

**Prioritizing Integrated Marketing Communication Tools in Sport Tourism in Iran  
Based on ACCA Model**

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## **Prioritizing Integrated Marketing Communication Tools in Sport Tourism in Iran Based on ACCA Model**

### **Abstract**

Tourism industry is considered as one of the largest and the most diverse industries in the world. In order Prioritizing Integrated Marketing Communication tools in sport tourism in Iran, the opinions of 44 sports marketing experts were collected through researcher-made questionnaires. Experts confirmed the validity (formal, content) of the questionnaire and its reliability was confirmed due to the inconsistency ratio of questionnaires that was less than (0.1). AHP method and Expert Choic11 software were used for data analysis. According to the findings, to pay Awareness based on the ACCA model, advertising and public relations were the first priority. To create a comprehension, sales promotion and to create Conviction, sales promotion, personal selling and direct marketing and create action, personal selling and direct marketing gained the most importance.

**Keywords:** IMC, Analytical Hierarchy Process, sports tourism, ACCA model

## **Prioritizing Integrated Marketing Communication Tools in Sport Tourism in Iran Based on ACCA Model**

### **Introduction**

Tourism is a phenomenon that has always existed in human societies, but in the modern age as an industry has become. Tourism industry is considered as one of the largest and the most diverse industries in the world. Many countries enjoy an appropriate status with respect to sport tourism and, accordingly, contribute directly to their nation's economic prosperity (Homafar & Honari & Heidary, 2011).

According to the IRAN travel and tourism council, IRAN tourism industry plays a major role in the Iran economy (Fallahi, & Karroubi, 2014). In Iran recent decades in Iran, Sports tourism is considered a new form of tourism so that the tourism and sport are so interdependent and complementary to each other (Mousavi Gilani & Sajadi, 2013). The link between tourism and sport has created a new type of tourism that has created new and comprehensive structures for leisure and recreation with mental and physical vitality (Mousavi Gilani & Sajadi, 2013). Sport has the ability to attract many tourists, so events that include sports, are considered a kind of charm and act as a tourism attraction in the city or the country (Fallahi, & Karroubi, 2014).

Iran with potential natural, cultural and tourism attractions can be considered as a capable country for preparing the conditions for those Comprehension to the foreign travel, in general tourism industry, and in particular in sports tourism. In many countries, this dynamic industry is known as the main source of income, employment growth, private sector development and infrastructure (Gaye, 2003). Also sport as one of the most motivating factors for the tourists and the "sport tourism" is a combination of "tourism" industry and "sport" industry has emerged (Hingham & Hinch, 2002). In other words, sport is one of the major tourist activities during the tourism and travel and tourism is also associated with different types of sports (Gaye, 2003).

The corresponding studies indicate that sport tourism is the most developed sector of the tourism industry (Chalip and Kim, 2004) such that it is regarded as a world multibillion trading element, producing 4.5 trillion dollars for tourism industry and world tour (Abdul, Hasan & Abolfazl Farahani, 2013). So sport tourism markets have so many economic and non-economic advantages, also to obtain competitive profit it is becoming

increasingly important for sport tourist industry marketers to understand how travelers find out a set of choice of alternative (Kulluvaara & Tornberg, 2003).

Therefore, it is necessary for countries to develop their capabilities in the field of sport tourism. So sport tourism marketers need to understand the importance of promotional and Integrated Marketing Communication strategies. One of the factors that can improve and develop the sports tourism industry of the country is using tools and the effective parameters of IMC. IMC is an approach used by organizations to brand and coordinate their communication efforts (Kulluvaara & Tornberg, 2003). Therefore, it can be said that implementation of integrated marketing communications programs has a particular importance. Integrated Marketing Communications is a new phenomenon in Marketing Communications that a short time has passed since its introduction (Reid, 2005).

Integrated Marketing Communication is a term that emerged in the late 20th century regarding application of consistent brand messaging across myriad marketing channels. IMC was developed mainly to address the need for businesses to offer clients more than just standard advertising. Integrated Marketing Communications, which is called briefly IMC, is a simple concept, yet it is important that guarantees the relation and the interconnectedness of all communication tools and sending messages regarding marketing (Ekhlaslasi & Maghsoudi & Mehrmanesh, 2013) so Communication which can be described as the paste that keeps combined a channel of distribution. Many companies understand that, communicating effectively with customers involves more than traditional marketing communication tools (Asiamah, & Alfred, 2013) the function of communication within channel of marketing is an important issue from both a theoretical and managerial point of view. Communication in marketing channel can function as the process by which influential information is transmitted (Frazier & Summers, 1984). Integrated marketing communication represents the planning, creation, integration and implementation of all contact points which a consumer has with a certain brand, as potential distribution channels, for messages which may influence directly or indirectly the purchasing process (Shimp, 2010).

The integrated marketing communications of Sports tourism is a comprehensive marketing communication plan that combines and evaluates a variety of strategic communication disciplines – general advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact (Du Plessis & Jooste & Strydom, 2005).

The five major types IMC are (1): Advertising: Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor. (2): Personal selling: Personal presentation by the firm's sales forces to make sales and build customer relationships. (3): Sales promotion: Short-term incentives to encourage the purchase or sale of a product or service. (4): Public relations: Building good relations with the company's publics by obtaining favorable publicity, building up a good "corporate image,". (5): Direct marketing: Direct communications with carefully targeted individual consumers to obtain an immediate response—the use of mail, telephone, fax, e-mail, and other non-personal tools to communicate directly with specific consumers or to solicit a direct response.

According to the matters that expressed the purpose of this study was Prioritizing Integrated Marketing Communication tools in sport tourism in Iran Based on ACCA model ACCA model: ACCA is an acronym that describes what happens when a consumer engages with an advertisement. The term and approach are attributed to American advertising and sales pioneer, E. St. Elmo Lewis. In marketing, grabbing the Awareness of potential customers or clients is imperative to gaining Comprehension in the product. Once that Comprehension is established, a business must make potential customers or clients Conviction the product enough to take action, generally by purchasing the product. There's a particular way consumers react to a marketing message. Marketers can gain the Awareness of consumers by product samples, large visual signs and other sensory techniques. Once the marketer has the Awareness of the consumer, they must craft their Comprehension through product demonstrations, information and ads. Companies must then build Conviction by focusing on creating a want for their specific brand, and lastly, consumer action through promotions, discounts and calling out of features or benefits. The ACCA model which stands for Awareness, Comprehension, Conviction, and Action is perhaps the simplest formula you'll ever find anywhere, yet also the most powerful.

### **Methodology**

In this study, the descriptive-field method is used for determining options of the decision hierarchy tree of interviewing with journalism and reviewing books and related articles in this area. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect opinions. The statistical population of the research consisted of experts and specialists in sports management (the meaning of experts, specialists and sports management professors are, who has masters and doctoral degree in the field of sport management and in

addition book, article or thesis in the marketing tourism and sports tourism or sports integrated marketing Communications). As far as the researcher has studied, the statistical population of the research was 53 people by the time of distributing the questionnaires. The sample was considered equally with the population. According to the theme and objective of the following research, decision-making analytical Hierarchy Process was considered the most appropriate method of analyzing data. The method begins by providing a decision-making hierarchy tree. Decision-making hierarchy tree shows the comparing factors and evaluating alternative options, and then performs a series of paired comparisons. These comparisons determine the weight of each factor related the competing options and ultimately combine the resulting matrix of paired comparisons with each other to make the best decision possible. According to the matter that the data analysis method was based on AHP model, initially, the paired comparison rate of inconsistency was controlled for each respondent and then after ensuring the acceptable rate of inconsistency (less than 0.1), the Respondents' comments were combined and paired comparison matrix were extracted. The rate of inconsistency reflects the consistency of comparisons with one another. By determining the rate of inconsistency, we can trust the determined priorities.

**Results**

As it can be seen from the following table to create Awareness based on the ACCA model, advertising and public relations, to create Comprehension, the Sales promotion had the first priority. To create a Conviction, the personal selling and direct marketing had the most importance. And to action, the personal selling and direct marketing had the utmost importance.

**Table 1.** The final weight of the IMC tools based on the ACCA model in the Iran sports tourism.

ACCA	IMC tools	The final weight	IR
Awareness	Advertising	0.206	0.00
	public relations	0.300	
	Sales promotion	0.145	
	Personal selling	0.210	
	Direct Marketing	0.138	
	IMC tools	The final weight	IR
	Advertising	0.115	0.03

Comprehension	public relations	0.164	
	Sales promotion	0.317	
	Personal selling	0.187	
	Direct Marketing	0.217	
Conviction	IMC tools	The final weight	IR
	Advertising	0.123	0.04
	public relations	0.157	
	Sales promotion	0.210	
	Personal selling	0.250	
	Direct Marketing	0.240	
Action	IMC tools	The final weight	IR
	Advertising	0.130	0.01
	public relations	0.120	
	Sales promotion	0.160	
	Personal selling	0.280	
	Direct Marketing	0.290	

As it can be seen from the table 2, in order to create Awareness among advertising tools, television advertising had the highest final weight and among public relation tools, exhibiting with the final gained the highest final weight.

**Table 2.** The final weight of advertising and public relations.

ACCA	Advertising Tools	The final weight	IR
Awareness	Television	0.300	0.01
	Radio	0.183	
	Environmental	0.157	
	Internet	0.220	
	Publications	0.140	
	public relations	The final weight	IR
	Exhibition	0.343	0.02
	Seminar	0.255	
	Publishing	0.149	

	a booklet		
	Internet	0.253	

As it can be seen in Table 3, to create an Comprehension among the tools of Sales promotion, discount coupon obtained the highest final weight.

**Table 3.** The final weight of Sales promotion tools to create Comprehension in the ACCA model.

ACCA	Sales promotion	The final weight	IR
Comprehe nsion	discount coupon	0.350	0.01
	Awards and Gifts	0.317	
	Display product	0.155	
	Sale Force award	0.178	

**Table 4.** The final weight of personal selling and direct marketing tools to Conviction.

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ACCA	Personal selling	The final weight	IR
Conviction	Presence selling	0.645	0.02
	Telephone sales	0.355	
	Direct Marketing	The final weight	IR
	Catalog	0.305	0.02
	Post	0.152	
	Kiosk	0.271	
	Internet	0.271	

As can be seen in Table 4, to provide reliability and purchase of sport tourism in Iran in personal sales tools, Presence sale and among the direct marketing tools, catalogs had the highest importance. As can be seen in Table 5, to provide reliability and purchase of sport tourism in Iran in personal sales tools, Presence sale and among the direct marketing tools, catalogs had the highest importance.



**Table5.** The final weight of personal selling and direct marketing.

ACCA	Personal selling	The final weight	IR
action	Presence selling	0.645	0.02
	Telephone sales	0.355	
	Direct Marketing	The final weight	IR
	Catalog	0.305	0.02
	Post	0.152	
	Kiosk	0.271	
	Internet	0.271	

### Discussion and conclusion

Today it is important that organizations to find out why IMC programs have become so significant in their activity. Conventional elements of the marketing mix - the product, price, place- are not longer as efficiently as they were in the past. IMC can provide a real sustainable competitive advantage to any organization. IMC in the most effective way, to ensure the creation and maintenance of long-term relationships with current and potential customers.

Based on the results of the research, the advertising and public relations to create Awareness based on the ACCA model had the highest importance. The highest importance of advertising and public relations than other integrated marketing communication tools can be due to their more effective role than other means of communication to inform the market of products and services, describe the product or service performance, correct misconceptions, convince the customer to purchase, remind the best purchasing location to the consumer compared to other means of communication. Moreover, the results of this study are consistent with the results (Esmaeili & Khabiri & Mehregan ,2011; Sarem Nejad ,2007; Samadi ,2009).

In addition, the research results indicated that to create Comprehension based on the ACCA model, the sales promotion had the most importance. Based on the research results, among the integrated marketing communication tools, the sales promotion is the best tool to create Comprehension toward the sports tourism product. Sales promotion can be helpful in stimulating the customer to respond quickly and creating a sense of urgency.. Kined Oladel (2010), in his research, consider the use of

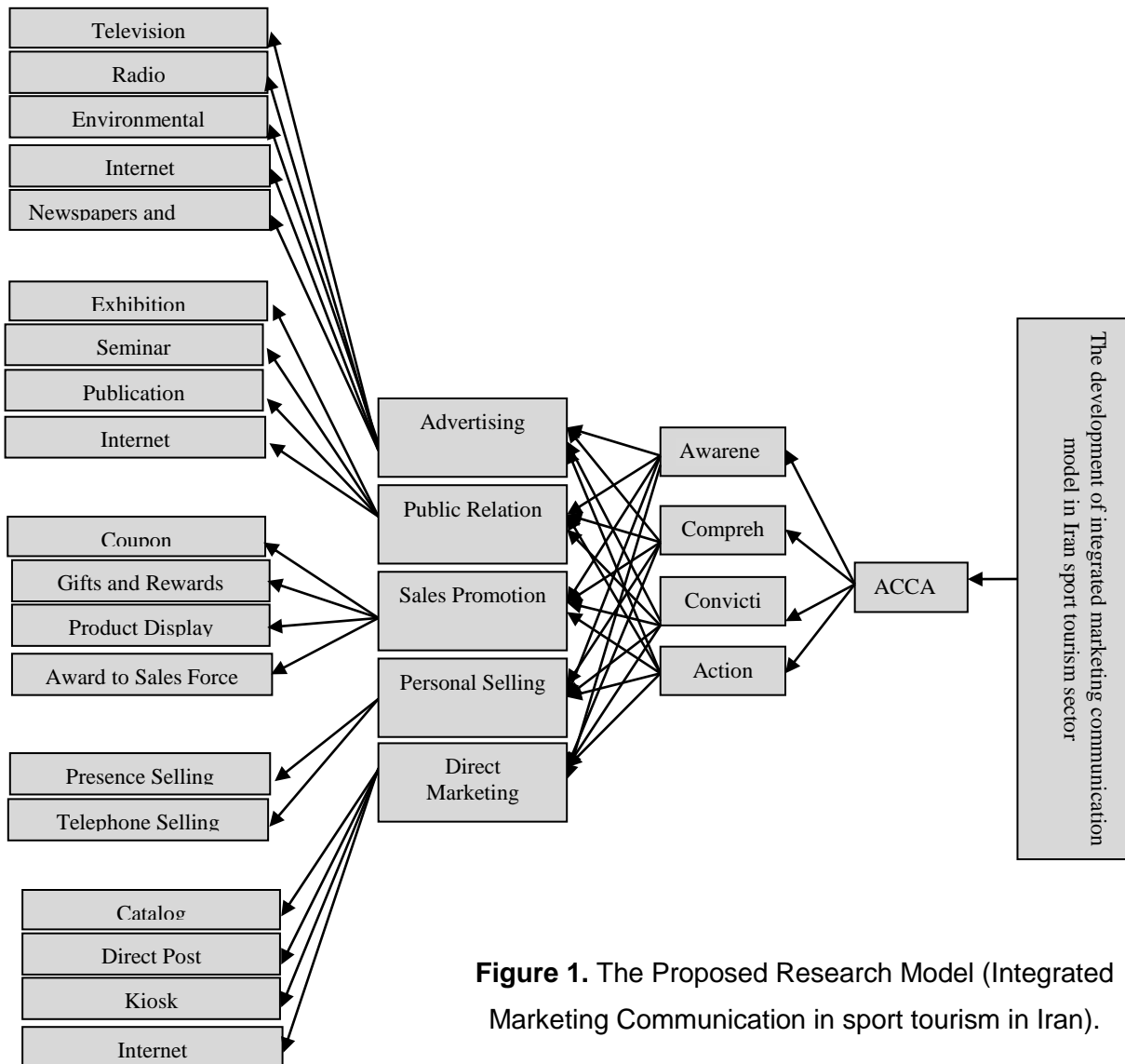
Sales promotion tools to stimulate consumers and encourage them to re-use the brand is essential that is consistent with this research results. In addition, these research results are consistent with previous results of (Farnaz, 2010; Rezaei, 2007;; Tavakkoli zadeh, 2006).

According to the research Conviction based on the ACCA model, personal selling and direct marketing had the highest importance. Since the personal selling requires the interaction of two or more people. Therefore, each person according to the needs and characteristics of other side can quickly be consistent with his condition. In the personal selling, the possibility of establishing any link is provided from a simple sale to a deep personal friendship. Personal selling, at some stages in the purchase process, and especially to create preference selection in buyers and to persuade and compel them to act is the most effective marketing communication tool. Direct contact with the customer gives the opportunity to the seller that he will be flexible and adjusts the sales message according to the customer's needs. The sales force can receive immediate customer feedback. The research results are consistent with the research results of (Herreraa & Lopez& Rodriguezb ,2002; Ho Hesu ,2009; Farnaz,2010; Rezaei ,2007).

The research results showed that in order to create Awareness among the advertising tools, the television advertising has the most importance and among public relations tools, the exhibition and seminar is the highest importance. The research results of Fathian (2011) showed that, there is a significant relation between the product advertising media and the willingness of customers to buy and between different forms of media, television gained more importance. Moreover, the research results of Ghafuri et al (2004) suggest that the media, especially TV, can have a significant effect on changing attitudes and behavior of people. The research results of (Noorian & Hamidi Zadeh, 2013) showed that the television advertising has the most effect on attracting customers. In addition, these results are consistent with the results of (Ishmaeli & colleagues ,2011; Samadi ,2009; Sabouri Motlagh, 2009; Saadat ,2009; Herreraa & Lopez & Rodriguezb ,2002; Etang ,2006). In addition, the research results showed that among the sales promotion tools, discount coupon and prizes and gifts have more weight than other sales promotion tools. Giving awards and gifts and discount coupon to customers' result in added value and increase loyalty and retention of customers. Research results of (Noorian & Hamidi Zadeh, 2013) showed that the audiences are attracted larger to communication tools that their messages are related to awards. Moreover, the research results of (Noorian & Hamidi Zadeh, 2013) also showed that

such messages remain more in the minds of the audience. Based on the research results among personal selling tools, presence selling has the highest importance and among direct marketing tools, catalogs and kiosks have the highest importance. These research results are consistent with research results of (Abdolvand, 2011; Ekhalsi, 2013; Bejestani, 2015; Foster, 2004).

Today the value of the integrated marketing communication has grown considerably. The integrated marketing communication campaigns are based on the strengths of existing communication tools to favorably influence the behavior of the target audience. Designing of an effective message and selecting the most appropriate communication tools are important steps in the creation and maintenance of consumer preferences for a product/one brand or company.



**Figure 1.** The Proposed Research Model (Integrated Marketing Communication in sport tourism in Iran).

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