

Sponsors' presence in Paralympic Games and providing a conceptual model for Iran

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Abstract

Background: The purpose of this study was to compare the presence of sponsors in Paralympic Games and provide a conceptual model for Iran.

Methods: According to the nature of the subject and the aims of the research, a descriptive-analytical method was used, which was performed comparatively in accordance with the George-Z-F- Beredy method. The statistical society were International Paralympic Committee sponsors. The sample of the study was non-randomly targeted. The sample was selected based on the sponsors available on the Paralympic International Committee's official website in the form of (Official Supplier, Global Partners, International Partners) including Asics, Allianz, BP, Citi, Atos, Bridgestone, Otto bock, Panasonic, Samsung, Toyota, visas.

Findings: Results showed that in the Paralympics and the development of the Paralympic Movement, the presence of partners, international partners, official competition suppliers used a variety of methods that have been accompanied with different outcomes and achievements for the company and its staff, as well as for the IPC, such as increasing the presence of athletes, increasing spectators at the Paralympic Games, increasing the income of the International Paralympic Committee, developing all kinds of artificial prostheses, building all kinds of wheelchairs and equipment for the disabled, broadcasting Paralympic games with unique quality and passion, helping people to know about Paralympic sport and the opportunity to use sports.

Conclusion: According to the findings of the study, a conceptual model was presented for sponsors to participate in competitions for disabled and veterans and to develop the Paralympic Games in Iran.

Keyword: Comparative study, Sponsors, Paralympic Games

Introduction

Disability is a natural and social disorder that occurs in different societies in different ways (Dolatabadi, et al, 2016). The first global report by the World Health Organization and the World Bank on Disability shows that about 15 percent of the world's population or about one billion people live with a kind of disability. Between 110 million (2.2 percent) and 190 million (3.8 percent) of people 15 years and older have severe performance problems. Disability rate is increasing due to the ageing of the population, increasing chronic diseases and other causes (World Bank, 2015). One of the most useful ways to help people with disabilities get into society, develop their individual abilities, and thereby increase their sense of independence is to lead them to physical activity and exercise. Regular exercise is a powerful stimulus for moving people with disabilities into normal life, as far as it goes beyond entertainment and plays a therapeutic and preventive role in the complications of disability. After World War II, special sports for people with physical-motor disabilities came into being, due to a large amount of war disabled. Disability sport was originally set up to help with the treatment of people with disabilities and was intended to promote and improve their physical fitness of, but this changed over time so that nowadays the attitude towards disability sports is the same as in modern sports for the healthy people. Disabled athletes have participated in competitive sports for over a century. The competitive nature of the Paralympic Games requires athletes to improve and promote better practices to achieve the goals of the competition (Dolatabadi, et al, 2016). On the other hand, developing countries have faced issues such as government aid fluctuations in the sports sector, lack of coherent plans, weak communication and lack of a

process to attract the participation of others in sport organizations due to global developments. This leads to growth and development limitations in their sports. This is certainly true for the country's sports organizations, especially the National Paralympic Committee and the federations (Armandnia, 2016). Iran, which has a significant number of disabled people due to the imposed war, accidents caused by driving and work, as well as congenital, is facing problems like many other countries (Ramazani Ghavamabadi, 2011). According to the 2012 census, nearly 1050000 people in Iran are disabled, including about 350,000 blind and deaf, about 600,000 people with physical and mobility disabilities, and 350,000 people with mental disorders (Statistical Center of Iran). The Olympic and Paralympic Games, as the world's largest sporting event, have a valuable position among governments (Eidipour, et al, 2015). Until half a century ago, however, public opinion was that people with disabilities had no place in sport and could only watch sports scenes. However, nowadays, with the significant advances that have been made in the sport of the disabled, especially those with spinal cord injuries, sport is increasingly playing an important role in the lives of such people (Armandnia, 2016). Participation in the Paralympic Games has increased significantly (Fairhurst, et al, 2017). Today, sport is a major industry in the world, and many people around the world are involved in it. Many well-known companies and organizations have invested in the sports sector and are marketing their products and services through it (Shirvani, et al, 2016). Professional sport, in the sense of sport to earn money, have become a major part of the sports industry. If people are interested in a particular, sport, professional athletes will receive a high salary. These salaries are paid

usually through ticket sales, television broadcasting rights, and companies support. The growth process of professional sports has been increasing in recent decades and there is no indication that this growth is slow. Governments usually support it because of the income from professional sports (Rezaei, et al, 2017). Chen and Zhang concluded that the use of key athletes and coaches in supported teams and the proper use of event space for advertising were among the factors that played a significant role in the success of financial support (Chen & Zhang, 2011). In a simple definition, sponsorship can be defined as the sponsorship of a sport, sporting organization or event by an individual or company to gain mutual benefits for both parties to a contract (Nourizadeh, et al, 2017). In the past, financial support was not the same as it is today, and only financial donations could be made to a person or sports team without a specific goal or expectations. After the 1980s, financial support was pursued in a more specialized way, which is now considered as a highly professional and specialized subject. As the level of sports sponsors grows each year, the reasons for the greater participation of supporters are also increasing. Today, having a sponsor is an integral part of making money in clubs (Rashidzadeh, et al, 2015). Support for major sporting and cultural events has become one of the greatest tools of marketing communication (Pitt et al., 2010). Financial support has become a major source of funding for sports (Kabitsis et al., 2002). Nowadays, the costs of managing and maintaining sports are increasing day by day. Clubs find it very difficult to overcome these costs and they are trying to find ways to fund these costs. Therefore, one of the ways to provide resources and expenses for sports activities, especially championship sports, is to attract appropriate financial sponsors by clubs

and sports officials (Rostam pour, 2016). According to reports of a large number of disabled people in the world, as well as the high number of these people in developing countries, including Iran, and due to the type of disability (congenital, acquired, etc.), the secondary consequences of disability, the costs incurred (for the disabled, the disabled family and ultimately the community), sport can be used as a rehabilitation and treatment tool to help and improve the disability. Due to the importance of sport for people with disabilities and informing this group and society about the necessity and importance of sport for the disabled community, researchers addressed the issue of the presence of sponsors in the development of the Paralympic Movement. Since most countries, especially developing countries, are dependent on government resources to finance their sports organizations, and governments no longer meet the needs of the sport due to budget deficits, financial crises and reduced investment in sports, most of the teams have refused to participate in the competitions due to financial problems and it is not possible to expand the sport. In recent decades, most governments have shifted government departments to the private sector due to budget deficits and financial crises. Most of the country's sports support is provided by the government and government financial resources, but due to declining government investment in sport, this support does not meet the country's sports needs. As a result, various organizations that responsible for the country's sport will not be able to meet their needs by relying on government funding. It has been observed in recent years, many sports teams have failed to participate in various national and international competitions due to the lack of good financial situation and financial sponsors (Seyed Bagheri & Sharifian, 2017). Most

sports teams in different provinces and cities refuse to participate in competitions due to the lack of sponsors (Hemmatinejad, et al, 2017).

However, most sports federations, as one of the main trustees of championship sports, face many financial difficulties in financing travel and logistics camps due to their reliance on government resources and their inability to attract private sector investors, let alone the development of sport and income generation (Keshavarz, et al, 2017).

De Bosscher et al (2009) in reviewing training policies and programs and training elite athletes in six countries concluded that the lack of financial resources and proper training conditions are two of the main obstacles to success and winning championships (De Bosscher et al, 2009).

Therefore, the Paralympic Movement needs to attract financial support for development in various dimensions and financial independence. The economic and industrial view of the sport, as well as the systemic approach to marketing and sports sponsorship, is one of the necessities of this field, and it seems that it is time to look at the presence of financial sponsors in the development of the Paralympic Movement from a scientific point of view. The Paralympic Games is the second largest sporting event in the world after the Olympics, and different companies participate in these games according to their goals and pay a lot of money to promote their goods and products. The presence of these companies as sponsors of the event and their assistance in the form of (partner, global and international partners, official competition supplier to (IPC), national committees and athletes, can be useful in the development of Paralympic sports and raise people's awareness of the importance of sport for people with disabilities. As a result, facilities are

provided for participation in sport and sports competitions, and the necessary support is provided for participation in the Paralympic Games and the development of the Paralympic Sports.

Materials and Methods

This research was performed by a descriptive-analytical method, which was applied comparatively, and in accordance with George's method. According to this method, a four-step process including description, interpretation, proximity and comparison has been used to analyze the research information. To collect information in this field, various methods have been used, including viewing electronic portals, documentary studies and libraries. The necessary information has been collected through written sources and articles, books, magazines, newspapers, publications and news. Published reports, Persian and Latin sources, Internet resources and websites are other sources used in this research. The statistical population of the study included all sponsors of the Paralympic Games, who were international partners and worldwide partners and Paralympic official suppliers. Targeted non-random method has been used to determine the research sample. The official supplier, the international partners and the worldwide partners who have participated in the last seven courses (4 paralympic summer tournaments and 3 paralympic winter games) during the year 2004-2016 have been selected on the official website of the IPC. This study is limited to a comparative study of eleven sponsors present on the official website of the IPC who have participated in the last seven Paralympic Games, including ASICS World Company, Allianz International Company, Citi World Bank, BP World Company, Atos World Company, Otto bock World Company, Samsung World Company, Panasonic

World Company, Visa World Company, Toyota World Company, Bridgestone World Company. Samples include countries with IPC and sponsoring companies, as well as countries that have hosted Paralympic Games in selected courses.

Results

According to the results of the research and by examining the situation of the presence of financial sponsors in the Paralympic Games, the commonalities and distinctions of these sponsors are as follows:

Support for the Olympic and Paralympic Games:

The sponsors of study include Allianz International Company, Visa World Company, Atos World Company, Otto bock World Company, Samsung World Company, Panasonic World Company, Bridgestone World Company, ASICS World Company, BP World Company (British Petroleum), Toyota World Company have participated in the Olympic Games as well as in the Paralympic Games.

Supporting the National Paralympic Committees:

The Visa World Company supported the 2004 National Paralympic Committees. Allianz supported 17 National Paralympic Committees, including Argentina, Australia, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Mexico, Morocco, Poland, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, and the UK. The BP (British Petroleum) has supported 10 National Paralympic Committees, including the Angola, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, Germany, Singapore, Georgia, the Netherlands, Germany, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. The Bridgestone World Company has supported three National Paralympic Committees, including Thailand, Japan and the USA. Citi

World Bank has supported 18 National Paralympic Committees, including Australia, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates. Finally, Toyota World Company supports all NPCs.

Support the Agitos Foundation:

Current sponsors, including Allianz, BP (British Petroleum) and Toyota, are working with the Agitos Foundation.

Achievements and types of services and products of sponsoring companies:

ASICS World Company is the only sports partner for the Paralympic Games that provide sportswear and footwear services. Visa operates in the field of global payment technology and provides international ATM network and online services. Samsung works in wireless communications and computer computing. Allianz is a financial community that operates through insurance and media initiatives. Otto bock is working on prostheses, wheelchairs and technical services for the Paralympic Games. Atos collaborates on databases, cyber security, high computing, and digital work. BP, an oil and gas company is working to reduce carbon footprint. Panasonic is collaborating on video audio products. Bridgestone works in the field of tires and tire services. Toyota is involved in the automotive industry, and Citi World Bank provides financial assistance.

Collaborating as an international partner or worldwide partner or official game supplier:

Official tournament supplier: Asics International partners: Allianz, BP, Citi Worldwide Partners: Atos, Visa, Otto bock, Panasonic, Samsung, Bridgestone, Toyota.

Comparison of the role of sponsors (the last seven periods) in the development of the Paralympics:

Having a sponsor gives team credibility and rank. If a company sponsors a team, people think of that team as worthy and qualified. The position and rank of the team are directly related to the reputation of the team. In addition, the team that is sponsored will definitely use more and better players and increase the quality of the team by using efficient coaches (Rostampour, 2016).

The results of the study show the cooperation of sponsors in the Paralympic Games:

In 2003, the Visa World Company began its first official sponsorship for IPC and then continued to work as a worldwide partner in all Paralympic Games until 2020.

In 2005, Otto bock launched its first official sponsorship for IPC and then continued to work as a worldwide partner in all Paralympic Games until 2020.

In 2006, Atos launched its first official partnership with IPC and then continued to work as a worldwide partner in all Paralympic Games until 2020.

In 2006, Samsung launched its first official partnership with IPC and then continued to work as a worldwide partner in all Paralympic Games until 2020.

In 2006, Allianz started its first official sponsorship for IPC and participated in the Games as a worldwide partner. Since 2008, it has continued to work as an international partner in all Paralympic Games.

In 2012, BP began its first partnership with IPC as a business partner, and since 2013, it has continued its official support for IPC and participation in all Paralympic Games as an international partner.

In 2014, Panasonic started its first official support for IPC and participates in all Paralympic Games as a worldwide partner until 2020.

In 2016, Toyota started its first official sup-

port for IPC and will participate in all Paralympic Games as a worldwide partner until 2024.

In 2016, Asics started its first official support for IPC and participates in the Games as an official supplier of the Paralympic Games. Since 2020, it has continued to work as an international partner.

In 2017, Citi World Bank started its first official support for IPC and participates in the Games as an official supplier of the Paralympic Games until 2020. Since 2020, it has continued to work as an international partner.

In 2018, Bridgestone started its first official support for IPC and then continued to work as a worldwide partner until 2020. Since 2020, it will work with IPC as an international partner until 2024.

In March 2018, a long-term partnership between IPC and IOC was established by 2032. As part of the agreement, from 2021 all top IOC partners around the world will be IPC partners and Paralympic Games (IPC Website, 2018). This agreement demonstrates the value of the Paralympic movement and developing and investing in this sector. The Paralympic movement pursues four core values: courage, confidence, inspiration and equality. IPC's mission is to create a healthier community for people with disabilities through exercise (IPC Website, 2017).

According to the International Paralympic Committee's mission, Allianz has created an emotional campaign of self-confidence by extensive sharing of Paralympics knowledge and through special media workshops, supporting 17 NPCs, supporting the Agitos Foundation and filling the Rio 2016 Paralympic seats. It encourages people and employees to learn about the inspiring achievements of Paralympic athletes.

Otto bock World Company:

Otto bock, which specializes in providing services to victims of World War II, creates an opportunity for an active and independent life. The company shows its support through free repairing athletes' equipment and prostheses, providing all prosthetic and chair services, repairing throughout the athletes' village, cooperating with IPCs, constructing wheelchairs equal to the desired standards of sports, increasing the number of technicians from 4 to 100 people in games and Holding a mobile exhibition during the Paralympic Games.

Samsung World Company:

Samsung's activities include opening a relaxing gym for athletes, training programs, supporting bloggers, creating online channels, helping local schoolchildren get to the games, launching a Rio School campaign in collaboration with NPC of UK, helping fill the Seats Institute through innovative communication technology wireless and computer computing.

The Visa Global Payment Technology Company:

It has helped athletes achieve their goals by providing financial assistance and financial literacy training and valuable marketing. Other activities include providing an international ATM network, online services, sponsoring the Paralympic Congress, opening the Paralympic Hall of Fame, creating a free online TV channel, and helping the IPC International Monetary Fund.

Atos Global Company:

Atos is a global leader in digital transformation that contribute to the development of the Paralympic Movement through the creation of a system, which is designed to manage the athletes' data, including results, biographical and classification specific information

and as well providing timing and scoring services.

BP Oil and Gas Company:

The Oil and Gas Company adapts its values (respect, excellence, courage, safety and teamwork) to the Paralympic sport and the Paralympic athletes. IT has helped athletes by providing gaming vehicles, reducing carbon footprint, booking the Paralympic Movement, supporting 26 athletes, launching an internal energy campaign in Rio 2016, supporting the Agitos Foundation and NPCs which demonstrates strong participation and coordination between BP and IPC values.

Panasonic Global Company:

Panasonic's goal is to share the excitement of the games with the people of the world, to support the Olympics and Paralympics with advanced technology and to adapt it to the Panasonic philosophy (a better life - a better world), to promote world peace, and to accept more disabled people around the world. The company's motto is to share the excitement, classify existing audio and video equipment, TV, audio and video equipment for professional broadcasting, AV storage media, multimedia equipment, security equipment, disability care products (shower, clothing).

Toyota Global Company:

In the category of vehicles, mobility services, rehabilitation robots and financial aids, sharing inspiring stories of athletes, launching an impossible start campaign, collaborating with the Agitos Foundation

Bridgestone World Rubber Manufacturing Company:

As a partner in the Paralympic Movement's highest sponsorship tier, Bridgestone receives global IPC rights in categories that include tires, tire services and selected automotive vehicle services, self-propelled bicycles, and a variety of building and industrial products. The company has supported several

leading international Para athletes, including eight Bridgestone employees who are training to qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. Increasing its commitment to support the global Paralympic Movement aligns with the company's "Chase Your Dream" message, which aims to encourage people to overcome obstacles and persevere in pursuit of their goals.

ASICS Global Company:

The goal of ASICS, which is a favourite brand of athletes and sports fans, is to make it available worldwide. ASICS not only provides products and services as the official supplier of the competition, but also supports the awareness and promotion of the Paralympic Movement, assists the IPC mission, and contracts with athletes and the International Paralympic Committees and Paralympic Sports Federations.

Citi World Bank:

First collaboration with NPC in 2012, \$100,000 donation to support US sports programs, supporting for 8 US Paralympic athletes, support for 18 NPCs, Supporting integrated activities to create national pride and excitement for sports achievements, supporting for tourism championships, helping with rugby equipment, inspiration from the strength and endurance of Paralympic athletes.

Discussion

Due to the high number of disabled people (World Health Organization, 2010), increasing the participation of disabled people in sports competitions and the importance of success in these competitions (IPC Website, 2017), significant growth of participating countries in Paralympic Games, attention to sport and providing facilities is necessary and important to increase the participation of the disabled in sport. Given the role of sponsors

in the development of the Paralympic Movement, it is possible to increase the participation of people with disabilities in sports by using the presence of these sponsors and benefiting from the facilities they provide. Sports financial support has a large share of financial support around the world and is considered as a marketing tool of the 21st century. This has led to higher spending on financial support. Extensive media coverage and an increase in sports audiences, spectators and sports fans have provided a good platform for the presence of sponsors.

On the other hand, today, financial credits and budgets, facilities and injection of financial resources are very important for sports clubs and organizations. In Iran, because sport organizations do not generate significant revenue through television broadcasting rights and other marketing practices, sponsors are vital sources of funding for sports organizations. As a result, a better understanding of financial management and the presence of financial sponsors will play an important role for managers of organizations to obtain financial resources. One example that could help sports organizations, including the National Paralympic Committee, in financial support and the presence of sponsors in sports competitions is to emulate the International Paralympic Committee. The necessary reforms can be achieved regarding the performance and how the financial sponsors participate in the Paralympic Games and the development of the Paralympic Movement in Iran. By a comparative study of the presence of leading financial sponsors in the Paralympic Games and using the results and feedback. Following the studies and researches and using different methods of financial sponsors in the development of the Paralympic movement in selected courses, this article aims to provide practical solutions that are in line

with the main purpose of this research. According to the studies conducted on the successful presence of investment companies in

the Paralympic World Championships, the proposed solutions are proposed according to the following conceptual model:

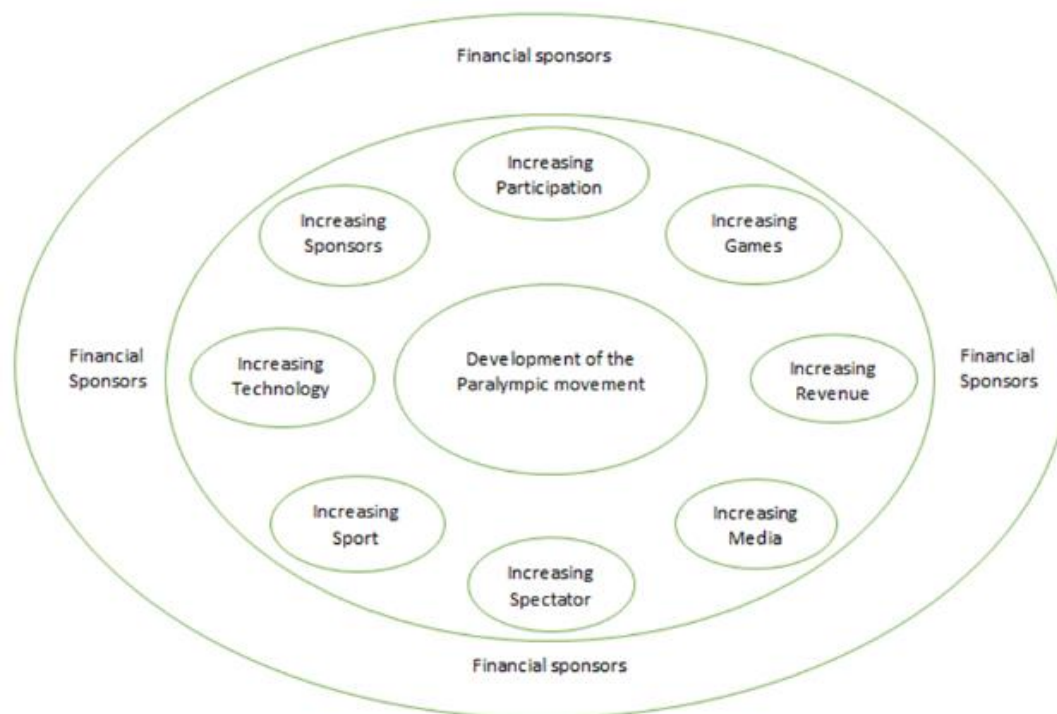


Figure 1 Conceptual model of development of the Paralympic Movement with the presence of financial sponsors in Iran

According to the above model, the number of participating and sent athletes to the Paralympic Games in the country should increase. Special attention should be paid to increasing the number of female athletes, as well as increasing the number of athletes in summer games compared to winter games. Cold provinces in the country should become a place for the development of winter games.

Financial sponsors in the country can contribute to the Paralympic movement, depending on their industry and profession. There is no need for cash support to support athletes and Paralympic sports, but any company in any profession can take the initiative to develop the Paralympic movement. It can also support eligible staff (disabled) to participate in the

Paralympic Games. Media and advertising campaigns have been used by most sponsors to attract and challenge viewers in games, so by launching such campaigns can reach more viewers. Blogging programs can be launched to make people aware of the value and importance of Paralympic sports. The Paralympic Hall of Fame can be created and supported to introduce athletes and their achievements.

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