

# INPLASY

## Quality in children's sports services: A systematic review

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### ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

**Support** - No support.

**Review Stage at time of this submission** - Completed but not published.

**Conflicts of interest** - None declared.

**INPLASY registration number:** INPLASY2024110058

**Amendments** - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 13 November 2024 and was last updated on 13 November 2024.

### INTRODUCTION

**Review question / Objective** The aim of this research is to identify the current scientific evidence on the methodologies and approaches used to evaluate the quality of service focused on children's sports.

**Condition being studied** The evaluation of the quality of the service seeks to know the expectations and perceptions of the users, but these have been focused mainly on young people and adults. The evaluation of service quality in the children's population has been little studied; this topic should be of great importance for sports organizations, given that this population comprises a large percentage of users.

The objective of this research was to examine the existing literature on the evaluation of the quality of children's sports services. A systematic review was determined to be the most appropriate search strategy to address the purpose of this study, as it is considered a good methodology. It also served

to expand the list of publications eligible for inclusion and improve the scope of the review. Currently, there is little scientific evidence evaluating the quality of children's sports services, so the purpose is to synthesize in a clear, objective and methodical way the research on this topic from January 2014 to December 2023, with the help of the criteria established by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) published in 2020 (Page, M. J. et al., 2021), this consists of checking a list of 27 items and a 3-phase flowchart: identification, screening and inclusion.

### METHODS

**Search strategy** A search was carried out in different databases using key words in English, however, within this search, articles written in Spanish were considered. The keywords were: quality; sports services; child\*. As well as the use of Boolean operators and the application of filters: range of years of publication; languages of the

studies; accessibility of the information. This review was carried out in the SCOPUS, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect and Web of Science databases. Likewise, studies related to the subject matter and involving the participation of children aged six to twelve years were considered. For this search, the titles and abstracts of the articles were analyzed, followed by the full text of those that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria."

**Participant or population** Girls and boys between 6 and 12 years old who practice physical-sports activities.

**Intervention** The methods of evaluation of the quality of the sports service in child population.

**Comparator** Not applicable.

**Study designs to be included** For this review, the recommendations of the PRISMA statement (Page, M. J. et al., 2021) were used, which include a 27-item checklist and a flow diagram. Additionally, the CASPe evaluation tool (López, 2021) was applied to verify the quality of the studies. This review includes several stages: information search, identification of relevant studies, study selection, data presentation in a table, and summary and reporting of results.

**Eligibility criteria** The search criteria were: 1) articles published in the last 10 years (2014 – 2023); 2) articles written in Spanish or English; 3) open access articles; 4) those that were related to the topic of study; 5) age of participants (between 6 and 12 years old).

**Information sources** The search for information was carried out in the SCOPUS, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect and Web of Science databases, were searched for English and Spanish articles published between 2014 and 2023.

**Main outcome(s)** The study highlights the importance of assessing the expectations and needs of child users in sports services to foster improvements in service quality at sports centers. There is little scientific evidence on service quality in the field of children's sports, indicating a need for further research in this area. Available studies show that children primarily value their relationship with the instructor, the tangible aspects of the facilities, and the emotional environment in activities. To improve sports programs and user experience, it is recommended to expand research in this population. This could provide key data for sports center managers to adapt and enhance

their programs based on the expectations and perceptions of child users.

**Additional outcome(s)** This research aims to provide updated information on the application of various methods to evaluate service quality in the field of children's sports. Evaluating the quality of service offered to children in sports organizations is essential, using diverse methods and tools that take into account the specific needs of this population. Future research could focus on analyzing and demonstrating the importance of service quality for child users, considering different contexts, types of sports, and user gender. This is a relevant topic in today's society, with the goal of promoting continuous improvement in sports organizations.

**Data management** The results obtained were used to initiate the process of emptying the data using Microsoft Excel. These were extracted by one of the researchers using a pre-established checklist. The data were organized and summarized in a spreadsheet where the name of the authors, title of the document, year of publication, key words and abstract were included and then passed through inclusion and exclusion criteria. Each article was analyzed by two researchers using certain criteria to improve the reliability of the articles. The following information was extracted from the remaining articles: 1) identification data; 2) objective; 3) study design; 4) sample; 5) study variables; 6) instrument and software used; 7) main results.

**Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis** The CASPe critical reading tool (Cano et al., 2010) focused on qualitative research was used to evaluate the methodological quality of the studies. This tool consists of 10 questions aimed at assessing the quality of the study by considering three general aspects: rigor, credibility, and relevance. The CASPe tool has been used in various fields, including sports. Two reviewers analyzed the selected studies with the help of this tool. The results of this evaluation were mostly positive, allowing the studies to be included in the review.

**Strategy of data synthesis** A total of 24 articles of interest for the research topic were obtained, of which 3 were eliminated due to being duplicates. Subsequently, from the 21 articles, those not relevant by title and abstract were excluded, leaving a total of 7. Finally, those that did not include the child population in their sample were discarded, giving a total of 5 articles considered for this systematic review.

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**Subgroup analysis** Not applicable.

**Sensitivity analysis** Not applicable.

**Language restriction** Other languages than Spanish and English.

**Country(ies) involved** MExico; Spain.

**Keywords** service quality; children's sport; sports organizations.

**Contributions of each author**

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