

# Do perceived value and satisfaction affect customers' behavioural intentions? A case study of Polish squash clubs

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper is to analyze relations between perceived quality, service convenience and satisfaction of squash customers to present implications for managers who address parents enrolling their children for extracurricular activities with their services. Applying the research framework of García-Fernández et al. (2018), a sample of 120 parents from Legia Warszawa Squash Academy completed an online survey in 2021. The SEM model revealed that perceived quality as well as service convenience had a positive and significant effect on perceived value, which turned out to be a strong predictor of customer satisfaction. Finally, satisfaction showed a very strong positive and significant influence on behavioral intentions of squash customers. The present study makes both a theoretical and a practical contribution to the field of sports management, highlighting the importance of perceived quality and service convenience to deliver expected value to the customer.

**JEL classification:** M3; M30; M31

**Keywords:** perceived quality, service convenience, loyalty, sports clubs, squash.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Family is the environment in which people form their habits. Therefore, parents play an active role in the socialization of their children (Li et al., 2021; Mastromartino et al., 2019). As far as sport is concerned, parents normally act as primary agents responsible for initiating their children's involvement in sport (Coutinho et al., 2021; Holt & Knight, 2014). They play a key role in this participation, as they usually provide concrete (transport, access, educational, economic) (Durand-Bush et al., 2004) and emotional support in their children's sporting lives (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005).

Parents around the world enroll their children in extra-curricular activities in order to develop them in a social, emotional, and cognitive manner (Harkness et al., 2011; Patterson-Price & Pass, 2021). In Poland, according to national statistics (CSO, 2021), only about 10% of children and youth participate in sports club activities. Participation in organized sports programmes still has the potential to influence a large percentage (Felber Charbonneau & Camiré, 2020).

Previous studies indicate that competition between commercial and non-governmental sectors in terms of sports organizations has increased, as the commercial market has grown rapidly over recent years (Breuer et al., 2017; Rossi et al., 2020). Due to the growing demand for organized sports activities and the growing competition from other companies organizing extracurricular activities for children and youth, sports clubs, especially those in niche disciplines, must apply a market-oriented approach to their business and develop long-term relations directly with customers. Squash, which is gaining more and more popularity and recognition around the world, is considered such a discipline. In Poland, according to national statistics, of the 678 people exercising, only 8% were juniors (CSO, 2021).

Although children and youth are users of sports services, it is their parents who are the purchasers and are responsible for their future intentions (Green & Chalip, 1998). While parents or guardians are considered customers, they often make decisions with the best interests of their children in mind. Children and adolescents may have preferences and desires regarding extracurricular activities and may provide feedback and input on decisions related to their education or social activities. Therefore, businesses and service providers may need to consider both the needs and preferences of parents or guardians and the well-being of the children involved.

For this reason, managers of sports clubs must identify the most important factors that determine the satisfaction and future intentions of parents to enable them to recruit and retain customers and survive in a saturated market environment.

The factors that affect the behavior of customers of sports organizations can be identified as: perceived quality, service convenience, perceived value and customer satisfaction (Baena-Arroyo et al., 2020; García-Fernández et al., 2019; García-Fernández et al., 2018).

Therefore, although the number of studies contributing to knowledge of the sports sector has increased, there are no studies that analyze the perceived quality, service convenience and satisfaction of their users in the niche sports discipline. The aim of the paper is to delve deeper and analyze the relations between the above-mentioned variables in order to present the implications for managers who offer their services to parents enrolling their children for extracurricular activities.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Perceived quality of the service

Perceived quality can be defined as “the customer’s perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service in terms of its intended purpose relative to alternatives” (Aaker, 1991). According to Grönroos (1984), buyers experience two dimensions of service quality: the technical (resulting from the efficiency of operational processes) and the functional (created as a result of contacts between the service provider and the client).

Most studies regarding sports organizations are based on the concept of Brady and Cronin (2001) who analyze the quality of services perceived by customers on three levels: interaction quality (cooperation of staff with the client), physical environment quality in which the service is provided and outcome quality, meaning customer evaluations of outcomes (García-Fernández et al., 2019; García-Fernández et al., 2018; García-Fernández et al., 2017).

### 2.2. Service convenience

Service convenience is the time and effort (non-monetary cost) perceived by the client (sacrifice or psychological stress) related to the purchase or the use of a service (Berry et al., 2002). As service convenience is also a direct and intuitive measure for consumers to evaluate service providers’ performance (Dai & Salam, 2014), it is one of the most critical considerations for most

consumers when making purchase decisions (Berry et al., 2002; Seiders et al., 2007). Berry et al. (2002) identified five types of service convenience that reflect the stages of consumer activities, suggesting that consumers perceived time and effort according to: 1) decision convenience related to initial decision to make a service purchase, 2) access convenience – initiate service delivery meaning availability and quality of the information regarding the service, 3) transaction convenience – effect a transaction, 4) benefit convenience – experience the service’s core benefit, and 5) post-benefit convenience involves the consumer’s perceived time and effort expenditures when reinitiating contact with a firm after the benefit stage of the service.

### **2.3. Perceived value**

Customer-perceived value can be defined as the result of the personal comparison between perceived overall benefits and perceived sacrifices or costs paid by the customer (Zeithaml, 1988). The concept of perceived customer value suggests that a product’s success relies heavily on whether customers believe it can meet their needs (Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2015). Buyers’ perceived value is the ratio between the quality or benefits they perceive in a product and the perceived sacrifices that buyers make in paying a given price (Pasuraman et al., 1988). Value for the customer, therefore, assumes a compromise between what the customer has received and what he has given, “sacrificed” (Woodruff, 1993).

### **2.4. Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction with products or services offered by the company is often considered the key to a company’s success and long-term advantage in the competitive market (Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997). It is regarded as “the extent to which a product’s perceived performance matches a buyer’s expectations” (Kotler et al., 2020, p. 15). Wu (2014) defined customer satisfaction as “a person’s subjective evaluation of his or her situation resulting in a positive emotional response”.

### **2.5. Behavioral intention**

Behavioral intention refers to the probability that an individual will participate in a particular behavior (Roberts-Lombard & Petzer, 2018). It will indicate whether customers will remain with or leave the company (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Fishbein and Manfredo (1992) emphasize that behavior objectives are the best way to anticipate a customer’s future intentions. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996) identify favorable behavioral intentions, which strengthen the customers relations with the company, and unfavorable intentions in which the relationship is more likely to be weakened. Favorable behavioral intentions involve recommending the company to others (word-of-mouth concept), paying a higher price to the company, spending more with the company, and remaining loyal to the company or repurchasing from the company. Unfavorable behavioral intentions include switching to another company, complaining about the company to external organizations or having fewer transactions with the company in the future.

### **2.6. Model conceptualization and hypothesis development**

In order to develop hypotheses of the study and propose a framework, we shall analyze the relationships between perceived quality, service convenience, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions of clients, particularly of sports organizations.

Managers of sports organizations need to understand the role of the service environment in attracting new and maintaining current customers (Foroughi et al., 2019). Profitability of such organizations also depends on delivering service of high quality (Yu et al., 2014). Within

sports organizations, many researchers have supported a direct and positive relationship between perceived quality and value for the customers of fitness centers (García-Fernández et al., 2018; Theodorakis et al., 2014), aquatic centers (Howat & Assaker, 2013) or sporting organizations in general (Nuviala et al., 2012). Based on this we have developed Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a direct and positive relationship between perceived quality and perceived value for the customers of a squash club.

Service convenience is profoundly determined by the time invested in getting to the facility, effort, waiting time, and orientation of the product to the market. All of the factors have demonstrated a direct relationship with perceived value of service, as in the literature of marketing services (Chang et al., 2010; Martín-Ruiz et al., 2012), but also within the context of sport (García-Fernández et al., 2018; Nuviala et al., 2012). Perceptions of service convenience affect consumers' overall evaluation of the service, including satisfaction with the service and perceived service quality and fairness (Berry et al., 2002). Therefore, we formulated Hypothesis 2 (H2): There is a direct and positive relationship between service convenience and perceived value for the customers of a squash club.

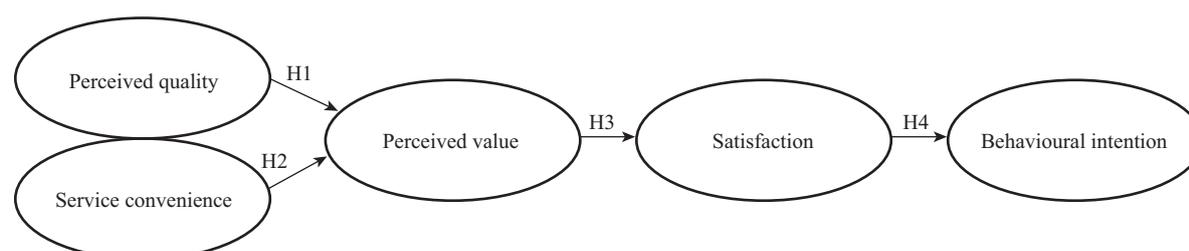
The concept of perceived value is closely related to customer satisfaction (Dorai & Varshney, 2012). From a marketing perspective, perceived value creates satisfaction (Makanyeza et al., 2016). Many researchers have found a direct relationship between the perceived value that customers derive from a service offer and their level of satisfaction (Dedeoğlu et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2016; Roberts-Lombard & Petzer, 2018; Vera, 2015), and also in sports organizations (Baena-Arroyo et al., 2020; Calabuig Moreno et al., 2015; García-Fernández et al., 2018; Nuviala et al., 2012; Theodorakis et al., 2014). Given the findings we formulated Hypothesis 3(H3): There is a direct and positive relationship between perceived value and satisfaction of the customers of a squash club.

For most companies, fostering customer satisfaction reflects a strategic imperative that promises favorable consequences in positive behavioral intentions and so ensuring long-lasting and profitable customer relationships (Seiders et al., 2007). Wu (2014), Roberts-Lombard and Petzer (2018) and Baena-Arroyo et al. (2020) confirm that customer satisfaction has a significant influence on positive behavioral intentions in a service environment, whereas dissatisfaction strengthens a customer's negative behavioral intention (Mohsan et al., 2011). Empirical evidence on the positive and direct relationship between the analyzed variables is also provided in research on sports organizations' customers [e.g. (Alexandris et al., 2004; Avourdiadou & Theodorakis, 2014; Baena-Arroyo et al., 2020; García-Fernández et al., 2018; Theodorakis et al., 2014)]. Thus, the last hypothesis is formulated as Hypothesis 4 (H4): There is a direct and positive relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions of a squash club's customers.

An illustrative framework of the hypotheses, based on García-Fernández et al. (2018), is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

Proposed research framework



Source: Author's elaboration based on García-Fernández et al. (2018)

### 3. DATA AND METHODS

#### 3.1. Research context

The origins of squash date back to around 1830, when British students came up with the idea of puncturing a tennis ball to make it harder to hit when playing indoors. In the following decades, the sport became a popular international discipline. In Poland, squash is a relatively young discipline, developing like no other sport. Every year, there are more and more professional and amateur players. “Squash Akademy Ltd.” was created in 2015 by four leading squash players in Poland. The club offers squash training, as well as summer and winter camps for children and youth aged 5–15 in five locations in and around Warsaw, the capital of Poland. As far as club’s marketing strategy is concerned, the founders of the organization decided to become a franchise of a nationally recognized club Legia Warszawa. This business model granted them a higher level of brand recognition, networking and sponsorship opportunities. Moreover, Legia Warszawa’s marketing and promotional resources are leveraged by the Academy to reach a wider audience, including social media presence, fan engagement and marketing campaigns.

#### 3.2. Procedure and sample

Based on case study framework the self-administered online questionnaire was sent via Google Forms to all customers from two locations of “Squash Academy Ltd.” Legia Warszawa in Warsaw. The research was carried out in March-April 2021. The study used a database from the online system of the Squash Academy Legia Warszawa, the so-called parent panel. The convenience sample consisted of 120 parents/guardians of children enrolled in squash classes (users), which accounted for a response rate of 76.3% of all customers. The questionnaire was completed by at least one guardian. 46.7% males and 53.3% females participated in the study. Detailed characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Characteristics of the sample according to gender, age of the respondent, length of the relationship, weekly frequency and age of end user (N = 120)

Variables	N	%
Gender		
Male	56	46.7
Female	64	53.3
Age of the respondent		
19–29	6	5.0
30–39	50	41.7
40–49	62	51.7
≥50	2	1.7
Length of the relationship		
0–12 months	50	41.7
13–24 months	20	16.7
25–48 months	44	36.7
More than 48 months	6	5.0
Weekly frequency		
Once a week	60	50.0
Twice a week	34	28.3
Three-four times a week	18	15.0
More than four times a week	8	6.7
Age of the user		
5–7 years	26	21.7
8–10 years	30	25.0
11–13 years	42	35.0
14–16 years	16	13.3
More than 16 years	6	5.0

Source: Author's elaboration.

### 3.3. Measures

The self-administered questionnaire was developed using multi-scale tools validated in previous studies. It consisted of six sections: 1) Perceived service, 2) Service convenience, 3) Perceived value, 4) Satisfaction, 5) Behavior intentions and 6) Socio-demographic variables. Perceived service quality was measured with two dimensions, from a Service Quality Scale for Fitness Centers (SQS-FC) proposed by Yildiz (2011) and further developed. The scale included dimensions of personnel (6 items) and program (4 items), and excluded dimensions of supporting services and physical environment due to context industry adaptation. Service convenience was measured with the concept of Berry et al. (2002), further developed by Garcia et al. (2018). The scale used included five dimensions of service convenience: decision (2 items), access (2 items), transaction (2 items), benefit (2 items) and post-benefit (2 items). Perceived value was measured with two items from Zeithaml (1988), used also in the scale of Garcia-Fernandez et al. (2018). Based on Avourdiadou and Theodorakis (2014), satisfaction was measured with three items. Behavior intentions were measured with 3 items according to Zeithaml et al. (1996). We used a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, to measure respondents' agreement levels on each item. Key constructs and measures are presented in Table 2.

### 3.4. Data analysis

Statistical analysis was performed with IBM® SPSS® ver. 26 and AMOS™ ver. 23 software.

First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to evaluate the structure of the predefined model. Psychometric measures were examined to assess reliability (Cronbach's alpha,  $\alpha$ ; composite reliability, CR), convergent (standardized factor loading estimates;  $\lambda$ ) Average Variance Extracted, AVE) and discriminant validity (correlations) of the scales. We incorporated the following criteria:  $\alpha$  and CR > 0.07, AVE > 0.05 and  $\lambda$  > 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019).

Adequacy of the model was analyzed with the likelihood following indices: Chi square to degrees of freedom ratio ( $\chi^2/df < 3.0$ ), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Parsimony Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). An appropriate adjustment is considered when values of  $\chi^2/df < 3.0$  (Hu & Bentler, 1999),  $\geq 0.95$  for GFI, (Kline, 2008), above 0.9 for the GFI, AGFI, NFI and TLI indexes (Hair et al., 2019),  $\geq 0.6$  for PGFI (Byrne, 2016) and  $\leq 0.06$  for RMSEA (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

The last step was to apply Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to examine the relationship between the studied constructs presented in the proposed research framework.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Measurement model

CFA was performed to test psychometric properties. As shown in Table 2, all items showed high factor loadings ranging from 0.59 to 0.9, indicating convergent validity of the measures in each construct. Reliability values of the scales are adequate, since all Cronbach's alpha and CR values were above the suggested threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.71–0.92 and 0.57–0.69, respectively.

**Table 2**

Dimensions used to measure variables and their psychometric properties of the measures

Dimension and items	$\lambda$	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
Perceived quality (PQ)				
<i>Personnel</i>	.76			
Coaches are knowledgeable and skilled (PQ1)	.79			
Coaches are experienced (PQ2)	.93			
Coaches' attitude towards children (PQ3)	.89			
Coaches work with enthusiasm (PQ4)	.72			
Coaches respond quickly to needs (individualization of the process) (PQ5)	.78	.92	.75	.65
Coaches provide parents with feedback about children's development (PQ6)	.76			
<i>Program</i>				
Program content is rich (PQ7)	.84			
Timing of programs is appropriate (PQ8)	.86			
Number of participants in groups is appropriate (PQ9)	.85			
Program is diversified (PQ10)	.85			

continued Table 2.

Dimension and items	$\lambda$	A	CR	AVE
Perceived value (PV)				
The programs and services have a great value (PV1)	.59	.71	.73	.60
The programs and services are worth what they cost (PV2)	.79			
Service convenience (SC)				
<i>Decision</i>				
This club made it easy for me to find a suitable program (SC1)	.88			
It was easy to obtain the information I needed to decide which club to join (SC2)	.64			
<i>Access</i>				
It was easy to contact my club (SC3)	.86			
I can easily figure out the location of the club (SC4)	.73			
<i>Transaction</i>				
The method of payment provided by this club is convenient (SC5)	.69	.89	.81	.57
This club allows diversified methods of payment (SC6)	.67			
<i>Benefit</i>				
I could easily obtain benefits from the services provided by the club (SC7)	.82			
The speed of providing services in the club met my requirements (SC8)	.84			
<i>Post-benefit</i>				
When I had a problem, the club resolved it very quickly (SC9)	.69			
The club has a good communication channel to handle complaints and recommendations (SC10)	.73			
<i>Satisfaction (S)</i>				
I am satisfied with the club's programs and services (S1)	.59	.76	.76	.58
I am satisfied with my decision to become a member of the club (S2)	.73			
I am satisfied with my decision to join the club (S3)	.86			
<i>Behavioral intentions (BI)</i>				
I will recommend the club to other people (BI1)	.91			
My child will participate in the programs and services of the squash club (BI2)	.92	.84	.77	.68
I will pay a higher price than competitors charge for the benefits I currently receive from the club (BI3)	.73			

Note:  $\lambda$  = Factor loads, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average extracted variance;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's Alpha.

Source: Author's elaboration

Mean values, standard deviations and correlation coefficients for the five latent constructs are presented in table 3.

**Table 3**

Descriptive statistics and discriminant validity of the constructs

	Mean±SD	PQ	SC	PV	S	BI
PQ	4.64 ± .54	–				
SC	4.57 ± .55	.86	–			
PV	4.41 ± .64	.75	.72	–		
S	4.77 ± .51	.87	.76	.79	–	
BI	4.76 ± .61	.75	.76	.72	.81	–

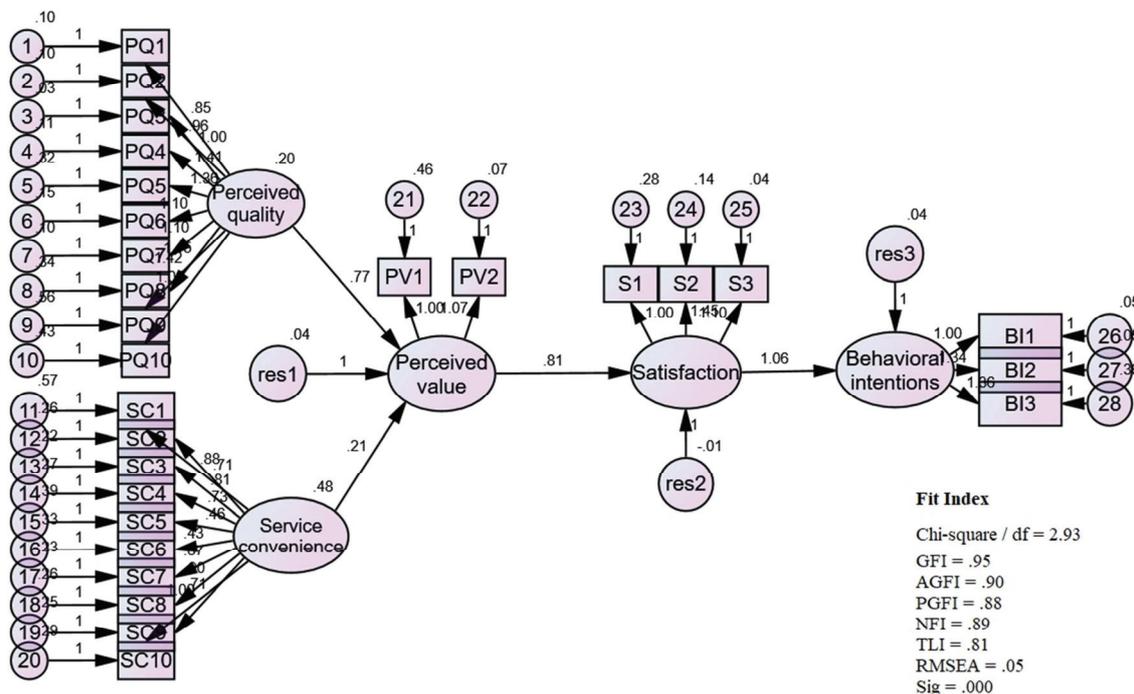
Source: Author's elaboration.

## 4.2. Structural model

The examination of the structural model included a test of the overall model fit, as well as a test of the relationships between the latent constructs. The goodness-of-fit indexes suggested that the model had an acceptable fit to the data:  $\chi^2/df = 2.93$ , GFI = 0.95, AGFI = 0.90, PGFI = .88, NFI = 0.89; TLI = 0.81; RMSEA = 0.05.

**Figure 2**

Structural equation model demonstrating relationship between perceived quality, service convenience, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions



Source: Author's elaboration.

When analyzing the relationship between the constructs, the model revealed that perceived quality as well as service convenience had a positive ( $\beta = 0.77$  and  $\beta = 0.21$ , respectively) and significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) influence on perceived value, thus confirming Hypotheses 1 and 2. The correlation between the two predictors also turned out to be statistically significant ( $r = 0.87$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Perceived value was shown as a strong predictor of customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.81$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), by which Hypothesis 3 was also confirmed. Finally, satisfaction showed a very strong positive and significant influence on behavioral intentions of squash customers ( $\beta = 1.06$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting Hypothesis 4.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The present study makes both a theoretical and a practical contribution to the field of sports management. The research framework integrated key customer variables (i.e. perceived quality, service convenience, satisfaction and behavioral intentions) into a model based on customers of squash clubs in Poland. Validity and reliability of the proposed measurement scale for squash clubs, adapted mainly from fitness centers, was established (García-Fernández et al., 2018). The results of CFA suggested a good fit between the measurement model and the observed data. The values of AVE, significant factor loadings and reliability coefficients indicated a sound psychometric instrument.

The aim of the paper was to examine the relationship between perceived quality, service convenience, satisfaction and behavioral intentions of customers of a sports club. Therefore, one of the strengths of the study is the contribution of knowledge regarding relations between the variables mentioned above in a novel environment, namely professional squash clubs, still a niche sports discipline in Poland.

In our case, the perceived quality referred to the club's personnel and program, and excluded dimensions of supporting services and physical environment due to context industry adaptation. The study underlines the importance of the skills, experience and attitude towards children of the coaches in perceiving the value of the service. This has also been confirmed by previous studies (Maksimović et al., 2017; Ortega Martínez et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2021). The program offered at the squash club also turned out to be an important factor in perceived value and is strongly related to the personnel, they are responsible for creating it and interacting extensively with customers (Yildiz, 2011). As Groönroos (2007) suggests, a program shall be considered a core service of a sport-related enterprise if it provides value to customers and enhances their experience.

The findings of the study show a positive relationship between perceived quality and perceived value in squash club customers. If squash customers perceive the sports club's coaching and program to be high quality, they see the benefits they receive from the sports club relative to the price they pay for membership. The findings are in line with previous research from different national sports contexts: Greek (Theodorakis et al., 2014), Spanish (García-Fernández et al., 2018; García-Fernández et al., 2017), Turkish (Sevilmiş et al., 2022) or South Korean (Yu et al., 2014) fitness clubs, and sports organizations in general (Nuviala et al., 2012) or sports events (Calabuig Moreno et al., 2015). Perceived quality and value are two important factors that can influence a person's decision to join a sports club, regardless of the pricing strategy the club has adopted, be it low-cost fitness centers (García-Fernández et al., 2018) or exclusive sports clubs, like with squash.

The results also provide evidence that there is a positive relationship between service convenience and perceived quality among squash customers. Decision convenience, access, transaction, benefit and post-benefit convenience are important factors contributing to increased perceived value by the customer. When a service is convenient, customers perceive it to be more valuable, as it saves them time and effort, reduces stress, and enhances their overall experience. This confirms the conclusions of previous studies by García-Fernández et al. (2018) conducted in fitness centers, and in other services beyond sport (Kaura et al., 2015; Lloyd et al., 2014; Pham et al., 2018).

In support of the third hypothesis, we observed a positive relationship between perceived value and satisfaction of customers. If a customer perceives that the benefits they receive from engaging in a sports-related activity outweigh their costs, they are likely to be satisfied with their experience. This is in line with numerous studies conducted in sport centers, which highlights the importance of service quality in order to improve customer satisfaction (Álvarez-García et al., 2019; Foroughi et al., 2019; Freitas & Lacerda, 2019; García-Fernández et al., 2018; García-Fernández et al., 2017; León-Quismondo et al., 2020a, 2020b; Maksimović et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2021).

Finally, our research indicates that behavioral (future) intentions of squash customers strongly depend on their satisfaction. The customers who are satisfied with their experience are more likely

to continue to use the sports club's services and to recommend the club to others. It confirms recent studies carried out in private and public sports centers, irrespective of the implemented business model (Alguacil et al., 2019; Avourdiadou & Theodorakis, 2014; Eskiler & Altunışık, 2021; García-Fernández et al., 2019; García-Fernández et al., 2018; García-Fernández et al., 2017; García-Pascual et al., 2020; Sevilmiş et al., 2022; Theodorakis et al., 2013). It confirms that customer satisfaction seems to be a reliable indicator of behavioral intentions.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1. Managerial implications

The study provides a number of key points that have practical implications to enable managers of squash clubs to improve customers' positive behavioral intentions. The study highlights the importance of perceived quality and service convenience aimed at delivering expected value to customers. Through the provision of high values for customers, club managers can ensure that their customers are satisfied with the service. Specifically, the findings revealed that in such a specific venue the program and the skills of coaches are primary dimensions in perceived quality. Thus, managers should engage responsive and skilled employees who will deliver rich and diversified program to users. As stated by Kotler et al. (2020), a company will gain a competitive advantage if it is able to differentiate and position itself as providing superior customer value. In addition, service convenience and perceived value are also closely related, and service providers should strive to improve the convenience of their services to enhance customer perceptions of value. Positive value perception may influence customer satisfaction and, in turn, positive behavioral intentions. To enhance customer satisfaction in squash clubs, it is essential to identify what customers perceive as valuable and work to ensure that their expectations are met or exceeded. Therefore, squash managers should carry out constant market research surveys to gather customer feedback, and study market trends and other information to improve their clubs' operations. Increasing loyalty and customer retention are crucial for the maintenance and growth of the organizations in the competitive market. The research findings demonstrate what managers of squash clubs should focus on in order to build long-term relationships with their customers and, ultimately, improve their profitability. It is particularly important in the case of extracurricular activities for children and youth organized by niche sports clubs due to the rapidly growing market competition.

### 6.2. Limitations and future investigations

This study has several limitations that should be addressed.

First, as it was a case study limited to a single squash club in Poland, results are only indicative. As suggested by several researchers, generalizations of sport service evaluation models and their consequences in various cultures should be approached cautiously (Theodorakis et al., 2013; Yoshida & James, 2010). Therefore, further work to expand the proposed model and explore its generalizability would be useful.

Secondly, in contrast to the majority of the previously discussed studies, the study evaluated experience in a sports club from the perspective of a parent (guardian), not the end user, i.e. children/youth participating in the program. We deliberately chose the sample as it is parents who are the purchasers and are responsible for future intentions. However, to have a broader perspective, further research on perceptions of the club's activities should be oriented toward end users as they (children and youth in our case) play a fundamental role in the family decision-making process (Assael, 2007; Cunha & Steiner, 2015).

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