



**Service Quality, Service Experience, and Customer Satisfaction:
the Case of a Fitness Center in Breda, the Netherlands**

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed at investigating the influences of service quality and service experience on customer satisfaction in a fitness center business in Breda, the Netherlands. Primary data were gathered using online self-administered questionnaires distributed to members of the fitness center through Qualtrics. The majority of the respondents were Dutch (84%). Most of them were female (62%), and 67% of the respondents were university students in Breda.

A five-point Likert scale was used to determine the agreement of each item of service quality, service experience, and satisfaction of customers. Multivariate multiple regression was used in order to analyze the influence of each service quality category, the psychological and atmospheric categories of the service experience, on customer satisfaction. The results showed that only some aspects of perceived service quality and service experience had significant influences on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the findings showed that the gym staff, group lesson instructors, receptionists, sports hall coaches, and bar personnel had positive significant influences on overall satisfaction. Additionally, the customers suggested different needs for bringing about changes in the fitness center.

Keywords: Service quality, service experience, customer satisfaction, fitness center, gym

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Statement and Significance of Research Problem

Fitness centers have played an important role in well-being of participants and this sector is growing. The health-and-fitness sector is included in service industry for the reason that it possesses the characteristics of services such as perishability, inseparability and intangibility (Cronin & Taylor, 1992, as cited in Omar, Ariffin, & Ahmad, 2016; Efi & Anasthasia, 2013; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). Over the recent years, many researchers have created frameworks for measurement and have identified dimensions of service quality and its psychological impacts (e.g., Chang & Chelladurai, 2003; Hapsari, Clemes, & Dean, 2016; Hu, Kandampully, & Juwaheer, 2009; Omar et al., 2016). As measurement of service quality is attribute-based (Chen & Chen, 2010), understanding customers' quality perceptions is vital for management of fitness centers.

Apart from quality, service experiences have a place in long-term memory which inevitably shapes satisfaction, which from the organizational perspective is important for customers' loyalty and thus return visits. Curious scholars have proposed evaluation scales for subjective reactions, feelings and emotions or knowledge acquirement i.e. experience. Pine and Gilmore (1998) have stated that a company's customers perceive experiences as memorable while services are used as the stage with tangible products as props. For its importance, customer satisfaction has received academic attentions by researchers and practitioners as a critical purpose firms aspire to attain (e.g., Burns, Graefe, & Absher, 2003; Chen & Chen, 2010; Hapsari et al., 2016; Kuo, Wu, & Deng, 2009; Omar et al., 2016). It is certainly undeniable for the competitive fitness industry to stress the importance of customer satisfaction. From the past research, not only has perceived service quality a significant relationship with customer satisfaction, but also customers' experiences affect their satisfaction on services. Specifying branch specific notions, sports facilities do not only compete with other sport facilities, but also with other leisure and health-related organizations. Lam, Zhang, and Jensen (2005) indicate that because of these organizational threats, the top managements of fitness clubs need to enhance service quality and the accompanying experiences.

Therefore, this research was a case study of quantitative nature aiming to provide a framework to describe the influences of service quality and service experience on satisfaction of customers of BRESS, a well-known fitness center that operates in Breda, the Netherlands. The researchers selected BRESS for this study on account of its uniqueness for being the fitness center for only students and staff of academic institutions. BRESS members pay period-

membership fees to join the gym, whose slogan is “More Than Just Sports”, to enjoy the basic gym facilities such as fitness equipment, fitness programs, locker rooms, bathrooms, personal trainers and consultancy, and a drink bar. In addition, BRESS has partnerships with outside organizations to offer extra health-and-fitness activities and amenities such as swimming to its members.

Service Quality

Regardless of main offerings either tangible or intangible, customer’s perceptions on service quality, value and image as excellent are core aims of firms. Not only is service quality conducive to please a firm’s clients, but also customer loyalty increases accordingly (Fernández et al., 2018; Hapsari et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2009). Although quality of product and services may be perceived as a benefit gained to customers (Fernández et al., 2018), conceived quality of service is crucial for business survival. Service quality is attribute-based (Chen & Chen, 2010) and that superior qualities create competitive advantages to organizations (Buttle, 1996, as cited in Hapsari et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2009; Lee, Kim, Hemmington, & Yun, 2004, as cited in Omar et al., 2016).

Alternative models have been developed and proposed as instruments for service quality assessment. Among emerged scales found in literature, SERVQUAL, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), has been widely adopted to studies of several service industries such as restaurants (Omar et al., 2016), hotels (Saleh & Ryan, 1991), and airlines (Hapsari et al., 2016; Hussain, Nasser, & Hussain, 2015). Nevertheless, the designed questionnaire consisting of 44 items (22 each for expectations and perceptions) brings about an immense duty for researchers in collecting data. Curiously focusing on health-and-fitness sector, Lengnick-Hall (1996, as cited in Chang & Chelladurai, 2003) has reported nine dimensions of overall quality of health-fitness services. These nine dimensions are positioned in three stages of the service which are 1) input state requiring management contributions, 2) throughout state that services are experienced by club members, and 3) output state that refers to the overall impression of customers on service quality.

Although the notions of customer satisfaction and service quality are closely associated, these two concepts have their own characteristics. Specifically, major differences between service quality and customer satisfaction are clarified (Rust & Oliver, 1994, as cited in Taylor & Baker, 1994) as follows:

1. Opinions on quality are quite definite while customer satisfaction can be influenced by any factors.

2. Quality expectations adhere to perceived superiority while satisfaction can arise from any factors (whether or not a quality issue), for example, customer needs and apperception of impartiality.

3. Satisfaction has more conceptual determinants.

In addition, customer satisfaction has been explained by Hu et al. (2009) as an emotional response to one or more services that a single customer has received. Satisfaction of customer is important because the satisfaction level affects an intention to return to the service provider (McDougall & Levesque, 2000, as cited in Hu et al., 2009). In spite of not being identical, service quality has been apparently measured as an antecedent of customer satisfaction. Hu et al. (2009) state that high quality of serviced provide that satisfy the customers is considered a sustainable competitive advantage of a particular organization. In 2015, a relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction of a Dubai-based airline was studied by Hussain et al. who found a positive influence of service quality on passengers' satisfaction. Further, Jiang and Zhang (2016) have highlighted in their research that service quality significantly drives satisfaction of leisure travellers for China airline's market.

The questions representing service quality in this research were taken from and based upon the constructs encountered by Chang and Chelladurai (2003) in the categories of 'program' and 'physical environment' since they applied to this case. Another construct applicable to this case was derived from Lam et al. (2005) categorized as 'workout facility'. After consulting with BRESS authority, three other attribute-based constructs came up which are membership, bar and front desk. Hence, BRESS members' perceived quality of service is used as a determinant to their satisfaction in this research. Nonetheless, while service quality measurement has been popular in research, study on service experience as another human cognition is limited.

Service Experience

Unlike the attribute-based perceived quality, experience on service is holistic. The distinction between two selves, the experiencing self and the remembering self, is another aspect of the diversity in which the holistic experience can be regarded in relation to the service provided. As described by Zajchowski, Schwab, and Dustin (2017), the remembering self is part of human cognition that looks back and reflects on 'what has been' experienced, and it is part of human cognition that lives in the moment; which behaves cognitively, affectively and behaviorally to life as it comes. The experiencing self is created through previous encounters which are recollected through the remembering self. For research, this distinction should be

taken in account for the operationalization of measuring experience and more prominently when the relationship between experience and another variable, which is satisfaction in this instance, is studied. Service experience is the latent construct to be studied; it is therefore that the remembering self is addressed given that data is collected after respondents have perceived the genuine service and accompanying experience without impediment. This non-impediment is preferred since it will limit biased data (Bryman, 2012).

Service experiences can be described as subjective reactions and feelings a customer has after one has received the service (Chen & Chen, 2010). Undoubtedly, service quality and experience quality are distinct. According to Crompton and Love (1995), service providers can manage the quality of service attributes they supply, but perceptions of experience quality are holistic psychological responses to involvement with the service providers and activities. In a word, experience is measured holistically and psychologically whereas service quality is evaluated on each aspect or item (Chen & Chen, 2010). One of the most recent studies claiming to have constructed a more holistic model measuring consumer experience than prior years is a study of Verhoef et al. (2009) who mentioned that “future research should seek to understand what marketing and management strategies will optimize the brand-customer experience interaction and what strategies will have the most positive influence on – and financial returns from – customer experience over time” (p. 38).

Besides the component of time, perception and accompanying experience of products and services naturally vary since individuals perceive phenomena and experiences differently based on past situations and the current situation (Kleiber, Walker, & Mannell, 2011). Despite different interpretations of interactions and further developments within the psyche, Collins (2004) goes as far as describing social interaction as the principle underlying experience and general mood for everyone in every occasion. This micro-sociological philosophy describes that positive social interactions shape a more positive mental state, creating more emotional energy and therefore more motivation for further social interaction within the same realm (Collins, 2004). This process works the other way around as well, which therefore highlights the importance of positive social interactions for overall satisfactory experience and return visits in an organizational context.

Berry and Carbone (2007) have indicated that the holistic experience can be measured through experience clues and highlights that “organizations cannot manage customers’ emotions, but it can manage the clues embedded in customers’ experiences with the organization that trigger their emotions” (p. 28). Further, Carù and Cova (2003) have described

that “for researchers of consumer behavior, an experience is above all a personal occurrence, often with important emotional significance, founded on the interaction with stimuli which are the products or services consumed” (p. 270). According to Bodet (2006, as cited in Zopiatis, Theocharous, Constanti, & Tjiapouras, 2017), an interaction between the health-and-sports center’s members and service providers have power to shape customer satisfaction. Therefore, it is that the clues mentioned by Berry and Carbone (2007) about staff and the physical environment will be used as experience determinants to describe the social and atmospheric aspect of the service BRESS provides in relation to the experience. Some aspects of the physical environment such as locker rooms, equipment and workout facilities are already tackled within the realm of service quality since these aspects are directly related to the service provided, and atmospheric concepts such as sounds and lightning are attributed to the holistic experience and not service-specific related.

In a formal meeting with BRESS, an authority mentioned that BRESS considered a distinction of staff members from different aspects of their services such as bar personnel as opposed to group lesson instructors. It is for this reason that, beyond the scope of existing literature, the same questions were repeated for different branches of personnel within BRESS. The clues mentioned by Berry and Carbone (2007) about emotions were not suited to this specific case study and thus did not seem to have added benefits; which is why information about the emotional and psychological aspects of the experience were gathered elsewhere.

Additionally, the psychological and emotional constructs were derived from Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung (2007) based on the ‘aesthetics’ and ‘escapism’ aspects of Pine and Gilmore’s four-realm model with added constructs of ‘arousal’ and ‘memory’ to address more emotional and psychological aspects of the experience. The researchers did not implement ‘entertainment’ and ‘education’ in the questionnaire because these elements did not fit the research practice.

Customer Satisfaction

To achieve customer satisfaction is regarded a major goal that businesses aim to achieve. The main reason is that satisfaction influences one’s intention to return to the service provider or to move to another service supplier (Hapsari et al., 2016; Kuo et al., 2009; Omar et al., 2016). Furthermore, satisfied customers tend to reveal their positive remarks and recommend others to visit such business (Chen & Chen, 2010; Kim, Lee, & Yoo, 2006, as cited in Hu et al., 2009). In other words, satisfaction of customers can lead to loyalty to the firm. Therefore, satisfying customers is the kernel of marketing activities. Satisfactory evaluative judgment can be

influenced by individual's perception that reflects the outcome of a received experience or a benefit gained from such product or service purchased (Kim & Ling, 2017; Sureshchandar, Rajendran, & Anantharaman, 2002). It is to say that customer satisfaction is a multi-dimensional construct, and this nature of customer satisfaction is similar to service quality.

As an emotional judgment of level of fulfilment from the total consumption of service and product (Kuo et al., 2009; Xiang, Schwartz, Gerdes, & Uysal, 2015; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003, as cited in Omar et al., 2016), satisfaction points to individual's subjective evaluation of disparity between before (or expectation) and after (or perceived performance) the consumption (Chen & Chen, 2010; Cronin & Taylor, 1992, as cited in Omar et al., 2016).

Among tremendous scales that have been developed to measure customer satisfaction in service sector, the researchers applied the 3-item European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI) developed by ECSI Technical Committee (1998, as cited in Martensen, Gronholdt, & Kristensen, 2000), which has been used in several studies in service industry such as food retailing (Juhl, Kristensen, & Ostergaard, 2002), Post Denmark (Kristensen, Martensen, & Gronholdt, 2000), and mobile phones and retail banks (Martensen et al., 2000), and postal service (O'Loughlin & Coenders, 2004) to the current study. Thus, the overall satisfaction, comparison with ideal and fulfillment of expectations were measured as follows:

1. Overall satisfaction on BRESS?
2. How close is BRESS to their ideal fitness center?
3. To what extent BRESS has fallen short of or exceeded your expectations?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were to: 1) investigate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction at BRESS and 2) investigate the relationship between service experience and customer satisfaction at BRESS.

Scope of Research

In this research, 1,700 members of BRESS Gym in Breda, the Netherlands were targeted. The simple random sampling was used in this study. The dependent variable of this research was customer satisfaction (CS) with three items (overall satisfaction, closeness to idealness and closeness to expectation). The independent variables were perceived service quality (SQ) and service experience (SE). Each independent variable was constructed with several categories. Categories of SQ were program (4 items such as "BRESS has various programs for members."

and “BRESS offers popular programs at different times.”), locker (3 items such as “The locker rooms are well maintained.” and “The locker rooms are clean.”), bathrooms (3 items such as “The bathrooms are clean.” and “The bathrooms are comfortable.”), drink (a single item of “The drinks at BRESS are suitable.”), food (a single item of “The food at BRESS is suitable.”), utilities (a single item of “There are sufficient utilities such as WIFI and sockets.”), membership (3 items such as “The membership cost at BRESS is suitable.” and “The membership at BRESS is good value for money.”), front desk (3 items such as “The front desk staff is always available.” and “The front desk is suited in a convenient location.”), and equipment and workout facilities (3 items such as “There is a good variety of equipment and workout facilities.” and “There are enough workout facilities and pieces of equipment”).

The SE consisted of psychological experiences (10 items such as “Being in BRESS was very pleasant.” and “My experiences at BRESS are very exciting.”), atmospheric experiences (5 items such as “BRESS is a well-designed building.” and “The building of BRESS is made of suitable sounds/music.”), and experiences with personnel (gym staff, group lesson instructors, receptionists, sports hall coaches, and bar personnel). In addition to the dependent and independent variables, the respondents’ demographic and personal factors were asked on the questionnaire including gender, age, membership tenure, number of visit per week, student status, academic institution enrolled and nationality.

Research Methodology

An introductory email was sent to BRESS management and a meeting with a BRESS authority was appointed for more information and understanding between the researchers and BRESS in conducting this research. After the request to conduct research of BRESS had been approved, the questionnaire was adjusted with respect to what BRESS management wanted to know. Primary data were gathered from online self-administered questionnaires distributed to members of BRESS through Qualtrics. Since BRESS was operated in the Netherlands, the researchers decided to create a questionnaire in English and then produced the Dutch version in which a back translation was done by a Dutch professor from Breda University of Applied Sciences.

The simple random sampling was used in this study. In the beginning, the researchers expected the 95% confidence level. Therefore, according to Taro Yamane’s formula, the sample size for this research should have been 324 respondents. However, the researchers did not

receive the anticipated amount of responses. Hence, the researchers went to BRESS to convince members to fill out the online questionnaire via the researchers' laptops and mobile phones in person. Some more responses were given. Still, the number of responses was not reaching the sample size the researchers intended. Thus, for this study, the 90% confidence level was used. The formula below presents the sample size as 94.

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{N}{1+Ne^2} \\ &= \frac{1,700}{1+(1,700)(0.1)^2} \\ &= 94 \end{aligned}$$

Nevertheless, the researchers finally received 99 responses for analyses of the study.

A five-point Likert scale was used to determine the degree of agreement of each item of SQ and SE as follows: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = somewhat agree, and 5 = strongly agree. For CS, a five-point Likert scale was also used to determine the degree of satisfaction of each item specified per question. For "overall satisfaction", 1 = strongly dissatisfied, 2 = somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, 4 = somewhat satisfied, and 5 = strongly satisfied. For "closeness to idealness", 1 = strongly not close, 2 = somewhat not close, 3 = neither not close nor close, 4 = somewhat close, and 5 = strongly close. And for "closeness to expectation", 1 = strongly fallen short, 2 = somewhat fallen short, 3 = neither fallen short nor exceeded, 4 = somewhat exceeded, and 5 = strongly exceeded.

The multivariate multiple regression was used to analyze the influences of each category of SQ and psychological and atmospheric categories of SE on CS. The SE facets relating to experiences with personnel were separately analyzed since only some of the respondents interacted with all different types of personnel. Thus, multivariate linear regression was used in order to see the significance levels of these SE dimensions on CS. Moreover, Pearson Correlations were utilized to determine the relationships among variables and to avoid the multi-collinearity problem. Also, a part of qualitative inquiry was added at the end of the questionnaire explicitly to help the commissioner acknowledge more of how the customers thought. The goal of this research from the commissioner's side was to find out specific things they could improve in order to improve their services. Accordingly, the implementation of the open ended inquiry: "Please list what BRESS should do to improve, add or provide in addition to their services." was constructed in order to gain more in depth knowledge.

Results

1. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The respondents were more female (62%) than male (37%) while 1 respondent's answer was missing. The biggest group of the respondents was of 18 – 24 years old (68%). The highest percentage among respondents had a 3-month membership (16%) while the rest varied. Most respondents visited the gym 2 times per week (31%), 3 times per week (23%), 1 time per week (20%), and 4 times per week (12%), respectively. 67% of the respondents were university students in Breda. Most of the respondents were Dutch (84%).

2. Pearson Correlations

The highest correlation of 0.736 was between service experience with bar personnel and service experience with receptionists. It was still lower than the recommended acceptable level of the correlation value suggested by Williams (2015, January 13), which was 0.80. Therefore, it was concluded that this research had no multi-collinearity problem regarding the variables.

3. Relationships between Service Quality, Service Experience and Customer Satisfaction

Cronbach's Alpha, a model of internal consistency, based on the average inter-item correlation, was used to test the reliabilities of the items. For overall SQ, the reliability was shown 0.858. As suggested by Sekaran (1992), a reliability value of at least 0.6 is considered reliable. However, when each SQ category was analyzed, the α of 0.529 was shown for 'program'. Although a suggested item would be deleted to increase the reliability, it would still be too low (0.557). Therefore, this scale was not used in further analyses. For 'membership', the α was first 0.664 but the item 'There are convenient payment options for membership.' was deleted to increase the α to 0.677. Further, for 'front desk', the α was 0.553 so the item 'The check-in at front desk is easy' was deleted and the α increased to 0.631. The other categories which are 'locker room' (0.859), 'bathrooms' (0.858), and equipment and workout facilities (0.821) showed high reliabilities. However, the 'drinks', 'food', and 'utilities' were single-item categories.

Table 1 Means and Standard Deviations of Perceived Service Quality, Service Experience and Customer Satisfaction

Item	Label	Mean	SD	N
SQ1	Quality of program	3.90	.603	97
SQ2	Quality of locker room	3.29	.904	96
SQ3	Quality of bathrooms	3.30	.908	97
SQ4	Quality of drink	3.88	.886	96
SQ5	Quality of food	3.36	.953	96
SQ6	Quality of utilities	3.98	.858	96
SQ7	Quality of membership	4.69	.618	97
SQ8	Quality of front desk	4.34	.668	97
SQ9	Quality of equipment and workout facilities	3.67	.903	97
SE1	Psychological experiences	3.67	.616	97
SE2	Atmospheric experiences	3.85	.632	97
SE3	Experiences with gym staff	4.30	.763	67
SE4	Experiences with group-lesson instructors	4.47	.580	49
SE5	Experiences with receptionists	4.14	.858	82
SE6	Experiences with sports hall coaches	4.45	.579	32
SE7	Experiences with bar personnel	4.40	.695	50
CS1	How satisfied are you with BRESS?	4.35	.680	96
CS2	How close is BRESS to your ideal fitness center?	3.61	.944	96
CS3	To what extent has BRESS has fallen short or exceeded your expectations?	3.64	.872	96

Source: Authors' Calculations

For overall SE, the researchers decided not to include the interactions with personnel in the reliability analysis of the latent construct of 'service experience' since different respondents interacted with different types of personnel and only 10 respondents interacted with everyone, which would make very low reliability. Instead, the choice was made to analyze the reliability of these variables per type of personnel to ensure the most amount of responses per type of personnel and the most valid reliability analyses. The results showed high reliabilities as psychological experiences (0.837), atmospheric experiences (0.798), gym staff (0.934), group

lesson instructors (0.885), receptionists (0.918), sports hall coaches (0.928), and bar personnel (0.964). For CS, the α was 0.692 while deleting any item would not make it higher.

Multivariate multiple regression analysis was conducted using SQ categories and SE categories, that excluded personnel according to the reason mentioned above, as independent variables and the three items measuring CS as dependent variables of this study. The results showed that only the SQ 'locker' ($B = 0.213$, $p = 0.014$), SQ 'equipment and workout facilities' ($B = 0.156$, $p = 0.044$) and SE 'psychological experience' ($B = 0.303$, $p = 0.009$) had a significant influence on CS 'overall satisfaction'. For CS 'closeness to ideal', only the SQ 'equipment facility' ($B = 0.412$, $p = 0.001$) had a weak positive significant influence. On the CS dimension of CS 'expectation', only SE 'psychological experience' ($B = 0.365$, $p = 0.025$) had a weak positive significant influence.

For analyses of experiences with each personnel type, multivariate linear regression was used. The results showed that gym staff ($B = 0.295$, $p = 0.007$), group lesson instructors ($B = 0.386$, $p = 0.018$), receptionists ($B = 0.225$, $p = 0.011$), sports hall coaches ($B = 0.495$, $p = 0.007$), and bar personnel ($B = 0.411$, $p = 0.001$) had positive significant impacts on CS 'overall satisfaction'. Only experience with bar personnel ($B = 0.435$, $p = 0.015$) had a significant relationship with CS 'closeness to ideal'. In addition, when asked openly, the respondents had many different needs to see changes in BRESS. The most occurring issues are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Issues for Changes

Issue	Number of Appearance
Healthy food/ drink	26
Fitness gym improvement	16
Scheduling/ opening times	16
Logistics/ facilities	12
Group lessons	12
Smell	4
Pricing	2
Specific personnel	2

Source: from the Study

Discussion

The findings helped explain how service quality and service experience categories could be influencing customer satisfaction. The study results are similar to what Kim and Ling (2017) have stated that service attributes including received experiences have impacts on customer satisfaction in health and fitness industry. Nonetheless, not all service quality and service experience categories were found to have significant influences on customer satisfaction in this study. From the findings, only qualities of 'locker' and 'equipment and workout facilities' and 'psychological experience' had significant influences on members' overall satisfaction. The findings supported the study of Zopiatis et al. (2017) for the positive effect of workout facilities on customer satisfaction. The significant positive impacts indicate that the higher perceived quality of the provided locker and equipment and workout facilities at the gym, the higher satisfaction level of the customers. Besides, a significant influence of equipment and workout facilities quality was found on closeness to ideal for members which showed that the more the customers perceive the quality of the equipment and workout facilities, the closer to the ideal fitness center for customers. Nevertheless, the research findings simultaneously failed to support the same study of Zopiatis et al. (2017) which has reported that no association between locker and satisfaction of fitness club members was revealed.

Additionally, only psychological experience contributed to perception of closeness to expectation of members. Although the abovementioned relationships are weak, they are positive. In this context, the better psychological experiences BRESS members receive will raise the level of perception that BRESS has exceeded their expectations. In this case, experiences with the gym personnel were found influences on the gym members' satisfaction. Better experiences with gym staff, group lesson instructors, receptionists, sports hall coaches and bar personnel will increase the satisfaction level of the members. The findings supported what Zopiatis et al. (2017) found in their research that positive associations between employees or gym instructors and customer satisfaction were revealed. Therefore, this study shows that customer satisfaction is not only dependent on quality of services provides, but also depends on experiences the customers receive from interactions with gym personnel in different departments.

These findings have implications for health-and-fitness club managers as they seek to increase satisfaction of members. Particularly, this study can be seen as a sort of baseline measurement for BRESS to understand their members' perceptions towards the provided services including facilities. Rather than just tangible goods and services, customers nowadays

are motivated to seek for new memorable experiences (Oh et al., 2007), which makes quality and experience measurements, as in line with the findings of this research and the previously mentioned studies, extremely valuable for customer satisfaction. Moreover, BRESS management should take into consideration the issues for changes that the respondents listed to see at the gym in which they might help increase customer satisfaction and might bring more customers to the gym.

Suggestions

Overall, this current study concludes that superior quality of specific services and good experiences with some gym personnel lead to customer satisfaction. In order to extend customer satisfaction at BRESS, the next step within the process would be to analyze specific areas more thoroughly. A decision for further research to dive deeper into differences between sub-departments of each service unit is suggested. For example, a division in the department of sport hall coaches would be to investigate differences in members' perceptions towards different types of sport hall coaches.

Further, the scales used in this research can be applied to study members' perceptions of other fitness centers offering similar services. The holistic experience items are suggested to be implemented to investigate the influence on satisfaction of gym members in other studies since they have been proven to be able to measure the latent construct of service experiences. The implementation of asking questions about personnel by their functions rather than personnel in general gave a greater understanding of which function was performing well and which function lacked ability to create positive experiences to customers. Even though this research was specifically studied at a particular organization within the leisure industry, the framework and reliable scales used can be utilized for any industry that focuses on delivering tangible and intangible products to customers. Moreover, the attribute-based items of service quality in relation to customer satisfaction should be adapted to specific cases at hand in further studies. In addition, other potential variables should be added and tested for their influences on customer satisfaction, both in leisure context and diverse organizations. Empirical studies integrating other constructs such as perceived value and brand loyalty as determinants to satisfaction will enhance our knowledge.

This study is no exception for its limitations. The most prominent limitation of this research is the quantity of the collection of data. The researchers could only manage to get 99

responses which is a very small sample size. More respondents would have ensured a more sophisticated body for research. Although this study has contributed to the knowledge of service quality, service experience and customer satisfaction, the data collected concerned only one fitness center. Thus, further research in other fitness centers would be beneficial.

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