



## Factors Impacting on Satisfaction and Word-of-Mouth of DanceSport Club in Chengdu

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### Abstract

This study investigates the impact of perceived value, brand trust, brand identification, image, and perceived usefulness on satisfaction, and satisfaction on word-of-mouth of DanceSport clubs in Chengdu. Quantitative analysis and multi-stage samplings are applied to analyze data collection of 500 samples. Probability and non-probability sample methods were used to reach target respondents of parents of the selected DanceSport clubs' registered members aged 4 to 14 years old. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation model (SEM) were used for model fitting, reliability and validity analysis. The results indicate that word-of-mouth is driven by satisfaction, and the satisfaction is impacted perceived value, image, brand identification, and brand trust, respectively. Perceived usefulness has no significant impact on satisfaction, as well as brand identification that does not have a direct impact on word-of-mouth. Therefore, club's owners and marketing practitioners are suggested to prioritize their marketing and operation management strategies in building and enhancing customer satisfaction through creation of value, reputation, and engagement.

**Keywords :** Perceived Value, Image, Satisfaction, Word-of-Mouth, DanceSport Club

### Introduction

Researchers in many countries believe that the growth of sports industry could stimulate the development of economy. The sports complex and events could drive fame and tourist



attraction. Since 1990s, there has been a sharp increase in the number of international professional athletes each year worldwide. In countries with highly developed sports industries such as the United States, teenagers who participate in professional sports training or sports clubs would have a congenital advantage for entering the world's elite schools, exploitation of college athletes, and even receive scholarships or educational subsidies. Parents are well aware that sports expertise could bring children a negotiating power and privileges (Nauright and Pope, 2016).

According to the sports survey report of PwC in 2019, the average growth rate of the global sports industry is 7.4% in the past three to five years and estimated a growth at 6.4% in the next three to five years (PwC, 2019). The Chinese government has promoted the development of sports industry. By 2025, Chinese sports industry would establish rational systems, equip with efficient sports products and services, and seamless marketing mechanism that in line with the growth of consumer demand. These would contribute to a total market of sports industry for more than five trillion yuan (Nielsen Sports, 2017).

The headquarter of DanceSport Asia Federation was settled in Chengdu since December 2020 with the positioning to centered Chengdu into a famous city of world sports events. Chengdu is one of the cities that hosted national DanceSport and International A-level competitions for 10 consecutive years from 2011 (China DanceSports Federation, 2019). There are more than 400 DanceSport clubs in Chengdu. The main target groups of DanceSport clubs are children and teenagers aged 4-14, accounting for more than 65% of the total consumer groups (Chengdu DanceSport Association Official, 2019). Their demand is to improve their physical quality, skills of DanceSport, and chances to win awards in professional competitions through participating in club training.

### Objectives

1. To investigates the impact of perceived value, brand trust, brand identification, image and perceived usefulness on satisfaction of DanceSport Club's members in Chengdu.
2. To investigates the impact of satisfaction and brand identification on word-of-mouth of DanceSport Club.



3. To highlight research findings to club's owners and marketing practitioners on the significant factors that should be considered when aiming to build or enhance customers' satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth.

## Literature Review

### Word-of-mouth

Word-of-mouth is a behavior of consumers extending the information or their opinion on the brand, goods, or services to other consumers in their society (Rosario, Sotgiu, De Valck, and Bijmolt, 2016). In the field of marketing, word of mouth is regarded as a powerful tool of informal media to influence consumers (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). The act of word-of-mouth is proven by the studies of Jalilvand, Salimipour, Elyasi and Mohammadi (2017) and Rosario et al., (2016) that it can be influenced by consumers' perceived value, satisfaction, experience, and loyalty. In the study of Cownie (2016), word of mouth has both positive and negative forces. Positive forces can mislead consumers by the propaganda and buy inferior goods. Conversely, negative effects could induce consumers to produce results that are contrary to the actual quality of goods. This shows that consumers are easily influenced by word of mouth, and not only on their buying behavior, but also the company and its branding (Tweephoncharoen and Vongurai, 2020). Since word-of-mouth can predict consumers' behavior before and after using product, this effect is much higher than the promotion of media advertising or we-media marketing (Hayat and Hershkovitz, 2018).

### Perceived value

Perceived value is conceptualized as an abstract measurement of something which determine its importance and worthiness. Consumer's perception on value can be dimensioned by the price, quality, social and emotional for goods and services (Sevilmiş and Çevik, 2021), which can lead to their choices in product selection (H. Lee, A. Lee, and Liang, 2019). Perceived value is a customer's overall evaluation of the total net benefits received from a product of service (Czaczkes, Brandstetter, di Stefano, and Heinze, 2018). The perceived value of the customers can be gained from the trial or experience with the products or services and how they are superior to their alternates (Pan, Lei, Wu, and Wang, 2021). Perceived value is one of the significant factors that can predict the satisfaction and behavioral intention of students or consumers in various context of studies such as in education, sports and service industry (Kim and Zhang, 2019; Mallika



Appuhamilage and Torii, 2019; Teeroovengadum, Nunkoo, Gronroos, Kamalanabhan and Seebaluck, 2019). On the contrary, the article of Clemes, Cohen, and Wang (2013) and To and Lung (2020) have claimed that students' perceived value has no obvious influence on satisfaction. As a result, following hypothesis is proposed for the study:

H1: Perceived value has a significant impact on satisfaction.

#### **Brand trust**

When studying brand trust, many scholars found that trust is the first determinants of customers' consumption and repetitive behavior (Rezaei, Sivasubramaniam and Ho, 2017). Brand trust can play a significant role in building consumers commitment. When consumers trust a business or brand, they would feel good about the consumer behavior they have chosen (Girard and Pinar, 2021). Many researchers believe that trust is a tendency, which means that a person is willing to rely on the ability or function of the brand to perform as it is intended or promised (Pinar, Girard, and Basfirinci, 2020). There are three conditions for building trust: honesty and credibility, effective communication, and business goal alignment with customers (Holland, Krause, Provencher, and Seltzer, 2018). Companies that have established a good trust for consumers would continue to play an important role in brand value growth and favorable attitude toward the companies (Hopp and Fisher, 2021). Therefore, trust would have a positive impact on the productivity and efficiency of enterprises. The following hypothesis is proposed for the study:

H2: Brand trust has a significant impact on satisfaction.

#### **Brand identification**

Kataria and Saini (2020) have denoted brand identification as the psychological state where individual perceiving, feeling, and valuing his or her belonging or connecting to the brand. If the school brand was well known, students would also feel it is a kind of honor, affiliated, and engaged with the school (Balaji, Roy, and Sadeque, 2016). Educational institutions are aware that their brand represents a quality social identity, therefore they are willing to invest in building their brand value for students' attraction and positive word-of-mouth (Lee, Ng, and Bogomolova, 2019). In the research of Balaji et al. (2016), it was found that college students with strong brand identification are more inclined to transmit positive signals to others through word of mouth. As a result, following hypotheses are proposed for the study:

H3: Brand identification has a significant impact on satisfaction.



H6: Brand identification has a significant impact on satisfaction.

### **Image**

Image is the portrait of company, brand, or institution perceived by the consumers. Acquiring a positive image from consumers is a great advantage that can help the company retain its position in the market (Özkan, Süer, Keser and Kocakoç, 2020). The image of a school directly reflects students' overall perception and selection of the school, so image can also determine the survival and competitiveness of the school in the market (Dennis, Papagiannidis, Alamanos and Bournakis, 2016; Osman, Saputra, and Luis, 2018). The level of professional knowledge and skills, number of talented instructors and students that educational institutions have can all represent the class of the institution (Shurair and Pokharel, 2019). Image would influence consumers' experience through service level (Weerasinghe and Fernando, 2018). High quality service would leave a good impression on students and enhance their satisfaction. Masserini, Bini, and Pratesi (2018) have also proven that student's satisfaction can be strongly predicted by the institution's image. As a result, following hypothesis is proposed for the study:

H4: Image has a significant impact on satisfaction.

### **Perceived usefulness**

Perceived usefulness is defined as internal belief and attitude of an individual that performing a task will enhance his or her performance (Chang and Chen, 2019). In other words, learners who believe engaging in a behavior is useful or can improve their performance by gaining new skills after training (N. Kashive, Powale, and K. Kashive, 2021). A large number of studies have confirmed that perceived usefulness has a strong impact on users' attitudes and satisfaction with the use of online systems. Perceived usefulness is attributed to external motivation, which has a predictive effect on student satisfaction (Rouibah, Hamdy, and Al-Enezi, 2009). Islam, Mok, Xiuxiu and Leng (2018) believe that perceived usefulness would directly affect user satisfaction, which agree with research of Salimon, Sanuri, Aliyu, Perumal and Yusr (2021) that perceived usefulness would affect the continuous learning willingness and satisfaction of students receiving online teaching. As a result, following hypothesis is proposed for the study:

H5: Perceived usefulness has a significant impact on satisfaction.

### **Satisfaction**



Satisfaction is defined as the level of pleasantness that the consumers have gained from the attainment of their expectation, needs and wants from the product or service (Fu, Liu, Fang, Luo and Cai, 2020). Satisfaction refers to the opinions or suggestions an individual get when performing something that he or she wanted or expected (El Refae, Kaba, and Eletter, 2021). Satisfaction of the students and teachers can be influenced by the competencies, acceptance, services and resources provided by the school (Alazmeh, 2019; Kamalluarifin, Aniza, Jayabalan, Saufi, and Karib, 2018). When students' satisfaction on learning experience is high, students and their parents tend to feel proud of the school and are likely to share their school information with others (Santos, Marques, Justino, Mendes, 2020). Student satisfaction can be enhanced by the school's reputation, which is an effective method that does not need to invest in publicity costs (Panda, Pandey, and Bennett, 2019). The competitive advantage and performance of the school lies in its high degree of satisfaction from students (Tanasapsakul and Vongurai, 2018). If the school could earn loyalty from students, they may share their academic experience to their society (Giner and Rillo, 2016). As a result, following hypothesis is proposed for the study:

H7: Satisfaction has a significant impact on Word of mouth.

## Research Methods and Materials

### Research Framework

The conceptual framework of this study refers to five structural models of literature in the fields of education and physical education. Teeroovengadum et al. (2019) studied the structural model of student satisfaction and loyalty in the service quality of higher education. Second literature is on the influence of customer satisfaction in traditional business environment on brand loyalty selection relationship (Kataria and Saini 2020). Furthermore, the third paper uses references from Mouakket and Bettayeb (2015) which investigates the willingness of university teachers to continue using the online system based on its usability and usefulness. Lastly, the papers of Jain, Kamboj, Kumar, and Rahman (2018) and Moura e Sá and Cunha (2019) illustrated the relationship between customers' trust and reputation in sports clubs and other business fields. From framework of these past studies, conceptual model for this study is proposed as shown in Figure 1. Factors of perceived value (PV), brand trust (BT), brand identification (BI), image (I) and

perceived usefulness (PU) are studied for determinants of students' and parents' satisfaction (S) and word-of-mouth (WOM) of the DanceSport club.

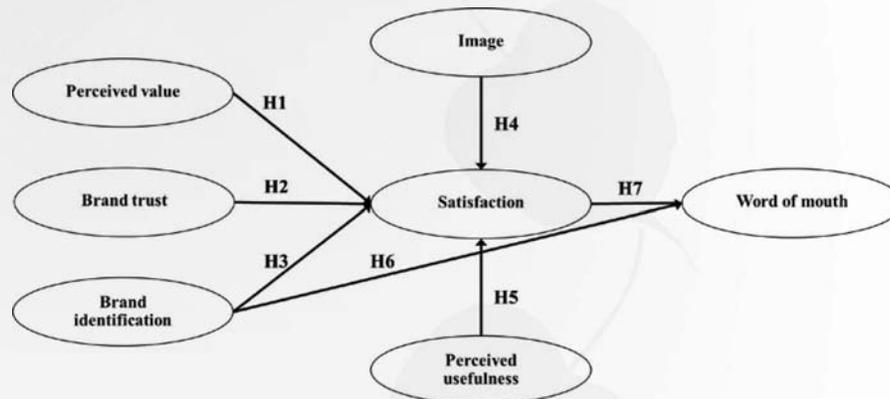


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

### Methodology

The quantitative analysis of multi-stage sampling was adopted in this study. The questionnaire was utilized for data collection, which item-objective congruence (IOC) test and Cronbach's Alpha method were conducted before distribution to ensure the reliability. Questionnaires were developed online using "Questionnaire Star" platform and distributed to the target respondents via WeChat group. There are four parts to the questionnaire, screening questions, independent and dependent variables measurement, and demographic profile questions. The Likert 5 scale was used in the questionnaire to test the 7 hypotheses proposed, and SPSS 26.0 and AMOS were used to analyze the CFA, which ensured the validity and reliability of the structural equation model. Finally, the influence and correlation between the variables in the SEM model are tested to illustrate the significant and non-significant relationship.

### Population and Sample Size

The target population defined for this study is the parents of students aged 4 to 14 years old and are members of the selected DanceSport clubs in Chengdu. The main consumer groups of DanceSport clubs are children and teenagers aged 4-14, accounting for more than 65% of the total consumer groups (Chengdu DanceSport Association Official, 2019). The recommended sample size is at least 425 copied based on using A-priori Sample Size Calculator for Structural



Equation Models (SEM) (Soper, 2019). The parameters for calculation were 7 latent variables and 29 observed variables at the probability level of 0.05. Therefore, this study finally decided to use a sample size of 500 for statistical verification.

### Sampling method

A multi-stage sampling method was adopted to collect data from target respondents. Purposive sampling was firstly used to select the most famous DanceSport clubs in the four regions of Chengdu. Famous in this context is based on the scoring of professional competitions sponsored by Chengdu DanceSport Association. Stratified random sampling is then used to divide the total sample size into four sample units based on the size of clubs' registered members as shown in table 1. Purposive and convenience sample were lastly used to screen and obtain response from parents of the club's registered members aged 4 to 14 years old and willing to participate in the questionnaire. With the consent from the club's owners, questionnaires are distributed via WeChat group of parents at each club.

**Table 1 Sample Size Distribution**

DanceSport clubs	West Side Club	South Side Club	East Side Club	North Side Club	Total
Population Size	1200	864	636	420	3120
Number of respondents	193	138	102	57	500

**Source:** Chengdu DanceSport Association Official. (n.d.). Annual Report. Retrieved from <http://www.cdywdxh.com/index.php?c=channel&a=type&tid=33>

## Results

### Demographic Information

A total of 500 respondents were surveyed in this study. Among the young people aged 4-14 who received DanceSport training, girls were accounted for 83%, and boys were accounted for 17%. 198 respondents (39.6%) were at the age of 4 to 8 years old and 302 respondents (60.4%) were at 9 to 14 years old. Moreover, 89 respondents (5.6%) have experience in DanceSport training for less than a year, 273 respondents (54.6%) for 1 to 3 years, 112 respondents (22.4%) for 3 to 6 years, and 26 respondents (5.2%) for above 6 years.



### Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Kataria and Saini (2020) believes that the CFA provides a more precise way of explaining the error variance results of the hypothesis variable. In the field of social science research, the CFA has played a major role in testing and observing the reliability of measurements. The CFA test data is in line with the hypothesis model proposed and needs to be tested with AMOS for a universally positive test tool (Chawla and Saxena, 2016). Table 2 has outlined the results from CFA testing. Acceptable values are determined at higher than 0.5 for factor loading, Composite Reliability (CR) at value higher than 0.7 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) at value higher than 0.4 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). All the 7 variables showed good results. The values of discriminant validity shown in table 3 were analyzed from the square root of AVE and all are greater than the factor correlations. The model fitting indexes in table 4 also showed acceptable results. Hence, the convergence validity and discriminant validity are guaranteed.

**Table 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Result**

Latent Variables	Source of Questionnaire (Measurement Indicator)	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Factors Loading	CR	AVE
PV	Hume and Mort (2010)	3	0.723	0.665-0.696	0.724	0.467
BT	Jain et al. (2018)	3	0.884	0.820-0.875	0.884	0.717
BI	Rather and Hollebeek (2019)	3	0.881	0.819-0.883	0.880	0.710
I	Clemes et al. (2013)	4	0.822	0.668-0.795	0.824	0.541
PU	Rouibah et al. (2009)	3	0.761	0.667-0.792	0.763	0.518
S	Panda et al. (2019)	4	0.767	0.561-0.728	0.773	0.463
WOM	Mahadin and Akroush, (2019)	4	0.834	0.708-0.782	0.834	0.558

Note: CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted

**Table 3 Discriminant Validity Output**

Variables	PV	BT	BI	I	PU	S	WOM
PV	<b>0.683</b>						
BT	0.485	<b>0.847</b>					
BI	0.524	0.743	<b>0.843</b>				



Table 3 Discriminant Validity Output (continued)

Variables	PV	BT	BI	I	PU	S	WOM
I	0.436	0.420	0.421	<b>0.736</b>			
PU	0.146	0.256	0.261	0.143	<b>0.720</b>		
S	0.674	0.531	0.556	0.504	0.192	<b>0.680</b>	
WOM	0.353	0.313	0.245	0.321	0.052	0.371	<b>0.747</b>

Note: The diagonally listed value are the AVE square roots of the variables

Table 4 Goodness of Fit

Index	Acceptable Values	Measurement Model	Structural Model
CMIN/DF	<5.00 (Awang, 2012)	1.373	3.895
GFI	≥0.85 (Sica and Ghisi, 2007)	0.950	0.851
AGFI	≥0.80 (Sica and Ghisi, 2007)	0.935	0.807
NFI	≥0.80 (Wu and Wang, 2006)	0.946	0.845
CFI	≥0.80 (Bentler, 1990)	0.985	0.879
TLI	≥0.80 (Sharma, Verma, and Pathare, 2005)	0.981	0.856
RMSEA	< 0.08 (Pedroso et al., 2016)	0.027	0.076

Note : CMIN/DF = The ratio of the chi-square value to degree of freedom, GFI = Goodness-of-fit index, AGFI = Adjusted goodness-of-fit index, NFI = Normed fit index, CFI = Comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis index, and RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation

### Research Hypothesis Testing Result

The significance of relationship among variables was statistically assessed using regression weight and  $R^2$  variance. Table 5 and figure 2 show hypothesis testing results that H1, H2, H3, H4 and H7 are supported, whereas H5 and H6 are not supported. Perceived value has the greatest impact on satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.815$ ), followed by image ( $\beta = 0.285$ ). Further, satisfaction has a sole impact towards word-of-mouth.

Table 5 Hypothesis Result of the Structural Model

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	T-Value	Testing Results
H1	PV→S	0.815	8.165*	Supported
H2	BT→S	0.196	4.721*	Supported
H3	BI→S	0.285	5.388*	Supported
H4	I→S	0.316	5.760*	Supported
H5	PU→S	0.039	0.848	Not Supported
H6	BI→WOM	-0.099	-1.881	Not Supported
H7	S→WOM	0.440	6.351*	Supported

Note: \*Significant at p-value<0.05

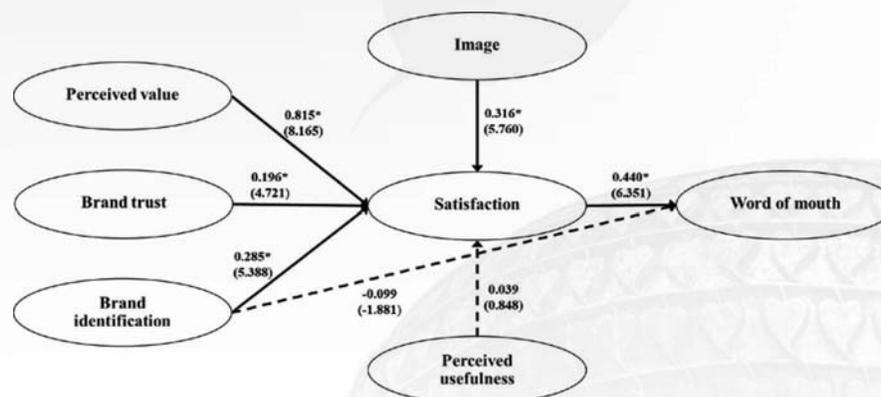


Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

Note : Solid line reports the standardized coefficient with \* as p<0.05, and t-value in parentheses. Dash line reports not significant.

## Discussion

Based on the statistical data in H1, the perceived value of students and parents joining DanceSport clubs has a strong impact on their satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the studies of Malakooti Asl, Kaffashan Kakhki, and Parirokh (2021), Mallika Appuhamilage and Torii (2019), and Teeroovengadam et al. (2019). Generally, the perceived value is evaluated through



money purchase, and happiness is generated through psychological satisfaction or perceived cost-performance ratio (Sevilmiş and Çevik, 2021). Image is the second strongest impact on the satisfaction of students and parents from the result in H4. Their perceptions, feeling, and interpretation towards the DanceSport clubs can impact or enhance the satisfaction level, which in line with previous studies of T. Chandra, Hafni, S. Chandra, Purwati, and J. Chandra (2019), Jeong and Kim (2020), Lu et al. (2020), and Osman and Saputra (2019). The level of consumer's satisfaction includes cognitive and affective aspects which perceived value and image are resulted from the cognitive behavior. Brand identification is the third strongest impact of satisfaction according to H3. Which implies that customer satisfaction can be heighten from the greater level of their commitment or perception towards the brand or DanceSport Club. The finding is similar to research of Balaji et al. (2016), Chen (2017) and Rather and Hollebeek (2019). Brand trust also significantly impact satisfaction in H2, which agree with the studies of Girard and Pinar (2021) and Hopp and Fisher (2021). Trust in the brand or DanceSport club can encourage their satisfaction and experience when using service. On the other hand, satisfaction of students and parents at DanceSport clubs is not derived from perceived usefulness, as proven in H5. The finding contradicts with the studies Islam et al. (2018) and Salimon et al. (2021), however agrees with studies of Kashive et al. (2021). To differentiate the service level among the DanceSport clubs that leads to satisfaction and disseminate positive word-of-mouth, students and parents regard value received, club image, and brand identification and trust rather than perceived usefulness. The benefits gained from dance training may not differ among the clubs to form or included as a factor for competitive advantages in their perspective. Also, as seen in H6, brand identification does not directly impact word-of-mouth, but instead impact indirectly through satisfaction. Therefore, to stimulate consumer's positive word-of-mouth, ensuring customer satisfaction should be emphasized as proven in H7. This finding is consistent with Santos et al. (2020) and Giner and Rillo (2016).

## Conclusion

The research related to DanceSport is in a relatively blank research field, and the relevant literature is very few. This study takes the theoretical research of physical education and management as the theoretical basis of the research, combines these research results with



management, and tries to study some problems that should be paid attention to in the process of marketing operation of Dance Sport. This study would enable to identify the factors creating customer satisfaction and dissemination of positive word-of-mouth regarding the DanceSport club. Data was collected from 500 parents of DanceSport clubs' students aged 4 to 4 years old in Chengdu. Seven hypotheses were proposed and adopted the IOC, CFA, and SEM data analysis to effectively test the conceptual model. The data results can be concluded that to stimulate positive word-of-mouth from consumers, the club's owner must emphasize on building customer satisfaction. Satisfaction of parents and students' of DanceSport club in this study is driven significantly by perceived value, image, brand identification and brand trust respectively. Therefore, the clubs' marketing strategies or operation management strategies should be developed in the manner that continuously improve these aspects in customer perspective. The club's owner should ensure that the provided services and entertainment are worth the money and time spent to form value for customers (Hume and Mort, 2010), leave a good impression after service rendering and build a positive reputation to the DanceSport club (Clemes et al., 2013). Also, engagement and reliance are important for customers to identify strongly with the DanceSport club (Rather and Hollebeek, 2019) and trust on the services (Jain et al., 2018).

### **Recommendation**

The findings of this study indicate that customers' word-of-mouth is impacted from satisfaction, and satisfaction can be derived from perceived value, image, brand identification and brand trust. Therefore, the recommendation for the DanceSport or sport club's owners and marketing practitioners is to develop marketing and operation strategies that aim to build or enhance these factors. To create value to customers, the owners and marketing practitioners can conduct a deep dive study on the customers' expectations from the services, both in monetary and non-monetary aspects. So that services can be customized or adapted to meet their target customers and perceived as worthwhile. A deep dive study in this case can be done through customer satisfaction survey or focused group interview with the parents. As perceived value is the most influential factor to enhance customer satisfaction, seeking and meeting customers' expectation should be prioritized and given effort for achievement. Second prioritization should be given to building image and reputation for the DanceSport club. To in line with the direction



of Chengdu in promoting the sports industry through national DanceSport competitions, the clubs' owner can strive on building capable and talent athletics for the competitors. Numbers of awards winning, talent athletics and instructors can determine the reputation of DanceSport clubs (Shurair and Pokharel, 2019). Also, social media should be utilized to promote and build images of the club such as consistently promote activities of the club and appraisal received. In order to build brand identification and brand trust, club's owners should focus on building engagement activities with the parents and students such as holding sporting and fun events, dance performance events to add students experience and commitment to the clubs. The core culture of the club should be shaped differently from other brands such as the diversified means of identity for customers to recognized and earned competitive advantage. Performing well on these dimensions can resulted to parents and students' satisfaction, which can further influence them to share positive experience and commitment in the club to their society. It can help the club to secure talent athletics, attract new members, and stabilize business operations and performance.

#### Limitation and Further Study

The sample size of this study is selected from the four DanceSport clubs based on comprehensive, and competitions score from Chengdu DanceSport Association. Different sports and art items, different cities and even different countries are likely to show different statistical results. The research could be extended from the sample size level, variables design, or comparative tests could be carried out to achieve different comprehensive statistical results.

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