

The Effect Of Service Quality On The Satisfaction Level: A Case Study In Mersin Province

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate to determine the differentiation situations according to some demographic variables of the individuals who are engaged in recreational activities in Mersin for a healthy life in an attempt to reveal the effect of the service quality on the satisfaction level. The sample group of the study was determined via convenience sampling method, and individuals preferring recreational activities in Mersin were chosen on a voluntary basis. A total of 424 participants, 158 female (37.3%) and 266 male (62.7%), participated in the study. The questionnaire form was used to collect research data and the scale of "Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction" consisting of 38 questions developed by Süllüoğlu was used to measure the service and satisfaction levels of the participants when being engaged in recreational activities (18). In the analysis of the data obtained in the study, the percentage and frequency were used to determine the distribution of the personal information of the participants, while the skewness and kurtosis values of the data were checked to determine whether the data showed a normal distribution. The analysis revealed that the data has a normal distribution. In addition to descriptive statistical models, t-test and Anova analysis methods were used in the statistical analysis of data ($\alpha = 0.05$). As a result, significant differences were found in sub-dimensions regarding the service quality and satisfaction levels of the participants according to variables including gender, level of welfare, and the frequency of use at the facility.

Keywords: Service quality, customer satisfaction, recreational activities

INTRODUCTION

The customer is defined as the end-user of the goods or services. Today, the concept of customer has ceased to be the person who pays money, and everyone who benefits from the goods or services produced has started to be seen as customers (3). Satisfaction can be evaluated as the response of the customer to the desired and expected service (11). Customer satisfaction is a psychological concept that involves the feeling of well-being and pleasure that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from an appealing product and/or service (14). Achieving customer satisfaction stands out as an important responsibility for managers in the developing sports services industry. Customer satisfaction plays a key role in the success of for-profit organizations. One of the important criteria

for the success of a sports facility is to avoid losing its customers. Acquiring new customers is five times more expensive than maintaining an existing customer. Customer loyalty is a product of increasing customer satisfaction and service quality (13).

Recreational activities attract more and more people day by day as such activities have positive effects on people's physical and mental health (16). Increasing technology and mechanization have a decreasing effect on people's movement, and lack of movement can be the source of various health problems, particularly in the future (15).

Recreational activities have become more important for people in that they allow them to lead a healthy life, and thus, the interest in fitness and

recreational activities in their free time has increased. As a natural consequence of this, there has been an increase in the number of facilities such as fitness and sports centers and health clubs where these activities can be conducted (20). Today, facilities preferred for recreational activities, as well as being user-centered, are expected to achieve user satisfaction as institutions that provide services. Therefore, the provision of services, activities, and products is important for facilities (6).

As in all businesses, management concepts that can provide quality service that fits in with customers' wishes and needs and keep the satisfaction level high should be adopted for recreational activities. Today, developments in different fields and rapidly changing conditions can lead to changes in the needs and expectations of people. Therefore, sports businesses should also create new trends, renew their equipment, update themselves on the training, and expand the physical and social facilities offered by the facilities under current conditions. In this process, companies that keep up with current conditions and respond to the demands, needs, and expectations of customers in a short time through adaptation will be preferred more. For, it is believed that facilities offering recreational activities may be preferred providing that customer satisfaction is achieved and high-quality service is provided (20).

METHOD

This section includes the research model, the population and sample, the measurement tools used in data collection, and the data collection and analysis.

Research Model

A descriptive survey was used in this research. Survey models attempt to describe a situation that existed in the past or exists for the time being as it is (8). In this study, the opinions of the individuals receiving service in private sports centers in Mersin province regarding their service quality and satisfaction levels are examined and the differentiation situations of the participants' opinions according to some demographic variables are presented.

Population and Sample

The population of the research consists of a total of 424 participants, 158 of whom are women and 266 men, who are engaged in recreational activities in Mersin for a healthy life. While determining the sample group, the convenience sampling method was preferred. Büyüköztürk et al. (1) defined convenience sampling as the selection of the population that is close to hand and applicable due to existing limitations such as time and labor.

Data Collection Tools

A questionnaire form was used to collect the research data. The relevant questionnaire consists of two sections. The personal information section of the form includes the variables of the participants' gender, age, education level, the use of time at the facility, frequency of use of the facility and level of welfare. In the research, a scale developed by Süllüoğlu (18) consisting of 38 questions in total was used to test the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The 22-item SERVQUAL scale developed by Parasuraman et al. (12) was taken as a basis for the measurement of service quality. Since the service quality is the measurement of sports centers, questions about service quality and customer satisfaction were added to the scale after the literature review, by receiving opinions from academicians, practitioners, and members working in this field. Factors obtained as a result of factor analysis are given the names of "Competence", "Customer Satisfaction", "Empathy", "Physical Elements", "Reliability" and "Enthusiasm", taking into consideration the Servqual Model. The scale is a 5-point Likert type and graded as Strongly Disagree (1) and Strongly Agree (5). The scale of "Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction", whose validity and reliability was conducted by Süllüoğlu (18), was used to measure the service and satisfaction levels of the participants from private sports centers.

Data Collection

To use the data collection tool in the research, the study of Süllüoğlu (18) was used in the current study by giving reference to the source in the text and on the scale. The individuals who participated in the study were selected on a voluntary basis. Besides, the participants were informed that the data

obtained would not be shared with secondary and tertiary individuals and would be kept confidential.

Data Analysis

The data of the research were analyzed using the SPSS for Windows 22.0 package program. In the analysis of the data obtained in the study, the percentage and frequency were checked to determine the distribution of the personal information of the participants, while the skewness and kurtosis values of the data were checked to

determine whether the data showed a normal distribution. As a result of the analyses, it was determined that the data has a normal distribution. According to Jondeau and Rockinger (7), when the coefficients of skewness and kurtosis of the sub-dimensions range between +3 and -3, these sub-dimensions are suitable for normal distribution parameters. In addition to descriptive statistical models, t-test and Anova analysis methods were used in the statistical analysis of data ($\alpha = 0.05$).

FINDINGS

Table 1. Distribution of Scale Scores

Sub-dimensions	Number of Items	N	Mean	Ss	Skewness	Kurtosis
Competence	18	424	4.29	.726	-1.00	.528
Customer Satisfaction	6	424	4.26	.850	-1.30	1.39
Empathy	3	424	4.29	.783	-1.06	.843
Physical Elements	2	424	4.28	.824	-1.06	.833
Reliability	3	424	4.38	.782	-1.31	1.43
Enthusiasm	3	424	4.45	.716	-1.69	3.54

Table 2. Demographic Information of Participants

Variables	f	%	
Gender	Female	158	37.3
	Male	266	62.7
	Total	424	100
Age	17-25	163	38.4
	26-33	194	45.8
	34 and 41	47	11.1
	42 and over	20	4.7
	Total	424	100
Educational Level	Secondary Education	17	4.0
	High School	174	41.0
	Undergraduate	79	18.6
	Bachelor's Degree	130	30.7
	Graduate	24	5.7
Total	424	100	
The use of time at the facility	1 month and under	42	9.9
	2-5 months	130	30.7
	6-9 months	92	21.7
	10-12 months	57	13.4
	1-3 years	68	16.0
	3-5 years	20	4.7
	5 years and over	15	3.5
Total	424	100	
Frequency of use of the facility	Every Week Day	78	18.4
	1-2 days a week	125	29.5
	3-4 days a week	211	49.8
	1 day in 2 weeks	5	1.2
	1 day a month	5	1.2
Total	424	100	
Level of welfare	Very bad	3	.7
	Bad	16	3.8
	Normal	173	40.8
	Good	151	35.6
	Very good	81	19.1
Total	424	100	

The averages of the scores of the participants in the study within the scope of service quality and customer satisfaction scale are given in Table 1. Accordingly, it was determined that the highest average was 4.45 in the sub-dimension of enthusiasm. Besides, considering skewness and kurtosis values, it was determined that the data were suitable for normal distribution

As can be seen in Table 2, 62.7% of the participants in the study are male, 45.8% are in the age range of 26-33, the educational level of 41% is high school, 30.7% of them use the facility for 2-5 months, the use of the time of 49.8% is 3-4 days a week, and the welfare level of 40.8% is normal.

Sub-dimensions	Variable	Mean	Ss	T	p
Competence	Female	4,3383	,59738	.955	.000
	Male	4,2686	,79288		
Customer Satisfaction	Female	4,3291	,67719	1.22	.000
	Male	4,2249	,93771		
Empathy	Female	4,3017	,71560	.171	.056
	Male	4,2882	,82241		
Physical Elements	Female	4,2373	,80543	-.856	.278
	Male	4,3083	,83603		
Reliability	Female	4,4008	,68112	.396	.001
	Male	4,3697	,83775		
Enthusiasm	Female	4,4367	,66550	-.304	.806
	Male	4,4586	,74631		

It is clear from the results of the t-test between the service quality and customer satisfaction sub-dimensions according to the gender variable, there was a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of "Competence", "Customer Satisfaction" and "Reliability" ($p < 0.05$).

Sub-dimensions	Variable	Mean	Ss	F	p
Competence	17-25	4,2458	,80896	1,366	,253
	26-33	4,3663	,67153		
	34-41	4,2447	,65669		
	42 and over	4,1139	,65125		
Customer Satisfaction	17-25	4,1800	,99570	1,319	,268
	26-33	4,3522	,75452		
	34-41	4,2199	,72491		
	42 and over	4,1917	,67164		
Empathy	17-25	4,2188	,86732	,968	,408
	26-33	4,3591	,73008		
	34-41	4,2979	,74934		
	42 and over	4,2500	,62008		
Physical Elements	17-25	4,2638	,85583	2,399	,067
	26-33	4,3634	,76052		
	34-41	4,1702	,89246		
	42 and over	3,9000	,91191		
Reliability	17-25	4,3395	,85464	,906	,438
	26-33	4,4450	,72904		
	34-41	4,2695	,74093		
	42 and over	4,3667	,76395		
Enthusiasm	17-25	4,4172	,79552	1,571	,196
	26-33	4,5241	,64983		
	34-41	4,3262	,65382		
	42 and over	4,3000	,76395		

According to the results of the ANOVA test conducted between service quality and customer satisfaction sub-dimensions according to the age variable, there was no significant difference between sub-dimensions and age ($p > 0.05$).

Sub-dimensions	Variable	Mean	Ss	F	p
Competence	Very bad	3,7037	1,42761	23,380	,000
	Bad	3,5174	,82495		
	Normal	4,0334	,74330		
	Good	4,4673	,59905		
	Very good	4,7058	,49053		
Customer Satisfaction	Very bad	3,4444	2,11695	28,483	,000
	Bad	3,1667	1,10219		
	Normal	3,9557	,87712		
	Good	4,4768	,65122		
	Very good	4,7716	,46804		
Empathy	Very bad	3,7778	1,34715	23,044	,000
	Bad	3,3542	,89002		
	Normal	4,0193	,76225		
	Good	4,5143	,66748		
	Very good	4,6708	,61800		
Physical Elements	Very bad	3,3333	1,15470	24,091	,000
	Bad	3,4688	,84595		
	Normal	3,9711	,83997		
	Good	4,5000	,65574		
	Very good	4,7346	,65711		
Reliability	Very bad	4,2222	,83887	17,453	,000
	Bad	3,3542	1,12526		
	Normal	4,1753	,78385		
	Good	4,5651	,61221		
	Very good	4,6872	,70385		
Enthusiasm	Very bad	4,4444	,50918	4,833	,001
	Bad	4,1042	,86683		
	Normal	4,3237	,78291		
	Good	4,5077	,62519		
	Very good	4,6831	,63004		

It is observed from the results of the ANOVA test conducted between service quality and customer satisfaction sub-dimensions according to the welfare level variable, there was a significant difference between all sub-dimensions and the welfare level ($p < 0.05$).

Sub-dimensions	Variable	Mean	Ss	F	p
Competence	1 month and under	3,9802	,98611	4,355	,000
	2-5 months	4,2517	,70974		
	6-9 months	4,5266	,61244		
	10-12 months	4,4825	,64320		
	1-3 years	4,1863	,68948		
	3-5 years	4,1194	,60919		
	5 years and over	4,1333	,79704		
Customer Satisfaction	1 month and under	3,8373	1,13963	4,620	,000
	2-5 months	4,1615	,83937		
	6-9 months	4,5127	,72889		
	10-12 months	4,5205	,66597		
	1-3 years	4,1740	,86695		
	3-5 years	4,2167	,72568		
	5 years and over	4,3111	,81617		
Empathy	1 month and under	3,9365	1,01543	4,243	,000
	2-5 months	4,2179	,78279		
	6-9 months	4,5109	,66382		
	10-12 months	4,5439	,65354		
	1-3 years	4,2108	,79364		
	3-5 years	4,2000	,66138		
	5 years and over	4,1556	,79549		
Physical Elements	1 month and under	3,9643	,94606	2,841	,010
	2-5 months	4,2231	,82373		
	6-9 months	4,4728	,72386		
	10-12 months	4,4912	,69752		
	1-3 years	4,1838	,90975		
	3-5 years	4,2250	,65845		
	5 years and over	4,2333	,97955		
Reliability	1 month and under	3,9286	1,04255	5,015	,000
	2-5 months	4,3487	,76516		
	6-9 months	4,6377	,57555		
	10-12 months	4,5205	,69299		
	1-3 years	4,3529	,78308		
	3-5 years	4,2833	,67776		
	5 years and over	4,0889	1,01939		
Enthusiasm	1 month and under	4,3968	,84018	2,324	,032
	2-5 months	4,3692	,69481		
	6-9 months	4,6087	,64167		
	10-12 months	4,6316	,49875		
	1-3 years	4,3578	,77549		
	3-5 years	4,2000	,94529		
	5 years and over	4,4000	,85635		

It is observed from the ANOVA test results between service quality and customer satisfaction sub-dimensions according to the Frequency of Use of the Facility variable, there was a significant difference between all sub-dimensions and the Frequency of Use of the Facility ($p < 0.05$).

Results and Discussion

The quality perception of the customer regarding the service offered in all service businesses, including those that offer individuals recreational activities for a healthy life, is one of the most essential conditions for businesses to establish superiority in conditions of market competition. The

perceived service quality is likely to bring customer satisfaction and customers with a high level of satisfaction are likely to become loyal customers for the business. However, customers' satisfaction with the services they receive will create a reference for other customers. Considering all these factors, it is necessary to provide high-quality service in order to ensure customer satisfaction. In the study designed for this purpose, the main goal was to determine the perceived service quality offered in the sports centers and customer satisfaction regarding the services and to reveal the relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. Data were collected from a total of 424 participants,

158 women and 266 men, who work in private sports centers in Mersin.

According to the results of the t-test conducted between the service quality and customer satisfaction sub-dimensions according to the gender variable, there was a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of "Competence", "Customer Satisfaction" and "Reliability". This result may be due to the lack of a homogeneous distribution among the participants of the research. Ferrand et al. (5) stated that the services, safety, and image of the fitness center positively affect customer satisfaction. In a similar study conducted by Süllüoğlu (18) to examine the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in fitness centers, it was determined that not only customer satisfaction but also the service quality elements such as competence, reliability, and enthusiasm differ according to the gender. In the studies of Theodorakis et al (19), it was determined that female satisfaction was lower compared to men in terms of the facility and the service provided. Contrary to the results revealed in the studies, Baş et al. (10) stated that there was no significant difference in the expected and perceived quality dimensions according to the gender variable.

According to the ANOVA Test conducted between service quality and customer satisfaction sub-dimensions according to the age variable, there was no significant difference between the sub-dimensions and age. These results are believed to stem from the fact that in the wake of technological developments, the facilities are in competition with other private sports centers for service quality and customer satisfaction and thus the services are provided to each age group. Contrary to the findings obtained in the study, Süllüoğlu (18) reported in his study that the competence, reliability, enthusiasm, and customer satisfaction differed by age according to the age variable.

According to the results of the ANOVA test conducted between service quality and customer satisfaction sub-dimensions according to the level of welfare variable, there was a significant difference between all sub-dimensions and the level of welfare. It was determined that this result showed a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of "Competence, Customer Satisfaction, Empathy, Physical Elements, Reliability, and Enthusiasm". As a result, with the increase in the level of welfare, the expectations and satisfaction levels of the individuals regarding the sports centers differ

depending on the increase in the living standards of the individuals.

According to ANOVA Test results between service quality and customer satisfaction sub-dimensions according to the frequency of use of the facility variable, there was a significant difference between all sub-dimensions and the frequency of use of the facility. In his study, Süllüoğlu (18) found that the difference between the perceived service quality and the level of customer satisfaction according to the frequency of use of the facility differs according to the membership duration.

A strong relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has been proven by studies (2; 17). When service quality assessments are low, the customer's behavioural intentions are unfavourable and the relationship is more likely to be weakened, and behavioural intentions can be viewed as indicators that signal whether customers will remain with or defect from the company (21). Factors such as cleanliness, a good quality, uncongested, and peaceful atmosphere, good ventilation, positive attitudes of the staff, the diversity of sports activities, good quality sports trainers, regularly-running tools and service, a high-quality and reliable service, cheap prices and considering complaints are among the expectations from a good sports center (9). Considering the difference between the average between the expected and perceived quality, one may notice that important information may be obtained from measuring whether individuals can benefit from the fitness center as they wish and whether they are satisfied with the service provided to take measures that will make customers more satisfied when using the fitness center and to improve the service quality offered in the fitness center in line with the customer satisfaction (4).

As a result, operations such as retaining the existing customers of sports centers, developing strategies to acquire new customers, diversifying the services and programs provided, renovating and organizing in-service training and development seminars for the personnel working in the facility should also be carried out in facilities where recreational activities are available. It is believed that applying these questionnaires that determine customer satisfaction and service quality to more participants in different city centers will contribute to the relevant field.

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