



## Customers Satisfaction and Service Quality at Public and Private Gyms

### KEYWORDS

questionnaire, customer satisfaction, evaluation, gyms

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### ABSTRACT

The goal of this research was to investigate the customers' satisfaction and the service quality at public and private gyms in Kozani. The number of participants was 524 people (206 men and 318 women). As a data collection Mrs. Alexandris, Zahariadis, Tsobatzoudis, & Grouinos questionnaire (2004) tool was used. The particular questionnaire consists of 26 questions classified into five factors and they were filled by the participants in the space of the gyms. For the evaluation of the total satisfaction and total quality at public and private gyms an uncorrelated control t-test were conducted. According to the results the total satisfaction of exercisers at the private gyms was significantly much higher than that in the public gyms. Corresponding results were scored in the assessment of service quality private gyms offered higher quality's services than public ones. In future surveys, the comparison between sexes (male-female) is advised to be held as far as their preferences to athletic programmes and age is concerned. It is also advised to done for possible participation motivation and selection of the particular gyms (private-municipal).

### INTRODUCTION

Several scientific efforts haven't stand able to find the definition of service quality giving an agreed view on this difficult condition (Cronin & Taylor, 1992, Rust & Oliver, 1994). This is because the measurement of service quality is difficult as it is a subjective assessment based on the experience of using a service. It becomes clear, therefore, that whenever the quality can only be determined by the crisis and the impression of the client for each service provided (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985). Therefore the term "service quality", is the supposed quality of the service, through the viewpoint of the user.

Based on the above assumptions literature report that quality is what defines its customer service and its measurement is based on the perception of the customer (Gounaris, 2003). The same wavelength is also the approach of Alexandris (2010), according to which the quality of service being one subjective concept, based on the experience acquired by the consumer through the use of this service. Therefore the assessment of superiority of a service is the consumer's perception of quality.

The quality of services and is a multidimensional concept is often associated with other concepts such as customer satisfaction and keeping them, their behavior and last and most importantly the profitability of the company / undertaking providing services (Richard & Allaway, 1993, Taylor & Baker, 1994, Rust, Zahoric & Kaeinigham, 1995, Spreng & Mackoy, 1996). Nevertheless these concepts although related are not identical.

Apart from the sense of satisfaction the intention customer behavior is a closely related concept of quality of service, and many investigations are also conducted to determine the relationship between them (Baker & Crompton, 2000, Bloemer, Ruyter & Wetzels, 1999, Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996). Positive perceptions of the quality of service would strengthen the customer relationship and organization while

negative perceptions result in unfavorable behaviors, and therefore crisis with the organization.

Sport in any form of activity is developed and promoted through the organization of programs by the central government (Alexandris, Papadopoulos, Palialia & Vasiliadis, 1999). When KEPE (Centre of Planning and Economic Research) domestic organizations are encouraged to develop and promote sports programs in cooperation with the General Secretariat of Sports, aiming to attract specific segments of the population and run local programs aimed at promoting mass sport.

Based on domestic counts, Costa, Tzetzis & Theodorakis (1998) report that the majority of people involved in municipal sports programs are middle-aged, female and married. So we need to promote family programs and should be targeted in these categories. Due to the limited amount of research on the level of service quality of municipal sports programs and customer satisfaction needs further investigation.

The private sector has experienced an unexpected and rapid growth in recent years which has continued unabated (KEPE, 1996). There are private fitness centers different stretching reputation and capabilities that offer a wide outlet to sports activities indoors and outdoors. However, the research and data that show are limited in number

From these studies it can be concluded that there are differences between private and public gyms, which vary depending on the quality of services, incentives and inhibitors impetus to sports activities.

### MATERIAL & METHODS

#### Participants

Participants were 524 people, inhabitants of the municipality of Kozani, of which 206 were men and 318 women. Their selection was random, their participation was voluntary, were

reassured that the study results will be used only for research purposes and would be confidential. Individuals surveyed had health problems or physical disabilities were not active gymnasts or athletes happened to be Greek origin.

### Test protocol-Procedure

Data collection took place from September to October 2011. Shared and answered a total of 524 questionnaires. The questionnaire used was based on the conceptual model of service quality of Alexandris, Zahariadis, Tsozbatzoudis & Grouios (2004).

This questionnaire consists of 26 questions relating to quality of service and is classified into five factors.

The first factor "programs - services" includes, variety programs and fitness equipment, the plant area as well as the equipment available to interns, the second factor "personnel" refers to the subtlety in the behavior of workers against the trainees as well as professional their specialization, the third factor "response" includes the right to immediately inform the customer as well as the receptivity on the part of the administration of the fitness of customer requests, the fourth factor "reliability" indicates the accuracy in meeting the clock program, the correct description of the programs and the consistency of the tasks of staff and finally the fifth factor "results of programs" is related to the impact of the programs on the physical and mental health of clients.

The answers given to seven-class type scale Likert, 1 = totally disagree to 7 = totally agree. The overall quality was investigated by asking "How do you characterize the overall level of quality of service provided in this gym?". Overall satisfaction was investigated with the question "Overall how satisfied you feel with your decision to work out in this gym?". In the first question, the answers given to six-class type scale Likert, 1 = poor to 6 = excellent and in the second question on the same scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = very much.

### Statistical analysis

To investigate whether there are differences in overall satisfaction among athletes in public and athletes in private gyms, conducted uncorrelated control t (Independent Samples T-test). Since variations of the two groups were significantly unequal ( $F = 8,81$ ,  $p < 0.5$ ), used for checking t unequal variances.

In the same way, to investigate whether there are differences in assessing the overall quality of services among athletes in public and athletes at private gyms, conducted uncorrelated control t (Independent Samples T-test). Given the variations of the two groups was significantly unequal ( $F = 14,61$ ,  $p < 0.5$ ), used t-test for unequal variances.

## RESULTS

### Demographic characteristics of sample

In the survey conducted to evaluate the quality of service in municipal and private gyms of the city of Kozani involved a total 524 subjects ( $N = 524$ ). Of those who attended 39.3% were male and 60.7% were women. The average age of the sample was  $M = 32.90$  years with a standard deviation  $SD = \pm 8,978$ . With reference to marital status 52.9% were free and 47.1% married.

**Table 1. Educational level of participants**

Education	Rates
Graduates	39,9%
Vocational and graduate schools	17,6%
Postgraduate studies	14,7%
Student	14,5%
Graduated from High School	13,4%
Total	100%

Table 1 shows the educational level of the participants. The largest group is that of university graduates with percentage

39.9%. The second position is occupied by IEK graduates and schools with 17.6% in the third position is the group of participants with postgraduate studies at the rate of 14.7%, while the fourth position occupied by students with 14.5%. The smallest percentage are graduates High School with 13.4%.

**Table 2: Participants professional condition**

Professional Status	Rates
Private Employee	27,9%
Freelance	18,1%
Civil Servant	16,2%
Student	16,2%
Unemployed	11,5%
Housewife	8,8%
Retired	1,3%
total	100%

In the above table (Table 2) shows the employment status of the participants. The private employees hold the majority with 27.9%, followed by freelancers to 18.1%. Then tied in third place civil servants and students with 16.2%. Then the unemployed with 11.5%, while in fifth place are the housewives of 8.8%. Finally the smallest percentage held by retirees with 1.3%.

### Factors of service quality

**Table 3. Averages factors influencing the assessment of service quality in the municipal and private gyms of Kozani.**

Factors	Mean	Std
Results	5,84	$\pm 0,91$
Reliability	5,57	$\pm 1,12$
Correspondence	5,49	$\pm 1,30$
Staff	5,29	$\pm 1,11$
Services / Programs	5,20	$\pm 1,29$

The above table shows the averages of the factors influencing the assessment of service quality in the municipal and private gyms of Kozani. As the first and most important factor appear "results" with AVERAGE = 5.84. Second factor with AVERAGE = 5.57 the "credibility", then the "response" with AVERAGE = 5.49, followed by "staff" with AVERAGE = 5.29. In last place is the factor "Services / programs" in AVERAGE = 5.20.

### Averages questions about the quality of services

**Table 4. Averages questions affecting the quality of services to private and municipal gyms.**

Question	Mean	Std
A variety of programs	4,97	$\pm 1,64$
The facilities are clean	5,26	$\pm 1,22$
The equipment is in good condition	5,26	$\pm 1,36$
There are a variety of instruments	5,17	$\pm 1,49$
Exercise areas are spacious	5,30	$\pm 1,39$
The facilities are attractive	5,25	$\pm 1,39$
The staff is experienced	5,43	$\pm 1,21$
The staff is reliable	5,43	$\pm 1,22$
The staff is well-trained	5,49	$\pm 1,22$
The staff are trusted	5,48	$\pm 1,20$
The staff provides individualized programs	5,31	$\pm 1,38$
The staff is courteous	5,72	$\pm 1,10$
The proposals take account of customers	5,27	$\pm 1,35$

Problems resolved quickly	5,24	±1,45
Responding to customer requests is immediate	5,31	±1,34
Customers are informed immediately of any changes	5,37	±1,37
The program start on time	5,63	±1,21
Provide accurate information on the daily timetable	5,47	±1,25
The staff is consistent in his duties	5,58	±1,16
The description of the exercise programs is accurate	5,60	±1,23
I increase my energy	5,66	±1,12
Improvements my health	5,83	±1,06
I improved my mood	5,90	±0,96
Improvements to my psychological state	5,86	±0,99
Improving my Fitness	5,93	±1,00
Better looks	5,88	±1,09

According to the results obtained from Table 4, the largest average holding three questions belonging to factor "results". In the first place there is the question "programs help me to improve my physical condition" with AVERAGE = 5.93 and issue A = ± 1,00. In the second place followed by AVERAGE = 5.90 and issue A = ± 0,96 the question "programs to help improve my mood" and third place in the table occupied by the question "programs to help improve my appearance" with AVERAGE = 5.88 and issue A = ± 1,09. The lowest position of the table based on the average, there is the question "there are a variety of programs" with AVERAGE = 4.97 and issue A = ± 1,64 where it belongs in factor services / programs.

**The level of service quality and customer satisfaction in gyms of Kozani.**

**Table 5. Overall service quality and customer satisfaction**

	Mean	Std
Overall level of service quality	4,61	±0,82
Overall satisfaction	4,54	±0,94

Table 5 shows the averages and standard deviations of the overall quality of service as well as the overall satisfaction. The overall quality of services has averaged AVERAGE = 4.61 with issue A = ± 0,82 and overall satisfaction has averaged AVERAGE = 4.54 with issue A = ± 0,94.

**Table 6. Response rates to the question (A) "How do you characterize the overall level of quality of service provided in this gym?"**

Question: (A)	Rates
Poor	0,0%
Tolerable	0,0%
Moderate	10,3%
Satisfactory	30,2%
High level	47,9%
Excellent	11,6%
Total	100%

Table 6 shows the percentages of the overall level of quality services. More specifically, the largest proportion of respondents 47.9% finds the level of specific fitness high and 30.2% satisfactory. Finally with zero quantities appear poor and tolerated.

**Table 7. Response rates to the question "Overall how satisfied you feel with your decision to exercise in this gym?"**

Question: "Overall how satisfied you feel with your decision to work out in this gym?"	Rates
No satisfied	0,0%
About satisfied	0,4%
moderately satisfied	15,8%
Fairly satisfied	28,8%
Very satisfied	39,7%
Too satisfied	15,3%
Total	100%

Table 7 analyzes the percentage of total customer satisfaction. 39.7% occupying the first position indicates very satisfied with this gym. In the next with 28.8%, quite happy and immediately after the 15.8% state average. The penultimate position holds relatively satisfied with 0.4%, while at the end with zero no customer left καθόλου ικανοποιημένος.

**DISCUSSION**

This study examined the quality of services offered by municipal and private gyms of Kozani. A key role is played by the age of the participants spent the third decade of life and gender (the majority were women). The above result shows that more than thirty years, the sport may be more feasible than other age groups because of vocational rehabilitation and earnings and hence more effective in maintaining a good level of fitness.

Regarding the educational level of the participants displayed the highest percentage in the category of graduates. According to the above result the educational level of participants is high. Perhaps this is directly linked to their professional situation because more than a quarter of participants, which constitute the majority hold positions in the private sector, which requires more qualifications like a diploma and thus perhaps more perks. Freelancers are the minority.

The profession of self-employed requires large schedules and responsibilities that make it difficult for active participation in sports, mainly due to limited free time and not because of economic issues. Although students should have the highest rates of participation in this leisure time they can devote to a gym (private - elementary) nevertheless their percentage is quite low which means that you may not have adopted a more natural active lifestyle. Latest in percentages come pensioners. The majority of these is known as an old age and perhaps we should be more balanced and more interest in this population group for their participation in exercise programs and improve their quality of life.

Regarding the factors of service quality found that the factor of effectiveness (eg improve appearance, health, fitness, etc.) holds the highest average, more preferably in improving fitness. This result agrees with earlier findings that said, sport is an important factor directly related to physical and psychological benefits (Sallis & Owen, 1997). This may indicate that participants have understood the significance of participation in exercise programs and benefits that occur through their health and improve their quality of life. The reliability of the service quality of gyms also holds a pretty high average. This means that the participants felt that the gym is reliable as to what indicates that it provides, namely the consistency timekeeping, personnel, tasks and the exact description of exercise programs.

Third factor in the list of factors of service quality is the response of fitness to customer requirements. This result indicates that the gyms of Kozani are able to provide their customers what they are looking at a gym, as well as their quality. The staff seems worthy trained to be able to offer clients the results they want, since it holds satisfactory average. The highest average is that of staff. It seems that politeness is very important for customers. Finally, the results show that customers are less satisfied compared with other agents of

the same fitness training programs that provide the gyms of Kozani.

It is worth emphasizing that the above factors the scale is seven-class and participants rated the quality of service of gyms Kozani with a grade of 5 or more, ie degree exceeding half of the seven-class scale. This means that customers of gyms are quite satisfied as to offer quality services. Nevertheless a small difference distinguished clients of private gyms, who feel more satisfied during sport, than to those of municipal gyms.

So from all the above it is understood that customers of Kozani gyms are quite satisfied with the fitness involved. This is also evident from the average overall satisfaction, which is quite high. However, for the overall satisfaction is important that no participant in research is said "not at all satisfied." However, the proportion answering the question "very satis-

fied" amounts to 39.7%. Similar high rates together and the view of the participants to the overall level of quality service in the fitness involved. In this question the percentage is quite remarkable is what characterizes the level as "high" and comprises almost half of the respondents, while none of the participants said the level as "low-tolerated."

### CONCLUSION

From the above it is clearly visible that the quality of services provided to private gyms is higher than in municipal gyms. This is illustrated by the Customer feedback the index of service quality in the municipal gyms is the "moderate level".

In summary, all of the above seems the obvious and great human need to escape from the routine, the routine of work and obligations enriching life with activities which bring physical, psychological and social benefits.

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