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The Service Quality Management of the Fitness Center: The Relationship among 5 Aspects of Service Quality

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ABSTRACT: Service quality management is very important to service businesses. In a world where people's needs are changing, the quality of service is becoming increasingly important. The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between the five areas of service quality in the fitness center business. The population of the study was people who use the fitness center for health in Phetchabun province, Thailand. 390 participants were the sample size. Questionnaires were collected by the convenience sampling method. Descriptive analysis and structural equation modeling were performed. The results revealed that (1) most of the participants were female, aged between 26-35 years, had a bachelor's degree, and monthly income was less than 480 dollars, (2) the correlation coefficients values indicated that the correlation of all aspects of the service quality was interconnected, and (3) five variable pairs had the high correlation coefficients included Tangibility and Reliability, Tangibility and Empathy, Reliability and Responsiveness, Reliability and Assurance, and Reliability and Empathy. The result suggests that fitness center business executives or entrepreneurs should focus on all five aspects of service quality including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. This focus will enable executives to plan strategies better, to better meet the needs of users, and to succeed in the fitness center business both financially and sustainably.

KEYWORDS: Service Quality, Fitness Center, Correlation, Structural Equation Modeling

INTRODUCTION

The service business is an important part of each country's industry in the world. Many countries focus on the growth of service businesses to make the country grow. Human needs are increasing all the time as the world changes, so service business organizations need to meet people's needs with good quality of service. And it is this good service quality that will contribute to business growth through customer satisfaction and loyalty. To develop the best service quality for users Service businesses need to understand user expectations and strive to meet those expectations or needs by planning appropriate strategies and developing new services to create the targeted customer interest, satisfaction, confidence, and customer loyalty. This will lead to good performance, growth, success, and ultimately business sustainability.

Thailand is one of the countries that focus on the service industry to create national value. Service quality management is therefore very important to the competitiveness of today's business and the adaptation for future business growth. Service businesses such as fitness centers need to focus on the quality of service by taking these factors into consideration in planning the organization's strategy to keep the business competitive and growing (Ozdemir & Yildiz, 2020). It is recognized that service quality affects the success of the service business (Gupta & Basumatary, 2017; Ozdemir & Yildiz, 2020). Because human needs are constantly increasing as the world changes, so the quality of service that affects satisfaction and loyalty will drive people's behavior in the future (Avourdiadou & Theodorakis, 2014; Ferraz, et al., 2018; Giao, 2018; Goncalves, Meireles, & Carvalho, 2016; Yusof, Joseph, & Shah, 2017).

Nowadays people around the world are very interested in health and hygiene. They pay attention to exercise and activities to reduce stress from work each day. People understand the importance of exercise, vitality, and longevity. Exercise is therefore essential to the quality of life of people around the world. Nowadays, there are many fitness centers born in every country, both owned by the government and private businesses. Fitness centers are a service business that caters to people who are interested in health and wellbeing. This is necessary for the fitness center to focus on the quality of good service to users. Good and high-quality service contributes to the growth and success of a fitness center. On the other hand, poor service quality will result in unsatisfied users and ultimately lead to business decline.

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This research is interested in studying the quality of services in five areas including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between the five factors of service quality to answer the question of which aspects are related and how they are related. The results of this research are expected to benefit the strategic planning of the fitness center business and contribute to the success of the fitness center business.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The quality of business services clearly affects business success (Gupta & Basumatary, 2017; Othman, Harun, Rashid, & Ali, 2019; Ozdemir & Yildiz, 2020). This is because service quality is related to various business issues such as customer satisfaction, creating important marketing strategies, customer loyalty, etc. (Avourdiadou & Theodorakis, 2014; Azhar, Jufrizen, Prayogi, & Sari, 2018; Goclowska, Piatkowska, & Lenartowicz, 2019; Goncalves, Meireles, & Carvalho, 2016; Gupta & Basumatary, 2017; Nafei, 2016; Msosa & Govender, 2015; Othman, Harun, Rashid, & Ali, 2019Yusof, Joseph, & Shah, 2017). Service quality is meant to ensure that customers will be able to truly meet their needs (Ferraz, et al., 2018; Yusof, Joseph, & Shah, 2017). Assessing the service quality of users is a comparison of what is expected and what is actually being delivered from a service business (Naik, Gantasala, & Prabhakar, 2010). People have increasing demands as the world changes, especially the need for good service for themselves (Avourdiadou & Theodorakis, 2014; Namin, Pilevary, & Namin, 2012). Customer expectations in the service business determine their satisfaction and continued use of the service (Goncalves, Meireles, & Carvalho, 2016). That means service quality is essential to customer satisfaction and ultimately building customer loyalty (Othman, Harun, Rashid, & Ali, 2019). Satisfaction and loyalty in both existing and new customers will also drive future customer behavior (Avourdiadou & Theodorakis, 2014). Quality service is therefore considered an important factor in the success of service businesses, such as in the fitness center business. The study of Othman, Harun, Rashid, and Ali (2019), Nafei (2016), and Namin, Pilevary, and Namin (2012) pointed out that the service quality significantly influenced customer satisfaction. The study of Avourdiadou and Theodorakis (2014) found that service quality affects satisfaction and loyalty for both existing and new customers. This was consistent with the study of Goncalves, Meireles, and Carvalho (2016) showed that customer satisfaction was the key factor that influenced customer retention in the fitness club. In addition, the study of Giao (2018) pointed out that the conversion cost of customers influenced the customer decision to choose or change the fitness center for them. Service businesses need to build an organizational strategy through five factors of service quality: tangibility, reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness (Msosa & Govender, 2015; Nadiri, Hussain, Ekiz, & Erdogan, 2008; Nafei, 2015; Naik, Gantasala, & Prabhakar, 2010; Neupane & Devkota, 2017; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Yusof, Popa, & Geok, 2018). The study of Othman, Harun, Rashid, and Ali (2019) revealed that all five dimensions of service quality significantly affect customer satisfaction. Tangibility is what appears in the fitness center such as facilities, equipment, staff, communication tools, and cleanliness, etc. (Jasinskas, Reklaitiene, & Svagzdiene, 2013; Neupane & Devkota, 2017; Othman, Harun, Rashid, & Ali, 2019). The study of Giao (2018) found that the tangible activity affected customer satisfaction and the conversion cost of customers influenced their decision to change the fitness center. Reliability is the ability to provide the services that are promised (Jasinskas, Reklaitiene, & Svagzdiene, 2013; Naik, Gantasala, & Prabhakar, 2010; Neupane & Devkota, 2017; Othman, Harun, Rashid, & Ali, 2019). Responsiveness is the willingness of employees to respond to and assist users and this includes delivering the right service. (Jasinskas, Reklaitiene, & Svagzdiene, 2013; Neupane & Devkota, 2017; Othman, Harun, Rashid, & Ali, 2019). Assurance involves serviceability, respect and friendliness, trustworthiness, and safety (Jasinskas, Reklaitiene, & Svagzdiene, 2013; Naik, Gantasala, & Prabhakar, 2010). The study of Othman, Harun, Rashid, and Ali (2019) pointed out that knowledge and courtesy are the key factors of Assurance. Empathy is the ability to communicate with users such as providing appropriate information and listening to their needs (Jasinskas, Reklaitiene, & Svagzdiene, 2013; Naik, Gantasala, & Prabhakar, 2010; Neupane & Devkota, 2017; Othman, Harun, Rashid, & Ali, 2019). The study of Nafei (2016) found a correlation in all aspects of service quality. It was found that the pairs of variables that were highly

The study of Nafei (2016) found a correlation in all aspects of service quality. It was found that the pairs of variables that were highly correlated were: Tangibility and Reliability and Empathy. The pairs of service quality variables that were moderately correlated were: Tangibility and Responsiveness, Tangibility and Assurance, Reliability and Responsiveness, Reliability and Assurance, Responsiveness and Assurance, and Responsiveness and Empathy. This finding was consistent with the study of Msosa and Govender (2015) who pointed out that all dimensions of service quality were interconnected. It showed that the variable pairs of service quality with high correlations were: Reliability and Empathy, Reliability and Assurance, Reliability and Responsiveness, Responsiveness and Empathy, Responsiveness and Assurance, and Assurance and Empathy. Other pairs of service quality were moderately interconnected. And also it was consistent with the study of

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Neupane and Devkota (2017) who found all variable pairs of service quality were significantly interconnected. It showed that the pairs of service quality that were highly correlated included Tangibility and Reliability, Tangibility and Responsiveness, Reliability and Responsiveness, Reliability and Assurance, Responsiveness and Empathy, Responsiveness and Assurance, and Assurance and Empathy. Other pairs were moderately correlated. In addition, the study of Baniya (2016) revealed the interconnection of all pairs of 5 aspects of service quality. The results showed the high correlation of variable pairs were: Tangibility and Assurance, Reliability and Assurance, Responsiveness and Assurance, and Responsiveness and Empathy. And other pairs of service quality were moderately correlated. Based on the results of these previous studies, the correlation between the five parameters of service quality of service businesses was summarized.

Because consumer demands are constantly changing. Therefore, the quality of service must be adjusted according to various factors that are important and the deciding factor of consumers (Ferraz, et al., 2018; Yusof, Joseph, & Shah, 2017). People's decisions or attitudes are based on their perception of things they experience or know (Othman, Harun, Rashid, & Ali, 2019). Therefore, the perception of good service quality is a very important factor for the success of the service business.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The population of this research was people who used fitness centers in Phetchabun Province, Thailand. The researcher calculated the sample size using Cochran's formula, which is the formula for which the population is unknown (Cochran, 1977). According to Cochran's formula at the confidence level and error of 95% and 5 %, the calculated sample size was 385. However, the researcher decided to use a sample number of 390 because the questionnaire was returned to that number.

Research Tool

This research used a questionnaire as a research tool. The questions were created from the review of relevant literature. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections: the descriptive data section and the five service quality variables section. Details of the five service quality variables are shown in Table 1. The results of the confidence test of the service quality questionnaire showed that Cronbach's Alpha statistics value was equal to 0.889 (Table 1). This result showed that the questionnaire is highly reliable (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014).

Table 1. The questionnaire details and reliability analysis

Constructs	Variables	Symbols	sources	Cronbach's
				Alpha
Service	Tangibility (6 items: TA1-TA6)	TANGI	Nadiri, Hussain, Ekiz, and Erdogan	0.899
Quality	Reliability (5 items: RL1-RL5)	RELIAB	(2008),	
	Responsiveness (5 items: RS1-RS5)	RESPO	Naik, Gantasala, and Prabhakar (2010),	
	Assurance (5 items: AS1-AS5)	ASSURA	Neupane and Devkota (2017),	
	Empathy (5 items: EM1-EM5)	ENPAT	Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988)	

Research Statistical Analysis

The researchers analyzed descriptive statistics using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. And using a five-level criterion as shown in Table 2 to evaluate the mean of the service quality variables.

Table 2. The criteria for the key variables analysis

Means	Evaluation criteria
4.21 - 5.00	Highest level
3.41 - 4.20	High level
2.61 - 3.40	Moderate level
1.81 - 2.60	Low level
1.00 - 1.80	Lowest level

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To analyze the structural equation model, the researcher used the Amos program. This analysis will test the correlation of five subvariants of fitness center service quality variables. In addition, the researcher will test the goodness-of-fit of the model using Karakaya-Ozyer and Aksu-Dunya (2018)'s criteria as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The goodness-of-fit criteria

Criteria	Values	Evaluation
Chi square/df	< 3	Perfect fit
GFI	>0.95	Perfect fit
CFI	>0.95	Perfect fit
TLI	>0.95	Perfect fit
RMR	< 0.05	Perfect fit
RMSEA	< 0.05	Perfect fit

RESEARCH RESULTS

Tables 4 through 8 show the results of the statistical analysis of this study. And the evaluation result of the structural equation model was shown in Figure 1.

Table 4 shows the results of the descriptive statistical analysis. It revealed that most of the participants were female, aged between 26-35 years, had a bachelor's degree, and monthly income was less than 480 dollars.

Table 4. The result of the descriptive data analysis

Variables	Frequencies	%					
Gender	Gender						
Male	190	48.7					
Female	200	51.2					
Age							
16-25 years	148	37.9					
26-35 years	172	44.1					
36-45 years	39	10.0					
46-60 years	26	6.7					
> 60 years	5	1.3					
Education							
Below Bachelor Degree	110	28.2					
Bachelor Degree	237	60.8					
Above Bachelor Degree	43	11.0					
Income per month	Income per month						
< 480 USD	205	52.6					
481 - 800 USD	149	38.2					
> 800 USD	36	9.2					

Table 5 shows the results of the statistical analysis of the service quality variables. The results of the statistical analysis with mean showed that the mean of the variables was between 4.43 and 4.47. The overall average of the service quality was equal to 4.45

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which is at the highest level of participants' opinion. When considering each aspect of service quality, it also found that the mean of all variables was at the highest level. In addition, when considering the skewness and kurtosis analysis, it was found that all variables had normal curves.

Table 5. The variables analysis result of the service quality

Variables	Means	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
TANGI	4.43	0.39	-1.26	1.69
RELIAB	4.43	0.38	-1.08	1.41
RESPO	4.46	0.37	-1.24	1.98
ASSURA	4.47	0.36	-1.28	2.33
ENPAT	4.47	0.35	-0.82	1.16
Service Quality	4.45	0.29	-1.11	1.65

Table 6 presents the results of the statistical analysis of this research model. It showed the unstandardized regression weight of the variables in the model. From these results, it is shown that the observable variable can describe the latent variable in every latent variable with statistical significance at the 0.001 level. Therefore, the researcher will summarize the results of testing the relationship between latent variables in the next step.

Table 6. The evaluation result of the measurement model

Measurement model			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
TA6	<	TANGI	1			
TA5	<	TANGI	0.613	0.088	6.973	***
TA4	<	TANGI	0.833	0.096	8.658	***
TA3	<	TANGI	0.884	0.102	8.699	***
TA2	<	TANGI	0.641	0.084	7.666	***
TA1	<	TANGI	1.088	0.118	9.259	***
RL5	<	RELIAB	1			
RL4	<	RELIAB	1.701	0.247	6.893	***
RL3	<	RELIAB	1.407	0.246	5.725	***
RL2	<	RELIAB	1.145	0.217	5.272	***
RL1	<	RELIAB	1.646	0.277	5.936	***
RS5	<	RESPO	1			
RS4	<	RESPO	1.237	0.185	6.703	***
RS3	<	RESPO	0.987	0.155	6.353	***
RS2	<	RESPO	1.329	0.195	6.816	***
RS1	<	RESPO	1.635	0.242	6.752	***
AS5	<	ASSURA	1			
AS4	<	ASSURA	0.868	0.157	5.514	***
AS3	<	ASSURA	1.201	0.182	6.598	***
AS2	<	ASSURA	1.115	0.172	6.468	***
AS1	<	ASSURA	1.318	0.201	6.557	***
EM5	<	EMPAT	1			

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EM4	<	EMPAT	0.79	0.131	6.023	***
EM3	<	EMPAT	0.87	0.14	6.224	***
EM2	<	EMPAT	0.81	0.139	5.839	***
EM1	<	EMPAT	1.198	0.175	6.863	***

Note: *** is significant at the 0.001 level

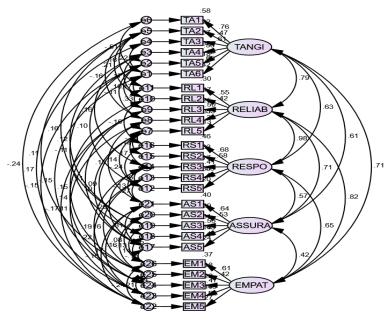
Table 7 showed the covariance estimates between the 5 aspects of the service quality along with the standard error, critical ratio, and p-values. It found that all pairs were significant at the 0.001 level.

Table 7. The result of the covariance analysis

Covariance			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
TANGI	<>	RELIAB	0.065	0.012	5.348	***
RELIAB	<>	RESPO	0.049	0.011	4.655	***
TANGI	<>	RESPO	0.064	0.011	5.747	***
TANGI	<>	ASSURA	0.068	0.012	5.84	***
TANGI	<>	EMPAT	0.085	0.013	6.299	***
RELIAB	<>	ASSURA	0.039	0.009	4.549	***
RELIAB	<>	EMPAT	0.048	0.01	4.934	***
RESPO	<>	ASSURA	0.038	0.008	4.894	***
RESPO	<>	EMPAT	0.047	0.009	5.204	***
ASSURA	<>	EMPAT	0.033	0.008	4.281	***

Note: *** is significant at the 0.001 level

Figure 1 showed the final model of this study. From this fitted model, it found that chi-square = 299.82 and chi-square/df = 1.28. The goodness-of-fit index included GFI, CFI, TLI, RMR, and RMSEA, which showed the best fit of this model.



Chi-square = 299.821, Chi-square/df = 1.281, df = 234, p = .002 GFI = .946, CFI = .972, TLI = .961, RMR = .013, RMSEA = .027

Figure 1. the final model of this study

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The correlation results of this model shows in Table 8. It found five variable pairs had a high correlation coefficients, included TANGI <> RELIAB = 0.786, TANGI <> EMPAT = 0.715, RELIAB <> RESPO = 0.984, RELIAB <> ASSURA = 0.713, RELIAB <> EMPAT = 0.816. Other variable pairs had the moderate correlation coefficients. However, these values indicated that the correlation of all aspects of the service quality were interconnected.

Table 8. The correlation result of the model

Correlation			Estimate
TANGI	<>	RELIAB	0.786
RELIAB	<>	RESPO	0.984
TANGI	<>	RESPO	0.630
TANGI	<>	ASSURA	0.608
TANGI	<>	EMPAT	0.715
RELIAB	<>	ASSURA	0.713
RELIAB	<>	EMPAT	0.816
RESPO	<>	ASSURA	0.573
RESPO	<>	EMPAT	0.654
ASSURA	<>	EMPAT	0.420

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study found a correlation between five aspects of service quality in fitness center businesses. The findings show that all aspects of service quality are interrelated, indicating the importance of the five areas of service quality. Therefore, a lack of service quality on either side has a negative impact on the performance of the fitness center business. The research indicates the opinions or needs of fitness center users that users want good service quality in all five areas. Therefore, the interrelated quality of service in all five areas is essential to the success of the fitness center business. The findings of this study are consistent with several studies. The findings were consistent with the study of Nafei (2016) who found correlation in all five aspects of service quality and found that the pairs of service quality that were highly correlated were: Tangibility and Reliability, Tangibility and Empathy, and Reliability and Empathy, consistent with the study of Msosa and Govender (2015) who revealed that all five dimensions of service quality were interconnected and showed that the pairs of service quality with high correlations were: Reliability and Empathy, Reliability and Assurance, and Reliability and Responsiveness, and consistent with the study of Neupane and Devkota (2017) who found all variable pairs of service quality were significantly interconnected and showed that the pairs of services quality that were highly correlated included Tangibility and Reliability, Reliability and Responsiveness, and Reliability and Assurance, also consistent with the study of Baniya (2016) revealed the interconnection of all pairs of 5 aspects of service quality and showed the highly correlation of variable pairs were: Reliability and Assurance, Tangibility and Assurance, Responsiveness and Assurance, and Responsiveness and Empathy. From the results of the study, it can be concluded that all aspects of service quality are interrelated and it is imperative that the fitness center business pay attention to all aspects. Focusing on the five areas of service quality will ultimately influence the success of the fitness center business.

RECOMMENDATION

Fitness center business executives or entrepreneurs should pay attention to the center's service quality factor, which should focus on all five aspects of service quality including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. This focus will enable executives to plan strategies better. In addition, paying attention to the quality of service in all five areas will allow businesses to better meet the needs of users. These submissions will ultimately contribute to the success of the fitness center business in terms of both financial and sustainability.

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