



Effects of Perceived Brand Value on the Intention to Purchase Sports Goods in Children: Mediating Role of Enjoyment of Physical Activity

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Abstract

Introduction: In light of the extensive variety of products available, customers in the sports sector often experience uncertainty when selecting a brand and struggle to differentiate among various options. In the current competitive landscape, sports brands can effectively address these challenges by strategically managing their brand equity.

Objective: This study sought to examine how the perceived value of a brand affects consumers' intentions to purchase sports products, specifically highlighting the mediating role of children's enjoyment in physical activity (PA).

Methods: To achieve this, a sample of 200 children aged 10 to 12 years, who were actively participating in football schools, was voluntarily selected to complete the life satisfaction questionnaires developed by Moore et al. (2009) and the purchase intention questionnaire created by Park et al.

Results: The results obtained from the path analysis performed with PLS software revealed that both the perceived value associated with the brand and the pleasure experienced from engaging in PA have a direct impact on the intention to buy sports products ($P < 0.05$). Additionally, the enjoyment derived from PA serves as a significant mediator in the connection between perceived value and the intention to purchase.

Conclusion: It appears that the enjoyment of PA encourages children to utilize the brand's sports equipment and apparel, as it enhances their motivation to engage in PA and fosters a sense of belonging within a group. Accordingly, it is essential for marketers in the realm of marketing to take into account two significant factors: perceived value and the enjoyment derived from p PA.

Keywords: Brand, Sporting Goods, Enjoyment, Exercise, Children

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1. Introduction

In the current landscape of intensifying business competition, possessing a competitive advantage is deemed essential for any organization. Companies that neglect this aspect risk being ousted from the market. One significant competitive advantage is brand equity (1). This concept is recognized as a vital intangible asset for businesses (2). Brand equity serves as a measure of market acceptance (3) and positively influences consumer purchasing intentions (4). When a brand successfully cultivates brand equity, it becomes ingrained in consumers' memories as a unique and distinct value compared to other brands, leading to repeat purchases or acceptance of new products from that brand (5). Consequently, the likelihood of consumers favoring that brand increases. It is essential for companies to comprehend the fundamental importance of their brand's value in order to improve profitability.

Brand equity essentially reflects the robustness of a brand as perceived by consumers, influenced by their experiences and the knowledge they have gathered over time (6). It significantly influences customer preferences and ultimately affects their intention to

purchase (7). The notion of brand equity is reflected in the perceptions, feelings, and actions of consumers regarding brands, in addition to influencing the company's pricing strategies, market share, and overall profitability (8). Consequently, brand equity can be evaluated through both financial metrics and customer value, or a combination of the two. Research on brand equity, notably the contributions of Aaker (9), has defined it as an embodiment of consumer perceptions and interpretations of a brand. Additionally, brand-specific preferences play a crucial role in how consumers process information, make judgments, and arrive at decisions (10). A brand with significant unique value can undoubtedly sway customers' purchase intentions. Overall, perceived value encompasses three key components: product quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions or purchasing decisions (11).

Perceived value arises from the assessments, preferences, and perceptions held by consumers. When engaging with products and services, customers inherently carry certain expectations. Therefore, the degree to which these expectations are fulfilled significantly impacts the value they assign to the respective product or service (12). The unique value of a



brand is characterized by its recognition and distinctiveness in the consumer's mind, which is both appealing and memorable. Generally, brand equity encompasses various dimensions that constitute the basis of the value provided to consumers. The development of strong brand equity is a gradual, multi-faceted process that can be compared to ascending a ladder. Each rung of this ladder represents a step where the outcome is contingent upon the success of the preceding step, which includes aspects such as salience, performance, imagery, judgment, and brand sentiment (13). It is important to note that perceived value emerges subsequent to perceived quality, with perceived quality serving as a prerequisite for perceived value.

The sports products sector is characterized by its complexity, making it challenging for consumers to fully comprehend its offerings prior to actual use. Given the extensive variety of products available, customers often experience uncertainty when selecting a brand and may struggle to differentiate among various options. Consequently, it is essential for sports brands to effectively manage their brand equity in the current competitive landscape to address the concerns of their customers (14). Research conducted on the environmental and psychological factors influencing children's physical activity (PA) has revealed that the enjoyment derived from such activities plays a crucial role in their engagement. This enjoyment is a significant predictor of sustained participation and enhances children's self-confidence (15). Furthermore, fostering a higher level of enjoyment among children correlates with an increased likelihood of their long-term involvement in PA, as enjoyment is positively associated with an individual's motivation to continue engaging in such activities (16).

Pleasure is fundamentally a psychological phenomenon manifested through a range of emotions, including enjoyment, affection, and contentment. Definitions indicate that the pleasure derived from PA constitutes a favorable cognitive or physiological emotional state, characterized by feelings of satisfaction and happiness that arise from engaging in or completing physical tasks (17). Enhancing the enjoyment associated with PA yields significant health benefits for children (15). Furthermore, maintaining participation in PA at an optimal level led to numerous positive outcomes, such as a decrease in the prevalence of disease risk factors, enhancement of a child's performance, and an increase in positive behaviors within the school environment (18). Luo et al. (19) identified a connection between shared value creation practices and the triadic relationships among consumers, brands, and communities, concluding that such practices fortify consumer-brand relationships, thereby enhancing consumer loyalty. Additionally, Feng & Yanru (20) demonstrated in their research that brand satisfaction and loyalty positively influence repurchase intentions. According to Schau, Muñiz Jr & Arnould (21), value creation activities can be categorized into four types: social networking, perception management, social interaction, and brand usage, through which customers engage in value creation within brand communities.

Laroche et al. assert that brand communities are characterized by three key indicators: shared awareness, shared rituals, and commitments to the community, all of which positively influence value creation activities (22). Dholakia et al. (23) further

emphasize that brand communities formed by passionate customers foster strong relationships among their members. Purchase intention refers to the consumer's inclination to acquire a product or service, essentially reflecting the buyer's expectation to make a purchase following an evaluation of the product (24). A critical factor in assessing the willingness to purchase is the quality of the product; consumers tend to favor higher-quality items, necessitating continuous improvement in quality (25). Moreover, it is vital for brands to offer emotional and sensory benefits to enhance brand value. The theory of planned behavior elucidates the importance of various factors, which significantly influence decision-making processes (26). Consequently, it appears that children's engagement in PA not only provides enjoyment and social interaction but also fosters a passion for sports-related brand products. This leads the researcher to explore whether perceived value can influence the intention to purchase children's goods through the mediation of enjoyment derived from PA.

A review of previous studies indicates that Pham et al. (27) found that brand equity influences customers' intentions to visit Vietnamese restaurants through perceived value. Similarly, Wang and Chiu (28) demonstrated that service impacts the purchasing decisions of sports customers via perceived value. Additionally, Shah et al. (29) revealed that purchase value positively affects purchase intention, mediated by subjective norms. Furthermore, Cyntya & Berlianto (30) established that brand equity positively influences customers' purchase intentions. However, there has been no research focusing on children or considering the mediation of enjoyment derived from sports activities. This highlights a significant gap in the existing literature, underscoring the need for current research to address this void. Such research aims to provide more comprehensive and accurate insights into this area concerning children, thereby assisting industries involved in children's sports goods in understanding the mechanisms of perceived value more effectively.

2. Methods

This research is organized within a descriptive correlational framework and utilizes structural equation modeling methodologies. The statistical population includes all children aged 10 to 12 who are enrolled in football academies in Tehran. A sample size of 200 participants was established, in accordance with the recommendations of Hair et al. (31), which advocate for a 5 to 1 ratio for each structural component and comply with the minimum sample size requirements for factor analysis.

2.1. Measures

The Enjoyment of Life Questionnaire, created by Moore et al. (32), consists of 16 items aimed at evaluating the enjoyment of PA in children aged 12 years and younger. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert scale, which ranges from "completely disagree" to "completely agree," assigning scores from 1 to 5. It is important to note that items 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 13, and 16 are scored in reverse. In the context of this study, the questionnaire underwent validation, resulting in a validity index of 0.92 and a reliability coefficient of 0.83, as assessed by Cronbach's alpha.

The purchase intention questionnaire created by Peña-García et al. (33) comprises four items assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, where responses range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). In the context of this study, the questionnaire underwent validation, resulting in a validity index of 0.88 and a reliability coefficient of 0.85, as calculated by Cronbach's alpha.

The brand equity questionnaire developed by Aker in 1997 comprises 32 items designed to evaluate brand equity. Participants express their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 5 signifies strong agreement. In the context of this research, the questionnaire underwent validation, resulting in a validity index of 0.94 and a reliability coefficient of 0.90, as assessed by Cronbach's alpha.

2.2. Procedure

During the implementation phase, initial coordination was established with the football team in Tehran. Following this, permission was obtained and arrangements were made with the managers of the football schools. The research objectives and their

practical applications were communicated to both parents and children. Subsequently, with parental consent, questionnaires were distributed and collected from children aged 10 to 12.

2.3. Data analysis

The examination of the collected data in the descriptive statistics such as mean, and standard deviation. The structural equation modeling technique was also applied. The analysis was performed using PLS version 4 statistical software at a significance threshold of 0.05.

3. Results

Table 1 outlines the characteristics of the variables associated with perceived brand value, the intention to purchase sports goods, and the enjoyment of PA in children. Furthermore, the skewness and kurtosis values for each variable are within the acceptable range of -2 to +2. As a result, the assumption of a normal distribution of the data is maintained.

Table 1. Description of Research Variables.

Variable	Kurtosis	Skewness	SD	Mean	Maximum	Minimum
Perceived Brand Value	-1.03	0.134	25.1	90.09	148	47
Purchase Intention	-1.06	-0.031	4.1	12.09	20	4
Enjoyment of Physical Activity	-1.17	-0.075	15.1	46.6	73	16

Table 2 revealed that the metrics for Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) surpassed the established acceptable

limits. As a result, the questionnaires utilized exhibited adequate reliability and validity.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability.

Variable	Cronbach's Reliability	Composite Reliability	AVE
Perceived Brand Value	0.82	0.82	0.56
Purchase Intention	0.75	0.76	0.59
Enjoyment of Physical Activity	0.91	0.92	0.45

The results derived from Pearson's correlation coefficient revealed a noteworthy association between the perceived value of the brand and purchase intention ($P=0.001$, $r=0.44$), as well as between the enjoyment of PA and purchase intention ($P=0.001$, $r=0.48$). Moreover, a significant positive correlation was identified between the perceived value of the brand and the enjoyment of PA ($P=0.001$, $r=0.41$). These findings lend support to the hypothesis of a linear relationship among the examined variables. Additionally, the variance inflation factor (VIF) values for the variables in this study remain below the critical

threshold of 10, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a concern within the analyzed variables.

The results derived from the path analysis performed with PLS software, as illustrated in Table 3, demonstrate that both perceived brand value ($P=0.000$, $T=3.78$, $b=0.29$) and enjoyment of PA ($P=0.000$, $T=5.05$, $b=0.36$) have a positive and statistically significant effect on children's intention to buy sports goods. Additionally, perceived brand value also has a positive and significant effect on children's enjoyment of PA ($P=0.000$, $T=8.17$, $b=0.45$).

Table 3. Coefficients and Values of the Structural Model for the Direct Path.

Path	b	SE	T	P
Perceived Brand Value → Purchase Intention	0.29	0.077	3.78	0.000
Perceived Brand Value → Enjoyment of Physical Activity	0.45	0.056	8.17	0.000
Enjoyment of Physical Activity → Purchase Intention	0.36	0.072	5.05	0.000

The results illustrated in Table 4 demonstrate that the enjoyment of life serves as a crucial mediating factor in influencing the perceived value of the brand,

subsequently impacting children's intentions to buy sports products ($P=0.000$, $T=4.21$, $b=0.16$).

Table 4. Coefficients and Values of the Structural Model for the Indirect Path.

Path	b	SE	T	P
Perceived Brand Value → Enjoyment of Physical Activity → Purchase Intention	0.16	0.039	4.21	0.000

The values of Stone-Geisler's Q2 index, as shown in Table 5, are all positive, which indicates that the

structural model possesses a high level of quality. The model demonstrates robust predictive capabilities,

especially in relation to endogenous latent variables. The R^2 value for the purchase intention variable is 0.32, indicating that the model explains 32% of the variance in purchase intention. Furthermore, the SRMR value is 0.072, which is below the acceptable limit of 0.08, and

the goodness of fit index (GOF) for the overall model evaluation is 0.37, surpassing the threshold of 0.36. This evidence suggests that the model is a good fit for the data.

Table 5. Model Fit Indices.

Variable	Q^2	R^2	SRMR	GOF
Perceived Brand Value	-	-	0.072	0.37
Purchase Intention	0.174	0.32		
Enjoyment of Physical Activity	0.085	0.21		
Acceptable Value	Positive		<0.08	>0.36

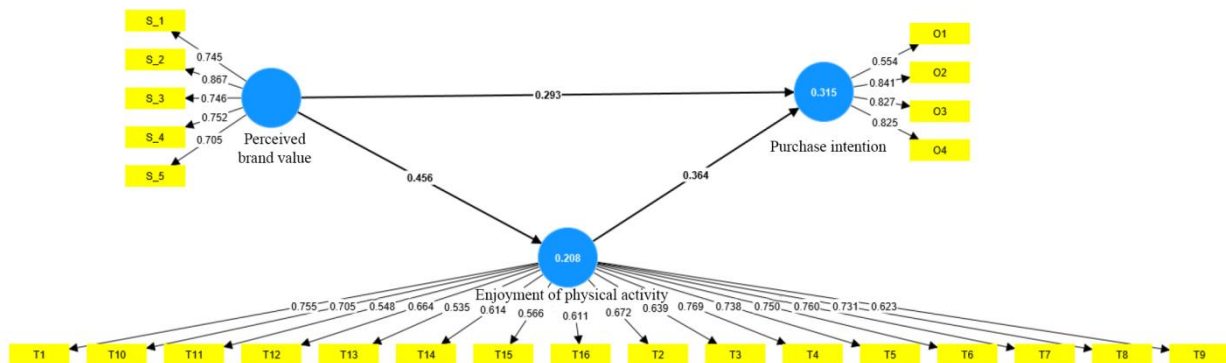


Figure 1. Standard Coefficients of Paths.

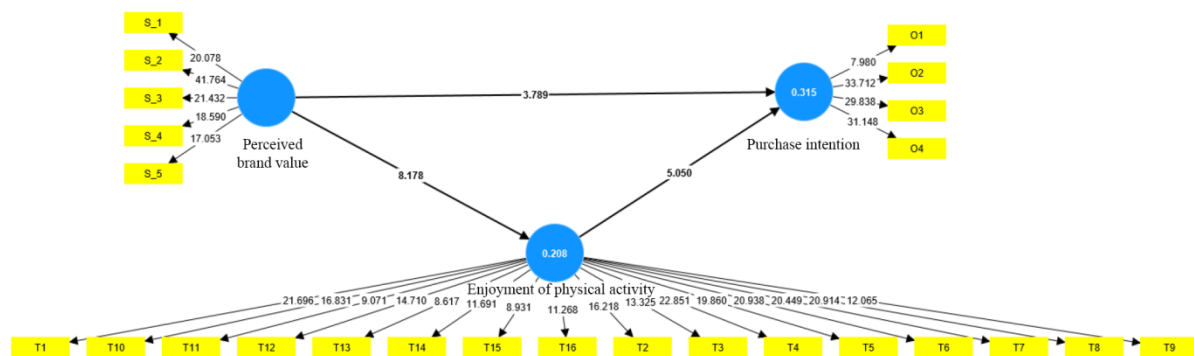


Figure 2. Research Model in the form of T Values.

4. Discussion

The aim of the present study was to investigate the impact of perceived brand value on the intention to purchase sports equipment, specifically considering the mediating role of children's enjoyment of PA. The results reveal that perceived special value has a significant and positive effect on children's purchasing intentions. This finding is consistent with prior research, including studies by Chattalas and Shukla (34), Hennigs et al. (35), Cheah et al. (36), and Jung Choo et al. (37), which have established a direct link between perceived brand value and purchase intention. Consumers generally perceive that a brand that fulfills their value expectations increases their likelihood of repeat purchases, recommendations to others, and willingness to pay a premium for its products, even when alternatives are available at lower prices (38,39). Therefore, customers' subjective assessments of brand value are essential (35) and positively affect their purchase intentions (40). It is widely acknowledged in scholarly discourse that perceived value is a critical predictor of purchase intention, as supported by research from Gallarza et al. (41) and Wang et al. (42). Moreover, the function of perceived value as a proxy for customer satisfaction, which subsequently reflects

customer loyalty, has been corroborated by earlier investigations (43). Additionally, Wu et al. (44) illustrated that improving customers' perceptions of brand value results in heightened purchase intentions in online contexts.

The results of this research suggest that the pleasure experienced from engaging in PA has a significant and positive effect on consumers' intentions to make purchases. Furthermore, this enjoyment serves as an essential mediating factor in the relationship between brand equity and purchase intention. A strong link exists between the fields of sports psychology and business, particularly in relation to consumers' purchasing intentions. Scholars characterize purchase intention as the probability that consumers will buy a product, emphasizing that psychological elements and social dynamics greatly influence the acquisition of sports-related goods. Numerous markets utilize psychological theories to better understand consumer purchase intentions. Sports psychology involves mental preparation, which encompasses various components that significantly impact athletes. Key factors include social status, economic conditions, attractiveness, physical stamina, ethical background, and value systems (45). Moreover,

social influences, such as those from peers and groups, contribute to the decision-making process regarding the purchase of sports products, with consumers' enthusiasm for sports also playing a significant role (11).

The enjoyment derived from engaging in sports appears to serve as a mediating factor, influencing both psychological and social dimensions. Within the realm of sports psychology, the pleasure associated with PA enhances a child's motivation and interest, encouraging continued participation in such activities and subsequently leading to the purchase of sports equipment and apparel. This enjoyment may, therefore, heighten the likelihood of acquiring sports-related products. Additionally, from a social perspective, the enjoyment of PA fosters the development of groups and teams among children. As peer groups form, children are motivated to align with the values of their teams, which often results in shopping for sports gear and clothing. Overall, it is evident that the enjoyment of PA fulfills both psychological and social roles, and the perceived value of a brand can further enhance a child's propensity to purchase sports products by strengthening these two elements.

4.1. Conclusion

The enjoyment derived from PA appears to serve two primary psychological and social functions. Furthermore, the perceived value of a brand can enhance a child's inclination to purchase sports products by positively influencing these psychological and social dimensions. Consequently, in the realm of marketing, the findings of this study suggest that marketers should prioritize two critical variables - perceived value and enjoyment of PA - to effectively boost the intention to purchase sports-related products. One notable limitation of the current study is its correlational and cross-sectional design. Future research should consider a longitudinal framework. Unlike previous studies, this investigation specifically targeted children between the ages of 10 and 12. Moreover, the limited exposure of these children to sports brand products may present a constraint. Therefore, it is advisable for future researchers to examine similar studies involving adolescents. Additionally, the type of questionnaires utilized in this research poses another limitation, as it can be difficult to guarantee the sincerity and diligence of children when responding. Future researchers are urged to adopt alternative data collection techniques, such as interviews.

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Footnotes

Authors' Contribution: This study was carried out solely by the corresponding author.

Conflict of Interests: The researchers confirms that there is no conflict of interests in this study with any participant.

Data Availability: The data that support the findings of this study are openly available upon request from the corresponding author.

Ethical Approval: The author confirms that all steps and requirements of this study comply with ethical guidelines. Participants were informed about the characteristics of the study and gave written informed consent.

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