How Coach Behaviors, Practice Structure, & Operation Quality Influence Parental Valuation of Youth Sport Programs

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Parents purchase youth sport programs because of a desire to provide their child an opportunity to improve skill, to join a team environment, be physically active, and develop character (Martin, Dale, & Jackson, 2001; Schwab, Wells, & Arthur-Banning, 2010). The relationship between youth sport participants and their coaches, by virtue of time spent with a coach throughout a season, provides an ideal environment for psychosocial development of youth (Horn, 2002). Therefore, parental perceptions of coaching behaviors through observing their child’s practices and games should influence parental valuation of a youth sport program. Bandura’s social cognitive theory (SCT) discusses how development is a reciprocal process between participants and their environment. In fact, many parents believe that youth participation in organized sports, helps prepare their children for adulthood through the preparation of life skills (Green & Chaliph, 1998). By understanding the variables which influences customer’s perceived value, managers can identify how to create, deliver and communicate the value and develop a rational price-point for the product (Kotler and Keller, 2011; Livesey & Lennon, 1978). Whether or not a child participates in a program falls on the shoulders of parents, who control the ultimate decision making power of what programs to purchase (Green, 1998) and the perceptions of the customer’s valuation influences repurchase intention (Chang & Wildt, 1994). Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1980) expectancy-valuation model based on the core theory of reasoned action provides the direction for the analysis of variables that influence parental valuation of a youth sport program. Our analysis seeks to identify a structural model that depicts what factors explain parental program valuation.

Method

Upon receiving permission from IRB, parents that attended two youth sporting events (N=1650) were approached prior to their child’s first game at the end-of-season tournament. The 461 participants (27.9%) completed a survey that contained questions relating to coaching behaviors, parental motivations in registering children in the program, an item evaluating how parents value the program, and demographic questions.

Analysis/Results

In order to test construct and factorial validity, 2nd order factors of coaching behaviors and motivations were formed by running coaching behaviors and reasons for registration to their respective factors. The 2nd order factors were then run towards program valuation. Using IBM SPSS AMOS 25 software.

The hypothesized model presented was validated using several common model-fit indices, X2 (18)= 31.45, p =.025, CFI=.983, TLI=.974, RMSEA=.040, SRMR=.043. Therefore confirming that parental motivations in purchasing a youth sport program and specific coaching behaviors directly influences parent program valuation.

Conclusion

This analysis illustrates the structural relationship of specific parental motivations for participation in a youth sport program and coaching behaviors positive influence on parental program valuation. The results introduce a new paradigm for youth sport program valuation that will help researchers and practitioners develop new coach training programs and refocus the program according to parental preferences.