



Physical Education

AN INVESTIGATION OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE QUALITY ON SPORT MASSAGE COURSE

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ABSTRACT

The Sports Massage Essentials for Fitness Professionals Course offered by Fitness Edu training Asia (FEA) is to overcome the exercise related fatigue and stress which common among avid exercisers. The needs of customers and their perspectives on service quality is a research issue which has moved to the forefront of the agenda for fitness organizations operating in an increasingly competitive environment. Also, consumers in the fitness industry is now more demanding, and fitness services providers are faced with the challenge of meeting their high expectations. Measuring customer satisfaction is also a way to measure the company's quality of service is as good as the satisfaction of the customers. The main objective of this study was to evaluate participants' feedback with respect to evaluate the overall customer experience regarding quality on the course itself, course materials, course content, topics covered, registration process, competency of edutainer, future expectation of the edutainer given by Fitness Edutraining Asia (FEA). Feedback forms were collected at the completion of The Sports Massage Essentials for Fitness Professionals Course. A total of 28 participants form 89 participants in 6 batches submitted their feedback forms, giving a response rate of 31%. At the completion the course, all participants were instructed to scan a QR code for feedback using a smartphone gadget at the front desk, it will redirect all participants to an online form that will allow them to give their feedback about that course. All factors measured revealed in between good and excellent ranging from $M=4.74$, $SD=0.56$ to $M=4.87$, $SD=0.34$ of the statements. It means the overall customer experience in this course fulfilled the objectives of this course and satisfied the participants. As reported, customer loyalty has been one of the most fundamental concepts in long-term business profitability and sustainability.

KEYWORDS : Customer Experience Quality, Sports Massage Essentials for Fitness Professionals Course, Feedback, Summative Evaluation

Introduction

As fitness professionals, ongoing training was given to improve the quality of fitness professionals from time to time; this is why it is most important to make sure the effectiveness of training provided to the customer (Timothy, 2020). The Sports Massage Essentials for Fitness Professionals Course offered by Fitness Edutraining Asia (FEA) is to overcome the exercise related fatigue and stress which common among avid exercisers. Sports massage can help in the relieve, relax the muscles and prepare the body for the next workout. This course provides fitness professionals with non-invasive sports massage techniques and stretches to help the everyday client function better. Objectives of this course includes describe the physiological effects of massage on body systems; explain the massage routines; differentiate the classification of massage groups; recognize the difference between massage sequence & flow and perform full massage routines. The services in sport massage vary, some of them offering medical treatments as well as fitness and wellness treatments, but they all have the same agenda: to offer feelings of wellness, wellbeing and health for their customers (Boguszewski, Kowalska, Adamczyk, & Białoszewski, 2014).

The needs of customers and their perspectives on service quality is a research issue which has moved to the forefront of the agenda for fitness organizations operating in an increasingly competitive environment. Also, consumers in the fitness industry is now more demanding, and fitness services providers are faced with the challenge of meeting their high expectations (Polyakova & Mirza, 2016).

As such, the impact of feedback on future practice and the development of participants' learning (Eraut, 2006). Providing opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance. Feedback offers a chance of closing a gap between current performance and the performance expected by the trainers (Boud & Molloy, 2012). Effective feedback can provide information to edutainers that can be used to help shape the teaching offer decent information to trainers which is eventually improve the learning experience for the participants (Bashir, 2016).

The main reason of the feedback collection is to evaluate the quality of the courses conducted. Whereby evaluation is the determination of the worth of a thing. It includes obtaining information for use in judging the worth of a program, product, procedure or objective, or the potential utility of alternative approaches designed to attain specified objectives. Evaluation as a process of identifying and collecting

information to assist decision makers in choosing among available decision alternatives (Sanchez & Levine, 2010).

Also, summative evaluation is done at the end of a course or a program. It is concerned with purposes and outcomes of the teaching-learning process. From a broader perspective, summative evaluation includes the evaluation of the trainer's performance in using the course syllabus, the infrastructure, the learning/teaching resources, time allocation, administrative support, the cost of the programme, and the impact of the programme. The findings of summative evaluation may lead to course continuity, enhancement, or change (Ndiku Makewa, Njoroge, & Allida, 2017).

The summative evaluation can be done in one of two ways; either with a paper form or with online technology. The online version can be identical to a paper version or more detailed, using branching question technology to glean more information from the participants. This feedback is to be used by edutainers to improve the quality of their instruction. The information can also be used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of a edutainers, particularly for tenure decisions (Schubert, 2018).

The health and fitness industry has been one of the fastest-growing industries worldwide over the past decade (Alguacil, García-Fernández, Calabuig, & Gálvez-Ruiz, 2021). Customer experience quality is an important and relatively new concept for service businesses in gaining a sustainable competitive advantage. The experiences are the basic building blocks of the exchange process (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Creating a superior customer experience and ensuring its sustainability now seems to be one of the main goals of service companies (e.g., fitness related services). As a matter of fact, offers such as commodities, goods, and services are no longer sufficient for long-term profitability under the current competitive conditions, but these offers are meaningful when presented alongside experiences (Cetin & Dinçer, 2013).

Customer experience results from direct observation of or participation in various events (before, during, and after purchasing). Also, experience is strictly personal and is associated with a client's interest at different levels (rational, emotional, sensory, physical, and spiritual) as a result of their interaction with a product, firm, or part of its organization (Meyer & Schwager, 2007). Furthermore, consumer experience is holistic in nature (Verhoef et al., 2009), encompassing cognitive and emotional assessments of both direct and indirect

interactions with the company that affect the customer's purchasing behavior (Klaus & Maklan, 2013).

From the literature related to this area, the concept of customer experience can be considered a phenomenon that develops as the consumer interacts with the service provider (e.g., while exercising, hands-on) and then leads to perceptions of service quality (Grönroos, 1993). Indeed, experiences create unique value for customers, are difficult to imitate, and strongly affect consumer satisfaction, loyalty, and recommendation behavior (Al Kurdi, Alshurideh, & Alnaser, 2020).

In this context, customer experience quality (CEQ) is likely to determine the perceived value of the service (Kim & Choi, 2013), and researchers have found that CEQ has a significant effect on consumers' cognitive and emotional purchasing behavior. It is a multidimensional perspective of customer experience that includes constructs such as corporate image, customer expectations, perceived value, customer loyalty, and service quality (Eklöf, Podkorytova, & Malova, 2018). Some studies show that providing a superior customer experience is one way to achieve successful marketing results and competitive advantages (Cetin & Dinçer, 2013; Gao, Melero, & Sese, 2019).

Measuring customer satisfaction is also a way to measure the company's quality of service is as good as the satisfaction of the customers (Salim, Haji, & Hussein, 2019). A customer can be considered satisfied when the services meet the expectations of the customer. A satisfied customer is the most important capital of a company. Especially in the service business the satisfaction factors for the customers are often individualistic and ever-changing. To create satisfied customers, a company needs up-to-date information of their customer's wants and expectations. Understanding these needs requires a good information system and genuine attempts to solve the customer's problems (Sohiduzzaman, 2019).

A satisfied customer is the best advert for a company, because satisfied and happy customers tend to tell of their experience to others. However, an unsatisfied or disappointed customer will tell of their bad experience to even more people, which is also why reaching customer satisfaction is so important. Satisfied customers may often become regular customers, who are very important to a company because they require less marketing funds to maintain than trying to attract new customers (Sohiduzzaman, 2019).

Part of what creates satisfaction is quality. Great quality is something that can be achieved by any company because it does not require big amounts of money to achieve. Continuous improvement is what should be the aim of a company who wants to offer quality service and reach customer satisfaction as well. The quality of a service is what the customers' perception of it is (Koc, 2018).

Main Objective of Current Study

The main objective of this study is to evaluate participants' feedback with respect to evaluate the overall customer experience regarding quality on the course itself, course materials, course content, topics covered, registration process, competency of edutainer, future expectation of the edutainer given by Fitness Edutraining Asia (FEA). The information gathered from the feedback of training effectiveness can be used to further improve the training program offered. In addition, it can be stated that more studies are needed for consumer experience considering the rapid progress and competitiveness in the fitness industry, especially in sport massage course.

Methods

Surveys are concerned with describing, recording and interpreting of phenomena without manipulation of variables that either exists or previously existed (Nayak & K A, 2019). Surveys are done in the case of descriptive analysis of responses (Nayak & K A, 2019). It is considered a rapid and relatively cheap method of getting people's feedback on personal experiences and opinions about a services, people and situations (Nayak & K A, 2019). Current study employed the descriptive analysis to provide answer for the objective for this study.

Participants

Feedback forms were collected at the completion of The Sports Massage Essentials for Fitness Professionals Course offered by Fitness Edu training Asia (FEA). A total of 28 participants from 89 participants in 6 batches submitted their feedback forms, giving a

response rate of 31%. This response rate, data collected is adequate to represent the entire population based on the sample sizing method (Hashim, 2010).

Procedures

To conduct an investigation of customer experience quality on the sport massage course, the necessary information need to be identified, collected and analyzed. At the completion the course, all participants were instructed to scan a QR code for feedback using a smartphone gadget at the front desk, it will redirect all participants to an online form that will allow them to give their feedback about that course.

Modern information and communication technologies, such as mobile technologies and Quick Response (QR) codes, have great potential to improve teaching and learning because mobile technologies enable learning across multiple contexts, through social and content interactions (Crompton, 2013). In other words, learners can learn anytime and anywhere and learning can be personalized, situated and authentic (Traxler, 2009). All feedback data will then have sent to a central unit for scanning and the production of a statistical.

Instrument

Collecting feedback from the customers via questionnaires remain the single most common means of conducting surveys and are indeed probably one of, if not the, most commonly-used research tools in the social sciences (Young, 2015).

In this study, a self-administered questionnaire is a structured form that consists of a series of closed-ended and open-ended questions. It is called self-administered as the respondents fill it in themselves, without an interviewer. Closed-ended questions have a list of possible options listed, from which the respondents must choose - these can be pre-coded. Open-ended questions permit any answer that the respondent thinks are appropriate and should be recorded in the respondents' own words. These need to be coded after all the possible responses and assigned themes have been read.

It helps you to reduce the costs of data collection in research. more convenient for participants because they do not have to fill the questionnaires immediately. Because research subjects do not have to fill and submit your questionnaire immediately, they can take their time to think about each question and fill in the best responses. This helps to improve the validity of your research data. It also reduces research bias since the researcher does not have any contact with the respondents as they fill out the survey. Additionally, the survey respondents enjoy better privacy with self-administered questionnaires. The absence of the researcher can make the respondent feel at ease and more willing to provide unique and unconventional answers.

In this study, respondents can view, fill and submit their self-administered feedback from their smartphones; without having to pinch out or zoom in on their screens. Form is mobile-responsive which means they can conveniently interact with surveys and questionnaires on their mobile device.

Current study utilized the questionnaire comprising of demographic data, 8 closed ended questions and 2 opened ended questions, it takes less than 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire and submit directly via the mobile phone.

Statistical Analysis

All data obtained from feedback forms were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS version 25.0). The respondents were asked to rate the statements in the survey questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale as follows: 5 – Excellent; 4 – Good; 3 – Fair; 2 – Poor; 1- Very Poor. For current study, we only analyzed the items from the closed-ended items

Results

Research is a crucial tool for leading man towards achieving progress, findings new facts, new concepts and discovering truths which leads to better ways of doing things (Davis, 2009). Descriptive research is one of the most commonly used type of researches in social sciences. A descriptive research aims to describe a phenomenon the ways it is, for example, describing social systems or relationships between events (Adams, 2011).

Table 1. Participants' Feedback on the Overall Training Experience, Course Materials, Course Content, Administration, Competencies of Edutainer & Expectation

No	Statement	Mean ($\pm$)
1	How was your overall learning experience?	4.87 (0.34)
2	Were the course materials helpful?	4.82 (0.51)
3	Was the course content like what you expected?	4.74 (0.56)
4	Was registration and administration smooth?	4.84 (0.37)
5	Was Edutainer clear, organized and communicated effectively?	4.82 (0.46)
6	Would you like to learn more from the Edutainer?	4.84 (0.37)

Discussions

Quantitative analysis was done on the data gathered from participants based on several factors such as: Overall Training Experience, Course Materials, Course Content, Registration and Administration, Competencies of Edutainer & Expectation. Participants' feedback is just one component of important processes of evaluation.

Overall learning experience

Table 1 shows the overall leaning experience mean values of participants' feedback results shows they rated excellent with overall training experience statement ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 0.34$) that the course provided by Fitness Edutraining Asia (FEA) are: appropriate, achieved their objectives, useful, suitable duration, positive effects, relevant and important with their work.

In this case, current findings supported that the customer experience can be evaluated as enjoyable, interesting, and unforgettable activities and moments (Oh, Fiore, & Jeong, 2007) for individuals participating in activities at the fitness educational training center. Fitness educational training services, like other services, have intangible, inseparable, perishable, and heterogeneous features that cannot be owned, and participants pay not only for the core product (fitness educational courses) but also for "non-refundable" experiences in the fitness educational training environment (Eskiler & Safak, 2022).

Over the last decade, researchers have emphasized the importance of creating a superior customer experience (Bueno, Brenner Beauchamp Weber, Bomfim, & Kato, 2019). Moreover, due to the nature of the fitness industry, creating a superior customer experience is of paramount importance to businesses.

Also, the results of this study supported the previous study state that customer experience consists of three dimensions: communication, service, and usage encounters (Lemke, Clark, & Wilson, 2011), while another research findings discuss the service experience as hedonic, social, and utilitarian experiences (Baena-Arroyo, García-Fernández, Gálvez-Ruiz, & Grimaldi-Puyana, 2020). Moreover, the practitioners see customer experience as a significant factor in creating satisfaction or loyalty, the importance of customer experience has been emphasized in number of studies (Baena-Arroyo et al., 2020).

Communication should not be a monologue and should promote originality in creating a unique customer experience, as the interaction between each customer and employee will be different. Another group of researchers point out the importance of good interaction skills in terms of employees' attitudes, behavior, level of expertise, and so on (Ko & Pastore, 2007).

Current results in line with previous studies suggest that consumer experience leads to behavioral loyalty (Behnam, Sato, & Baker, 2021). Additionally, another study reported that customer experience affects both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty in the retail industry (Srivastava & Kaul, 2016). Similar study by another researcher notes that customer experience for a hedonic service (restaurant chain) has a greater impact on consumer attitudes than for a utilitarian service in banking (Roy, 2018).

As such, fitness educational services are considered largely as a sector in the hedonic context (Lemke et al., 2011), it is possible to state that current research findings provide evidence for previous research in term of consumer experience.

Course Materials

Course materials refer to the learning experiences, the content and activities of the course. Materials prepared for use in teaching, fixed or unfixed, in any form, including, but not limited to, digital, print, audio, visual, or any combination thereof.

Table 1 shows the participants' feedback toward the course materials ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 0.51$) on a 5-point scale. The participants rated between good and excellent with the statement that notes for the course is clear, easily understood, contains adequate information. The results of this study able to provide explanation and clarification of the course materials was the most used item for revision for fitness educational training methods because it deals directly with the jest of fitness educational training. The course materials in this course is about written instructional materials for revision for course because it deals directly with the course content. Also, the materials provided is about application sessions use to deals directly with skills application of the theoretical content. Current findings supported that that the participants see these items contribute to a great extent (as students' feedback) towards their professional development.

Course Content

The content and structure of this course was designed and reviewed centrally by experts on inclusion by Fitness Edutraining Asia (FEA). The delivery was the responsibility of the edutainer appointed. Results obtained from this study reported that content of this course is ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 0.56$) on a 5-point scale. Participants' feedback can be humbling, but it may lead edutrainers to admit that something in the course or their teaching needs to change (McGowan & Graham, 2009). Meaningful change, according to edutrainers who have made significant improvements in end-of-course ratings, does not require great effort (McGowan & Graham, 2009). Improvements in ratings are most frequently associated with creating opportunities for active learning in the classroom, fostering better edutainer-participant interactions, setting expectations and maintaining high standards, being prepared for class, and revising procedures for assessing participants' performance (McGowan & Graham, 2009).

The results obtained in current study supported previous study found that participants' comments were more often positive than negative and tended to be general rather than specific (Nasser-Abu Alhija & Fresko, 2010). In results of this study was similar to previous study reported that the participants who benefitted most from attending the course were those who evaluated the quality of course implementation most positively. Participants who perceived the course negatively (or even neutrally) did not experience any long term benefits. As such, it indicates that when the participants value the course activities they have engaged in, they are more likely to report higher customer experience gains and to demonstrate greater commitment to change their practices (Bueno et al., 2019).

Registration and administration

As the results obtained in this study on the statement related to registration and administration is ($M = 4.84$, $SD = 0.37$) on a 5-point scale. It means that the company (service process), service providers (employees) are doing excellent in this part. When the customer first contact with company employees (receptionist, trainer, etc.) to the service delivery and afterward. It is critical that employees exhibit good interaction skills in terms of attitude (importance to their job, etc.), behavior (friendly, polite, etc.), and levels of expertise (knowledge, application skills, etc.) in their interactions with customers (Ko & Pastore, 2004).

The results of current study are consistent to previous study reported that customer experience evaluated as a result of interactions between customers and the company (service process), service providers (employees) regarding the registration and administration of the course. In the interaction between the customer and the employee, the customer experience is entirely personal (Meyer & Schwager, 2007), and the service provided is not standard because human performance is the essential product (Ko & Pastore, 2004). In this context, fitness educational services are a value creation process created through the interaction between the customer and the employee. Indeed, value creation can encourage service reuse in fitness educational centers, thereby leading to the behavioral loyalty of customers (Behnam et al., 2021). High-quality interactions that enable a fitness educational client to create unique experiences with their service provider are "key to unlocking new sources of competitive advantage," (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Moreover, another study emphasize the

importance of customer–employee relationships and interactions for customer loyalty in CrossFit users (Eskiler & Safak, 2022).

Therefore, the quality of the interaction between the customer and the employee in the process of the experience is vital for both customers (satisfaction, emotional pleasure, stimulation, etc.) and companies such as repeat purchasing, positive verbal communication and advice, loyalty (Akaka & Vargo, 2015).

Competencies of Edutrainers

Results from current study revealed that mean values of participants' feedback toward the competencies of the course edutrainers is ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 0.46$) on a 5-point scale. It means all participants agreed with the statement that edutrainers in this course provide them with real life example, know thoroughly the material he is presenting, clear presentation, easy to understand and learn, involves participants in discussions. Also, this result reflecting that the edutrainers is well prepared, involves participants in his course activity, hands-on activity and effective presentation.

There is a large body of research which supports the notion that competency is a key determinant of effective teaching and a key motivation belief influencing edutrainers' professional beliefs and actions (Durksen, Klassen, & Daniels, 2017). This includes their 'effort, aspiration, planning, organization, persistence and resilience' as well as the extent to which they differentiate instruction (Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, & Hardin, 2014). Edutrainers' competency is also believed to be a variable in explaining professional learning participation and impact (Caena, 2011).

Current results accordant to previous researchers that effective facilitation involves edutrainers: (i) offering participants opportunities to explore alternative modes of teaching in meaningful contexts (Kennedy, 2015); (ii) fostering conversations that are both affirmative and contradictory in order to introduce 'disequilibrium'; and (iii) achieving an appropriate balance between theory and practice so that pedagogical innovation is promoted within a theoretical framework rather than in a vacuum. Meaningful engagement and learning can also be achieved by ensuring that learning activities are rooted in evidence of what and how participants do so that existing beliefs and practices are shared, articulated, discussed, reflected upon, compared to the new professional learning, and – when required – problematized and reviewed (Hawe & Dixon, 2016).

Expectation

The final factor regarding Customer Experience Quality is the expectation from the participants regarding their expectation to learn more. Results in table 1 showed $M = 4.84$, $SD = 0.37$ on a 5-point scale. It means the participants rated between good and excellent on this statement. This is correspondent with previous researcher reported that a high quality service means competitive advantage for a company, if, as a result, it can attract and retain customers. Quality, however, has to be seen from the customer's viewpoint (Doležalová, Picha, Navrátil, Veselá, & Švec, 2016). Service quality is defined as “the difference between the customer's expectations and experiences; the more the experiences overcome the expectations, the higher is the quality perceived” (Löke, Kovács, & Bacsí, 2018).

Also, the customers' preliminary expectations have a high weight in assessing the quality of the service provided. Expectations (expected quality, expected service) are formed by the customers' earlier experiences, the recommendations and suggestions by friends, word-of-mouth promotion, but informal sources and the promises by competitors and the marketing communication by the service provider are also important (Sosyal, Dergisi, Gürel, Sevay, & Aydin, 2016).

When expectations are not met, the consumer is disappointed. When, however, the performance is above the expectations, the consumer becomes overly satisfied, or in other words, happy. Satisfaction, in general, is, therefore, the happiness or disappointment generated by the difference between the expected and the experienced service (Rekettey & Rekettey, 2020).

There is international recognition that to be effective fitness trainers, short courses providers need ongoing, high quality training in order to develop the conceptual and practical tools to do so effectively (Makopoulou, Neville, Ntoumanis, & Thomas, 2019).

Conclusion

The present study evaluates the overall customer experience regarding

quality on the course itself, course materials, course content, topics covered, registration process, competency of edutrainers, future expectation. All factors measured revealed in between good and excellent ranging from $M = 4.74$, $SD = 0.56$ to $M = 4.87$, $SD = 0.34$ of the statements. It means the overall customer experience in this course fulfilled the objectives of this course and satisfied the participants. As reported, customer loyalty has been one of the most fundamental concepts in long-term business profitability and sustainability. As a matter of fact, perceived quality, perceived value, and satisfaction in both the general service sector and the fitness educational sector (García-Fernández et al., 2017) increase customer satisfaction is the primary precursor of customer loyalty.

Also, previous studies investigated relationships between service quality, customer satisfaction, loyalty and behavioral intentions. It has been found that the effect of service quality on behavioral intentions is a consumer's level of satisfaction (Brady & Robertson, 2001).

It was supported that some facets of quality can influence customer satisfaction in the health and fitness sector, and this in its turn leads to increased word of mouth communications. Moreover, the combination of service elements and corporate values is significantly associated with members' satisfaction levels and their intentions to stay (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2007).

The results of current are compatible with the researchers which emphasized the importance of creating a superior customer experience (Bueno et al., 2019). Moreover, due to the nature of the fitness industry, creating a superior customer experience is of paramount importance to businesses.

This results are in-line previous findings that employers strongly believed in providing staff with appropriate training as a strategic factor for improving their services and thus could enhance their companies' competitiveness (Deros, Daruis, & Basir, 2015). In addition, a crucial factor for developing high skilled and knowledgeable employee that could satisfy customers' needs and requirements, especially the front liners.

Communication is one of the components of immediacy behavior, which refers to communication behaviors aimed at reducing social and psychological distances among people (Anderson, Martin, & Zhong, 1998). Findings from several studies suggest that immediacy behavior encourages participant learning and satisfaction with the course. Communication with the edutrainers has been pointed out as the most important predictor of perceptions about all aspects of a course (Dolen, Dabholkar, & de ruyter, 2007).

The concept of Customer Experience Quality (CEQ) was developed to identify the most important attributes that align with customer loyalty, satisfaction and recommendations for relationship marketing and customer experience programs (Klaus & Maklan, 2013). From the results obtained in this study, we can postulate that all participants from the six batches of Sports Massage Essentials for Fitness Professionals Course offered by Fitness Edutrainers Asia (FEA) were satisfied and had an excellent CEQ regarding this course, in return, they will be a loyalty customer for Fitness Edutrainers Asia (FEA).

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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