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## Getting Fit? Let's See If We're Satisfied with The Service Quality of Sports Centers in Malaysia: Customers' Perspective

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### Abstract

For those who are concerned with their health and appearance, fitness is crucial. In order to sustain its current clientele and draw in new ones, fitness centre must constantly upgrade their offerings and gym equipment. A crucial component of the success of any organization, including sports, is customer happiness. studies on consumer satisfaction in relation to recreational sport services and facilities. The two main goals of the current study were to measure customer satisfaction and service quality. All Malaysian sport facilities are available to the public, who can play sports there while spending time with their families or friends, hence the study was targeted at all of their users. Based on this research, the information gathered is extremely valuable and beneficial to academics, researchers, learning institutions, corporations, and governments.

**Keywords:** customer satisfactory, service quality, sports centres





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quality will lower service costs (Murat Aslan, 2011). Organizations began placing attention on identifying the wants and expectations of their consumers in order to lower their manufacturing costs for these reasons. The analysis of the organization's current service quality and customer satisfaction level is crucial in this process (Gürbüz, 2003; Yetiş, 2001).

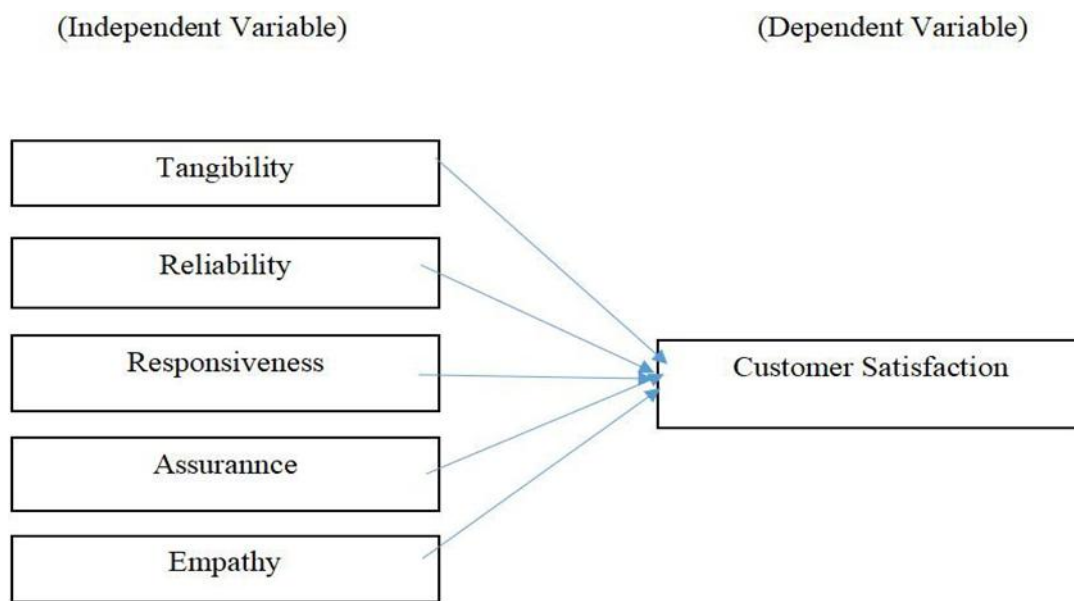


Figure 1: SERVQUAL Theoretical Framework

The research framework of this study is presented in Figure 1. The study consists of five independent variables which are tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

### Literature Review

A fundamental idea in marketing is the concept of consumer satisfaction or discontent. It is decided based on a person's general opinions or attitudes regarding a good or service after either experienced or bought. Customers are people who buy the goods or services that businesses provide. In order to meet a demand and increase satisfaction, a client is an investor in a company who pays for the offer offered to him by the company. On sometimes, the meanings of the words consumer and client are erroneous. A consumer can be a customer even though that may not always be the case. Customers are always reviewing the products they purchase since they use them in their everyday consumption activities. Consumers assess



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the good or service in light of their requirements and expectations. Satisfaction or discontent may be the result. The ultimate goal of every organization is customer pleasure. Recognizing how a person feels after comparing their performance or apparent accomplishments to their expectations (Susanto, 2010).

The ability of service quality to attract and keep consumers is acknowledged as a major source of competitive advantage. According to Shin and Kim (2008), Tsoukatos and Rand (2006), Cronin and Taylor (1992), and Kim, et al., the quality of the service is related to loyalty and customer satisfaction (2015). Through study, it has been determined that client loyalty and satisfaction are related (Santouridis & Trivellas, 2010; Deng, et al, 2009; Turel & Serenko, 2006; Kim, et al., 2004; Rashed & Abadi, 2014). In essence, service quality is a mindset developed via a thorough analysis of a stellar performance. A natural indicator of the quality of a service is how the consumer felt about the service during the service encounter. Evaluations of interaction, result, and physical environment quality are the foundation for service quality assessments.

In research conducted by Alexandris, et al. (2013), Aminuddin, Joseph and Parilah (2017), Hyun, et al. (2014), and Macintosh and Doherty, the tangibility component was positively correlated with customer satisfaction (2007). Overall, all of the research' findings indicated that modernism, usefulness, and consistency of physical facilities and equipment were significant drivers. Because of this, current authors predict the following connection.

Studies have shown that centres that follow through on their commitments and give accurate service information significantly increase members' satisfaction (Lotz, 2019; Soita, 2012). Additionally, on-time delivery of services by fitness programmes boosted member satisfaction (Tsitskari, Antoniadis, & Costa, 2014). According to Alexander, Dimitriadis, and Kasiara (2013), customers were happier with fitness centres that offered dependable services, such as on-time appointment keeping, service guarantee implementation, and pricing transparency.

Empathy demonstrates how concerned service providers are about the welfare of their clients. The study by Alexandris, et al. (2013) found that clients were more satisfied with fitness club staff members who provided tailored and personalized services and gave them individual attention. Similar to this, consumers' pleasure with fitness clubs has grown as a result of staff members' caring demeanour, special attention, and capacity to comprehend customers' individual demands (Soita, 2012; Marandi & Harris, 2010; Stuard, 2017; Yousapronpaiboon, 2014).



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Studies in the past have confirmed the beneficial correlation between worker responsiveness and customer happiness. The pleasure of the fitness centre's patrons has increased thanks to staff who were eager to deliver fast services (Soita, 2012). According to Ngceba's (2017) study findings, customers were more satisfied with fitness centre staff who responded quickly to their needs. The punctuality and promptness of staff members in responding to customers' requests considerably increased members' satisfaction in the fitness club, according to Yildiz's (2011) study.

According to Alexanders, et al. (2013), Macintosh & Doherty (2007), and Rueangthanakiet (2008), a service provider's capacity to accomplish their job responsibilities (in terms of knowledge and confidence level) has a positive relationship with the pleasure of the client. For instance, the assurance dimension was the most crucial element that raised the happiness of fitness club customers in Rueangthanakiet's (2008) study. Sports club members appreciated the teachers' and trainers' expertise since it helped them reach their objectives (Alexandris, et al., 2013). Users' pleasure was positively connected with service providers' confidence in their ability to do their jobs, which enhanced consumer trust (Macintosh & Doherty, 2007).

### Research Operation

The major tool for the study is a google form questionnaire, which is used in the survey approach of conducting this research. Among the quantitative research techniques utilized in this work, descriptive model methods were favoured. Since bias may be eliminated by organizing the research questions, concentrating the study's objectives, gathering data from the study topic, and applying analytical numbers using neutral statistics, quantitative methods are more suitable for this study. Users of sports centres served as the sample group for this study.

This research is to determine factors influencing service quality of the sports centres from the public perspective aged around 18 to 60 years old who still works out. The questionnaire will be distributed across Malaysia. The focus for the groups of respondents was reduced to public who goes to sports centres to improve the work and process efficiency.

Convenience sampling was used for this research. Depending on their availability and desire to participate, customers are selected for convenience sampling. The sample may not be representative of other criteria like age or sex, and persons who choose to participate may differ from those who choose not to, thus while valuable results can be obtained, they are vulnerable to severe bias.





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Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Dependent Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Item
Customer Satisfaction	0.830	3
Independent Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Item
Tangibility	0.810	4
Reliability	0.815	4
Empathy	0.829	4
Responsiveness	0.872	4
Assurance	0.883	4

Table 2 shares the Reliability Analysis results. According to the table 2 above, every variable that was addressed in the questionnaire had a reliability score of 0.8 or higher, indicating that the items were reliable due to their prior use and testing by other researchers in the same field of study. This outcome essentially demonstrated that the questionnaire is comprehensible and appropriate for the circumstances. The independent variable in this test is Tangibility with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.810, Reliability is 0.815, Empathy is 0.829, Responsiveness is 0.872, and Assurance is 0.883. Furthermore, the dependent variable of the test is Customer Satisfaction and its Cronbach's Alpha is 0.830. Based on all the results above are 0.8, which is accepted by the supervisor, which concludes that all the questions with all variables are reliable in this study.

Table 3: Hypotheses summary

No.	Hypothesis	P-Value	Results
H <sub>1</sub>	There is a significant relationship between Tangibility and the service quality of the sports centres in Malaysia.	0.025	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	There is a significant relationship between Reliability and the service quality of the sports centres in Malaysia.	0.023	Supported



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No.	Hypothesis	P-Value	Results
H <sub>3</sub>	There is a significant relationship between Empathy and the service quality of the sports centres in Malaysia.	0.009	Supported
H <sub>4</sub>	There is a significant	0.092	Supported

Table 3 shows that all the hypotheses have been accepted and supported. The hypothesis for the independent variables and dependent variables were intended to aid the study aims. According to the findings, tangibility, reliability, empathy, responsiveness and assurance have a positive significant relationship with the dependent variable of Customer Satisfaction.

### Conclusion and Discussion

Since customers place a great value on dependability, the fitness facility should pledge to offer services that are regarded as high-quality by both new and current clients. One strategy is to follow through on their commitments and provide the best service possible by learning about customer preferences (Edmundas, et al., 2013). The centres may benefit from the customers' trust in this way. Additionally, keep the equipment in good condition and ensure that it is capable of performing as intended.

For customers, service assurance is crucial. Service providers, and trainers in particular, need to be knowledgeable and self-assured in order to accomplish their training duties, which include giving the right training instructions and sharing personal physical activity experiences with the customer (Melton, Katula, & Mustian, 2008). Additionally, in order to give consumers accurate, current, and updated information, service providers' knowledge must be regularly updated.

The importance of empathy is giving managerial decision-makers a helpful cue. Effective approaches to develop a tighter relationship with clients include using better communication techniques like showing the customer a lot of care and paying attention to their suggestions for improvement. For instance, Ncegba (2017) recommended that centres tailor their services, such as a customised workout regimen to young, healthy clients as opposed to older, unhealthier customers.





