

Marketing strategies to improve service quality at sports and fitness venues: a systematic review

Estrategias de marketing para mejorar la calidad del servicio en instalaciones deportivas y de fitness: una revisión sistemática

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Resumen. La industria del deporte y el fitness ha tenido un crecimiento acelerado con el aumento de la conciencia pública sobre la relevancia de la salud y el bienestar. Hoy en día, instalaciones como gimnasios, estadios, piscinas y centros de acondicionamiento físico se han convertido en elementos fundamentales del estilo de vida en la sociedad. Las estrategias de marketing son importantes para atraer y retener clientes. Los programas ofrecidos deben verse como productos de servicio que tienen valor de venta. Por tanto, implementar estrategias de marketing efectivas es necesario para competir, satisfacer las necesidades de los clientes y aumentar su fidelidad. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo realizar una revisión sistemática de la literatura existente sobre estrategias de marketing para instalaciones deportivas y de fitness utilizando el método PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). Este estudio incluye investigaciones publicadas en los últimos 10 años de fuentes indexadas en revistas y se identifican hallazgos clave relacionados con la efectividad de diversas estrategias de marketing en la prestación de servicios y la retención de clientes. Los resultados de la investigación muestran que la personalización del servicio, la utilización de la tecnología, la comprensión profunda de las necesidades del cliente y la alta calidad del servicio son estrategias clave que pueden aumentar el valor percibido, la satisfacción y la lealtad del cliente en el sector del deporte y el fitness.

Palabras clave: industria del deporte y el fitness, estrategias de marketing, calidad del servicio.

Abstract. The sports and fitness industry has seen accelerated growth with increasing public awareness about the relevance of health and well-being. Nowadays, facilities such as gyms, stadiums, swimming pools and fitness centers have become essential elements of lifestyle in society. Marketing strategies are important to attract and retain customers. The programs offered should be viewed as service products that have sales value. Therefore, implementing effective marketing strategies is necessary to compete, satisfy customer needs and increase customer loyalty. This research aims to conduct a systematic review of existing literature regarding marketing strategies for sports and fitness venues using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method. This study includes research published in the last 10 years from indexed journal sources and identifies important findings regarding the effectiveness of various marketing strategies in service and retaining customers. The research results shows that personalization of service, utilization of technology, deep understanding of customer needs, and high service quality are key strategies that can increase perceived value, satisfaction, and customer loyalty in the sports and fitness sector.

Keywords: sports and fitness industry, marketing strategy, service quality.

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Introduction

The sports and fitness industry is currently increasingly developing, changes are continuously being made to maximize the potential of places for sports activities so that it has experienced significant growth in recent years (Llopis-Goig et al., 2017; Supriyoko et al., 2024; Wang & Fang, 2019). This development is in line with increasing public awareness of the importance of exercise to maintain health and also to improve well-being (Martínez García & Zambrano Alvarez, 2020; Masdeu Yelamos et al., 2019). Several sports and fitness venues, such as fitness centers, stadiums, swimming pools and fitness studios, are places that are widely used by people and have now become an important part of their lifestyle (Forradellas et al., 2021; Goodyear et al., 2019; Torstveit et al., 2018). The innovative and varied programs offered in these places are not only designed to improve physical fitness but also to support the mental, social and emotional health of their users (Algualcil et al., 2020; Portela-Pino et al., 2022). In the context of increasingly fierce competition in this industry, marketing strategies become crucial to attract and retain customers (Miranda-Guerra et al., 2024; Reyna-Gonzalez et al., 2023). The programs offered by sports and

fitness venues are not only seen as physical activity but also as service products that have their own selling value and attraction (García-Pascual et al., 2023; Theodorou et al., 2024). Therefore, implementing effective marketing strategies is very important to ensure these programs can compete in the market, meet customer needs, and ultimately increase customer loyalty (Ferreira-Barbosa et al., 2022; Pérez et al., 2024). Marketing strategies are not only limited to promotions and advertising but also include elements such as customer relationship management, improving service quality, competitive pricing, and strategic service placement (Dash et al., 2021; Morán-Gómez et al., 2024). Therefore, a deep understanding of how these strategies is implemented in the sports and fitness industry (Algualcil et al., 2020). This research aims to conduct a systematic review of existing literature regarding marketing strategies, services that impact customer satisfaction, and customer assessments of service products offered in sports and fitness venues. Through the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method, this research will identify, evaluate, and synthesize findings from various relevant studies to provide comprehensive insight into the effectiveness of various marketing strategies (Solanki & Thomas, 2023).

Methods

This research uses a systematic review method with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach to identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant literature regarding marketing

strategies for sports and fitness venues (Mishra & Mishra, 2023). This method was chosen to provide a comprehensive overview of the topics discussed, as well as to ensure transparency and replicability in the research process.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Table 2.
List of Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
Studies that discuss marketing strategies in the sports sector.	Exclude studies that focus on non-strategic aspects of marketing in the sports sector.
Studies that discuss services for sports facility users.	Exclude studies that focus on non-service aspects of sports facility users.
Articles published in peer-reviewed journals.	Exclude articles not available in full text
Studies published in English.	Exclude studies published in languages other than English
Studies published in the last 10 years (2014-2024).	Exclude those published in 2013 and below

Data sources and literature search

The literature search process was carried out using several main academic databases, namely: (1). SagePub, because it publishes academic journals that have a high reputation and are widely recognized in the academic community, (2). ScienceDirect is a database that contains a collection of quality full-text documents that have been peer-reviewed by Elsevier. (3). Scopus; A bibliographic and citation database that provides indexation and abstracts for millions of scholarly articles, books, and conference proceedings. Provides citation information, allowing users to track the influence and associations between publications. (4). Taylor & Francis is one of the leading academic publishers focused on publishing scholarly journals, books, and reference resources in a variety of disciplines, including the social sciences, humanities, science, technology, and medicine. Keywords used in the search included: Keywords used in the search included: “sports AND fitness venue marketing strategies”, “service programs OR sports venue marketing services”, and “service products AND forms of sports venue marketing”, “service types OR service models towards sports venue users”. These keywords are used to ensure coverage in a comprehensive search.

Study Screening and Selection Process

In the study screening and selection process, the research team involved two independent reviewers who conducted parallel literature searches. The screening process is carried out in several stages, identifying all articles that are relevant to the topic and then collecting them from a predetermined database (Hamel et al., 2021; Hiebl, 2023; van Dinter et al., 2021). Each reviewer is responsible for reviewing the data found from the collected articles, then screening the titles and abstracts of all collected articles to be filtered based on the title and abstract by eliminating irrelevant studies (Ng et al., 2014). After the initial review, the two reviewers discuss their search and selection results to resolve any discrepancies that may have arisen. If there were discrepancies in the assessments, consensus was reached through discussion. The next stage is full text selection of articles that pass the

screening stage and are checked again completely to ensure that the articles meet the inclusion criteria, and the final stage is the creation of a PRISMA Flow Diagram used to illustrate the selection process, including the number of studies identified, screened, and finally included in the review (Trifu et al., 2022). The extracted data will be analyzed qualitatively. This research will use a narrative approach to synthesize findings from various studies. If quantitative data are available and relevant, a meta-analysis can be performed to combine the results of multiple studies presented in the PRISMA flow chart to ensure compliance with systematic reporting standards.

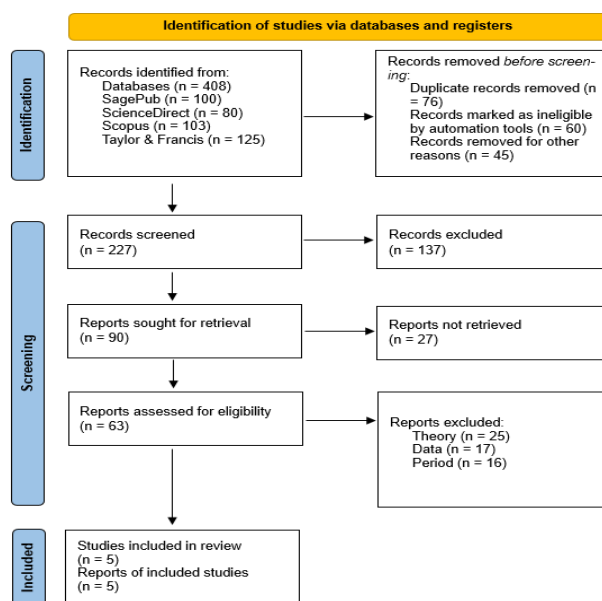


Figure 1. Process flow diagram for the inclusion, screening, and selection of articles

Results

The results of this study will be reported in accordance with PRISMA guidelines, which include the presentation of a PRISMA flow diagram, a table summarizing the characteristics of the included studies, as well as a narrative synthesis of the main findings.

Table 2.
List of Articles Subject to Review

No.	Author	Title, publisher	Result
1.	(YU et al., 2014)	Service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention among fitness center members aged 60 years and over. <i>Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal</i> , 42(5), 757-767.	The results of this study highlight the importance of service quality, customer satisfaction, and perceived value in the context of sports and fitness consumption.
2.	(Fajar Fathoni et al., 2024)	Leveraging Digitalization for Enhanced Publication and Marketing of Sports Services. <i>Retos: nuevas tendencias en educación física, deporte y recreación</i> , (57), 264-270.	The results of this research show that digital applications integrated with advanced features can provide competitive advantages for sports institutions in marketing efforts and improving services.
3.	(Choi et al., 2018)	Effects of service quality, perceived value, and consumer satisfaction on behavioral intentions in virtual golf. <i>Journal of Physical Education and Sport (JPES)</i> 18(3), Art 216, pp. 1459 - 1468, 2018	The results of this research state that providing satisfactory service requires training to improve employee skills and knowledge.
4.	(Theodorakis et al., 2014)	A comparison of service evaluation models in the context of sport and fitness centres in Greece. <i>Managing Leisure</i> , 19:1, 18-35,	Customers' perceived service quality towards sports and fitness centers was found to be an important factor influencing perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions.
5.	(García-Fernández et al., 2018)	The effects of service convenience and perceived quality on perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty in low-cost fitness centers. <i>Sport Management Review</i> 21 (2018) 250–262	direct and positive relationship between perceptions service quality on perceived value on satisfaction and loyalty on low-cost fitness center clients.

Discussion

In discussing marketing strategies to improve the quality of services at sports and fitness venues, especially for all ages from children, adults to the elderly. Several important points can be taken from the research results (YU et al., 2014). These findings emphasize the importance of providing high-quality services that focus on the specific needs of older adults, which in turn can increase perceived value. As perceived value increases, customer satisfaction increases, which is a key factor in reducing behavior that becomes a complaint. This satisfaction also contributes to a high likelihood of membership renewal and continued use of the facilities, demonstrating how important a personalized and quality approach is in services for all ages.

Apart from that, in the context of using technology to make it easier for customers to get information and several other components that can attract customer interest, as research results (Fajar Fathoni et al., 2024), the SHC (Smart Health and Care) application shows that the features available in this application contributes significantly to improving the quality of promotional and marketing services for sports institutions. This shows that the integration of technology in marketing strategies not only facilitates better communication but also creates opportunities to build stronger relationships with customers.

then in research (Choi et al., 2018) explained that to attract consumers and retain current consumers, it is important to understand significant factors such as core services, additional services, perceived value, consumer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions in the individual decision-making process towards virtual golf, as found in this study.

Based on research (Theodorakis et al., 2014), this research examines the theoretical relationship between service quality, value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions by proposing and comparing three competing models. Structural model testing shows that the satisfaction

model is superior to other models. The results show that the service quality consumers perceive towards sports and fitness centers is an important factor influencing perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions.

Finally, there is evidence from research (García-Fernández et al., 2018), this research focuses on the positive relationship between variables that influence client loyalty, especially in low-cost sports organizations. In accordance with our hypothesis, we found a direct and positive relationship between perceived service quality and service comfort on perceived value. In addition, perceived value also has a positive effect on satisfaction, which ultimately increases client loyalty in low-cost fitness centers.

These five studies collectively show that personalization of service, use of technology, deep understanding of customer needs, and high service quality are key strategies that can increase perceived value, satisfaction, and customer loyalty in the sports and fitness sector.

Conclusion

These five studies reveal the importance of specific service elements in improving quality and customer loyalty in sports and fitness centers. (YU et al., 2014) Emphasize services tailored to specific needs, especially for the elderly, to increase satisfaction and reduce complaints. (Fajar Fathoni et al., 2024) highlight the role of features in SHC applications that facilitate access to information, enable more effective communication, and strengthen service promotion. (Choi et al., 2018) show that a deep understanding of core and ancillary services, as well as how customers evaluate those services, is critical in a customer's decision to remain with a virtual golf service. (Theodorakis et al., 2014) and (García-Fernández et al., 2018) confirmed that perceived service quality, convenience, and value of the services offered largely determine customer satisfaction and loyalty, even in low-cost fitness centers. An approach that prioritizes core service quality, convenience, personalization, and technology integration is proven to increase customer perceptions of

service value, satisfaction, and their desire to renew membership.

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Conflicts of interest

– No conflicts of interest are disclosed by the writers.

Future investigations

From the results of these studies, practical implications can be applied in future research on marketing strategies that focus on service quality to create customer satisfaction and create loyal customers.

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