they found that in sport tourism weaknesses of Iran variety in local games was the most important sport and lack of planning and correct, detailed and scientific strategies for tourism progress was the highest weakness. In opportunities section climate with suitable weather for attending sports camps and competitions such as skiing, boating was the most important and in treat section having a negative view and malicious advertising of foreign countries about Iran was the most important that threats sport tourism industry of Iran. Also, the results show that sport tourism of Iran from situation point of view and in domestic and foreign matrices it is situated in a preservative area. Shojaei et al. (2012)

used to recognize and prioritize planning of weaknesses, strengths, opportunities, and threats in their study and then they use to analyze the strategy of sport tourism industry in Mazandaran, Iran. Data analysis showed that favorable climate is the most important strength and not attending international sport competitions and tournaments with high quality in this province are the most important weaknesses. Besides, in a study with Turkish sample carried out by Turkmen et al. (2013), it was pointed out that the hotel managers without qualified educational and professional background were an important barrier in front of the development of sport tourism in the tourism industry. Baktas (2011) did a research that its topic as considering the most important natural sport attractions which effects on sport tourism progress in Turkey from the point of view of sport tourism experts. The results showed that attractions that were less affected by seasonal phenomena and therefore they have a longer tourism season with more variable activities; have more importance in sport tourism progress of Turkey. According to this, sport tourism as one of sub category of tourism industry has spatial importance, because research results show that this sub category had the most growth in among different sections of tourism industry.

Among these, it has been focused on environmental recognition and determination of strategic situation of sport tourism its progress. The results show that there is little research about sport tourism with strategic approach and on the other hand, organizations responsible for sport tourism progress such as cultural heritage, handicraft, and tourism industries and Iran offices have done no systematic actions or strategic long-term plans necessary for progress in each domain. So sport tourism in Iran is far from tourism as one of its sections. This research aimed at considering sport tourism status in Iran according to analysis. It seems that doing this research for environmental recognition and natural capabilities of tourism in Iran is so important. Surely many people exist all around the world that has not traveled to Iran yet and has not recognized its attractions and natural attractions. So, the researcher recognizes weaknesses, strengths, threats and environmental tourism opportunities by this model and determines its strategic situation.

Methodology

This research has been done mixed methodologically that phenomenology has been used in qualitative dimension and approach of strategy editing have been used in quantitative dimension. Sport experts formed statistical society of quantitative & qualitative section of the research and this research, according to visual saturation of 10 people, has been chosen by snowball sampling method. For gathering data, a systematic form has been used for the survey which has general questions about tourism and general status of the area with two kinds of qualitative and quantitative questions and its formal and contextual validity have been assessed before questioning from the experts. The method of performing was questioning from the experts firstly and then ranking them quantitatively. Each survey lasts about 40 min. Then each survey has been analyzed. It is necessary to do the survey step by step to have access to visual saturation and also must be trusted that the research is continuing. Survey data analysis has been done as coding strengths, weaknesses & opportunities in the first section and then according to said frequency rate of the coefficients of the experts, the strategic situation has been determined and related strategies have been chosen due to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and the strategic situation. Since in these kinds of researches coding is so important, it would be done by two people and

the similar coefficient that has been gained is 82%. All analysis has been done by maxqda software, version 12.

Table 1. Internal and external factors

strengths	weaknesses	opportunities	threats
Food variety	Congresses and workshops	Tourism organizations	General culture
People awareness about sport tourism	Programming in tourism	Ministry of education, sports & youth organization & sport boards	Religious rules
Spare time in tourism	Supervising & assessing tourism management	Flourishing economy, occupation	Financial sponsors
Tourism marketing	Organizing tourism management	Province potential in attending the event	Aggression
Data registration of tourism	Competitions & tourism	Ancient attractions	Psychological insecurity
Nongovernmental organization	Agencies & centers selling the tickets	Climate variety	Social insecurity
Being cheap in Iran	Transportation system	Natural resources	-----
Coordination in tourism management	Quality of places	Competition space	-----
The letter of tourism	Sport museums	-----	-----
Human force	Sport medical centers	-----	-----
Traditional media	Entertainment centers	-----	-----
Modern media and social channels	-----	-----	-----
Shopping centers	-----	-----	-----
Civil architecture	-----	-----	-----
Language and accent	-----	-----	-----

After recognizing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in determining strategic situation of two dimensions of weight of each factor and ranking them from the point of view of special and normal opportunities, strengths and weaknesses which is specified in table 2 and 3 should be considered by weight of each factor and ranking.

Table 2. Ranking & weight of internal factors

Internal factors	weight	ranking	Ranking*weight
Food variety	7.04	4	28.28
People awareness about sport tourism	6.06	4	24.24
Spare time in tourism	4.04	3	12.12
Tourism marketing	4.04	3	12.12
Data registration of tourism	6.06	4	24.24
Nongovernmental organization	7.07	4	28.28
Being cheap in Iran	4.04	3	12.12
Coordination in tourism management	2.02	3	609
The letter of tourism	5.05	4	20.20
Human force	7.04	4	28.28
Traditional media	1.01	3	3.03
Modern media & social channels	7.07	4	28.28
channels	7.07	4	28.28
Shopping centers	5.05	4	20.02
Civil architecture	7.07	4	28.28
Language & accent	6.04	4	24.24
Congresses & workshops	3.02	4	24.24
Programming in tourism	2.01	2	4.02
Supervising & assessing tourism management	2.01	2	4.02
Organizing tourism management	1.01	2	2.02
Competitions & tourism	1.01	2	2.02
Agencies & centers selling the tickets	1.01	2	2.02
Transportation system	1.01	2	2.02
Places quality	1.01	2	2.02
Sport museum	1.01	2	2.02
Sport medical centers	1.01	2	202
Tourism centers	1.01	2	202
Entertainment centers	1	2	2
Total	100	-----	353.33

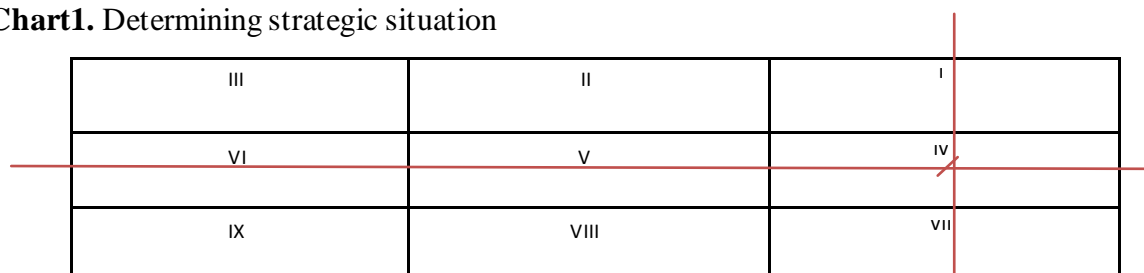
Findings of table 2 after determining the weight & ranking according to normal and special strengths and weaknesses show the situation of internal factors. The sum is 353.33.

Table 3. Weight & ranking of external factors

External factors	weight	ranking	Ranking*weight
Tourism organizations	8.33	4	33.32
Ministry of education, sports & youth organization & sport boards	5.95	3	17.85
Flourishing economy, occupation	9.52	4	38.08
Province potential in attending the events	8.33	4	33.32
Ancient attractions	4.7	3	14.1
Climate variety	9.52	4	38.08
Natural resources	9.52	4	38.08
Competition space	8.33	4	33.32
General culture	4.7	2	9.4
Religious rules& regulations	8.33	1	8.33
Financial sponsors	2.38	2	4.76
Aggregation	2.38	2	4.76
Psychological insecurity	9.52	1	9.52
Social insecurity	8.33	1	8.33
Total	100	----	291.25

Findings of table 3: After determining the weight & ranking according to normal and special opportunities and threats have shown 291.25. According to determined external and internal factors, strategic situation could be specified that is referred to in the following chart.

Chart1. Determining strategic situation



III	II	I
VI	V	IV
IX	VIII	VII

Chart 1 shows that sport tourism of Iran strategic situation is located in structure and growth strategy area. It should be remembered that I, II, IV of growth and structure area, I, V, VII of preservation and maintenance, VI, VIII, IX are the strategy of product payment and releasing them. In the area strategic situation, growth ideas and sport tourism structure should be

performed by a compilation of proper strategies. According to this, necessary strategies about sport tourism and growth and progress ideas should be edited.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research has been done for editing sport tourism strategy of Iran. For this, it is necessary to recognize internal factors (strengths & weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities & threats). In this regard with the approach of tourism sport ideas of the experts in Iran primary information about this matter were gathered. Strengths were: food variety, people awareness about sport tourism, spare time in tourism, tourism marketing, data registration of tourism, nongovernmental organization, being cheap in Iran, coordination in tourism management, the letter of tourism, human force, rules & regulations, traditional media, modern media and social channels, shopping centers, civil architecture and language and accent. Weaknesses were: congresses & workshops, programming in tourism, supervising & assessing tourism management, organizing tourism management, competitions & tourism, agencies & centers selling the tickets, transportation system, places quality, sport museums, sport medical centers, tourism centers, entertainment centers. Youkao (2004) referred to tourism progress strengths consist of tourism sources, transportation system, tourism places and politics coordinate with tourism, weaknesses consist of lack of human sources, the name of the place and lack of comprehensive planning. Jirex and Brangan (2016) quoted from Rhin and referred to the strengths of abundant tourism sources, the rapid growth of the economy, human sources progress and weaknesses of unequal spatial distribution of tourism sources, unsuitable place, weakness in structure, insufficient awareness about tourism and professional sport tourism in another research. In a similar research in Iran Abbasi et al. (2016) quoted from Hamidi et al. (2010) introduced variety in local matches of Iran as the most important strength and lack of planning and correct, detailed and scientific strategy for sport tourism progress as the most important weakness. Shojai et al. (2012) introduced favorable weather condition as the most important strength and not attending any sport matches and international tournaments with high quality in this province as the most important weaknesses. The mentioned findings show that strengths and weaknesses are similar in the researches, so that human sources as tourism producer, culture and different matches of the countries, having weaknesses in constructive planning and transportation were the shared matters of the researches. The opportunities of this research were tourism organizations, the ministry of education, sports and youth, sport boards, flourishing of economy, occupation, having potential in attending the events, historical attractions, climate variation, natural sources and competitive space. In this regards, threats were popular culture, religious rules and regulations, financial sponsors, aggregation, psychological and social insecurity. Abbasi et al. (2016) quoted from Hamidi et al. that in opportunities favorable climate for attending different camps and matches such as skiing, boating, had the most importance and in threats, section having a negative attitude and abuse of foreign countries about Iran were the highest subject that threats tourism industry of Iran. Baktas (2011) has done a research; its topic was considering the most important sport natural attractions that effect on sport tourism progress of Turkey from the view of tourism and sport experts. The results showed that attractions which are less affected by seasonal phenomena and they have longer tourism season with more variable actions have more importance. According to the opportunities and threats mentioned here, it can be referred that climate and security are joint elements that are in opportunity and threats trends. According to external and internal factors and determined ranking of strategic situations that were located in progress and growth point and the strategies can be submitted as following: attending sport

events that attracts tourists, compilation of group works and progressing through sport tourism, development of entering beds of sport tourism, attending annual sport congresses and tourism workshops and preparing plans, preparing entering system of financial sponsors to sport tourism, preparing cultural programs and developing infrastructure, preparing secure programs and culture making of sport tourism and preparing and editing sport tourism propaganda. According to the selected strategy of sport tourism, the approach of Iran can probably progress through these ways.

Corresponding Author

Mohammad Ebrahim RAZAGHI

Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, University of Farhangiyān, Kerman, IRAN, **Email:** Me.razaghi@yahoo.com

Conflict of Interest

The authors have not declared any conflicts of interest.

REFERENCES

- Abbasi H, Khanmoradi S, Eydi H, Rasekh N (2016). Quantitative Strategic Planning of General Office of Sports and Youth in Regard to Championship Sport Using QSPM in Kermanshah. *International Journal of Sports Science*, 6(2), 36-45.
- Andrades L, Dimanche F (2017). Destination competitiveness and tourism development in Russia: Issues and challenges. *Tourism Management*, 62, 360-376.
- Akhoondi L, Danehkar A, Arjamandi R, Shabanali Fami H (2015). Site Selection Appropriate Zones for Sport Tourism in Mountain Areas A Case Study: Karaj-Chalous Road, *Journal of Natural Environment*, 68, 331-334.
- Buning RJ, Gibson HJ (2016). The role of travel conditions in cycling tourism: implications for destination and event management. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 20(3-4), 175-193.
- Gilani SRM, Kazemi M, Asadi H, Samadzadeh GR, Atashpanjeh AR (2014). Market segmentation of sport tourism in Iran for foreign tourists regarding culture and modeling of target market. *Asian Journal of Research in Marketing*, 3(6), 192-200.
- Grix J, Brannagan PM (2016). Of mechanisms and myths: conceptualizing states' "soft power" strategies through sports mega-events. *Diplomacy & statecraft*, 27(2), 251-272.
- Kartakoullis NL, Karlis G (2002). Developing Cyprus as a sport tourism destination: the results of a SWOT analysis. *Journal of Sport Tourism*, 7(4), 3-17.
- Karlis G (2006). The future of leisure, recreation, and sport in Canada: A SWOT for small-sized enterprises. *The sport journal*, 9(2), 60-69.
- Kim W, Jun HM, Walker M, Drane D (2015). Evaluating the perceived social impacts of hosting large-scale sport tourism events: Scale development and validation. *Tourism Management*, 48, 21-32.

- Liu X, Zhang Y (2016). SWOT Analysis on the Development of China's Sports Industry in the Era of Negative Interest Rate. *Hubei Sports Science*, 3, 008.
- Lepp A, Gibson H (2003). Tourist roles, perceived risk, and international tourism. *Annals of tourism research*, 30(3), 606-624.
- Malkeabadi M, Chaghajerdi I (2016). Leveling of 15 districts in Isfahan based on sports tourism infrastructure using Topsis model, *Geographical Journal of Tourism Space*, 17, 25-41.
- Sariisik M, Turkyay O, Akova O (2011). How to manage yacht tourism in Turkey: A SWOT analysis and related strategies. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 24, 1014-1025.
- Shojaei V, Tejari F, Soleymani B, Doosti M (2012). Strategic planning of sport tourism in Mazandaran province. *Geographic Space*, 39, 173-194.
- Turkmen M, Kul M, Genc E, Sarikabak M (2013). The Evaluation of the Perceptions and Attitude of the Hotel Managers about Recreation: The Sample of The West Black Sea Region, *Turkish Studies*, 8(8), 2139-2152.
- Yuan-zhao LU (2004). The SWOT analysis and strategic choices on tourism of national minority sports in Guangxi [J]. *Journal of Physical Education*, 5, 007.
- Yu LH, Wu JY (2010). SWOT Analysis and Strategy Choice for Developing Sports Tourism in Poyang Lake [J]. *Journal of Nanjing Institute of Physical Education (Social Science)*, 6, 014.
- Zhou H, Qu XY (2008). My Thoughts on Developing the Industry of Ice-Snow Sports Tourism in Heilongjiang Province [J]. *China Winter Sports*, 2, 38-40.