

# The Influence of service equity and psychological Contract on Customer Citizenship Behavior in Chinese Fitness Service Enterprises: Customer Satisfaction as an Intermediary

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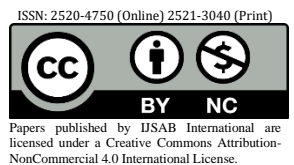
## Abstract

At present, the output value provided by the service sector accounts for about 70 percent of the China GDP, which is an important indicator to measure a country's economic development. However, the homogenization of the current service industry is relatively high. To obtain a place in the competitive market, customer relationship management is particularly important. In recent years, the academic circle has put forward the idea that "customer is a part of enterprise human resources" and put forward the concept of "customer citizenship behavior" based on the theory of organizational behavior. In other words, customers who enjoy good service will take the initiative to make free publicity for the enterprise and provide good suggestions to help the enterprise improve the service process. Enterprises should strive to use the existing customer resources to bring more tangible or intangible benefits for the enterprise. Based on the quantitative design and the social exchange theory, the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between customer citizenship behavior, psychological contract, and service equity. From the findings of this study, the psychological contract and service equity, influence the mechanism of psychological contract and service equity on customer citizenship behavior respectively and discusses the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the above influencing process. The implication is to provide guidance for enterprises to use psychological contract and service equity to promote customer citizenship behavior, to bring more customers to the marketing practice.



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## Introduction

In western human resource management and organizational behavior research, psychological contract and organizational citizenship behavior have been hot issues since the 20th century. With the improvement of national education level and quality, enterprises have requirements for applicants such as education background, experience, ability and so on. Meanwhile, the publicity of enterprises themselves and the outside world also prompts the applicants to have a kind of treatment and emotional expectations for the enterprise. This mutual demand and expectation form a kind of implicit psychological expectation, namely psychological contract. Once fulfilled, this psychological contract will prompt employees to have a high sense of satisfaction, and thus consciously make actions that are beneficial to the enterprise, namely organizational citizenship behavior (Rousseau, 1990). Psychological contract originally originated from organizational behavior. Roehling (1996) replaced it in the field of marketing and found that there was also a psychological contract between customers and enterprises. In addition to the purchase of enterprise products, enjoy the service provided by the enterprise and the written indication of after-sales service, customers also have expectations of such as enterprise service personnel should respect customers, to provide sincere service to customers and other implicit requirements. At the same time, in the 21st century, some scholars (Gruen,1995; Groth,2011) studied customer citizenship behavior and believed that customers would spontaneously recommend the enterprise to others, help others to make choices, and give service feedback to the enterprise, which would bring huge profits to the enterprise. The global economy is shifting from an "industrial economy" to a "service economy" as service companies account for a growing share of gross domestic product. In terms of service marketing, on the one hand, due to the intangible characteristics of service products, production and consumption at the same time, customers can not have an accurate understanding of the quality of services before consumption, they tend to get information from people who have similar purchasing experience. Therefore, the recommendation and help behavior of experienced customers will have a significant impact on customer decision-making. On the other hand, due to the variability of service products, it is difficult for customers to evaluate the standard of service quality, and customers are more likely to judge whether the service provided by enterprises is fair by comparing with other customers. Customers feel fair service, will help enterprises to provide positive evaluation and even positive word-of-mouth publicity. On the contrary, if customers feel that the company has unfairly served them, the negative word-of-mouth effect will have a negative impact on the company's image. (Chen et al. 2021; Kang & Ye 2021; Meng 2021; She et al. 2022; Zuo et al. 2023; Yan 2022). At present, the tertiary industry is developing rapidly, but there are still many problems in service enterprises, such as the high degree of homogeneity of service enterprises, lack of core competitiveness. How to use the existing loyal customers to attract more potential customers and make customer citizenship behavior bring more benefits to the enterprise is the focus of service enterprises, and it is also an advantage that cannot be replicated in the homogeneous market competition. Considering scholars at home and abroad (Roehling, 1996; Groth,2011; Luo Haicheng and Fan Xiucheng, 2015; Yang Lin, 2010) studies the theories of psychological contract, service equity and customer citizenship behavior. This paper concludes that customer psychological contract and service equity can promote customer citizenship behavior. At the same time, the fulfillment of both psychological contract and service equity can make customers feel satisfied, thus leading to the generation of customer citizenship behavior. Therefore, this paper argues that customer satisfaction plays a mediating role in the influence of psychological contract and service equity on customer citizenship behavior respectively. Using structural equation model, this study found that: (1) psychological contract and service equity have significant positive effects on customer citizenship behavior; Among them, customer satisfaction plays an intermediary role in the influence of psychological contract and

service equity on customer citizenship behavior. (2) The two dimensions of psychological contract have significant positive effects on the three dimensions of customer citizenship behavior; Among them, transaction psychological contract has the most significant influence on customer feedback behavior. (3) Outcome fairness has a significant positive impact on the three dimensions of customer citizenship behavior; Procedural fairness positively affects helping behavior; Communication fairness positively affects recommendation and feedback behavior; Information fairness only has a significant positive effect on recommendation behavior. Finally, on the basis of empirical research, this study provides some suggestions for the marketing practice of fitness enterprises: pay attention to and maintain customer psychological contract; Create customer fitness files, establish a good customer communication mechanism; Provide accurate and timely information; Create a platform for customer citizenship behavior. (Chen et al. 2021; Kang & Ye 2021; Meng 2021; She et al. 2022; Zuo et al. 2023; Yan 2022)

### **Research Background**

After the epidemic, health has been paid attention to and the awareness of exercise and fitness has been awakened: Rousseau once said, "The body is weak, it will never fully cultivate a dynamic soul and wisdom", a strong body is the guarantee of people's happy life and work, after the baptism of the novel coronavirus epidemic, people cherish health more, the awareness of sports and fitness quickly awakened, the number of people who regularly participate in sports in China reached 435 million yuan in 2020, This is 27.01 million yuan more than in 2019, and the people are rapidly developing the habit of exercising and keeping fit. Fitness is a kind of sports items, such as a variety of unarmed asthenics, rhythmic gymnastics, form gymnastics and a variety of resistance actions, gymnastics, yoga can increase strength, flexibility, increase endurance, improve coordination, master the strength of each part of the body, to make the body strong. The market size of China's fitness industry has always maintained a growing trend. In 2022, the market size of China's fitness industry reached 336.2 billion yuan, with a year-on-year growth of 8.03%. It is estimated that the market size will further grow to 389 billion yuan in 2022 by the in-depth discussion report on the operation situation and investment planning of China's fitness industry from 2022 to 2027. The outlook for the fitness industry is positive, but competition is fierce. From the perspective of the five forces competition model, there are more enterprises in the fitness industry, and the competition is fiercer. The upstream suppliers are generally fitness equipment manufacturing industry and fitness trainer training industry, and the product homogeneity is low, so the upstream bargaining power is strong. The downstream of the fitness industry is the customer. Due to the different environment of coaches, courses and venues, the experience gap between different brands of fitness clubs is large. Therefore, the bargaining power of the downstream customers is weak. Because the industry needs a large amount of capital investment in the early stage, the industry potential entry threat is small; At the same time, in recent years, online fitness is more popular, and the industry substitutes are more threatening. A good fitness organization not only understands its responsibilities, but also understands the people-oriented service concept. If the management of the gym still regards the cold business model, equipment and sales as the first premise, it may be beneficial to the development of the enterprise in the short term. But good organization in the field of fitness, its social responsibility and the spread of ideas is an important part of the attraction. From the perspective of service consciousness, nowadays, with the overwhelming impact of the Internet + boom, the fitness field also plays the Internet model. For the gym scene, the shared fitness warehouse, mini gym and Internet gym are impacting the original immature Chinese traditional fitness organizations. Traditional fitness is a newly emerging fitness mode in China and one of the main application scenarios of Internet fitness or fitness products. If the service awareness of traditional gyms is not enough to drive

people's fitness consumption or even hinder the enthusiasm of the fitness crowd, we ask whether other derivative services will be greatly reduced in use or even the meaning of existence? At present, the customer-oriented service consciousness of some gyms has not been paid enough attention. (Chen et al. 2021; Kang & Ye 2021; Meng 2021; She et al. 2022; Zuo et al. 2023; Yan 2022). Since ancient times, "fairness" has always been one of the objects of human concern. The concept of "fairness" has its specific connotation in different academic fields today. In the field of sociology, fairness is understood to mean that the social status, economic income and consumption level among social members are close rather than excessively unequal. In the field of economics, fairness is mainly reflected in the equal opportunity of employment and entrepreneurship, and through this opportunity to achieve common prosperity by means of honest management and legal prosperity. In the field of law, fairness means that everyone enjoys equal, complete, true and guaranteed civil rights, and uses it to participate in society with equal opportunities to realize equality before the law. In the field of administration, social equity emphasizes the promotion of political power and social welfare to those who lack political and economic resources and are at a disadvantage: it emphasizes the equality of government service provision and the responsibility and obligation of public managers in the process of decision-making and organizational implementation. However, in the field of business administration, theoretical researchers have studied service equity for less than 20 years. Elizabeth C. Kleinmer, an American scholar, put forward the concept of service equity for the first time in 1988. She believes that the theory of social communication equity is also applicable to the communication between service enterprises and customers. Service fairness refers to customers' evaluation of the fairness of service provided by enterprises. In 1998, American scholars Kathleen Seiders and Leonard L. Berry pointed out in their article *Service Fairness: What it is and Why it Matters*: The invisibility of service increases the risk of customers' purchasing behavior. That is, before purchasing services, customers cannot evaluate the quality of services. Sometimes, even after consuming services, customers still may not be able to accurately evaluate their consumption experience. Based on the above situation, some unfair service enterprises may harm the interests of customers in order to seek greater personal gains. It is because of this potential threat to customers' interests that customers pay more attention to the fairness of service. Therefore, enterprises, especially service enterprises, must attach great importance to service equity. Service equity is one of the hot topics in the field of service marketing in recent years. In the past decade, equity theory has been widely applied in the field of service failure and service recovery, but the research results on equity in service consumption of fitness enterprises are few. In recent years, many scholars have realized this problem and started to study service equity in the service field of fitness enterprises and obtained certain research results. Service equity in the service field of fitness enterprises provides a new idea and entry point for the research on customer satisfaction and loyalty. The research on the influence of service equity in fitness enterprises on customer citizenship behavior and customer satisfaction will undoubtedly become one of the types of research focuses on the academic circle in the future. (Chen et al. 2021; Kang & Ye 2021; Meng 2021; She et al. 2022; Zuo et al. 2023; Yan 2022)

### **Research purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to explore how customer psychological contract and service equity affect customer citizenship behavior in the context of marketing, and to explore the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the influencing process. Combined with the empirical study of fitness enterprises, the research framework on service equity, customer satisfaction and customer citizenship behavior is organized and constructed, and the questionnaire is designed based on this, so as to achieve the following research objectives:

1. Explore the influence between psychological contract of fitness service enterprises and customer citizenship behavior.
2. Explore the influence between service fairness of fitness service enterprises and customer citizenship behavior.
3. Explore the influence between psychological contract and customer satisfaction in fitness service enterprises.
4. Discuss the influence between service fairness and customer satisfaction of fitness service enterprises.
5. Explore the influence between customer satisfaction and customer citizenship behavior of fitness service enterprises.
6. Explore the mediating role of customer satisfaction in fitness service enterprises in psychological contract and customer citizenship behavior.
7. Explore the mediating relationship between customer satisfaction of fitness service enterprises and service fairness and customer citizenship behavior.

## **Research significance**

### **(1) Theoretical significance**

By referring to the relevant literature of domestic and foreign scholars, this paper puts psychological contract, service equity and customer citizenship behavior into a theoretical framework to supplement the theoretical research of the three. The specific theoretical significance is as follows: First, it is an interdisciplinary attempt and innovation to extend the theory of psychological contract and organizational citizenship behavior in organizational behavior to the field of marketing and explore the relationship between customer psychological contract and customer citizenship behavior. This study is the first to explore and verify the relationship between customer psychological contract and customer citizenship behavior, and to supplement the relationship theory of the two. Second, customer psychological contract and customer citizenship behavior are hot issues in Western marketing field in recent years. Domestic research is still in its infancy, and empirical research is rare. Luo Haicheng (2015) proved that psychological contracts also exist in marketing context through automobile repair industry and beauty industry and verified the relationship between psychological contract and customer satisfaction. Later, some scholars (Peng Lei, 2015; Li Linda, 2017; Yanglin, 2019; Zhao Xin et al., 2011) respectively conducted empirical studies on tourism, communication, banking, and restaurants, all of which confirmed the existence of psychological contract in the field of marketing. This study selected the fitness industry with high customer involvement for empirical study and supplemented the few existing empirical studies in China. Third, as for the prediction source of customer citizenship behavior, most previous studies only consider the direct influence of one factor on customer citizenship behavior and lack the indirect effect of various factors on customer citizenship behavior. In addition, most studies only focus on the relationship between the whole variables, and do not carry out in-depth research on the relationship between various dimensions of variables. Therefore, this paper integrates customer citizenship behavior, psychological contract and service equity into a model framework, which systematizes the existing isolated research. Furthermore, the relationship between different dimensions of the variables is studied deeply, and the existing research is refined. (Chen et al. 2021; Kang & Ye 2021; Meng 2021; She et al. 2022; Zuo et al. 2023; Yan 2022)

### **(2) Practical significance**

Customer citizenship behavior can bring benefits to enterprises. For example, customer recommendation behavior can help the enterprise bring more customers, and customer helping behavior can help potential customers to understand and choose the enterprise faster

and better. Customer feedback behavior can help enterprises improve their services and management. Therefore, how to help enterprises stimulate customers' civic behavior has important meaning and value. The practical significance of this paper lies in: First, through the study of the relationship between psychological contract and customer citizenship behavior, help enterprises pay attention to the cultivation and maintenance of customer psychological contract, to promote enterprises to use psychological contract for customer citizenship behavior marketing. Secondly, through the research on the relationship between service equity and customer citizenship behavior, the factors that can best promote customer citizenship behavior in the fitness industry are found out, to help enterprises strengthen the management mechanism of service equity and stimulate customer citizenship behavior. Finally, from the perspective of psychological contract and service fairness, help enterprises improve customer satisfaction, promote the generation of customer citizenship behavior, and bring competitive advantages to enterprises.

### **Research innovation**

Based on the relevant theories of service equity, psychological contract and organizational citizenship behavior in organizational behavior, this paper discusses the influence of psychological contract and service equity on customer citizenship behavior for the first time. In the study of customer citizenship behavior, based on the review of existing literature, this paper not only discusses the influence of a single variable on customer citizenship behavior, but also integrates multiple variables together, puts multiple factors in a framework, establishes a relationship model, and supplements the relationship between various variables and dimensions. Through questionnaire survey and data analysis, the paper makes a comprehensive demonstration, and explores, applies, and promotes the theory of service equity, psychological contract and organizational citizenship behavior in the marketing field of fitness enterprises, so as to enrich the theories of service equity, customer psychological contract and customer citizenship behavior in the marketing context.

### **Literature review**

#### **(1) Review of customer citizenship behavior**

##### **The concept of customer citizenship**

Gruen for the first time used the concept of "civic behavior" to outline the extra-role behaviors between customers and enterprises, and defined civic behavior as the behaviors that are helpful or important to the enterprise. These behaviors are valued by the enterprise but are not the behaviors that the enterprise requires customers to do. Subsequently, many scholars at home and abroad have defined "customer citizenship behavior". In summary, customer citizenship behavior can be summarized into the following three characteristics: (1) It is voluntary and spontaneous behavior taken by customers, rather than the behavior required by enterprises; (2) Behaviors that are helpful to the improvement of service quality and operation efficiency; (3) This behavior is not included in the process of customer's purchase of products and services.

##### **The dimensions of customer citizenship behavior**

Because the research on customer citizenship behavior is still in the initial stage, existing scholars have different dimensions of customer citizenship behavior and use different scales in their respective empirical studies. At present, there are three dimensions of customer citizenship behavior, five dimensions and eight dimensions. Bettencourt (1997) believes that customer citizenship behavior can be divided into three different roles, namely customer loyalty, customer participation and customer cooperation. Growth (2011) proposed that customer citizenship behavior can be summarized into three dimensions, namely customer

recommendation, customer help and customer feedback, based on the empirical research and investigation of network service industry. Groth's (2011) views are subsequently supported by the empirical studies of the fitness and education industries by Gong and Yi (2016, 2018a). Rosenbaum and Massiah (2017) expand two more dimensions in the composition of customer citizenship behavior, namely, customer citizenship behavior includes five dimensions: loyalty, participation, cooperation, empathy, and responsibility. They believe that customers will act in favor of others out of consideration of their influence on others, namely empathy; Customers will also think that they are a member of society and have the responsibility to care for others, namely the sense of responsibility. Based on previous studies, Bove et al. (2018) expanded the dimensions of customer citizenship behavior and proposed an eight-dimension model. Scholars such as Chen Xiaojing, Sha Beibei, & Jiang Haibo (2021), Tian Qitao & Ge Fei (2021), Zuo Wenming, Xu Zixin, Huang Fengxuan, & Jiao Qingsong (2023), etc., further explored or developed the concepts in it.

### **The formation mechanism of customer citizenship behavior**

The formation of customer citizenship behavior is mainly based on the exchange perspective based on social exchange theory and the motivational perspective based on customer motivation. Since the generation of organizational citizenship behavior is based on the social exchange theory, which has been widely recognized by the academic circle, in the context of marketing, scholars believe that customer citizenship behavior also originates from the "reciprocity principle" in the social exchange theory, that is, customers will judge the behavior to others according to the value or interests they gain. Customers feel that they have benefited from the products or services provided by enterprises, and then spontaneously generate a kind of return behavior after benefits, so the formation of customer citizenship behavior. Customers regard the relationship between them and the enterprise as social exchange, and they feel that they benefit from the enterprise, so they make exchange returns to the enterprise such as word-of-mouth publicity, feedback, and suggestions, which is customer citizenship behavior. Research on organizational behavior holds that the relationship between superior and subordinate employees will affect organizational citizenship behavior. In the field of marketing, the relationship between customers and service personnel in service enterprises will also have an important impact on customer citizenship behavior. Bove et al. (2018) explained the generation of customer citizenship behavior from the perspective of egoistic motivation and altruistic motivation. Self-interested motive refers to the expectation that the customer will get the benefits he has received in the past or the expectation that he will get the returns in the future. The customer assumes that if he or she is friendly to the service staff, in return, the service staff will provide better service to the customer. If the customer has received good service in the past and expects to continue to receive good service in the future, then by being nice to the service personnel in exchange for good service. Altruistic motive means that customers sincerely expect to benefit the enterprise or service personnel indirectly. For example, customers provide feedback or suggestions to the enterprise, which will not directly benefit the customer, but indirectly benefit the enterprise to improve the service quality (Grucn, 1995). Ma Shuang & Wang Yonggui (2021) try to introduce "knowledge acquisition mode" and "organizational citizenship behavior" in the field of knowledge management and organizational behavior into the study of brand community, and deeply discuss the different effects of different knowledge acquisition mode on brand identity and its influence mechanism. The empirical results show that compared with static knowledge acquisition, dynamic knowledge acquisition can promote customers' community citizenship behavior more strongly. Compared with in-role behavior, community citizenship behavior promotes brand identity of community members more strongly.

## **(2) Review of psychological contract**

### **Psychological contract theory in organizational behavior**

As early as 1960, organizational psychologist Angyris proposed the concept of "psychological contract" in the field of management to study the relationship between employees and employers, but Angyris did not define psychological contract. Subsequently, Lcvison et al. (1962) described psychological contract as the sum of internal and unwritten mutual expectations between the organization and the employee. In the 1980s, Schein proposed the definition of psychological contract for the first time, believing that psychological contract is a set of implicit expectations between employees, employers, and other members of the organization. Since the subject of psychological contract is not unique, individuals and organizations often have different understandings of the content of psychological contract. Since 1998, scholars have had a fierce debate on the concept of psychological contract, and two schools of universities have been formed. The "classical school" (led by Guest) believes that the subjects of psychological contract are both the employee and the employer. In the exchange relationship, both the employee and the employer have a subjective understanding of their responsibilities. However, since the views of this school are difficult to be applied in empirical studies, the definition of psychological contract by the school of "Rousseau" (led by Rousseau) is generally used in the theoretical circle, that is, psychological contract is an individual employee's subjective understanding of the responsibility or obligation between the employee and the employer, and the employer's understanding is excluded here. Consistent with the theoretical basis of the formation of the concept of organizational customer citizenship behavior, the formation mechanism of psychological contract also originates from the social exchange theory centered on the "principle of reciprocity" and the famous equity theory in sociology. According to the social exchange theory, to obtain their own interests, both sides of the exchange relationship need to return the benefits already obtained. If both parties gain, the exchange relationship continues; If one party gains but the other does not, the exchange relationship terminates (Gouldner, 1960). This leads to the theory of equity, which holds that what the exchange parties value is a kind of equality between pay-to-return, and only when the pay-to-return ratio of the exchange parties is roughly the same can the exchange relationship be maintained, and then the relative psychological balance can be maintained (Adams, 1965). Jiao Linna (2021) puts forward that the development of knowledge economy and intelligent manufacturing industry makes the competition for talents among enterprises fiercer. Meanwhile, the mobility of talents is relatively large, and it is difficult to effectively enhance the enthusiasm of talents according to the traditional human resource management mode. The talent management strategy is analyzed from the development dimension, incentive dimension, organizational commitment, and other aspects of psychological contract, to effectively promote enterprises Win-win with talent. Meng Yueqiu (2021) proposed that rapid economic development has intensified the "war" for talents among enterprises. Under the background of the talent market that is in short supply, enterprise talents tend to follow the value of "people go to the top", which leads to the high turnover rate of enterprise talents. However, the traditional human resource management mode has certain drawbacks and deficiencies, which cannot retain enterprise talents. Updating talent management concepts and innovating talent management methods is an important way to improve the level of enterprise talent management, and the most critical link is to require enterprises to implement the comprehensive management of talents from the perspective of psychological contract. Starting from the development dimension of psychological contract, incentive dimension and organizational commitment, the talent management strategy is effectively analyzed, and finally the enterprise and Win-win for talent. (Chen et al. 2021; Kang & Ye 2021; Meng 2021; She et al. 2022; Zuo et al. 2023; Yan 2022).



### **The concept of psychological contracts in marketing situations**

In the late 1990s, the concept of psychological contract was expanded and extended. In his research on service management and marketing practices, Roehling found that psychological contracts not only existed between employers and employees, but also between employers and external customers of enterprises. Blancero and Ellram(1997) introduced the concept of psychological contract when studying the relationship between strategic partners, believing that psychological contract is the responsibility or perception of both partners for the benefits that can be obtained from each other. Psychological contract also exists in the "buyer-supplier" relationship, that is, the supplier provides products or services according to the requirements of the customer, in the expectation that the customer will reach a continuous business with it. Customers expect suppliers to provide guaranteed products and quality service. This reciprocal relationship based on mutual interests and mutual expectations is a kind of psychological contract, but it has not been expressed by scholars with the concept of psychological contract. Llewellyn (2011) pointed out that psychological contract is the expectation of both parties to fulfill their responsibilities and how the client should be treated. Such an expectation reached by both parties is not explicitly stipulated. In service enterprises, service personnel have the closest contact with customers. There exists both the basic psychological contract of transaction, that is, customers expect to get the most basic service guarantee from service personnel, and the contract based on relationship. That is, customers expect polite, friendly service and caring greetings from service staff (Eddleston, Kidder and Litzky, 2010). As foreign scholars have extended the psychological contract in organizational behavior to the field of marketing, domestic scholars such as Luo Haicheng (2015) and Fan Xiucheng (2016) have also studied the psychological contract between customers and enterprises and proved that psychological contract also exists in the marketing relationship through the empirical research on the service industry such as beauty industry, maintenance industry and banking industry. In view of Rousseau's (1990) narrow definition of psychological contract, Luo Haicheng (2015) replaced employees and employers in the concept of psychological contract with clients and enterprises, and defined customer psychological contract as "clients' perception or belief of reciprocal obligations between themselves and enterprises". She Shengxiang, Xu Haoran, & Xu Dayou (2022) explores and refines the concept, structure and content of the psychological contract of consumers to anchors in the context of live broadcasting marketing through grounded theory and finds that the psychological contract of consumers to anchors includes two dimensions: "transaction norms" and "relationship maintenance". With the development of the relationship between consumers and anchors to different stages, the psychological contract of consumers gradually increases. There are significant differences between psychological contract in growth stage and maturity stage. At all stages, "relationship maintenance" was stronger than "transaction regulation". Kang Haiyan & Ye Mingxin (2021) proposed that the competition among retail enterprises tends to be white-hot, and the "competition for customers" among retail enterprises becomes increasingly fierce, but the "uncertainty of customers" is a difficult problem for enterprises to establish a relationship with customers. Customer psychological contract is the "invisible hand" that affects customer relationship. It restricts the type of resource exchange between customers and enterprises and has a set of norms to guide the whole process of resource exchange.

### **Dimensions of psychological contract in marketing Context**

In the field of organizational behavior, Rousseau (1990) verified that psychological contract can be divided into two dimensions: transactional psychological contract and relational psychological contract through the empirical study of more than 200 MBA graduates employed in all walks of life. The former refers to material tangible factors such as money, while the latter refers to emotional intangible factors such as personal support and family care. As for the

dimensions and content of customer psychological contract, Kingshott(2016) points out that psychological contract includes four dimensions: whether the enterprise treats the customer fairly, the relationship between conditions, and the inherent characteristics and advantages of the relationship, following Rousseau's research on psychological contract. Pavlou and Gefen (2014) divide the dimensions of psychological contract, including transaction and relationship, is widely adopted in the academic world. In the context of marketing, domestic scholar Luo Haicheng (2015), to verify the two-dimensional division of transaction psychological contract and relationship psychological contract, demonstrated the two-dimensional view of customer psychological contract in the field of marketing through his empirical research on the automobile maintenance industry and the beauty industry. Yang Lin's (2019) empirical study based on the banking industry also proved the rationality of the two-dimensional division of customer psychological contract. The psychological contract of transaction in marketing context is based on the perception of short-term return or income, which refers to the customer's perception of the enterprise's relatively clear commitment to it, such as the guarantee of product and service quality. Relationship psychological contract is established based on long-term social emotions. It refers to the customer's perception of the care and care given by the enterprise, which is psychological satisfaction beyond the value of products or services. For example, service personnel respect and care for customers, and establish a good interpersonal relationship with customers. Yan Mei (2022) explored the correlation between customers' consumption intention and event marketing through empirical methods, and introduced psychological contract to explore its mediating role, with a view to guiding enterprises to make reasonable use of event marketing to enhance their brand image and strengthen customers' consumption intention. It is found that both event quality and event propagation effectiveness can significantly affect customers' consumption intention. Event quality significantly promoted both transactional and relational psychological contracts. The effectiveness of event propagation also plays a significant role in promoting transactional and relational psychological contracts. The consumer intention is positively affected by psychological contract. Psychological contract plays an intermediary role between event marketing and customer consumption intention.

### **(3) A review of service equity**

#### **Theoretical development of service equity**

The research on service equity theory can be traced back to the equity theory of social psychology in the 1960s. Adams (1965) first studied equity in the field of organizational behavior based on the cognitive dissonance theory. People compare their pay-to-play ratio to others, and when they feel unfairness, they take certain measures (such as going slow at work) to alleviate the unpleasant feeling of unfairness. Adams' research found that there is a positive correlation between employees' perceived fairness of work remuneration and their work motivation. In the 1970s, the fairness theory of Adams was applied by western scholars to many different fields such as justice, education and interpersonal relations to study people's attitudes and behaviors. Since 1985, the research of fairness theory has been extended to the field of business administration. Customers will compare the cost-return ratio they feel in the process of consumption with those who have the same experience. Only when customers perceive fairness can customer satisfaction be generated. This perception of fairness is more likely to be found in the service industry. The concept of service equity was first proposed by Clemmer in the late 1980s. He and Schneider jointly studied service enterprises to explore the relationship between customers' perception of fairness in enterprises' attitude and behavior and customers' repeated purchase intention. Clemmer and Schneider (1993) pointed out that customers expect fair treatment from enterprises, and the fairness of service will directly affect customers' repeated purchase intention. Service equity is the customer's perception of

whether the business is treating them fairly. Later, the famous American marketing scholars Seiders and Berry (1998) conducted extensive research on the relationship between service equity and customer behavior, and demonstrated the importance of service equity in the service process of enterprises. In the past decade, domestic and foreign scholars have been very active in the study of service equity, including the dimension study of customer equity (Colquitt et al., 2011; Zhan Zhifang and Gan Biquan, 2016) also focused on the relationship between service equity and customer behavior (Wen Biyan et al., 2022). Scholars' research has proved that service equity has a significant impact on customers' purchasing behavior, and service enterprises must attach great importance to service equity.

### **The dimensions of service equity**

On the dimension of service equity, the academic circle is not unified. At present, there are two popular views: three dimensions and four dimensions. The three-dimensional view holds that service equity includes outcome equity, procedural equity, and communication equity (Clemmer, 1998; Bies and Shapiro, 2012). Clemmer and Seiders (1996) selected four types of service enterprises, such as hospitals and hotels, to study service equity, and found that service equity includes three aspects: the equity of profit after receiving service, the equity of principles and methods adopted by enterprises in the service process, and the equity of communication between service personnel and customers in the service process. Yi Yamin (2019), a domestic scholar, also verified that the service fairness perceived by customers includes the above three dimensions based on the empirical research on the service industries such as banking, fast food, and aviation. The four-dimensional view was first proposed by Greenberg in 1993. He extracted information justice from the communication justice dimension and believed that whether customers get the information and explanation they deserve is also a part of the service justice perceived by customers, which should be independent of the other three dimensions. Colquitt (2011) added the dimension of information fairness from the perspective of three dimensions by observing the fitting degree of data.

1) Fairness of results. Outcome equity refers to customers' perception of fairness in benefits obtained from services, which can significantly affect the relationship between customers and service enterprises (Oliver, 1999). The indicators of outcome fairness include customers' perception that their own efforts should match their returns (justice), that they should get the same standard of service results as other customers in the process of receiving services (equality), and that they should get the corresponding value according to their legitimate needs (conformity to needs).

2) Procedural fairness. Procedural fairness, also known as process fairness, refers to the fairness of the principles and methods followed by customers in the service process to obtain a certain result or benefit. For service enterprises, the index of procedural fairness usually includes six aspects: customer waiting time, procedures experienced in the waiting process, whether individual requirements are met, how fast enterprises serve customers, service guarantee and service error rate.

3) Fairness in communication. Interpersonal justice, also known as interpersonal justice or interactive justice, refers to whether customers perceive the fairness of service attitude and behavior of enterprise service personnel. Although consumers are mainly more concerned about their own benefits, in the interaction between customers and service personnel, the service level of service personnel will significantly affect customer satisfaction (Hoffman and Novak, 1996). Bies proved through empirical research in 2011 that communicative fairness is an independent dimension from procedural fairness and should be separated. In service enterprises, the indicators of communication fairness usually include service personnel's

respect for customers, polite treatment of customers, honesty to customers, and sincere care for customers.

4) Information fairness. Information equity refers to whether the customer perceives whether the company has received a comprehensive explanation of what and how to serve the information. At present, the independent dimension of information fairness is controversial. Some scholars believe that information fairness should be included in communication fairness because it interprets and transmits various decision results. However, some scholars believe that information fairness is an independent dimension different from the above three kinds of fairness. Communication fairness refers to whether enterprises or service personnel treat customers in a polite, respectful, and considerate way when distributing results. Information fairness is whether a business communicates and explains information to customers that they should know (Greenberg, 1993).

### **The research status of service equity theory**

The theory of fairness can be traced back to the 1960s, and it has been further studied in many fields such as organizational behavior and human resource management. In the late 1980s, Clemmer formally proposed the concept of "service equity" in the field of service marketing, and the research on service equity began to attract much attention.

In the field of service marketing, domestic and foreign scholars generally pay attention to the relationship between fairness theory and customer satisfaction in the process of service recovery. As early as 1975, Thiban and Walker conducted research on the role of procedural fairness in customer satisfaction. It was found that customers' perception of fairness affected their satisfaction with the distribution results. Tax and Brown (1998) pointed out that customers' perception of the fairness of the enterprise's remedial behavior would have an impact on the satisfaction level. Seiders and Berry (1998) also studied the relationship between service fairness and customer trust and found that customers can only have a sense of customer trust if they first feel service fairness. Wolstenholme's (1998) empirical study on four types of service industries also verified that service fairness would affect customers' trust in enterprises.

### **(4) Review of customer satisfaction**

#### **Customer satisfaction concept**

In the field of marketing, Cardozo first proposed the concept of "customer satisfaction" in 1965. Oliver and Kotler's ideas are widely recognized and adopted by the academic community. Oliver (1980) believes that customer satisfaction is a network of emotional states formed when the expectation of the product based on previous experience is consistent with the actual harvest later. Kotler (2010) believes that customer satisfaction is the feeling state generated by customers when they evaluate the actual function of products and their previous expectations. Whether the customer is satisfied is measured by the expected expectation of the product or service.

#### **Factors influencing customer satisfaction**

Domestic and foreign scholars have done a lot of research on the influencing factors of customer satisfaction, mainly in the following four aspects: Customer expectation. Customer expectation refers to customers' belief in the future of the products or services provided by the enterprise, which is derived from customers' demand, their own or others' past purchasing experience, and the information about the quality and price of the current products or services conveyed by the enterprise. Customer satisfaction is strongly influenced by customer expectations and perceptions (Oliver, 1980).

Customers need it. The customer needs satisfaction model of Woodside and Frcy (1989) states that customers need to have an impact on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction refers to a pleasant feeling that a customer's need for a product (or service) has been met. On the contrary, customer dissatisfaction is caused by customers not getting the satisfaction they need from the product or service. The more the perceived product or service performance can meet the needs of customers, the more likely customer satisfaction will occur. On the contrary, the more the product or service performance perceived by customers cannot meet the needs of customers, the more likely customer dissatisfaction will occur. Perceive performance: A customer's perceived quality of the product (or service) will significantly affect their satisfaction with the product (or service) (Churchill and Carol, 1982). Based on previous studies, Walker proposed that the perceived performance that affects customer satisfaction is not the perception of a certain aspect of a product or service, but a comprehensive perception. Customer perception of reality must first meet the needs of customers, and at the same time, the product or service has the function or performance required by customers, to make customers feel satisfied. If the product or service has function and performance, but the realization of function and performance is not what the customer needs, the customer will not have a sense of satisfaction (Berry and Zeithaml, 1985). Equity theory: Based on the social exchange relationship, the equity theory believes that the repeatable social exchange behavior is based on the reciprocal relationship between the exchange parties to their respective efforts and returns. In service enterprises, customer satisfaction with a consumption behavior is based on the comparison between the customer's input and output and the input and output of the enterprise's service personnel. Fairness is the basis for customers to evaluate products or services (Seiders and Berry, 1998).

### **The relationship between customer satisfaction and customer behavior**

Customer satisfaction is a positive post-purchase evaluation, which has a direct and significant impact on customer's future consumption behavior, mainly manifested in the following three aspects:

1) Customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. According to the theory of instrumental conditioning, an individual's behavior is affected by the results of his past behavior. If an individual is rewarded in the past behavior (satisfied with the evaluation of the behavior results), the possibility of repeating the past behavior will increase (repeated purchase behavior reinforcement). Conversely, if an individual is punished for a past behavior (dissatisfied with the evaluation of the outcome of the behavior), the likelihood of repeating the past behavior is reduced (repeated purchase behavior subsists). The empirical studies of scholars have also verified this theoretical viewpoint. Oliver (1980) found that the higher the degree of satisfaction, the more loyal customers will be to a brand, and thus the stronger the intention to buy again. It is found in the behavioral research of automobile consumers that those customers with high satisfaction tend to buy cars of the same brand when they buy them again (Oliver and Swan, 1989). Cronin and Steven's (1992) empirical study also showed that customer satisfaction had a significant impact on repeat purchase intention.

2) Customer satisfaction and recommendation behavior. Scholars of service marketing management assume that people are usually willing to share and recommend satisfying products or pleasant consumption experiences to family, friends, and colleagues. As Kotler puts it, "Satisfied consumers are the best advertisement." Empirical studies have proved that customer satisfaction is one of the important variables for consumers to disseminate information and recommend others to buy (Dabholkar and Dayle, 1994).

3) Customer satisfaction and loyalty. Loyalty refers to the long-term purchase of products or services of a certain brand or enterprise by customers because they are satisfied with the brand or enterprise. It includes behavioral and emotional components, which not only shows

repeated purchase, but also shows positive and satisfied attitude towards the brand or enterprise. Based on the above analysis, on the one hand, customer satisfaction has an impact on customers' repeated purchase behavior; on the other hand, customers' positive evaluation of brands or enterprises. Such positive evaluation will promote the formation of brand belief, thus affecting the emotional component of loyalty, namely, customer satisfaction affects customer loyalty (Bolemer and Lemmink, 1995).

### **(5) The relationship between customer citizenship behavior, psychological contract and service equity**

#### **The relationship between psychological contract and client citizenship behavior**

In organizational behavior, psychological contract positively affects organizational citizenship behavior (Luo Qiuming, 2019). Psychological contract is an important antecedent variable of organizational citizenship behavior (Tumley and Feldman, 2010). At the same time, the higher the degree of satisfaction of psychological contract, the more obvious organizational citizenship behavior of employees. On the contrary, the lower the degree of satisfaction of psychological contract, the less significant the organizational citizenship behavior of employees (Yu Chen, 2017). At present, although domestic and foreign scholars have not directly studied the relationship between psychological contract and client citizenship behavior. However, the existing literature shows that when customers feel that the expected expectations have been realized, they will not only buy the products or services of the enterprise repeatedly, but also take the initiative to tell others about their satisfactory consumption experience, helping the enterprise to make good publicity (Roseenbaum and Massish, 2017). It can be predicted that the fulfillment of customer psychological contract has an important impact on customer citizenship behavior. From the perspective of social exchange theory, the formation of customer citizenship behavior and customer psychological contract originates from the "reciprocity principle" in exchange relationship. When customers expect to benefit from the enterprise and get actual satisfaction, they will have a sense of responsibility for the return of the enterprise and take the initiative to show the return behavior of the enterprise, such as word-of-mouth publicity of the place they are satisfied with, helping other customers to collect and understand the information related to the enterprise, giving feedback on the enterprise's services, giving suggestions to the enterprise, etc. (Fan Jun and Kong Jingwei, 2019). Customer psychological contract is an important antecedent variable of customer citizenship behavior. From the perspective of motivation, the main motivation of customer citizenship behavior comes from customers' expectation that the enterprise may fulfill its responsibilities in the future, that is, an expectation of return, while psychological contract is customers' expectation that the enterprise may fulfill its responsibilities, which can promote the generation of customer citizenship behavior (Fan Jun and Kong Jingwei, 2019).

#### **The Relationship between Service Equity and customer citizenship**

Seiders and Berry (1998) pointed out in their study on the fairness of restaurant service that if a customer thinks the service of the restaurant is especially fair, he is very likely to visit the restaurant again and recommend the restaurant to his relatives and friends, but they did not carry out empirical research on this. Later, Jin Liyin (2016) found through the study of the education and training industry that the three dimensions of service equity all have a direct impact on customer citizenship behavior. Among them, communication equity not only directly affects customer citizenship behavior, but also indirectly influences customer citizenship behavior through intermediary variables. Xie Lishan et al. (2017, 2018) discussed the relationship between the four dimensions of customer perception of service justice and customer citizenship behavior for Internet services. The empirical results showed that information justice had both direct and indirect effects on customer citizenship behavior.

Result, procedure, and communication fairness have only indirect effects on client citizenship behavior. Korean scholars Yly and Gong.T(2018) introduced the mediating variable of customer emotion and found that the three dimensions of customer perception, namely, outcome, procedure and communication fairness, all have indirect effects on customer citizenship behavior through customer emotion. Bove et al. (2018) 's findings in barbershops and hospitals also support this view.

### **The relationship between customer satisfaction and customer citizenship**

The research of Bove et al. (2018) shows that customers' satisfaction with enterprise service personnel will have a direct and significant impact on customer citizenship behavior. Xie Leshan and Shen Wenguo et al. (2018) pointed out that customer satisfaction not only has a significant impact on customer citizenship behavior, but also is an important intermediary variable. Based on the research of travel agencies, Peng Jiamin and Xiao Yue (2019) found that customer participation directly affects customer satisfaction, and then has a significant indirect impact on customer citizenship behavior. Customer satisfaction has a complete mediating effect on recommendation and a partial mediating effect on feedback and helping behavior.

### **Research method**

Firstly, this paper uses the literature research method to sort out the existing research of domestic and foreign scholars, so as to provide a theoretical basis for the establishment of the relationship model of psychological contract, service equity and customer citizenship behavior. Secondly, based on the measurement scale developed by predecessors, appropriate modifications are made for the fitness industry, and field visits are used to adjust the designed scale. Then the data were collected by questionnaire survey. Finally, the empirical research method is used to analyze the data. The details are as follows:

(1) Literature research method. This paper refers to a large number of domestic and foreign literature, and has a deeper understanding of the concept, dimension, theoretical development and mutual relationship of the study variables, which provides theoretical support for the establishment of the relationship model in this paper.

(2) Field visit and questionnaire survey. In the design process of the questionnaire, the prototype of the questionnaire was formed first according to the existing scale. Then, during the field visit, the rationality of the index and variable design was verified through the brief interview with the managers, staff and some members of the fitness enterprise, and the questionnaire was issued with small samples for preliminary analysis of the data, to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

(3) empirical research method. After collecting the original data through questionnaire survey, SPSS17.0, a statistical analysis software, was used to test reliability, validity, and correlation analysis. Then, LISREL8.70 was used to establish structural equation model, and the relationship between various variables was studied from an empirical perspective to test the research hypotheses of this paper.

### **Research problem**

This paper proposes the following specific research questions:

(1) How does the psychological contract of fitness service enterprises influence the existence of customer citizenship behavior? (2) What is the influence of service fairness of fitness service enterprises on the existence of customer citizenship behavior? (3) What is the impact of psychological contract of fitness service enterprises on customer satisfaction? (4) How does service fairness of fitness service enterprises affect customer satisfaction? (5) How does customer satisfaction of fitness service enterprises influence the existence of customer citizenship behavior? (6) Does customer satisfaction of fitness service enterprises play a

mediating role in the relationship between psychological contract (2 dimensions) and customer citizenship behavior (3 dimensions)? (7) Does customer satisfaction of fitness service enterprises play a mediating role in the relationship between service equity (4 dimensions) and customer citizenship behavior (3 dimensions)?

## **Research hypopaper**

### **(1) The hypopaper of the relationship between psychological contract and client citizenship behavior**

On the one hand, based on the social exchange theory, both psychological contract and customer citizenship behavior are formed based on the "reciprocity principle" in social exchange relations. The profits of customers from social exchange relations will make customers feel a sense of responsibility for the return of the enterprise, and thus affect the reputation publicity of the enterprise by customers (Fan Jun and Kong Jingwei, 2019). On the other hand, based on the motivation theory, the occurrence of customer citizenship behavior originates from the benefits they have obtained or their expectations for results, and customers believe that service personnel will fulfill their due responsibilities or obligations in the future (Fan Jun and Kong Jingwei, 2019). As can be seen from the previous literature review, the realization of customers' expected expectations will not only encourage customers to continue to buy the enterprise's products and services, but also influence customers to actively recommend new customers for the enterprise and make favorable word-of-mouth publicity for the enterprise (Roseenbaum and Massish, 2017). Meanwhile, empirical research results also prove that psychological contract is an important antecedent variable of organizational citizenship behavior (Tumley, 2010). Therefore, the following hypopaper is proposed in this paper:

*H1: Psychological contract has a positive impact on customer citizenship behavior.*

*H1a: Trading psychological contract has a positive effect on customer recommendation behavior*

*H1b: Relational psychological contract has a positive effect on customer recommendation behavior*

*H1c: Transaction psychological contract has a positive influence on customers' helping behavior*

*H1d: Relational psychological contract has a positive influence on clients' helping behavior*

*H1e: Trading psychological contract has a positive influence on customer feedback behavior*

*H1f: Relationship psychological contract has a positive influence on customer feedback behavior*

### **(2) The hypopaper of the relationship between service fairness and customer citizenship behavior**

Berry and Zeithaml (1985) studied the service fairness of restaurants and concluded that those customers who thought the service of restaurants was fair were more inclined to recommend the restaurant network to their relatives, friends, or colleagues. Groth (2015) pointed out that whether the service of service enterprises is fair will have an impact on word-of-mouth, feedback and other behaviors. In recent years, domestic and foreign scholars have proved that there is a positive correlation between service equity and customer citizenship behavior (Jin Liyin, 2016; Xie Lishan et al., 2017; Bove et al., 2018; Yi.Y and Gong.T, 2018). Therefore, the following hypopaper is proposed in this paper:

*H2: Service fairness has a positive influence on customer citizenship behavior*

*H2a: Outcome fairness has a positive influence on customer recommendation behavior*

*H2b: Procedural fairness has a positive influence on customer recommendation behavior*

*H2c: Communication fairness has a positive influence on customer recommendation behavior*

*H2d: Information fairness has a positive influence on customer recommendation behavior*

*H2e: Outcome fairness has a positive influence on customers' helping behavior*

*H2f: Procedural fairness has a positive influence on customers' helping behavior*



- H2g: Communication fairness has a positive influence on customers' helping behavior  
 H2h: Information fairness has a positive influence on customers' helping behavior  
 H2i: Outcome fairness has a positive influence on customer feedback behavior  
 H2j: Procedural fairness has a positive influence on customer feedback behavior  
 H2k: Communication fairness has a positive influence on customer feedback behavior  
 H2l: Information fairness has a positive influence on customer feedback behavior

### **(3) The relationship hypopaper with customer satisfaction as the intermediary variable**

Customer satisfaction depends on the degree of conformity between consumers' expectations for products or services and their real feelings (Qiu Shu, 2018). The fulfillment of psychological contract is the basis for the formation of customer satisfaction, which depends on the degree of conformity between the expectations contained in psychological contract and the reality (Wang Shuhong, 2015). Guo Hui and Zhong Sheng (2019) pointed out that customer psychological contract is a kind of psychological guarantee based on trust, which plays a very positive role in the relationship between customers and enterprises. Domestic scholars have also proved through empirical studies that psychological contract has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction (Luo Haicheng and Fan Xiucheng, 2015; Yanglin, 2020). Therefore, the following hypopaper is proposed in this paper:

H3: Psychological contract has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

H3a: Transaction psychological contract has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

H3b: Relational psychological contract has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

Domestic and foreign scholars have made a large number of empirical studies on the relationship between service recovery, service equity and customer satisfaction in the normal service process of enterprises, and they all prove that service equity has a significant impact on customer satisfaction (Greenberg, 1993; Seiders and Berry, 1998; Wen Biyan et al., 2012; Iyamin, 2019). Therefore, the following hypopaper is proposed in this paper:

H4: Service fairness has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

H4a: Outcome fairness has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

H4b: Procedural fairness has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

H4c: Communication fairness has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

H4d: Information fairness has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

Bove et al. (2018) pointed out that customer satisfaction with service personnel will directly and significantly affect customer citizenship behavior. Customer satisfaction can directly cause the generation of customer citizenship behavior and is an important antecedent variable of customer citizenship behavior (Bettencourt, 1997; Xie Lishan et al., 2018; Peng Jiamin and Xiao Yue, 2019). Therefore, the following hypopaper is proposed in this paper:

H5: Customer satisfaction has a positive influence on customer citizenship behavior

H5a: Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on customer recommendation behavior

H5b: Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on customer helping behavior

H5c: Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on customer feedback behavior

The research results of Luo Haicheng and Fan Xiucheng (2015) show that customer psychological contract significantly affects customer satisfaction. Based on the social exchange theory, customer satisfaction will encourage customers to make voluntary behaviors to repay the enterprise. The research results of Bove et al. (2018) also show that customer satisfaction has a significant impact on customer citizenship behavior. Combining hypopaper 3 and hypopaper 5, this paper concludes that psychological contract influences customer citizenship behavior through customer satisfaction. Therefore, hypopaper 6 is proposed:

H6: Customer satisfaction plays an intermediary role in the relationship between psychological contract (2 dimensions) and customer citizenship behavior (3 dimensions).

Many scholars at home and abroad have proved that service equity has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. In addition, the study found that service fairness not only has a direct effect on customer citizenship behavior, but also has an indirect effect through mediating variables, including customer satisfaction, customer emotion, etc. (Jin Liyin, 2016; Xie Lishan et al., 2017; Bove et al., 2018; Yi.Y and Gong.T, 2018). Combining hypopaper 4 and hypopaper 5, this paper concludes that service fairness affects customer citizenship behavior through customer satisfaction, and proposes hypopaper 7 accordingly:

H7: Customer satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between service equity (4 dimensions) and customer citizenship behavior (3 dimensions).

### **Questionnaire design**

To make the questionnaire design reasonable and serve the purpose of research, this paper follows a rigorous process of questionnaire design. First of all, through literature reading, the original scale of relevant variables studied by domestic and foreign scholars was obtained. Combined with the research object and purpose of this paper, on the basis of the previous scale, a little modification and adjustment was made, and the rationality of measurement items was repeatedly discussed with the tutor and several master students to form a preliminary questionnaire. Then, the consumers who have spent and experienced in fitness enterprises are interviewed and investigated to confirm whether the expression of measurement items is clear and easy to understand. Finally, according to the feedback of respondents, the measurement items were adjusted, modified, and supplemented to form the final questionnaire.

The questionnaire in this paper includes the measurement of four variables, namely psychological contract, service fairness, customer satisfaction and customer citizenship behavior, as well as the basic information of the respondents. In the first part, the measurement of customer psychological contract refers to the scale of Luo Haicheng (2015), with 12 questions in total. The second part, measuring service equity, refers to the scale of Clemmer and Schneider (1996), Greenberg(1993) et al., with a total of 16 items. The third part, measuring customer satisfaction, refers to the scale of Bettencourt (1997) and Oliver (1980), a total of 3 questions. The fourth part, measuring customer citizenship behavior, refers to the scale of Growth (2015), Gong and Yi (2018), with a total of 9 items. The fifth part is the basic information of the interviewees, including gender, age, income, etc.

### **Pre-survey data collection and sample description**

This study chooses the fitness industry with high customer involvement as the industry for empirical research. A total of 4 fitness centers with more than 201 members were selected as sample sources. The objects of the survey are customers who have spent and experienced in fitness enterprises (with a card for at least one month).

In this study, questionnaire was used to collect data. Specific investigation methods include field questionnaire survey and network questionnaire survey. Questionnaires were distributed mainly from December 10 to December 30, 2022. In this study, 401 questionnaire requests were actually sent out, 342 were recovered, 26 invalid questionnaires were eliminated, and the final valid questionnaires were 316. The questionnaire of this study has a total of 40 items, and the ratio of sample number to questionnaire items is greater than 5:1, which meets the requirements of data analysis on samples (Hou Jietai et al., 2019).

**A total of 316 valid questionnaires were finally collected, and the details of the samples are shown in the following table:**

**Table Basic information description of research samples**

Demographic characteristics		frequency	Percentage (%)
gender	male	170	53.8
	female	146	46.2
age	Age 20 and under	34	10.7
	21-30 years old	85	26.9
	31-40 years old	96	30.4
	41-50 years old	74	23.4
	Age 51 and above	27	8.5
Degree of education	Senior high school and below (including technical secondary Junior college)	28	8.9
	undergraduate	105	33.2
	Master degree or above	148	46.8
		35	11.1
occupation	student	31	9.8
	teacher	47	14.9
	Enterprise staff	70	22.2
	Public institution staff	101	32.0
	Self-employed person	67	21.2
Disposable income	monthly Less	19	6.0
	2010-2999	35	11.1
	3010-4999	101	32.0
	5010-7999	124	39.2
	8010	37	11.7
Do(fitness)card type	More than 1 year card	39	12.3
	1-year card	201	63.6
	Half-year card	33	10.4
	Quarterly card	18	5.7
	Monthly card	25	7.9
Average number of exercises per month	1 time or less	48	15.2
	Two or three times	135	42.7
	Four or five times	102	32.3
	6 times or more	32	10.1

### **Scale reliability test and analysis**

Cronbach's coefficient was used in this paper to judge the internal consistency of the questionnaire. According to Guiclford(1995), Cronbach's coefficient should be above 0.7, indicating high reliability. At the same time, CITC (corrected total correlation of items) and a value after deleting items were used to analyze the reliability of each variable. When  $CITC > 0.6$ , the item should be deleted if it's a value is significantly higher after deletion (Guieford, 1995).

### **Validity analysis of sample data**

Validity generally includes content validity and structure validity. The questionnaire of this study draws on the development scale of previous scholars and integrates the feedback of tutors, experts, and fitness customers to make appropriate corrections, so it has good content validity. For structural validity test, firstly, KMO and Bartlett sphericity test were used to determine whether there was correlation between variables, and then factor analysis was carried out on each variable. Discriminative validity was judged by standardized factor load coefficient of each measurement item.

### **Findings**

#### **Sample situation description summary**

A total of 316 valid questionnaires were finally collected, and the specific situation of the samples showed that the distribution of male and female ratio was relatively equal. 68 percent were younger than 40; Most of them have bachelor's degree and college degree. The highest proportion of monthly income is 5010-7999 yuan; The proportion of one-year cards accounted for 63.6%; The average number of exercises per month is mostly 2-3 times.

#### **Data processing, analysis, and verification**

SPSS17.0 and LISREL8.7 are mainly used in this study to process, analyze and test all research data. Specific data analysis methods are as follows:

(1) Descriptive statistical analysis. Basic statistical analysis was conducted on the sample's age, gender, education background and other basic information as well as the mean value, standard deviation, and variance of each question item. The descriptive statistics of this study include enterprise scale, enterprise ownership type, interest related pressure, institutional pressure, ethical leadership, corporate social responsibility, etc.

(2) Reliability analysis. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was used to determine the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.980 for the questionnaire as a whole, 0.941 for psychological contract, 0.947 for service fairness, and 0.914 for customer satisfaction. Cronbach's value of customer citizenship behavior was 0.911, both of which were significantly greater than 0.7, indicating that the questionnaire of this study was generally consistent internally. Secondly, this paper makes a specific analysis of the reliability of each variable, including CITC (corrected total correlation of the item) and the A coefficient after deleting the item. When  $CITC < 0.6$ , the item should be deleted. If a value is significantly higher after the item is deleted, the item should be deleted. If not, the item should be retained. The overall reliability of each variable is greater than 0.8, the CITC of each measurement item is greater than 0.6, and a value is not significantly improved after deleting the item, which indicates that the scale of each variable in this paper has high reliability.

(3) Validity analysis. Validity refers to the correctness of all the measured potential variables. Usually, content validity, aggregate validity and discriminant validity of the research can be explained separately. For example, the content validity of the study was illustrated through the distribution and design of questionnaires, the aggregate validity of the study was illustrated through the factor loading, composite reliability (CR) and average variation sampling (AVE),

and the discriminant validity was illustrated through the correlation coefficient matrix of AVE and latent variables. The analysis tools used in this paper are SPSS16.0 and EXCEL2010.

(4) Correlation analysis. In this paper, Pearson coefficient correlation analysis was used to test the linear correlation between variables. Regression analysis is to analyze the relationship between variables by ordinary least square method (OLS), and further verify the influence of interaction effect and moderating effect. By placing control variables, independent variables, interaction terms, etc. into the regression model successively, the change of T value and R<sup>2</sup> of variables are tested, so as to determine the significance of the moderating effect. This paper uses this method to verify some of the hypotheses. The analysis tools used are EXCEL2010 and SPSS22.0.

(5) Structural equation model analysis. Previous studies mostly used regression models to test the causal relationship between variables, allowing only one dependent variable to be tested each time, while ignoring the possible influence of multiple dependent variables (Wu Minglong, 2019). In this paper, structural equation model is used to break through the limitation of traditional regression method on research hypopaper and measurement error. Given that the sample size is greater than 201, if the  $X^2/df$  value of a structural equation is less than 5, the RMSEA value is less than 0.08, and the CFL, NFL and IFI are all greater than 0.90, it indicates that the data and model fit well (Hou Jietai et al., 2019).

## Conclusion

### **(1) Psychological contract has a significant positive effect on customer citizenship behavior**

This paper studies the relationship between psychological contract (2 dimensions) and customer citizenship behavior (3 dimensions) in fitness enterprises. The empirical results show that psychological contract (2 dimensions) has a significant positive impact on customer citizenship behavior (3 dimensions). (Chen et al. 2021; Kang & Ye 2021; Meng 2021; She et al. 2022; Zuo et al. 2023; Yan 2022). Among them, the trading psychological contract is the customer to fitness enterprises relatively clear commitment to fulfill, is the most basic psychological contract. The fulfillment of the trading psychological contract will prompt customers to recommend the fitness center to others, help other customers make choices and give feedback to the fitness center. Relationship psychological contract is the customer perception of the fitness center to respect, care and take care of their responsibilities, is based on long-term emotional connection based on psychological satisfaction. The fulfillment of relational psychological contract will also have a positive promoting effect on the recommendation, helping and feedback behavior of customers.

### **(2) Service fairness has a significant positive impact on customer citizenship behavior**

The empirical research results of this paper on fitness enterprises show that the significance of service equity (4 dimensions) and customer citizenship behavior (3 dimensions) is different in different dimensions. Outcome fairness is the customer's perception of fairness in pay and return and is the basis of fairness of all kinds. The main purpose is to benefit from service. When customers feel that they benefit, they will be prompted to produce customer citizenship behaviors such as recommendation, helping others and feedback. Procedural fairness has no significant influence on recommendation and feedback behavior but has significant positive influence on helping behavior. Procedural fairness mainly measures whether the service process of fitness enterprises is fair and reasonable. (Chen et al. 2021; Kang & Ye 2021; Meng 2021; She et al. 2022; Zuo et al. 2023; Yan 2022). The service process of different customers is basically similar, which is not enough to influence the recommendation and feedback behavior of customers. However, the perception of fairness of service process can enable customers to provide information to other customers to help them choose. Communication fairness is an

interactive process based on social emotion. Emotional satisfaction will make customers feel happy, and then encourage recommendation and feedback behavior. However, only due to communication fairness, customers cannot understand the service flow and service quality of fitness enterprises, and thus cannot motivate customers to help other customers. Information fairness refers to customers' perception of the accuracy and timeliness of information obtained from enterprises. It produces positive incentives for recommendation behavior but has no strong incentive effect on helping others and giving feedback.

### **(3) The mediating effect of customer satisfaction**

Among the relationships among psychological contract, customer satisfaction and customer citizenship behavior, customer satisfaction plays a partial mediating role in the recommendation and feedback behavior of transaction psychological contract, a complete mediating role in the helping behavior of transaction psychological contract, and a complete mediating role in the recommendation, helping and feedback behavior of relational psychological contract. As the psychological contract of transaction is a psychological contract that is easy to be perceived by customers and can be measured in the short term, its performance can directly promote the recommendation behavior and feedback behavior of customers and can also motivate the recommendation and feedback behavior through customer satisfaction. As helping behavior is a subjective altruistic behavior of customers and requires customers to have a full understanding of fitness enterprises, it is necessary to accumulate customer satisfaction to a certain extent to have an impact on customer citizenship behavior. Relational psychological contract is a long-term emotional psychological contract, its performance will make customers have a higher sense of satisfaction, and this sense of satisfaction is more lasting than the performance of transactional psychological contract, will have a significant impact on the customer's recommendation, help and feedback behavior. Customer satisfaction partially mediates outcome fairness on recommendation behavior, and completely mediates outcome fairness on helping and feedback behavior. Customer satisfaction plays a partial mediating role in procedural fairness on helping behavior, a complete mediating role in communication fairness on recommendation and feedback behavior, and a complete mediating role in information fairness on recommendation behavior. (Chen et al. 2021; Kang & Ye 2021; Meng 2021; She et al. 2022; Zuo et al. 2023; Yan 2022)

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