

Participation, retention and dropout of children and adolescents in club-based community tennis

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Introduction

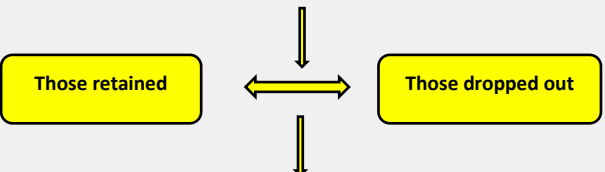
Within the national sports policy of Australia, improving participation in organised sport, specifically club sport, is a priority due to its recognised positive association with health and wellbeing of participants. Club-sport participation is high among children but it declines sharply during adolescence. Little is known about the factors that influence players in making the choice to continue playing (retention) or to drop out. This poster presents the summary of a research study that focused on participation of adolescents in community level club-based tennis, and investigated the determinants of retention and dropout among tennis players aged between 10-18 years from tennis clubs in Victoria.

Methodology

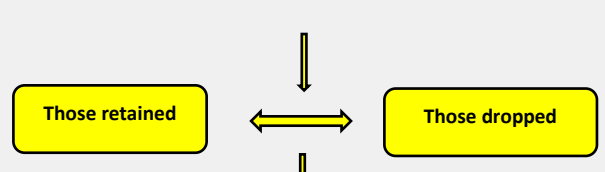
A mixed-method approach comprising of quantitative and qualitative studies within the framework of the socio-ecological model was used.

Research study plan

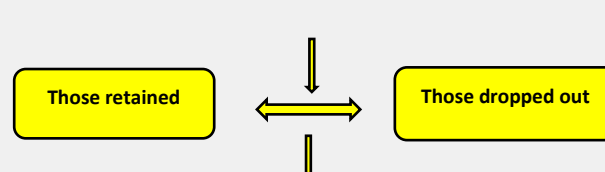
Study 1- Quantitative analysis of demographic variables in club tennis participation



Study 2- Quantitative survey exploring determinants of retention and dropout in club tennis players



Study 3- Qualitative study on determinants of retention and dropout



Recommendations to improve participation and retention

Conclusion

Promotion of fun / enjoyment must be prioritised in delivering sports club programs, coaching and competition. Competency and enjoyment are interconnected in promoting retention; therefore, access and affordability of good quality coaching that promotes enjoyment along with teaching sporting skills should be given importance to sustain children's interest and passion for the game and improve their retention in club sport.

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Study 1

Aim: To investigate the demographic variation between retained and dropout players playing club tennis in the state of Victoria.

Samples: Registered club tennis players (10-18 years).

Variables: Age (10-18 years); Sex (male, female); Location (metro, regional); Socio-economic status.

Data collection: Secondary data.

Findings: Significant association between all demographic factors and retention in club-based tennis participation. Highest retention rates are among male participants aged 11 years, living within the metropolitan region in a suburb with a high socio-economic index (SEIFA).

Study 2

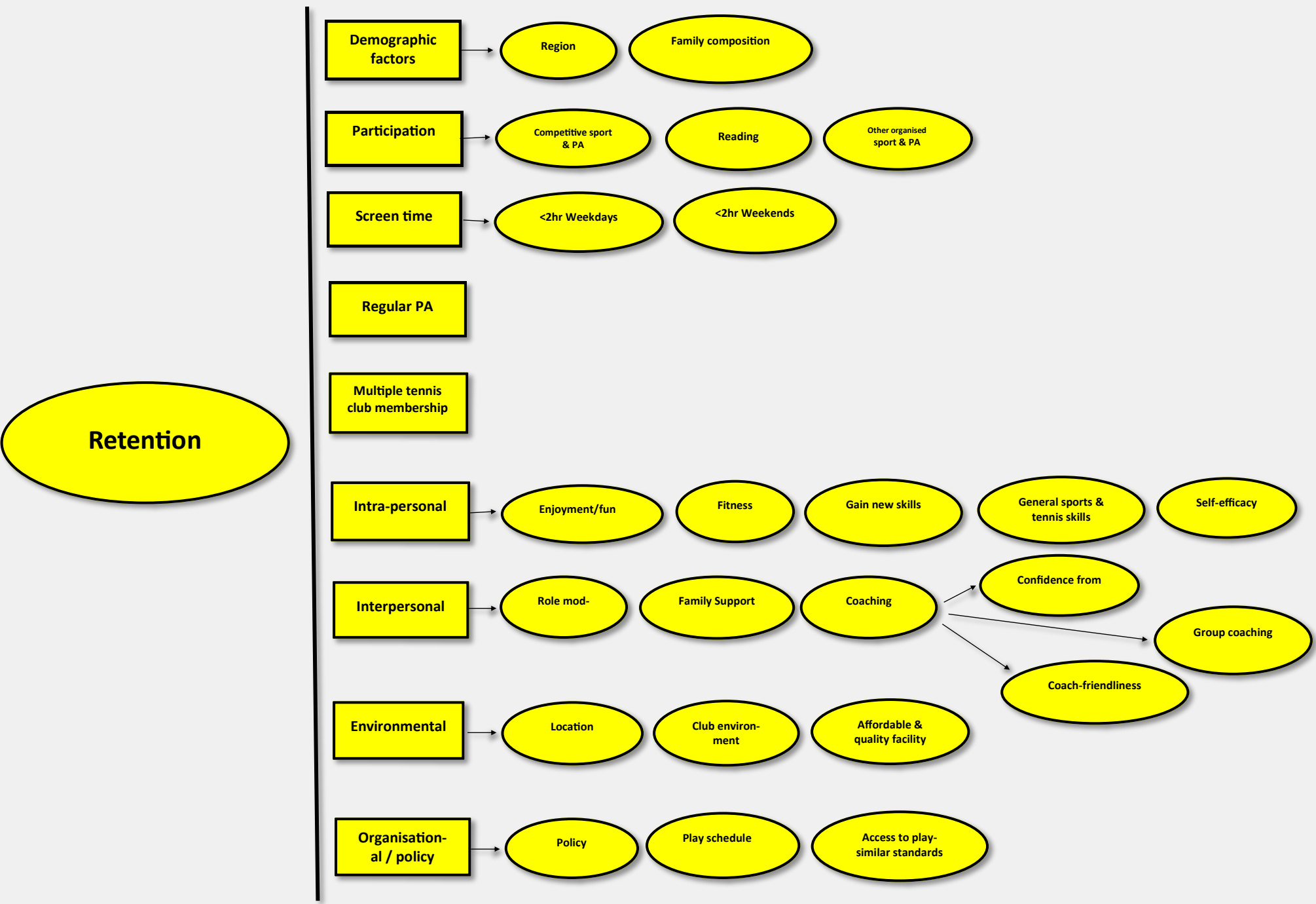
Aim: To investigate the determinants of retention and drop out in club tennis players in the state of Victoria.

Samples: Registered club tennis players (10-18 years).

Variables: Age (10-18 years); Sex (male, female); Location (metro, regional); Socio-economic status.

Data collection: Online quantitative survey.

Findings: Identified the key socio-ecological determinants that have a significant association with retention of children and adolescents in club tennis.



Study 3

Aim: To investigate the factors that influence the players decision to retain or dropout from playing club tennis.

Samples: Players who provided their contact details from study 2, parents and coaches.

Data collection: Qualitative semi-structured interviews.

Findings: Intrapersonal determinants 'enjoyment' and 'competency' are the two 'core' determinants that directly influence players' decision to continue to play or to drop out. Study also revealed the interconnection of enjoyment and competency and how the direct or indirect links of the different socio-ecological elements influence these factors in promoting retention or dropout.

